

Arto Luukkanen

THE PARTY OF UNBELIEF

Societas Historica Finlandiae

Suomen Historiallinen Seura

Finska Historiska Samfundet



Arto Luukkanen

---

# The Party of Unbelief

---

The Religious Policy of  
The Bolshevik Party, 1917–1929

The Finnish Historical Society has published this study with the permission, granted on 18 April 1994, of Helsinki University, Faculty of Theology.

Cover and design: Tuija Halttunen

Picture: Dimitry Moor: "The ABC of a Red-Army Conscript".  
Gosizdatelstvo. Moscow 1921.

Distributor: Tiedekirja, Kirkkokatu 14, 00170 Helsinki, Finland  
Tel: 358-0-635177, Fax 358-0-635017

ISSN 0081-6493

ISBN 951-710-008-6

Raamattutalo  
Pieksämäki 1994



---

# Abstract

Arto Luukkanen

The Party of Unbelief – The Religion Policy of The Bolshevik Party, 1917-1929.

The main objective of this dissertation is to study the religious policy of the Soviet Bolshevik party during the years 1917–1929 by utilizing historical methods. The Bolshevik religious ideology was influenced by Left-Hegelian philosophy, Marxist materialism and the anti-clerical attitudes of the Russian intelligentsia. The period under examination can be divided into four separate sections. During the civil war (1917–1920) the ruling regime limited its official religious policy to legislative acts in church-state relations and its main political objective was to isolate the Russian Orthodox church, the ROC. The mission of executing Soviet religious policy was given to the NKYust's "Liquidation Committee" and to the Soviet security organs. The introduction of the early NEP policy (1921–1923) did not automatically represent a relaxation of the religious policy but, on the contrary, the Bolshevik government, especially Lenin and Trotsky, engaged in general attack against the ROC during the so-called "confiscation conflict". Trotsky and his "Liquidation Committee" conducted this anti-religious campaign in order to obtain money and to undermine the role of religions in the Soviet society by fomenting pro-government schisms inside the religious organizations.

After Lenin lost his grip on power, the "triumvirate" and especially Stalin outmanoeuvred Trotsky in the anti-religious work by organizing their own antireligious cabinet (CAP). This change was rationalized by certain slogans of the high NEP (1924–1927) which underlined the importance of seeking reconciliation in the Russian countryside. Moreover, foreign pressure also played into the hands of the "triumvirate". This policy of appeasing the peasantry also implied a relaxation in the antireligious campaign. The 12th and 13th party congresses represented the beginning of the high NEP and of "detente" in Soviet religious policy. The more moderate party leaders wanted to stabilize the Russian countryside by making concessions to religion

while at the same time hard-liners attempted to brake the normalcy of the NEP in this area.

The NEP could not survive the introduction of the Cultural Revolution (1928–1929). The criticism from the left-opposition gradually undermined the fundamentals of the NEP's civil peace. Stalin was also anxious also to utilize this mood in order to get rid of his “rightist” allies and to this end encouraged the Cultural Revolution by supporting Komsomol's drive to politicize Soviet society. In the religious policy former religious political organs were disbanded and their responsibilities were transferred to the VTsIK. The battle between moderates, so-called *culturalists* and hard-liners (*interventionists*) was one of the most characteristic features of anti-religious activity at that time. As a conclusion, it must be stated that the Soviet religious policy was always dependent on the general political objectives of the party leaders. The development of the Soviet religious ideology must therefore be studied in association with other major political battles.

---

# Preface

The completion of this work, and the archival research on which much of its based, would not have been possible without encouragement and the financial assistance of many. First I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Simo Heininen, Acting Professor Aila Lauha, and especially to Professor Juha Seppo for kindly reading my thesis in draft form. All the above are attached to the department of Church History at the University of Helsinki under whose auspices this work has been completed.

7

The Renvall Institute has been my second “home” at the University of Helsinki and I wish to thank all my colleagues there for their assistance and encouragement. I am deeply indebted to Eino Lyytinen, director of the Renvall Institute, and especially to Dr Timo Vihavainen for reading a draft of my thesis and for the much invaluable help he has given me. In addition, I wish to express my thanks to Dr Jyrki Iivonen of the Ministry of Defense, Dr Ilmari Susiluoto of the Ministry of International Affairs, Valdemar Melanko, director of the Institute for Russian and East European Studies in Helsinki, Professor Juha Tolonen, chairman of the Finnish Association for Russian and East European Studies, Dr Andrew Pospelovsky, and Professor Robert Service from SSEES for opening up new perspectives on Russian and Soviet history for me. Professor Emeritus Eino Murtorinne also gave me assistance during the early stages of my research. I would, furthermore, like to give a special word of thanks to the personnel of the Finnish Institute in London and the archives in Moscow – RTsKhIDNI and GARF, for their help. To the Finnish Historical Society I am also thankful for publishing the study in their series. Mícheál Briody MA from the University of Helsinki and Dr. Felix Corley from Keston College have kindly revised the language of this study. In paying all the above due acknowledgements, I want to stress that all interpretations, opinions and errors in this work are the sole responsibility of the author.

Without the technical assistance of Rauno Endén MA from the Finnish Historical Society, the Commission for Scientific and Technological Co-operation between Finland and Russia under the auspices of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the financial assistance of

the Foundation of Science and Art (SKSK), the Emil Aaltonen Foundation, E.J. Sariola Foundation, the Väinö Tanner Foundation, and especially that of the Academy of Finland, this work could not have been undertaken.

I also wish to thank Taina and Raimo Luukkanen, and especially my father, Reijo Luukkanen, for their support. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Dr Tarja-Liisa Luukkanen, for her forbearance and encouragement during the many vicissitudes of this study. I dedicate this work to her and to our newly born Aapo Matias.

Helsinki, 1994

Arto Luukkanen

---

# Abbreviations and Terms

AGMIR	Arkhiv Gosudarstvennyi Muzei Istorii Religii (Archive of State Museum concerning History of Religion)
AK	Azbuka Kommunizma (ABC of Communism)
APO	Agitatsionyi i Propagandicheskyy Otdel (The Agitation and Propaganda Section, Agitprop)
APRF	Arkhiv Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii (The Archive of the President of the Russian Federation)
ARA	American Relief Association
ARCP(b)	See RSDWP
AT	Arkhiv Trotskogo (Trotsky Archive)
AUCP(b)	See RSDWP
BB	Bonch-Bruevich, V.D. Izbrannie Sochineniya (Bonch-Bruevich, V.D. Selected Works)
BDOFA	British Documents of Foreign Affairs
bednyak	poor peasant
BKh	Biograficheskaya Khronika. Vladimir Ilich Lenin. (Biographical Chronicle. Vladimir Ilich Lenin)
BSE	Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia)
CAP	The Commission of Antireligious Propaganda
Cheka	Chrezvychainaya Komissiya (The Extraordinary Commission)
Comintern	Kommunisticheskyy Internatsional (The Communist International)
CPSU	See RSDWP
d.	delo (file)
desyatina	1.09 hectare
DMV	Delo Mitropolita Veniamina (The Case of Metropolitan Veniamin)
DO	Deyateli Oktyabrya o religii i tserkvi (The Public Figures of the October [Revolution] on Religion and the Church)
DOBFP	Documents on British Foreign Policy

DSV	Dekrety Sovetskoi Vlasti (The Decrees of the Soviet Power)
ES	Entsiklopedicheski Slovar (The Encyclopedic Dictionary)
Evseksiya	Evreiskaya Sektsiya (The Jewish Section [of the Bolshevik Party])
f.	fond (collection)
FMLP	The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy
GARF	Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (The State Archive of the Russian Federation)
Glavpolitprosvet	Glavnyi Politiko-Prosveshchenskii Otdel (The Central Administration of Political Education)
GPU	Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (The State Political Administration)
Heder	Jewish religious school
IPSS	Izbranniye Proizvedeniya Skvortsov-Stepanova I.I. (Selected Works of Skvortsov-Stepanov I.I.)
IzvTsK KPSS	Izvestiya Tsentralnogo Komiteta KPSS (The News of the Central Committee of the CPSU)
K	Konferentsiya RKP(b) (The Conference of the RCP(b))
Komsomol	Kommunisticheskii Soyuz Molodezhi (The Young Communist League)
KPSS	Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza (The Communist Party of the Soviet Union)
Kulak	rich peasant
l., ll	list, listy (leaf, leaves)
LS	Leninsky Sbornik (The Lenin Collection)
MEW	Marx-Engels Werke (The Collected Works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels)
MVD	Ministerstvo Vnutrennykh Del (Ministry of Internal Affairs)
Narkomnats	Narodnyi Komissariat po Delam Natsionalnostei (People's Commissariat of Nationalities)
Narkompros	Narodnyi Komissariat Prosveshcheniya (People's Commissariat of Enlightenment)
Narodnaya Volya	People's Will (Liberty), a Russian terrorist organization, See SRs
NEP	Novaya Ekonomicheskaya Politika (New Economic Policy)
NKID	Narodnyi Komissariat po Inostrannym Delam (People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs)

NKVD	Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs)
NKYust	Narodnyi Komissariat Yustitsii (People's Commissariat of Justice)
NKZem	Narodnyi Komissariat Zemledeliya (People's Commissariat of Agriculture)
NR	Neizvestnaya Rossiya (The Unknown Russia)
oblast	province, administrative unit
obshchina	Russian peasant commune
OGPU	Obedionennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (The Unified State Political Administration)
okrug	administrative region between region and district
op.	opis (inventory)
Orgburo	Organizational Bureau, TsKa
Orgkomsekt	Organizatsionalnyi Kommissiya Sektanstvo (Organizational Commission of Sectarians)
ORTs	O Religii i Tserkvi (On Religion and Church)
OZET	Obshchestvo po Zemelnomu Ustroistvu Trudyashikhsya evreev (Society for Settling Jewish Toilers in Agriculture)
PCAP	Protocols of the Commission of Antireligious Propaganda
PCSRQ	Permanent (working) Commission for the Study of Religious Questions
Politburo	Political Bureau, TsKa
Politotdel	Political department
Pomgol	Soviet Commission for Helping the Starving in the Volga area
Pp	Politburo protocols
PSS	Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniya V.I. Lenin (The Collected Works of V.I. Lenin)
raion	district, administrative unit
raskol	schism
RdO	Rapport de l'OGPU
ROC	The Russian Orthodox Church
Rosta	The Russian news-agency
RP	Russkoe Proshloe (The Russian Past)
RSDWP	Rossiiskaya Sotsial-Demokraticheskaya Partiya. Later RKP(b), Rossiiskaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya (Bolshevikov) (The Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks))



RSFSR	Rossiiskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialiticheskaya Respublika (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
RTsKhIDNI	Rossiiskiy Tsentr Khraneniya i Izucheniya Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii (The Russian Centre of Conservation & Study of Records for Modern History)
S	Sezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bolshevikov) (The Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks))
Secretariat serednyak	Bureau of Secretaries, TsKa "middle" peasant
Sharia	Islamic law
Skhod	village assembly
"Smena-Vekh"	"Changing Landmarks" movement
Sobor	Orthodox ecclesiastical assembly
Sovnarkom	Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov (The Council of People's Commissars)
SR	Sotsial-Revolytsioner (Social-Revolutionary, SR party)
SS	Sochineniya I.V. Stalin (The Collected Works of I.V. Stalin)
SSLKSM	Sezd Vsesoyuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soyuza Molodezhi (Congress of Leninist All-Union Young Communist League)
SSR	Sezdyi Sovetov RSFSR v postanovleniyakh i rezolyutsiyakh (Congresses of Soviets of RSFSR on decisions and resolutions)
SSS	Sezd Sovetov Soyuza SSR (Congress of Soviets of Union of SSR)
ST	Sochineniya Trotsky L.D. (The Works of Trotsky L.D.)
SUR	Sobranie Uzakoneyi i Rasporyazhenyi (The Collection of Legislation and Decrees)
SZR	Sobranie Zakonov i Rasporyazhenyi (The Collection of Laws and Decrees)
TRRR	The Russian Revolution and Religion
TsGAOR	Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Oktyabrskoi Revolutsii (The Central Archive of the October Revolution)
TsGA RSFSR	Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv RSFSR



	(The Central State Archive of the RSFSR)
TsIK	Tsentralnyi Ispolnitelnyi Komitet (The Central Executive Committee)
TsKa	Tsentralnyi Komitet (The Central Committee)
TTP	The Trotsky Papers
uezd	administrative unit
VKP(b)	Vsesoyaznaya Kommunisticheskaya Partiya (Bolshevikov) (The All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks))
VSS	Vserossiiskiy Sezd Sovetov (All Russian Congress of Soviets)
VTsIK	Vserossiiskiy (Vsesoyuznyi) Tsentralnyi Ispolnitelnyi Komitet (All-Russian (All-Union) Central Executive Committee)
VTsU	Vyshee Tserkovnoe Upravlenie (The Supreme Church Administration)
Y	Yaroslavsky, Em. (The Collected Works of E.I. Yaroslavsky)
Zemlya i Volya	Land and Will (Liberty), a Russian revolutionary organization, See SRs.



# Contents

i	Preface .....	7
ii	Abbreviations and terms .....	9
I	Scope .....	19
	1. Introduction .....	19
	a. Goals of the study .....	19
	b. Earlier studies, basic concepts and limitations .....	26
	c. Sources of the study .....	33
	2. The roots of the study .....	35
	a. Historical and ideological background of Bolshevik religious ideology .....	35
	b. The religious political programme of the RSDWP, the challenge of sectarians and Christian socialism .....	46
	c. The nationality question and religion in Bolshevik thinking .....	55
II	“Storm and Wind” – religious policy after the October Revolution and during the civil war (1917–1920) .....	60
	1. General background to early Soviet religious policy .....	60
	2. The October Revolution and the conflict of different beliefs .....	68
	3. The “breathing-space” and the Constitution of 1918 .....	75
	4. The civil war and the “isolation of the ecclesiastical enemy” .....	79
	5. Other religious organizations during the civil war .....	88
III	Trotsky’s control of early NEP religious policy (1921–1923) .....	96
	1. General background to religious policy during the NEP ....	96
	2. The confrontation of two beliefs – the “confiscation conflict” .....	103
	a. The background to this operation and the assault organized by Trotsky .....	103
	b. Other religious organizations .....	119

3. Interregnum of power .....	123
a. The birth of the Commission of Antireligious Propaganda, CAP .....	123
b. The fate of Tikhon .....	129
4. The 12th congress as a pacesetter for the religious policy of the early NEP .....	136
a. Preparations for the 12th congress .....	136
b. The paradox of the 12th congress: belligerent resolutions and conciliatory speeches .....	140
c. Trotsky's comments on the 12th congress – the justification for Bolshevik rituals and the birth of the antireligious press .....	151
IV The role of religion in the power struggle at the height of the high NEP (1924–1927) .....	161
1. Diverging leadership and the legacy of Lenin .....	161
2. The debate on religion and the 13th party congress .....	168
3. Tolerance and agitation – the aftermath of the 13th congress .....	181
a. The sectarian movement and the ruling regime at the height of the high NEP .....	181
b. The development of the ecclesiastical schism .....	186
c. The questions of national minorities and religion after the 13th congress .....	190
d. The Soviet regime and Catholics .....	193
4. The aggravated situation before the 15th congress and the search for a new antireligious line .....	195
5. The debate of 1926 and the 15th congress as the highlight of the NEP religious policy .....	199
V The “Storming of Heaven” – The impact of the Cultural Revolution and the years of the “Great Turn” (1928–1929) ..	208
1. The motive and search for allies and enemies .....	208
2. The implementation .....	213
3. “Culturalists and Interventionists” .....	219
VI Conclusions .....	230
VII Sources and bibliography .....	239
1. Documentary sources .....	239
2. Printed sources .....	240

3. Newspapers and periodicals .....	250
4. Bibliography .....	251
VIII Index .....	270
1. Index of names .....	270
2. Index of subjects .....	274



---

# I Scope

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### a. Goals of the study

The Soviet Union has collapsed and historians all over the world are trying to find explanations for the rapid process which transformed one of the mightiest military powers into the Commonwealth of Independent States. One of the reasons<sup>1</sup> put forward for the disintegration of the Soviet Union usually involves the economic failure of the Soviet system. The collapse of productive industrial power, the vast budget deficit, and astronomical investments in the military were apparent factors in the decline of Soviet totalitarianism. Unfortunately, researchers and scholars have usually emphasized only these “hard” aspects in their evaluations of former Soviet society. Nevertheless, divisions, armies, and nuclear weapons were unable to save the Soviet system.<sup>2</sup> Few researchers have concentrated on analysing the neglected “soft” factors, such as the mentality of closed societies, the ideological fundamentals of the totalitarian state, the rise of nationalistic feelings, and the renaissance of religion. But contrary to all the wisdom of the twentieth century and the tendency to relegate religion to being a thing of the past, the claim of Dennis J. Dunn appears to be extremely pertinent:

“...regimes that abandoned or neglected their religious roots are inherently unstable, and their future might not be unlike that of the shah of Iran...”<sup>3</sup>

1 For other explanations, see Chavetz 1992, 151–169; Iivonen 1992, 324–347.

2 In the opinion of most scholars the Soviet Communist system appeared very stable. Statements regarding possible instability in the USSR however courageous they sounded were not to be taken seriously. Very many would probably have agreed with the sceptical view of Zbigniew Brzezinski when he speculated on the possibility of secessionist movements in the former USSR. Albeit this famous American observer did not count out the possibility of disintegration, he remarked: “...now would these conditions... suffice to activate and make a secessionist aspiration politically significant? My judgement on the whole would be negative”. Brzezinski 1971, 78.

3 Dunn 1987, 12.

As Helene Carrere D'Encausse has suggested, the diversity and intensity of nationalistic feelings were contributing factors in the Soviet leadership's failure to create a *Homo Socialisticus*<sup>4</sup> from the ashes of the old Russian culture and, despite all their efforts, nationalities, religions, and different ethnic groups are nowadays asserting their identity in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

This dissertation will focus on the development of the communist party's religious policy from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 to the end of the NEP period in 1929. It will also examine the start of the so-called "Cultural Revolution" (1928–1932) and the beginning of Stalin's hegemony. During the course of 1929 the last vestiges of opposition to the General Secretary from old Bolshevik leaders were crushed and his fiercest opponent, L.D. Trotsky (Bronstein, 1879–1940), expelled abroad. The year 1929 represents the starting point of Stalinism, a new epoch with its own dilemmas and problems.

This research will analyze the role of religion in the Soviet leadership's political thinking and political actions during the period in question. The study employs an historical methodology: by examining the different ideas, arguments and political acts of the Soviet leaders, and especially the debates and resolutions of party assemblies from 1917 to 1929, we are able to achieve an extensive overview of Bolshevik religious policy. The aim is to present the general outlines of Bolshevik religious policy mostly in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church, but in addition a certain amount of attention will be paid, for example, to the sectarian movement, Catholics, Jews and Moslems.<sup>5</sup>

It is justifiable to study Soviet religious policy in relation to the ideology and history of the communist party because in Soviet totalitarian society communist ideology served two purposes: firstly it justified Bolshevik rule, and secondly it justified the existence of an

4 D'Encausse 1978, 265–274. The well-known Russian writer Mikhail Geller has noted in his book "Машина и винтики" (A Cog in the Wheel), the importance of creating the New Man, the so called *Homo Sovieticus* to socialist society. In order to achieve this end, one had to atomize society and dissolve all individuality in it, sundering bonds based on religion, family, historical memory and language. Geller recognizes four different categories in the plan for creating The New Man: "инфантилизация" ("infantilization"), "национализация времени" (nationalization of time), "идеологизация" ("ideologization") and "тоталитаризация" ("totalitarianization"). Geller 1985, 7, 29–33, 36–39, 48–49, 60, 89–90.

5 The correlation between religion and nationalism offers a practical view when investigating the religious policy of the Bolshevik party. In investigating the relationship between religion and nationality Bohdan R. Bociurkiw has distinguished six different categories of Soviet religious organizations: (1) the former Imperial Church (ROC); (2) national churches; (3) traditional native sects; (4) transnational religious communities; (5) ethno-religious diasporas; and (6) modern cosmopolitan sects. Bociurkiw 1990, 150.



elite, i.e. the communist party. The party was the source of power and thus, in studying religious policy in the Soviet system, it is essential to examine the role of the leading party. What was the ideological background of the Soviet leaders? How did the communist leaders' critique of religion develop before and after the revolution? Were there any disagreements or different ideological approaches towards religion inside the ruling regime? And how were ethnic problems reflected in this ideology?

In Marxist ideology and in Marxism-Leninism<sup>6</sup> both nationalism and religion were seen as relics of the old capitalist era. Both religion, as a part of "delusive knowledge", and national "chauvinism", as an obstacle to Marxist class struggle, had to be defeated before the emergence of the new socialist order could be achieved. For instance, Gerhard Simon's definition of nationalism also fits religiosity when he states that both were acting against the class structure of society and that both of them "strove to overcome class antagonism" for the sake of mutual religious commitments or national affiliations and the mobilization of different social strata in pursuance of a common religious or national objective.<sup>7</sup> As a matter of fact, it seems obvious that during this epoch of the "death of old ideologies" ethno-religious bonds would appear more stable than those of universal doctrines. As John A. Armstrong has pointed out in this context:

Apart from questions of transcendental faith, it is hardly deniable that, throughout millennia, religion constituted a far stronger source of identity than either class or nation. In fact, as [the] term "ethno-religious" implies, the categorical distinction between religion and ethnicity is slippery...<sup>8</sup>

An examination of the ideological and historical contribution of Vladimir Ilich Lenin (Ulyanov, 1870–1924) forms, of course, the basis of this study. If we want to comprehend the development of the religious policy of the Bolshevik party and attempt to evaluate different viewpoints and disputes inside the Soviet leadership concerning religion, it is essential to acquaint ourselves with Lenin's religious ideology by analysing his political doctrine and beliefs. From the

\*\*\*\*\*  
6 This term is a general term for the ideology of the Soviet regime. The official handbook of Soviet philosophy, "The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy", defines Marxism-Leninism as: "...a whole and logical doctrine, which contains three basic backgrounds: philosophy, political economy and the theory of scientific communism...". FMLP 1973, 11.

7 Simon 1991, 12-13. See also Bociurkiw 1990, 159.

8 Armstrong 1992, 27.

beginning of the 1917 Revolution he was the key figure of the Soviet state and the Russian Communist Party<sup>9</sup> and the “primus inter pares” among the Bolshevik ideologists. Moreover, after his death in 1924, Lenin’s political legacy was promoted as the official ideology of the Soviet Union. This so-called “Lenin cult” prospered after his death and also became a very significant factor in the bitter power struggle between rival party-leaders.<sup>10</sup>

Lenin’s position as the principal ideological authority remained unchallenged until the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991. In fact, the legitimacy of the Soviet regime was extremely dependent on V. I. Lenin’s political heritage. Every Soviet leader after Lenin (even M.S. Gorbachev) emphasized the importance of Leninism and every “Vozhd” after 1924 has claimed to be the ideological heir of Lenin.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Lenin’s “Collected Works” and “original Leninism” have frequently been used as ideological weapons in power struggles between competing party factions. Even during the “perestroika” era the figure of Lenin was used by the official party machinery to ensure and stabilize the CPSU’s position in Soviet society.<sup>12</sup>

Although most attention in this study will be paid to the political thinking of official party leaders, such as V.I. Lenin and I.V. Stalin (Dzhugashvili, 1879–1953), other significant figures must also be taken into consideration. L.D. Trotsky, as spokesman of the “left” Bolshevik wing, was a very remarkable political figure in Soviet Russia from 1917

9 The history of the *Russian Social Democratic Workers’ Party* (RSDWP) is officially counted from the first party congress convened in Minsk in 1898, but actually the party took shape in 1903 during its second congress. In 1918 the Bolshevik wing renamed itself the *All Russian Communist Party (bolsheviks)*, ARCP(b). In 1925, a few years after the creation of the Soviet Union, the party renamed itself the *All Union Communist Party (bolsheviks)*, AUCP(b). Finally, the party was renamed the *Communist Party of The Soviet Union* (CPSU), henceforth referred to in this monograph as the Bolsheviks.

10 The corpus of Lenin’s writings, as Daniel Peris has pointed out, was apotheosized as the font of Bolshevik wisdom and political culture. In different political debates opposing party factions quoted from the written legacy of Lenin. Peris 1991, 718.

11 Service 1985, 2-3. During the short period of transition, perestroika, some Soviet writings tried to maintain that Gorbachev’s policy regarding religion was truly Leninist and that earlier policies had not been. Olcott 1990, 372. Nonetheless, the search to elucidate who were “true” Leninists and who were not poses problems for historical researchers.

12 John Gooding has remarked that during the years 1985-1991 reformists in the CPSU needed Lenin “in order to set the country on a radical trajectory”. Reformists also required Lenin’s political stature to ensure that demands for change would not become so radical as to get out of control (Lenin was not really in favour of a multiparty system and democracy). The new “perestroika” cult of Lenin was an attempt to save the position of the party by utilizing the popularity of Lenin. Lenin is still very popular among ordinary Russians. For Gooding a sign of this respect was the fact that after the “coup d’etat” of August 1991 Lenin’s mausoleum was not interfered with, unlike F.E. Dzerzhinsky’s (1877-1926) statue, which was destroyed. Gooding 1992, 403–405, 412.

to 1927. The role of Grigory Evseвич Zinovev (Radomyslsky, 1883–1936) and the ideological contributions of N.I. Bukharin (1888–1938), A.I. Rykov (1881–1938) and M.I. Kalinin (1875–1946), who were pace-setters of the “right” and moderate communist faction, will also be examined. In this context we must take into account the political alliance, the so-called “triumvirate” of Stalin, Zinovev and L.B. Kamenev (Rosenfeldt, 1883–1936) which came into being from 1922 to 1925. Later Stalin emerged as an ally of the so-called “right-wing” of the Bolshevik party and for a time he partly shared their estimations for a more prolonged development in modernizing industry and in collectivizing agriculture. One of the principal associates of Stalin was Emelyan Israelevich Yaroslavsky (Gubelman, Minei Israelevich, 1878–1943), who was gradually promoted to the position of director of atheist work in the Soviet Union. His role as the highest official of Stalinist religious policy raises many questions. He did not directly belong to Stalin’s personal henchmen, as we can see from Niels Erik Rosenfeldt’s monographs, but nonetheless he was one of the most loyal supporters of Stalin.<sup>13</sup>

This study will be divided into four major chronological sections. The second part of its introductory chapter, “The roots of the study”, examines the ideological heritage of Russian communists and looks at the general political situation in Imperial Russia and the role of the Russian “intelligentsia”, together with the religious-political circumstances of pre-revolutionary Russia. The radicalism of the religious sects and the conditions of the ethnic minorities within Russia constituted fertile soil for revolutionary activity. Moreover, the development of Lenin’s pre-revolutionary political doctrine and his religious ideology will be studied. This chapter will examine the development of Lenin’s doctrine of class struggle before 1905 and study how the 1903 party programme of the Russian Social Democratic Worker’s Party (RSDWP) dealt with religion. Some questions concerning nationality problems in Russia are also examined in this context. The year 1905 is important for its implications for Lenin’s ideology. The ideological wavering of the “god-seekers” and the “zubatovian” workers’ union were doctrinal threats for Lenin’s Bolshevik faction.

The second chapter, “Storm and Wind” – religious policy after the October Revolution and during the civil war (1917–1920)”, explains how the October Revolution and the conflict of the new atheist rulers

13 Niels Erik Rosenfeldt: “Knowledge and Power, The Role of Stalin’s Secret Chancellery in The Soviet System of Government. Copenhagen. 1978;” “Stalin’s Styrets Nervcenter, Nye Studier I Kilderderne Til Det Sovjetiske Kommunistpartis Hemmelige Kancelli”. Københavns Universitets Slaviske Institut. København. 1980. See also Gill 1990, 72.

with traditional belief systems interacted. An official relationship between the ROC and the Soviet regime was established on 20 January 1918. In order to understand this legal act, we must view it in connection with the contemporary political situation in the Soviet state. The most important question in this context is: how did the changing political circumstances affect the religious political line of the Soviet leaders? The study of the internal debates and the process of decision making of the Soviet leadership gives a more fruitful view of the development of the Soviet religious policy. One of the basic hypotheses of this study is that the state was under the control of the party; the totalitarian system of the “party-state” was a fusion in which the communist oligarchy exercised its will by means of a new tool - the state machine.<sup>14</sup> The Bolshevik revolution, the role of the new legislation and the intentions of the new rulers bring to the fore new questions. By what methods and organs did the party execute its early religious policy? What was the attitude of the ruling regime in general towards religions during the civil war? Were there any modifications in the religious political doctrine or attempts at achieving a “modus vivendi” between the atheist rulers and the ROC? What was the role of national minorities and sectarians during the civil war?

In the third chapter, “Trotsky’s control of early NEP religious policy (1921–1923)”, the influence of the NEP period on Soviet religious policy in general will be studied and the incident of the “confiscation-conflict” focused on. In addition to many other questions, it examines the content of the NEP policy in relation to religious organizations. How, for example, was this policy implemented? Who or what organs were put in charge of religious-political affairs after the civil war, when the government had time to concentrate on dealing with civil politics? Trotsky’s leading role in the religious policy of the ruling party deserves special attention.

The fourth chapter, “The role of religion in the power struggle at the height of the high NEP (1924–1927)”, outlines in more detail how the contest for supreme power, with its ideological confrontations, dealt with religion. How did the death of Lenin affect religious policy and how did an open power struggle arise in the religious political debates before the 13th congress? Moreover, how did the sectarian movement and Soviet Catholics adjust to conditions at the height of the high NEP and how did an ecclesiastical schism develop inside the ROC?

The fifth chapter, “The “Storming of Heaven” – The impact of the Cultural Revolution and the years of the “Great Turn” (1928–1929)”, will examine the beginning of the Cultural Revolution and its impact on

14 Rupnik 1988, 132. See also Rigby 1979, 176–179; Pipes 1980, 243–246.



the position of religious organizations. It investigates how the struggle between Komsomol “activists” and moderate “rightists” inevitably led to the introduction of a more aggressive religious policy. During Stalin’s Cultural Revolution, the so-called “korenizatsiya” policy<sup>15</sup> was altered and the so-called “sblizhenie” policy<sup>16</sup> took its place in relation to such ethnic minorities as Jews and Moslems. In this respect, I.V. Stalin’s role as a representative of a new “Red, anti-semitic Russian patriotism” arouses interest. As Mikhail Agursky has remarked, I.V. Stalin sympathized with Russian nationalism and promoted “National Bolshevism” as one of the cornerstones of his ideology.<sup>17</sup>

Although this dissertation does not strive to propound any new theory concerning Soviet church-state relations, such as Pedro Ramet has done in his “Cross and Commissar”<sup>18</sup>, the author of this monograph follows in his footsteps in endeavouring to elucidate certain matters which could shed light on the actual decision-making process inside the leadership of the Soviet regime. For instance, what were the discussions and debates which emerged inside the leading Soviet organs and were there any secret organs at work inside the party? What was the role of open discussion? How did the Central Committee and Party congresses and conferences deal with religion? How did the changing power struggle affect ideological confrontations and the implementation of religious policy? Another absorbing question is how Stalin adapted Lenin’s views on religion. Were Stalin’s tendencies to emphasize “Red patriotism” and rehabilitate the outmoded nationalistic tradition clearly visible during the 1920s? Stalin’s “Red patriotism” and his underlining of certain old symbols of Imperial Russia as well as the Great-Russian revivalism were part of his policy during the late 1930s and afterwards. But during the 1920s the tradition of “orthodox” Marxism and internationalism were still significant forces in party politics.<sup>19</sup>

15 By the “korenizatsiya-policy” is meant the early policy of the Bolsheviks towards the various nationalities in the Soviet state. It signified the promotion of language and national cultures in these national regions. Moreover, the communist party actively recruited local national cadres and used local languages in administration in order to nurture the new Soviet state apparatus on its cultural periphery. Crawford 1992, 86.

16 As The Great Soviet Encyclopedia has later stated, one attribute of the Soviet nationality policy was to bring peoples together (политика сближения). BSEb, 292. During L.I. Brezhnev’s (1906–1982) time this conventional view, i.e. that national cultures were growing together, was even given an official ideological justification. It was claimed that in the Soviet Union national groups were developing and at the same time coalescing. Gleason 1993, 85. See also Rakowska-Harmstone 1986, 236–237; Dunlop 1992, 324.

17 Agursky 1987, 296, 316–317, 324–325. Mikhail Agursky defines National Bolshevism as “...the ideology of a political current that legitimizes the existing Soviet political system from a Russian national point of view, contrary to its exclusive Marxist legitimacy”. Agursky 1986, 87. See also Kolstø 1984, 1–29.

18 Ramet 1987, 177.

19 Gill 1990, 13.

## b. Earlier studies, basic concepts and limitations

Scientific studies which deal in one way or another with this topic can roughly be divided into five categories. Each of these categories contains numerous monographs and articles.<sup>20</sup>

1. Studies in the history of the ROC
2. Studies in the history of the Soviet Union
3. Studies of individual political thinkers (personal histories of Soviet leaders)
4. Studies of the Soviet political system or philosophical doctrine
5. Studies of the relationship of nationalities and Soviet power

One of the foremost and most reliable scientific works on the history of the ROC and the development of religious policy in the Soviet Union is John S. Curtiss' "The Russian Church and the Soviet State 1917–1950". As Richard Stites has remarked, this work is still a recommendable general study of the relationship between the ROC and the Soviet regime.<sup>21</sup> Curtiss succeeded brilliantly in connecting the general historical context of Soviet Russia with transformations in Soviet religious policy.

There are not so many scientific studies in this first category which have concentrated on investigating the relationship between the church and ruling regime. Most of the earlier monographs such as Trevor Beeson's "Discretion and Valour", "Patriarch and Prophets: Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today" by Michael Bourdeaux<sup>22</sup>, Dmitry V. Pospelovsky's trilogy "A History of Atheism in Theory and Practise, and the Believer I–III" and "Candle in the Wind" edited by Eugene B. Shirley Jr. and Michael Rowe<sup>23</sup> have been content with drawing the general outlines of the ROC's history and providing quite

20 Disinterested and politically neutral studies made by Soviet authors investigating this issue are few. Soviet studies concerning Lenin's political activities have suffered from a dogmatic approach. Some dissidents like R. Medvedev and B. Kagarlitsky were not able to publish their monographs until after 1985 when a certain degree of openness emerged in Soviet research. During the time of "perestroika" newspapers such as *Voprosy Istorii*, *Moskovskie Novosti*, *Kommunist*, *Argumenty i Fakty* and *Ogonek* promoted discussion on sensitive political topics of the Soviet era. Soviet researchers, nevertheless, had many restrictions placed on them during the time of "perestroika". Spring 1987, 27. As a rare exception, we could mention V.A. Alekseev's excellent monograph "Illusions and dogmas", published on the eve of the 1991 "coup". See Alekseev, 1991.

21 Stites 1989, 274.

22 "Patriarch and Prophets. Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church Today." Keston Books. London. 1970.

23 "Candle in The Wind – Religion in the Soviet Union." Edited by Eugene Shirley Jr. and Michael Rowe. Foreword by Richard Schifter. Ethics and Public Policy Centre. Washington D.C. 1989.

impressive religion-by-religion analysis in this sphere. Some of the studies applying a Marxist critique of religion display a systematic approach and contain profound analysis.<sup>24</sup>

However, there are many pitfalls in this field. One particular problem in some books on church-state relationships is that there is a danger of seeing the Bolshevik party as an ideological monolith. The lack of primary sources may have led to such inaccurate conclusions. However, during the 1920s the Bolshevik party debated intensely what attitude it should adopt in relation to religious organizations. Moreover, if we, for example, compare Lenin's different writings on the subject systematically, without any historical approach, we may end up with anachronistic conclusions.<sup>25</sup> The main problem with a systematic approach is the difficulty of seeing the effects of the changing political situation in the religious political sphere. As Dimitry V. Pospelovsky correctly remarks, simply drawing conclusions on different labels such as "moderate" or "hawkish" without deeper political analysis, may lead to simplistic conclusions. In the changing political situation of the 1920s these different labels could be attached to the same person at different moments.<sup>26</sup>

27

The second category consists of authorities such as Edward Hallett Carr, whose majestic series "A History of the Soviet Union" gives a profound analysis of the emerging Bolshevik revolution, the development of Bolshevik doctrine in the USSR and the practice of national self-determination. Another authority in this field is Richard Pipes. His study entitled "The Formation of the Soviet Union, Communism and Nationalism 1917–1923" is an outstanding piece of scholarship and investigates the views of Soviet leaders on nationality and the implications of such views for religious minorities such as Jews and Moslems. One of the most distinguished investigators of individual political figures has been Isaac Deutscher, the author of a trilogy on Trotsky and a biography of Stalin. His personal and cultivated view of the power struggle inside the communist regime is in a league of its own, although he has come in for criticism too.<sup>27</sup>

24 See, for example, Delos B. MacKown, "The Classical Marxist Critique of Religion: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Kautsky". The Hague. 1975.

25 One example of this kind of systematically impressive but inaccurate thinking is when Gustav Wetter tries to find a solution to the problem: "Is this (Soviet ideology) also essentially an antireligious one?" and examines it in relation to the slogan "religion – private matter". However, it seems obvious that Lenin's ideological writings provides material for many interpretations. Wetter 1963, 23. See also Weber 1980, 167.

26 Pospelovsky 1987, 33–34

27 Beilharz 1987, 150–153, 173–176. Regarding certain critiques and opinions about Carr and Deutscher, see Pethybridge 1990, 6–7, 16–17.

The third and fourth categories contain authors such as Robert Service, Robert Tucker, Ronald W. Clark, Frederick F. Copleston, Tibor Szamuely and Merle Fainsod. Their studies concerning the Soviet political leadership and the Soviet political system have particular relevance for this dissertation mainly because the Soviet system considered religious organizations as posing a political challenge to its legitimacy.

The last category consists of authors such as Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, Hélène Carrère D'Encausse, Alexander Bennigsen, Gerhard Simon and Zvi Gitelman who have made studies dealing with the nationality question. Analyses of the effect of power struggles on religious policy have been rare. Moreover, questions related to nationality and religion have been discussed in secondary connections only, but there have, nonetheless, been some pioneering attempts to survey the relationship between religion and nationalism. Nevertheless, one of the basic hypotheses of this study presumes that ties between religion and nationality (ethnicity in the case of Jewish and Moslem populations)<sup>28</sup> were linked together in the ideology of the Soviet leadership in general and that in their religious policy in particular the role of the nationality question was significant. Only from this standpoint can the similarities between Imperial Russian and Soviet Russian national and religious policies be explained. For both regimes, religion served to clarify a person's nationality and identity.<sup>29</sup>

For example, Jewish symbols of identity, religion and ethnicity were partly fused together in the former Soviet Union. Soviet Jews bore internal passports where their official nationality was designated as Jewish.<sup>30</sup> It is also quite legitimate to maintain, as Pedro Ramet does, that religious organizations worked in the Soviet Union as "vehicles for the preservation, defence, and reinforcement of ethnic sentiment"<sup>31</sup>. Following from this, an investigation of the religious policy of the former Soviet regime presupposes a more or less profound examination of national and religious policies as interlinking themes. As Pedro Ramet has said, for Marxists,

28 Alexander Bennigsen has defined the word "Muslim" as having no religious significance in his article "Islamic or Local Consciousness among Soviet Nationalities". Nevertheless, he has acknowledged the significance of religious consciousness among Muslims as a reality in pre-revolutionary Russia and in the early Soviet period. Bennigsen 1971, 168, 181–182.

29 Dunn 1987, 1, 4–11. See also Garrard 1991, 134–140; Klier 1991, 214.

30 Gitelman 1992, 75.

31 Ramet 1989, 411.



...religious policy and nationalities policy are parts of an organic whole and neither should be thought to be autonomous or independently elaborated...<sup>32</sup>

Dennis J. Dunn has accurately noted that because for most of the modern historical period Eastern European nationalities lacked their own nation states, national consciousness drew on a variety of sources of inspiration, including religion, language, history and race. It is obvious that religion was the key factor influencing the formation of nations in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. The second major reason for the strong ties between nationalism and religion is that the now collapsed communist regimes adopted atheism and internationalism as part of their official ideology. Religion and nationalism were compelled to withdraw into the margins of communist society where they found each other as natural allies.<sup>33</sup>

The fundamental concepts dealt with in this monograph can be seen from its title: "The Party of Unbelief – The Religious Policy of The Bolshevik Party, 1917–1929". As John Anderson has remarked, religious policy appears to be one area in which ideology seems to be a predominant factor. Nonetheless, Anderson has realized that ideological premises have not prevented the adoption of a variety of different policies towards religion.<sup>34</sup>

The expression "religious policy" does not need to be defined especially, but it should be noted that the pre-revolutionary Russian Encyclopedic Dictionary defines the term "church policy" (церковная политика) in two ways. Firstly it defines it as the activities of the church towards the state and society. The second definition is much more pertinent for this study: "church policy" is the policy of the state in its relations towards existing churches.<sup>35</sup> But because this study also examines other religious groups such as Jews and Moslems it is justified to use a wider expression like "religious policy". In this study the term "religious policy" represents the ideological views, political attitude and measures taken by the Soviet regime towards the ROC,

\*\*\*\*\*  
32 Ramet 1989, 38.

33 Dunn 1987, 11–12.

34 "...amongst the considerations of the policy makers are to be found those relating to the needs of the economy, national issues, questions of socialization and control, foreign pressure, and in some cases the preferences of individual leaders..." Anderson 1991, 701.

35 "...церковная политика - 1. политика церкви. т.е. деятельность церковного управления, направленная к осуществлению общих задач церкви в её отношениях к государству и обществу. 2. Политика государства по отношению к существующим в нем церквям". ES, 72. Understandably, the Great Soviet Encyclopedia does not mention the term "church policy", although it examines in depth state-church interactions in Soviet Russia. BSEa 1934, 186–188.

different religious sects and two particular ethno-religious minorities in Russia, Jews and Moslems. Furthermore it must be stated that the ruling communist regime itself used this expression to describe its tactical and strategic objectives and to define its political initiatives in relation to different religious organizations.<sup>36</sup>

"Ideology" is a term which also features in this study. Ideology can be perceived as the totality of ideas that strives for the maintenance of an existing social order.<sup>37</sup> This definition is, however, too narrow for this study and does not do justice to the Marxist or Soviet interpretation of ideology. Too narrow a definition of the term "ideology" may lead us to draw misleading conclusions.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, as Michael Waller has remarked, the problems with using this term are related to utilizing it too restrictively.<sup>39</sup>

This term was originally used by A.L.C. Destutt de Tracy (1754–1836) to manifest the empirical analysis of the human mind. The leaders of the French revolution used it to describe the official republican doctrine of education which sought to give rational schooling to all citizens and free them from prejudices and superstitions.<sup>40</sup> According to Alan Swingewood, Marx and Engels understood ideology as being connected with terms such as alienation, mystification and reification. They identified it with the "bourgeois" tradition of philosophy or related it to earlier forms of "mechanistic materialism".<sup>41</sup>

Following the French example, the Bolshevik revolution interpreted ideology as the body of political programmes directing people towards happiness. This was transferred to the Soviet system and it meant that all political questions were interpreted and discussed in ideological terms. It was at the same time a methodology for the analysis of social questions and a policy tool inside the Soviet leadership, although without providing direct guidelines for policy implementation.<sup>42</sup>

36 See, for example, RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.318 (Pp 32, 19/10–22).

37 See Karl Mannheim, "Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge". Routledge & Kegan Ltd. 1960. London.

38 Bercken 1989, 18. See also Mayer 1988, 48–49.

39 Waller 1988, 21; Pravda 1988, 227.

40 Aiken 1956, 16.

41 Swingewood 1975, 60–61. See also Aiken 1956, 17; Miller 1984, 45–50.

42 Mah 1987, 5. As Graeme Gill has noted, the adopted policy of the ruling regime did not necessarily have to be in accordance with ideological tenets (such as the NEP policy) in order to be official, but if some political opinion could claim to be really "orthodox", it had a good chance of being adopted as the official line of the Soviet state. Nevertheless, Gill has remarked in this context that "...while the ideology, through the methodology it embodied, helped to structure the approach of the party's leaders to the problems confronting them, it offered no simple solutions. This was one of the important characteristics of the period: the ideology was not a dogma or an orthodoxy, but a living and developing intellectual universe". Gill 1990, 107.

During Lenin's lifetime it had no living authority whose word in ideological matters would have been categorical. Not even Lenin could, despite his eminence and authority, claim to be the living ideological fountain of Marxist orthodoxy. As Graeme Gill has stated, during Lenin's political career ideology was:

...a flexible body of ideas which provided both a form of intellectual legitimation for the regime and a source of broad principles of policy. But the policy direction offered by the ideology was neither clear-cut nor monist; a variety of policies could be extracted from the ideological principles, with a number of policies being able to claim ideological rectitude...<sup>43</sup>

According to the Soviet interpretation of the 1920s, the concept of ideology was seen simply as a mechanical image of class consciousness. M.N. Pokrovsky (1868–1932), one of the leading Soviet historians and scholars in the 1920s, stated that ideology was

31

...a reflection of reality in the minds of men through the prism of their interests, mainly class interests...<sup>44</sup>

After the death of Lenin this variety slowly vanished and ideology became more petrified and standardised under Stalinism. The struggle for power affected ideology and it emerged as a weapon and a rationalization or a justification of the prevailing policy. The process of narrowing the limits of acceptable ideological debate was a result of Stalinist policies inside the party. In the spring of 1929 policy debates vanished as a result of ideological unification. Membership of the party demanded ideological orthodoxy and total submission to the general party-line.<sup>45</sup> As Alain Besançon has pointed out, Lenin's ideology was a rational theory which required complete commitment, almost religious belief in the "great thing". The difference between conventional religion and Soviet ideology (later Marxism-Leninism) was, as Christel Lane has suggested, that the latter does not give as comprehensive a conception of the world. She proposes that the Soviet ideology could be best described as a "political religion".<sup>46</sup>

So in accordance with the above, while the official ideology seemed on the surface to be very dogmatic, in practice political manoeuvres

\*\*\*\*\*  
43 Gill 1990, 184.

44 Aron 1963, 293

45 Gill 1990, 107, 184–186.

46 Besançon 1981, 2–5; Lane 1981, 40–41. See also Bercken 1989, 16–21.

allowed for more flexible Marxist interpretations which resulted in an elastic implementation of religious policy. The problem we face here is analogous to that of Biblical interpretation. The scriptures of the Marxist “apostles”<sup>47</sup> provided a universal “gospel” for the Marxist movement. Nevertheless, the main question for Soviet Marxists was how to interpret these “holy scriptures” correctly.<sup>48</sup> One of the main hypotheses in this study is that the practical execution of Soviet religious policy proved to be more dependent on the general political battles over the hegemony of the party than on ideological arguments.

In modern Marxist understanding the term “ideology” refers to a class society and ideology serves as an organized system for the understanding of the interests of a particular class.<sup>49</sup> The foregoing definitions of the term ideology reveal how in Marxism-Leninism in general and in Soviet studies in particular this term has its own special meaning. The one additional concept which is used in this study is “doctrine”, a term originally derived from religious use.<sup>50</sup>

47 This concept of borrowing from higher authority in ideological confrontation was very common in the Russian socialist movement. George H. Sabine has compared this, aptly, to the practice of using biblical verses in religious debate. Sabine 1966, 806–808.

48 The famous Russian emigrant historian Andrei Sinyavsky has also noted the similarities between Soviet ideology and religion by commenting that communist ideology would enter history not only “as a new sociopolitical order and economical system but also as a new great religion denying all others”. Sinyavsky 1990, 6. The reason for this understanding of ideology as a major motivation of behaviour may be found in the fact that in the Orthodox faith the ideological and intellectual dimensions were so close to each other. As Christel Lane has suggested, believing in transcendental force has always presupposed belief in particular dogmas. Lane 1978, 55.

49 Kai Nielsen gives us an example of Marxist understanding of ideology: “a system of ideas, theories, beliefs, attitudes, norms and social practices that (a) is characteristic of a class society or of a class or other primary social group in class society and that (b) serves principally the interests of a class, typically a class in that society, or other primary social group while typically at least, putting itself forward as answering to the interests of the society”. Nielsen 1989, 98.

50 Iivonen 1990, 13. The close relationship between “ideology” and “doctrine” can be seen from the definition of Alfred G. Mayer: “...Soviet ideology as the body of doctrine taught in courses on dialectical and historical materialism, political economy, scientific communism and the history of the party, in short, the sum total of what the new Programme of the CPSU describes as “the scientific world view...the basis of which is constituted by Marxism-Leninism as a well integrated system of philosophic, economic and socio-political positions”. Mayer 1988, 44. Alex Pravda makes a basic distinction between ideology and doctrine by emphasizing that ideology operates as a policy or a control mechanism, while doctrine affects form and style rather than the content of policy. Pravda 1988, 241.



### c. Sources of the study

The rapid social changes during “perestroika” and the collapse of the Soviet regime after August 1991 have posed many interesting challenges for scholars investigating Russian/Soviet history. New primary sources are more available for researchers, though at the time of this writing there are still some important archives such as the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF) and various archives of the Soviet security organs to which foreign scholars have no access.

The primary sources utilized in this study consist of the minutes and protocols of different organs of the state or party as well as personal files and other archive material. The main archives used in this study are the State Archive of the Russian Federation – GARF ГАРФ. Государственный архив Российской Федерации (comprising the former TsGAOR<sup>51</sup> and TsGA RSFSR<sup>52</sup>), and the party archives, the Russian Centre for the Storage & Study of Documents of Recent History, RTsKhIDNI РЦХИДНИ. Российский центр хранения и изучения документов новейшей истории.<sup>53</sup>

Published sources used in this study can be divided into three categories. First the published works of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and other leaders of the Bolshevik regime. The second group of sources consists of the published protocols and stenographic minutes of the congresses and conferences of the Bolshevik party. Some of these were published before Stalin’s “school of falsification” and some in the post-Stalin period.<sup>54</sup> The third group consists of miscellaneous sources: archive material, edited volumes of the Trotsky archive,<sup>55</sup> party resolutions,<sup>56</sup>

33

51 The former Central State Archive of the October Revolution. Henceforth referred to as GARF1.

52 The former State Archive of the RSFSR. Henceforth referred to as GARF2.

53 The Central Party Archives/former Institute of Marxism-Leninism for the Central Committee of the CPSU (Центральный Партийный Архив Института Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС). My colleague, Varpu Myllyniemi MA has also kindly provided me with some exemplary material from the Archive of State Museum concerning History of Religion (AGMIR) from St. Petersburg.

54 The Central Committee of the CPSU has published some useful documents and minutes of the Central Committee and Politburo. See *Izv TsK KPSS* 1990, No.4.

55 Even during “perestroika” some documents from this archives were published in Russian. Архив Тротцкого. Коммунистическая оппозиция в СССР. Том I–IV. 1923–1927. Ярославль. Редактор–составитель Ю.Фельштинский. Издательский центр “Терра”. 1988. See also *The Trotsky Papers* I–II, 1917–1922. Edited and annotated by Jan Meijer. The Hague. 1971.

56 See, for example, Коммунистическая Партия Советского Союза в резолюциях и решениях съездов, конференций и пленумов ЦК (1898–1970). Том I–III. Изд. восьмое, дополненное и исправленное. Москва. 1970.

printed volumes of early Soviet legislation<sup>57</sup> etc.<sup>58</sup>

The documents from the Party Archives and from the State Archives represent the most valuable sources utilized in this study. Originally these documents were intended only for the small inner circle of the ruling party. This can be seen from the special captions employed. Classifications such as секретно, совершенно секретно, срочно секретно, строго..секретно, абсолютно секретно, хранит коспиративно!, секретный отдел were often prefixed to those papers. These captions reveal how the tradition of conspiracy prospered inside the Bolshevik party especially after the October revolution. The main reason for this secrecy was the desire to minimize the spread of any information which could shed light on the party's political activities. In this respect this new archive material is of crucial importance, as these authentic documents allow one to investigate the actual process of debate and decision-making inside the ruling regime. Moreover, working with this new archive material allows one to evaluate critically earlier studies in this field and to conduct source criticism of hitherto available material. This is an essential method when inspecting official Soviet sources, as it is much easier when we are able to compare official published material with archive material. For example, Soviet archives preserve authentic documents of party officials who were later purged from the ruling regime. Moreover, the earlier categorization of the sources<sup>59</sup> is now less enigmatic than before. Tracing the different positions in this field and evaluating the decision-making processes in the area of religious policy was earlier quite difficult as official Soviet sources formerly tried to give a harmonized picture of Soviet policy.

\*\*\*\*\*  
57 See, for example, Декреты Советской Власти. 1–3. Москва. 1957; Собрание Указаний и Распоряжений Рабочего- и Крестьянского Правительства. I 1917–1918: Отдел 1. 1–90, 93–99. Указатель II 1919: 1–69. Указатель. III 1920: 1920:1–100. Указатель: Отделение Церкви от Государства в СССР. П.В.Гидулянов. Printed originally in Moscow in 1926, followed by a supplement, Moscow 1928. Richmond, Surrey. 1971.

58 For other source material, see the “catechism” of the 1919 party programme: Азбука Коммунизма. Популярное объяснение программы Российской Коммунистической Партии большевиков. Государственное Издательство. Петербург. 1920. See also British documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print. General Editors: Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt. Part II. From the First to the Second World War. Series A. The Soviet Union, 1917–1939. Ed. Dominic Lieven. University Publications of America. 1986.

59 See, Rosenfeldt 1978, 18.

## 2. THE ROOTS OF THE STUDY

### a. Historical and ideological background of Bolshevik religious ideology

When examining the roots of this study, it is essential to acquaint oneself with some of the factors which influenced the ideological background of the Russian Bolshevik party. One such factor is the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) as well as those ideological ingredients which Marxism inherited from Hegelianism. One of the concepts which later proved important for both Hegelianism and Marxism is “dialectics”, which for Hegel was a universal method of enacting the truth in philosophy, religion, logic, history, etc. Marxist philosophy adopted this view too, and regarded dialectics as a universal method, but only in the sphere of the material world: productive forces and history. According to Marxists, the history of mankind was not governed by the development of the Spirit; the existing order was based on dialectically developing material forces.<sup>60</sup>

35

The second significant concept in this field which Marxism adopted from Hegel was the teleological concept of history. According to Hegel, mankind was developing through means of a Universal Spirit towards the culmination of history. The Marxist concept, on the other hand, underlined that history obeys only material principles, i.e. the laws of production, which could lead to only one chiliarist goal in history and society – communism. Marxist thinking maintained that history and society together composed a totality of facts which were on the way to the *telos* of communist society.<sup>61</sup>

The Left-Hegelian movement, which emerged after the death of Hegel in 1831, steered Hegelian thinking in a radical direction. Left-Hegelians declared themselves genuine inheritors of the Hegelian philosophical system and criticized the conservative, existing political order. For them, Hegel's logic of rationality required changing the autocratic and unreasonable existing order which hindered the fulfilment of the concept of reason. Unlike Hegel, they believed that this would come into existence not on a spiritual and transcendent level, but in history and in the material world.<sup>62</sup>

66 Taylor 1975, 131; Heidegger 1988, 65–66. See also Wood 1990, 1–4.

61 See Althusser 1972, 174–176, 181–186 and Gorman 1982, 96. See also Dickey 1987, 144–150. On Hegel's influence on Russian radicals, see Riasanovsky 1965, 56, 118–119, 167, 170.

62 Hook 1958, 77–80; Gorman 1982, 70–71.

The culmination of the Left-Hegelian criticism was the philosophy of L. Feuerbach (1804–1872) and the biblical critique of D.F. Strauss (1808–1874). Other young Hegelians had denounced the idea of God in an academic way, but “Das Leben Jesu” of D.F. Strauss and Feuerbach’s work “Das Wesen des Christentums” drew wider public attention to these questions. Strauss’s audacious monograph concerning the historicity of the four Gospels also deepened the differences among the Left-Hegelians themselves. Furthermore, Feuerbach justified his views by stressing that the content of religion and its objects could only be explained by anthropology. For Feuerbach religion was part of human activity and had no other justification than man himself. According to him, the origin of all deities lay in the fact that man did not dare take full responsibility for himself; he was alienated from his true nature and projected his best attributes towards God. Feuerbach concluded that religion was simple alienation and fatalism; the only rational object of faith was the human himself, his abilities and actions.<sup>63</sup>

Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) developed their philosophical concept system partially from Feuerbach’s epistemological concepts and partially from Left-Hegelian tradition. For them Hegel’s concept of the rationality of being demanded that conscious human activity should turn this rationality to *praxis* – to change the world by revolution. Marxist understanding presupposed that the history of mankind had given rise to a contradiction between labour and capital – the difference between exploiters and the exploited. According to them, history was conducted not by a Spirit, but by productive forces and the material basis which determined them. The consciousness of man, institutes of society, and also religion were part of the superstructure of society; an exploitative form of production was then reflected in the alienation of man from his real essence.<sup>64</sup>

In its religious ideology Marxism underlined that the premise of any critique of society was the critique of religion. Religion was an erroneous understanding of reality which of necessity led to an imaginary understanding of the world; a believer becoming alienated from his genuine being. The exploited majority of mankind, the proletariat, escaped from this reality by having recourse to religious “opium” and unconsciously awaited its redemption from the yoke of capitalism. At the same time, this “opium” was exploiting the

63 McLellan 1969, 2–8, 20–22, 31–33, 43–47.

64 MEW 3, 69–70. “Deutsche Ideologie. Feuerbach”; Swingewood 1975, 89–93; Gorman 1982, 26.



consciousness of workers by making them resigned to their lot.<sup>65</sup> Summa summarum, religion was only moonshine and metaphysics; mesmerizing illusion which the proletariat consumed in their despair. The role of religion was always reactionary, although Engels in particular was ready to acknowledge that in the early Christian era religion had expressed the genuine anguish of the exploited masses.<sup>66</sup>

Another important ingredient in the development of Bolshevik religious ideology was the authoritative status of the ROC which aggravated the religious-political situation in pre-revolutionary Russia. Orthodox Christianity, the dominant faith in Imperial Russia, was deeply anchored in the autocratic system. It enjoyed privileges and had a special legal status as the only official church for Russians. Some 63% of the population (83 million) of the Russian Empire belonged to the ROC, while its nearest competitor, the Old Believers, with approximately 11 million followers, formed the second largest religious group in the Empire. Nonetheless, this high status was not enough to save the ROC from being absorbed by the autocratic state. In 1721 the ROC was subordinated by the "ecclesiastical reforms" introduced by Peter the Great (1682–1725). The founder of the modern Russian state could not tolerate an independent church and the ROC was forced to fuse with the ruling regime. The results of his reform were devastating for the independence of the ROC. Clergymen were now placed directly under state control and in most people's minds the church and state were identical. The most influential change was, however, the de-capitation of the church: the office of the Patriarch was abolished and replaced by the Holy Synod as the highest authority of the church. The Over-Procurator, nominated by the Czar himself, was now the real head and the supervisor of Russian Orthodoxy.<sup>67</sup>

Although the ROC had lost its independence, the material basis of the ROC and especially its monasteries prospered up until the October Revolution. According to the Holy Synod of 1914, there were 57 000 churches and 24 000 chapels along with 110 000 priests and deacons in the Russian Empire. In addition the ROC had over 800 monasteries, it possessed over 7 million desyatins of land and was engaged in many different commercial enterprises.<sup>68</sup>

But, on the other hand, the education and social situation of the priests was in sharp contrast to the abundance of the ROC's material

65 MEW 1, 378. "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung"; Althusser 1972, 176.

66 McLellan 1969, 95; Thiemann 1984, 54–55.

67 Cunningham 1981, 15; Waldron 1989, 103–107. See also Smolitsch 1964, 10.

68 Armstrong 1967, 31; Seton-Watson 1967, 222–223, 534–535.

wealth. The educational level of the Russian clergy was notoriously low and the social contrast between the “white” lower clergy and the “black” higher clergy deepened social tensions among priests. The poor “white” clergy working in the countryside were struggling at almost the same economic level as their flock. And the “black” priest-monks, who despite the fact that they could advance in their career, were, nonetheless, strictly supervised by the Holy Synod.<sup>69</sup>

The dominant state church was not the sole agent in the field of religion: other denominations and religious groups existed too. These different groups were often connected with specific nationalities and the Russian autocracy usually treated nationality and religion as one. For example, in Poland and Lithuania Roman Catholics predominated, while Estonia and Finland were overwhelmingly Lutheran. The Lutheran Churches in Finland and in the Baltic region could operate relatively freely under their old privileges, but the situation with regard to other religions and nations was not so stable. In addition to these “official” denominations, there was a substantial Catholic population in Western Ukraine and large ethnic minorities such as Jews, especially in Ukraine (the so-called Pale of Settlement). As the Russian Empire extended further east it came into contact with Moslems in the Caucasus and in Siberia. After the middle of the 19th century the government intensified its “Russification” policy towards the nationalities and religions of the Russian Empire and the Jewish population especially experienced semi-official persecution.<sup>70</sup>

Along with these national groups, there existed different sects, both domestic and of foreign origin, which competed with the Orthodox faith in Russian minds. Numerous groups of starovery (Old Believers) formed the oldest and most influential religious competitor inside the Russian Empire. From the beginning, this movement constituted the protest of the old-fashioned Russian countryside against modern, urban influences, although many significant Russian businessmen emerged later from the ranks of the Old Believers. The Russian state at first persecuted Old Believers, but gradually the authorities became more tolerant of them. The autocracy tried only to curtail the most radical manifestations of the Old Believer movement. On the other hand, Russian radicals in time also came to realize the importance of the Old Believers and attempted to co-operate with them and radicalize them. Russian political radicals interpreted the religious protest of these people as a political challenge against the autocracy.<sup>71</sup>

69 Freeze 1983, 472–473. See also Gagarin 1970 (1872).

70 Waldron 1989, 102. See also Thaden 1984.

71 Struve 1967, 131–139; Venturi 1983, 113–114, 117–118, 198–200, 577–579. On the Russian sectarian movement, see Karl Konrad Grass, “Die Russischen Sekten I–

One particular group worth mentioning are the sects of foreign origin. These movements had an influence over the peasant in the Russian countryside, especially through their ultra-democratic gospel. Foreign groups such as the Stundists, a sect of German origin,<sup>72</sup> played an important part in spreading literacy among the peasantry. Many poor Russian peasants adopted this faith which preached democracy between believers and collective ownership. The ruling autocratic regime took a negative attitude towards this political radicalism and persecuted these sects with all its might. Suspicion that revolutionaries might gain a foothold among these sects caused officials to ban Stundism and persecute other radical domestic sectarians such as the Dukhobors, "those who fight for the Spirit".<sup>73</sup>

The Bolshevik religious doctrine had its origins in the tense pre-revolutionary social situation in Russia, i.e. the antagonism between the state church and the radical intelligentsia. On the one hand, the Orthodox religion and clergy were utilized as tools in support of Czarism. On the other the privileged and at the same time subordinated position of the ROC in pre-revolutionary Russian society complicated its relations with the Russian intelligentsia. It was generally held by the radical intelligentsia that the ROC, which supported the autocracy, was an obsolete and reactionary institution. These western-orientated radicals saw the autocracy and the ROC as being identical.<sup>74</sup> This submissive position of the Orthodox church proved fatal for the ROC. Due to the above factors a "spiritual vacuum" was formed in pre-revolutionary Russia. On the eve of 1917 the ROC had become somewhat discredited in the eyes of the populace. It had steadily lost the loyalty of the Russian intelligentsia, which looked with suspicion at all attempts to revitalize Orthodoxy. Moreover, the official church had suppressed the protest of dissident religious thinkers such as L. N. Tolstoi (1828–1910) or V. M. Solovev (1853–1900), viewing them as heretics and all attempts to revitalize the ROC failed. At the same time, large masses of the people were indifferent to their church and Old Believers and sectarians were able to attract those peasants who were stirred by religious feelings. When the church lost its powerful

.....  
 III." Leipzig, 1966; Alexandr Ilich Klibanov, "History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s–1917)". Oxford, 1982. See also how Mikhail A. Bakunin (1814–1876) attempted to win over certain representatives of the Russian sectarians to anarchism: Kelly 1987, 160–161.

72 Revolutionary propaganda seemed to especially suit Protestant sects. According to Andrew Q. Blane, this was due to a concept familiar to Protestants, that of building the ideal society on Earth. Blane 1971, 302.

73 Seton-Watson 1967, 473–474; Brooks 1985, 25–27; Waldron 1989, 112.

74 Zernov 1963, 197–198; McLellan 1987a, 90–91.

supporter during the revolution, the vacuum was filled with more “concrete” beliefs.<sup>75</sup> As Richard Pipes has noted, “this [spiritual] vacuum was filled with secular ideologies which sought to realize on this earth the paradise that Christianity had promised to provide in the next”.<sup>76</sup>

The tradition of Russian radical thought is also a very significant factor to be borne in mind when examining the development of the religious ideology of the Soviet ruling regime. It goes without saying that Bolshevism was ideologically rooted in the Russian radical revolutionary tradition. The birth of this Russian radicalism can, with good reason, be traced to the mutiny of the “Decembrist” officers in 1825. After this mutiny a long dispute began between Western-minded reformers and Slavophiles who sought the ultimate answer to the problems of Russian society in the country’s past. The initiator of this discussion was P.I. Chaadaev (1794–1856) who in his “Philosophical Letters”, published in 1820, introduced the idea of the Westernization of old Russian society. According to him, there was nothing in Russian history or society which was worth preserving; everything that was important or useful in Russia was of Western origin. By themselves Russians had hardly created anything worthwhile. He criticized the autocracy especially, which had isolated Russia in the cultural and economic sphere. The Orthodox religion had prevented the natural development of the Westernization of Russian society. However, Chaadaev did not oppose religion as such, but believed in the possibility of an imminent “Kingdom of God” where religion would be the foundation for all moral life.<sup>77</sup>

Chaadaev’s opinion of the necessity of Westernizing Russian society was repeated in the philosophical debates of later Russian generations. One initiator of this debate was the so-called Stankevich’s Philosophical Circle which promulgated the ideas of nineteenth century classical German philosophy among the Russian intelligentsia. One of the important representatives of this dissident generation was Vissarion Belinsky (1811–1848), whose writings range from literary criticism to criticism of Russian society. He belonged to the camp of Westernizers and believed that Czarism had betrayed the example of Peter the Great. Peter had been a real reformer of Russia but the later autocracy had not been able to fulfil Peter’s goal of modernizing Russian society and had degenerated into Oriental despotism. The autocracy had also neglected its duty to educate and reform the ancient society and had put its hope in

75 Pipes 1974, 243–245.

76 Pipes 1974, 245.

77 Anderson 1967, 196–198; Walicki 1980, 85–91. See also Copleston 1986, 26–32.



mysticism and prayer rather than in civilisation.<sup>78</sup>

The second imposing member of the Stankevich's Circle was the journalist and writer A.I. Herzen (1812–1870). He was the founder of Russian agrarian socialism and among his numerous activities he found time to edit the first famous emigré newspaper, *Kolokol*. Like Chaadaev, he believed that Russia had nothing to give to the history of mankind, but later when he was exiled to the West, he modified his views. Herzen started to emphasize that the ordinary people, the *narod*, were capable of reforming Russia, unlike the rotten autocracy with its privileges. Herzen's most famous philosophical contribution was the idea of the *obshchina*, the agricultural commune, which he saw as the answer to the burning social questions of Russia. Both Belinsky and Herzen were representative of the anticlerical faction among members of the Russian intelligentsia. They fiercely opposed religion and the church as well as the autocracy and believed that the ROC actively impeded the progress of liberty. Herzen and his generation were also influenced by Left-Hegelian thinking in general and studied Marxist thought with keen interest.<sup>79</sup>

41

However, the Russian intelligentsia before the middle of the 19th century, the generation of Belinsky and Herzen, was still convinced of the possibility of peaceful reform or dialogue between the autocracy and radicals, unlike M.A. Bakunin and P.N. Tkachev (1844–1885), who were much more critical of traditional values than were their forerunners. The rise of Left-Hegelian thought and the outbreak of revolutions in Europe, together with emerging Marxism, had an influence in Russia. In the 1860s there emerged a new generation of “nihilists” who opposed both the official and spiritual authorities. The ideological teachings of these “angry young men” were opposed to everything which could not be rationalized; they approved only of material values and denied everything related to tradition, romantics, metaphysics and religion.<sup>80</sup> Mikhail Bakunin, as a representative of the Russian anarchists, objected fervently to the fusion of state and church and believed that real freedom in Russia could not be possible until the destruction of both institutions. Tkachev's main legacy to the Russian revolutionary tradition was his idea of making revolution with the help of a conscious and disciplined revolutionary party.<sup>81</sup>

The autocracy responded to this criticism with punitive methods and was reluctant to compromise with Russian radicals. A well-known

78 Anderson 1967, 198–199; Copleston 1986, 80–81, 84–87. See also Copleston 1988, 1, 7.

79 Copleston 1986, 90–94, 97–99; Kelly 1987, 45–49, 51, 66.

80 Szamuely 1974, 241–242; Copleston 1986, 100–102.

81 Szamuely 1974, 289–291, 318–319; Copleston 1986, 24–25, 81–82, 87–89

representative of this generation was N.G. Chernyshevsky (1822–1889), a student of theology who later became a radical writer and essayist. His books opposing the autocratic regime caused officials to exile him to Siberia for 14 years. His novel “What is to be done?” also influenced the young Vladimir Ilich Lenin. This book articulated the future praxis and programme of the Russian radical intelligentsia. But more importantly, it presented an archetype for revolutionary heroes; it showed role-models for new kinds of activists who would deny themselves, go among the people as “professional revolutionaries” and sacrifice themselves for the sake of the people.<sup>82</sup>

One practical outcome of the suppression of the intelligentsia was the birth of the *narodnovoltsy* movement. A young radical generation, inspired by Herzen’s and Chernyshevsky’s ideas towards the end of 1860s, went to the countryside in order to enlighten the Russian people and raise them against the autocracy. This romantic crusade resulted in failure; the peasant population rejected all attempts to radicalize them. As a result of this frustrating experience, the *narodnovoltsy* movement split into two, “*Narodnaya Volya*” – the People’s Will, a terrorist group which later murdered Czar Alexander II in 1881, and the more moderate “*Zemlya i Volya*” movement.<sup>83</sup>

The collapse of the “People’s Will” prepared the soil for a new revolutionary movement based on Marxism. This emerged in Russia in the 1880s and 1890s and won support especially among students and in academic circles because it seemed to offer a scientific and concrete answer to the problems of Russian society.<sup>84</sup> The “father” of this philosophy in Russia was Georgy Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856–1918), who became one of the most authoritative spokesmen of Russian Marxism. He had once belonged to the moderate wing of the *narodnik* movement but later started to criticize the *narodnovoltsy* and turned to Marxism. Plekhanov believed that neither individual acts of terror nor educational activities among the peasants would destroy the autocracy; the only possibility was to build a Marxist organization for class-struggle and organize industrial workers for revolution.<sup>85</sup>

Plekhanov’s religious ideology had two sources, the tradition of the Russian intelligentsia and the Marxist heritage. As a member of the Russian intelligentsia he had adopted the clichés of his time. For Plekhanov, as for many other members of the intelligentsia, the ROC was an obstacle to freedom and civil liberties. He shared the typical

82 Carr 1969, 41–43; Copleston 1986, 104.

83 Baron 1963, 78–83; Bryner 1985, 70.

84 Seton-Watson 1967, 550–551; Ulam 1968, 143–144.

85 Seton-Watson 1967, 532–533, 561–565.



view of the intelligentsia in maintaining that religious beliefs could be justified only for an uneducated peasantry but should be anathema for educated people. For someone to call himself a socialist and express religious convictions was unacceptable; there could not be any kind of ideological accommodation between religion and socialism. As a standard-bearer of the "orthodox" Marxist tradition, he criticized those German Social Democrats who believed that religion was a private matter. Plekhanov urged that every socialist should fight against religious ideology and attempt to enlighten (although not with brute force) such comrades who held religious opinions.<sup>86</sup> As George Kline and David McLellan have remarked, Plekhanov believed that the origin of religion was based on animism and religion would yet be seen as an interlude in the development of human history. Nevertheless, Plekhanov made a distinction between religious feeling and religious ideas. For him religious feeling was to some extent a sign of aesthetic values. He believed that in the future, in a socialist society, churches would serve the people as theatres and concert halls.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, one other significant factor which influenced the religious ideology of the Soviet oligarchy has to do with personal biography. The personal experiences and histories of the Soviet leaders must be looked at. When we glance briefly at the personal biographies of the three leading Bolshevik figures we notice distinctions between typical representatives of the Russian intelligentsia (Lenin, Trotsky) and representatives of the half-educated elements of the intelligentsia (Stalin).<sup>88</sup>

The founder of Bolshevism, Vladimir Ilich Ulyanov (Lenin), was born on 10 April 1870 in Simbirsk in the family of school inspector Ilya Nikolaevich Ulyanov (1831–1886). Lenin's family and especially his father were religious, educating their son in accordance with Orthodox tradition. However, these early religious teachings had little effect; the young Lenin was quite early on influenced by the Russian anticlerical and antireligious tradition. Chernyshevsky's literary works and especially his novel "What is to be done?" introduced him to the ideas of the radical intelligentsia. The real hero of this novel, Rakhmetov, resembled in his monomania the later Lenin, who would come to possess the same qualities. Lenin was indeed the ultimate rigorist, a professional revolutionary with few interests outside his Party. Among others, he was also inspired by the poet D.I. Pisarev (1840–1868) who wrote about dreaming of a new world, the altruistic possibility of

86 Plekhanov 1956, 469–471.

87 Kline 1968, 136–137, 139; McLellan 1987a, 92–95.

88 Deutscher 1967, 24.

suffering for this world.<sup>89</sup>

Nevertheless, nothing in his childhood indicated that he would become the future leader of the Bolsheviks. Trotsky maintained that the events of 1886 were the turning point for Lenin. He believed that the death of Lenin's father shook the basis of the young Vladimir's religious convictions. Trotsky "psychologized" that the non-rational nature of the ROC's answers at that critical moment destroyed Vladimir's earlier religious beliefs. The crisis continued in 1887 when his older brother, Alexander Ilich Ulyanov (1866–1887), was imprisoned for revolutionary activity and shortly afterwards executed. Lenin's subsequent expulsion from school for rebellious behaviour no doubt further embittered him. According to Trotsky, the young Vladimir then became acquainted with the writings of Marx which gave him a rational explanation for his great personal tragedy and directed him towards only one logical solution; to continue his brother's work with more specific methods.<sup>90</sup>

44

Trotsky's early days may be seen as a prototype for many Russian revolutionaries of Jewish origin. Lev Davidovich Bronstein, a son of a prosperous Jewish agricultural settler, was born in 1879 and grew up in Yanovka in Ukraine. Cosmopolitanism was perhaps the most influential element in his early education. Although he received the traditional Jewish education in a *heder*, a Jewish religious school, he also later became acquainted with the teachings of the ROC and other religious denominations. But as a typical representative of the Russian and the Jewish intelligentsia of his day, Trotsky rejected religious teachings on rationalist grounds, the traditional Jewish or Orthodox dogmas being too narrow-minded for him. For Trotsky, as for many other Russian revolutionaries, the teachings of traditional beliefs represented an obsolete and irrelevant part of human history. Nevertheless, he was familiar with religious doctrines and utilized expressions, metaphors and language rooted in religion. He even started his revolutionary career by working among radical religious sects.<sup>91</sup>

Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili (Stalin) represented a different social group to that of Lenin and Trotsky, who were both from educated and fairly prosperous backgrounds. Pre-revolutionary Russian society could have offered many possibilities for advancement to both Lenin

\*\*\*\*\*  
89 PSS 6, 172–173 “Что делать. Наболевшие вопросы нашего движения; Carr 1969, 43; Copleston 1986, 110, 122–123. As Robert C. Williams has remarked, this idea of self-sacrifice and martyrdom for a better world was a recurring theme in Russian revolutionary and Bolshevik thinking. Williams 1986, 53–58.

90 Trotsky 1972, 95.

91 Deutscher 1970, 11, 31.

and Stalin, but for a boy like Iosif an ecclesiastical education offered the only way to social progress. Maybe as a result of this background, turning to socialism was for him something more concrete than it was for Lenin and Trotsky. For the Russian semi-intelligentsia, the radical antireligious and anticlerical tradition was not a self-evident truth. Stalin came from a religious background and, in his case, Bolshevism replaced the Orthodox faith and his Georgian nationality as a new form of dogma. For Stalin joining the Russian revolutionary tradition and adopting socialist principles represented the abandonment of his old faith. Giving up the Orthodox religion and Georgian nationality symbolized something nearly mystical for him. As his later speeches testify, turning to socialism was for him an initiation into a new godless and international brotherhood. It also explains why Stalin had an ambiguous attitude towards the tradition he had joined. On the one hand he accepted it, but on the other he retained mental reservations towards the heights of the intelligentsia's thinking. For him it was more a tool than a value in itself.<sup>92</sup>

This may perhaps explain why his attitude towards traditional values was always complex. As a Marxist he was compelled to reject both his old Orthodox religion and Georgian nationality as harmful prejudices, but it is justified to claim that he never characterized religion with Lenin's aggressive animosity or the intellectual disdain of Trotsky. Stalin was not mentally shackled by the ideas of the Russian intelligentsia and perhaps therefore he could modify his ideological thinking in accordance with practical needs, even to an extreme degree. As Robert B. Tucker has commented, Stalin could integrate his Bolshevism with Russian nationalism and saw himself personally as a representative of a "resurrected Russian statehood".<sup>93</sup>

In conclusion we may state that the ideological roots of Bolshevik religious doctrine can be traced to German classical philosophy and especially to Hegelian thought. Hegelian philosophical concepts and Left-Hegelian tradition became fused in Marxism which rejected the ideas of transcendency, i.e. religion as an alienated form of consciousness. Religion for them was a harmful obstacle to progress in society. It was an opiate which the exploited proletariat hung on to, thus weakening its desire for a better lot on Earth. Also, we may sum up that the Russian revolutionary tradition was at the same time anti-autocratic and anticlerical; criticizing both the "rotten" state and the "decayed" church. This anticlericalism was passed on to the Bolshevik party.

\*\*\*\*\*

92 Deutscher 1967, 26, 35; Tucker 1990, 3-4, 7. See also Nikolai Berdyaev, "The Russian Revolution". Ann Arbor, Michigan Press. Michigan 1966.

93 Tucker 1990, 5-6. See also Billington 1970, 534-535.

## **b. The religious-political programme of the RSDWP, the challenge of sectarians and Christian socialism**

When tracing the formation of Bolshevik religious ideology before the October Revolution it is useful to study it through Lenin's revolutionary career. Ideologically Lenin was, as we have seen, a mental product of the Russian radical tradition. Like Plekhanov, he was an "orthodox" Marxist and a convinced atheist with little understanding for doctrinal compromises in this area. This can be seen clearly from his early writings in which religion appeared to him to be a "delusion" which ensured that the exploiters could maximize their profits undisturbed. According to him, the church and the pub were both harmful diluters of the workers' political activity.<sup>94</sup>

46

However, the practical political situation in Russia restricted his ideological reservations as the Social Democrats were working under the yoke of political suppression. This gave rise to many local peculiarities and modifications in Marxist class-struggle tactics. Opposition to the regime was illegal in the Russian Empire and many of the RSDWP's leaders such as Lenin and Plekhanov were exiled to Europe. For example, the first Russian Social Democratic party congress, convened in Minsk in 1898, was disrupted by the police almost immediately after its opening and its leaders were put in prison.<sup>95</sup>

During these formative years the RSDWP belonged to a large anti-autocratic front together with many other Russian radical movements. This may perhaps explain why before the 1905 revolution the Bolsheviks actually criticized religion and the church so little. For example, Lenin did not particularly underline this part of his ideology or write any specific attacks against the ROC or religion before 1905. We may presume that this was a deliberate tactic; the future Bolshevik party was still a marginal political group among other radical Russian factions. Moreover, *Iskra*, the Party's newspaper, was only gradually increasing its circulation among the Russian workers.

Russian Marxists, and Lenin in particular, saw clearly the limitations and possibilities of this situation. As the Russian Empire was still under a medieval political order, its industry still underdeveloped and the bourgeois class and proletariat virtually non-existent, Lenin was obliged to make unique modifications to Marxism. According to general Marxist understanding, Russia needed a bourgeois revolution

\*\*\*\*\*  
94 PSS 6, 74 "Что делать. Наболевшие вопросы нашего движения"; PSS 6, 264–265 "Политическая агитация и "классовая точка зрения".

95 See KPSS I, 13–17.



and consequently the bourgeois class had a dual role. It had a historical mission to first accomplish the goals of the bourgeois revolution, before the emergence of a socialist revolution and a socialist society. Along with other Marxists in general, Lenin believed that the Russian bourgeoisie was obliged to overthrow the autocracy before its own destruction by a revolution of the proletariat. These duties also included the duty to enact civil liberties, i.e. to separate church and state. This can be seen from the RSDWP's newspaper, *Iskra*, when it declared on 1 August 1903 that the bourgeois society which would emerge after the autocracy should secularize Russian society. Or, as Lenin explicitly put it, the positive goals of bourgeois political demands could be reduced to one word: democratism. So before the 1905 revolution Lenin was a standard bearer of general Marxist assumptions and supported the idea of democratic liberties for all Russian political parties. But even from the beginning he underlined that the Russian bourgeoisie was too weak alone to carry out the democratic revolution without the help of the proletariat. Due to its ambiguous class nature, the Russian bourgeois was always "flirting" with autocracy and could not alone play its progressive class role in accomplishing the bourgeois revolution.<sup>96</sup>

As Lenin stated in his early demands, the RSDWP should become the leader of the reluctant bourgeoisie and the leader of all other groups which suffered under the yoke of the autocracy. Lenin, like other revolutionaries, was aware of the protests of persecuted national minorities, persecuted religious denominations, as well as religious sects. He believed that these groups would become important allies of the RSDWP. Lenin suggested that the party should support the bourgeois slogans of democratism and gather allies from the ranks of the persecuted nationalities, religions and sects.<sup>97</sup>

The Minsk congress had given Lenin the assignment of drawing up a Russian party programme. In its earliest drafts he explained that the first mission of the RSDWP was to accomplish political freedom. At first this moderate draft also included demands for religious freedom and demands for national equality.<sup>98</sup> Later, in 1902, he altered it and included demands concerning the separation of state and church and school and church. The 1902 draft also included demands for the right

96 PSS 1, 279–280, 294–295, 298–300 "Что такое "друзья народа" и как они воюют против социал-демократов? (ответ на статьи "Русского Богатства" против марксистов)"; *Iskra*, 1 August 1903, No. 45. See also McKenzie 1964, 68–71; Deutscher 1967, 42–43.

97 PSS 2, 446–451, 452–453. "Задачи русских социал-демократов"; PSS 6, 69, 80–83. "Что делать. Наболевшие вопросы нашего движения".

98 PSS 2, 85. "Проект и объяснение программы социал-демократической партии".

to self-determination for nations.<sup>99</sup>

48 This programme was first published in the RSDWP's newspaper *Iskra* and its religious policy demands aroused discussion. For example, one representative of the Russian clergy wrote an open letter to the editors of *Iskra* claiming that the RSDWP's programme coincided with the "ideas of religion and the spirit of Orthodoxy". This moderate priest believed that the autocracy had subordinated the church and that the only way forward was to break the chains with the state. In an accompanying remark the editors of *Iskra* stated that the RSDWP supported these demands, adding that every progressive party should include demands for the separation of church and state in its programme. Although the editors welcomed this letter, they were nonetheless against a close co-operation between social democracy and religion. The belief that religion or even a liberated church could work for liberty or for social change was, in their view, an illusion. *Iskra* expressed the view that the role of the church was always conservative and hostile to knowledge and real human ethics. Social democracy would always fight to liberate people from every kind of slavery and it had declared war on religious ideas and the church. However, socialists did not want to exclude the possibility that some priest or other church member would leave the church and take up the cause of socialism.<sup>100</sup>

This much-debated programme was later accepted at a stormy party congress which was convened in 1903 in Brussels and London. Although this congress became famous, mostly because it resulted in the Bolshevik-Menshevik division, it must be acknowledged that this bitter split was not its only outcome. One of the few things the congress could discuss without rancour was the general draft of the party programme drawn up by Lenin. And in accordance with the general understanding of Russian Marxists, the final draft included a special "minimum part" for a democratic republic and a "maximum" one for more distant demands. Among other things, this "minimum part" included the official religious policy programme of the Bolsheviks. It included demands for freedom of conscience, separation of church and state and secular education. The accepted minimum programme also demanded self-determination for all the nationalities of the Russian Empire. These demands were indeed quite "democratic" and some of them can be found in the programmes of other revolutionary groups too.<sup>101</sup>

99 PSS 6, 206. "Проект программы российской социал-демократической рабочей партии".

100 *Iskra*, July 1902, No. 22.

101 ORTs, 46–47, KPSS I, 63, 65; McCauley 1984, 33, 36, 37; Keep 1966, 121; Ferro 1980, 11–12. See also, "Истории политических партий России". Под редакцией профессора А.И. Зевелева. "Высшая школа". Москва. 1994.



We may also note the attention which this congress paid to sectarians. It heard a lecture from V.D. Bonch-Bruevich (1873–1955), a close friend of Lenin and a scientist, who had studied profoundly the role and teachings of the Russian sectarian movement. He had come to the conclusion that the RSDWP could utilize the latent revolutionary sentiment among Russian sectarians. In his lecture he explained those social elements which determined the life of sectarians and stressed that Russian sectarians were usually in one way or another struggling against the autocracy. Bonch-Bruevich believed that sectarians constituted a potential revolutionary force to which the party should direct its attention. Before utilizing their radicalism, the RSDWP would have to acquaint itself with the social differentiation among the sectarian movement and see how their demands varied from dogmatic-religious slogans to purely political declarations.<sup>102</sup>

Lenin had earlier devoted attention to the political protest of the sectarian movement. In his article “To Agrarian Toilers” (1903) he presented himself to them almost as a spokesman for religious liberty. He warmly supported demands for religious freedom by maintaining that everyone had a right to believe or proclaim his belief without hindrance from officials. He also attacked the privileged position of the ROC and demanded secular education for Russians. In the London congress of 1903 Lenin was prepared to use this religious protest for the benefit of his party and suggested that the party should organize a newspaper for sectarians. This was accepted and the paper “Sredi Sektantov” (Among Sectarians) was given the mission of addressing suitable RSDWP propaganda to sectarians and appealing to sectarians who had come under Social Democrat influence.<sup>103</sup> The editing of this newspaper was later entrusted to Bonch-Bruevich, who only managed to edit nine volumes before it had to be closed down as a result of financial difficulties. Prior to this the newspaper “Rassvet” (Dawn) spread agitation among sectarians and was able to link religious themes and Social Democratic propaganda in an interesting way.<sup>104</sup>

But does the simple desire to entice rebellious sectarians into the ranks of the RSDWP explain this tactical manoeuvre to appease sectarians? One possible explanation of Lenin’s will to appease

102 ВВ I, 158–188. “Раскол и сектанство в России. Доклад В.Д. Бонч-Бруевича Второму очередному съезду Российской социал-демократической рабочей партии”.

103 PSS 7, 173 “К деревенской бедноте”; PSS 7, 310. “Проект резолюции об издании органа для сектантов.”

104 ВВ I, 189–199. “К сектантам”; PSS 8, 441. “Речь о газете Рассвет”. See also Tumarkin 1983, 19–20.

sectarians and the bourgeois class is the simple fact that the Bolsheviks were heavily dependent on the financial support of the industrial magnate S.T. Morozov (1862–1905), who was of Old Believer stock. He had earlier played an important role as spokesman of the Russian business community which was hoping for radical reforms and an intensified tempo of industrialization in Russia. In order to advance these reforms, Morozov had cultivated connections with the Russian liberal intelligentsia and also with the Bolsheviks. Maxim Gorky (Aleksei Maximovich Peshkov, 1868–1936) had been the initiator of this relationship and due to his efforts Morozov regularly supported Lenin's Bolsheviks with considerable sums of money.<sup>105</sup>

This peculiar co-operation between a rich Old Believer who was seeking the Westernization of Russia through revolution and atheist Bolsheviks who were organizing this revolution with the help of money from a capitalist of sectarian extraction, continued undisturbed until the revolution of 1905 which totally changed the situation in Russian society. The war against Japan was a catastrophe and domestic disturbances spread along with revolutionary waves, shaking the roots of the autocracy. The situation was intensified on 9 January 1905 when a priest named Georgy Apollonovich Gapon (1870–1906) led demonstrators against guards in St Petersburg. The demonstration was violently dispersed and this incident was the starting point for the 1905 revolution. The movement he led was originally an interesting mixture of Christian socialism and anarchism. In order to seek protection and to show loyalty Gapon had organized contacts with the secret police, one of whose leaders in St Petersburg, S.V. Zubatov (1864–1917), had hoped to fight against socialism and anarchism by establishing a loyal workers' movement. Gapon's Zubatovian Movement, as it came to be known, combined the aim of some officials to use Christian socialism against radical revolutionaries with Gapon's own desire as a member of the "white" clergy to improve the social condition of workers. This movement became very popular and unlike the RSDWP it attracted thousands of supporters.<sup>106</sup>

The activity of this movement was at once both a pleasant and an unpleasant surprise for the RSDWP. The events in St Petersburg had indicated how much the autocracy was in a state of decay, but the fact that the riotous demonstration was initiated by a priest who had links with the secret police came as a shock for the exiled leaders of the

105 Valentinov 1991b, 77–78. See also Williams 1986, 49, 58–59.

106 Pipes 1979, 312–313; Ascher 1988, 89–92.

RSDWP.<sup>107</sup> This reserved attitude can be seen from Lenin's writings on the events in St Petersburg. To Lenin this man was anyway a puzzle. According to Lenin, Gapon was perhaps a sincere Christian socialist who unconsciously worked as a tool of the government. On the one hand he was the hero of the St Petersburg workers who had ignited the revolution in Russia. On the other hand he was a priest, believed in god<sup>108</sup> and worked under the protection of the secret police. Lenin claimed that Gapon had expressed the vain hopes of that section of the people who believed that the Czar could help them. He was of the opinion that in a more particular way, Gapon was working unconsciously for the cause of the Social Democrats.<sup>109</sup>

As an interesting epilogue, it should be mentioned that in 1905 Lenin and Gapon finally met. According to Lenin's wife, N.K. Krupskaya (1869–1939), other Russian Social Democrats such as Plekhanov despised Gapon because he was a priest. Lenin, however, was anxious to meet and talk with him when he realized that Gapon had good relations with the workers and tried to convert the priest to his own cause. Nevertheless, as Krupskaya remarked, Gapon showed little interest in Lenin's opinions and was "blinded by his ecclesiastical psychology". In addition, we may note how Trotsky also commented enthusiastically on Gapon's revolutionary activities in St Petersburg. He declared that the revolutionary proletariat would always preserve the memory of Gapon. Later in an article addressed to Russian peasants he referred to Gapon as an "honest, young priest".<sup>110</sup>

Nevertheless, the activity of Gapon and the strength of Christian socialism indicated that religion was still a significant social force in Russia and, more importantly, that it constituted a challenge to his revolutionary movement. George F. Putnam has even estimated that the challenge of Christian socialism offered a relevant political alternative to Marxism in pre-revolutionary Russia.<sup>111</sup>

In his article "Socialism and Religion" (1905) Lenin responded to this ideological challenge by repeating the Marxist critique of capitalist society which was based on economic exploitation. Religion, Lenin stated, originally constituted a form of vulnerability in the face of

107 Ulam 1968, 205–207, 231–238.

108 Lenin nearly always used a small letter when writing words like "Bog" or "Khristos" as well when using pejorative expressions such as "bozhenka", "popovshchina" or "pop". This was a conscious choice on his part in order to express his aversion to religion. See PSS 9, 210–211. "Поп Гапон"; PSS 9, 216–217. "Царь-батюшка" и баррикады"; PSS 12, 144. "Социализм и религия"; PSS 48, 226. "А.М. Горькому"; PSS 55, 256–259. "Ульяновой-Елизаровой".

109 PSS 9, 210–211. "Поп Гапон"; PSS 9, 216–219. "Царь-батюшка" и баррикады".

110 ST III, 58–64; 214; Krupskaya 1972, 96–98.

111 Putnam 1977, 6.

nature and now constituted a form of resignation in the face of capitalist exploitation. Its role was to keep the proletariat humble and unconscious of the real reasons for their misery.<sup>112</sup>

Lenin interpreted Marx in the Russian context and commented that religion was one kind of mental “moonshine”. In this way, he gave to Marx’s interpretation a particular meaning. Marx had criticized religion on a theoretical level by implying that religion was an opium which people consumed in their despair. It seems most likely that for him religion represented more a natural product of exploitation than a cause of misery. Lenin, however, as a result of Russian historical circumstances, saw religion as a kind of opium which the upper classes were willingly serving up to the proletariat in order to keep them in darkness.<sup>113</sup>

52

As a portent of things to come, Lenin emphasized that the modern worker had abandoned the yoke of religion and was now building a new world and no longer believed the priest. Lenin also explained the religious policy programme of the RSDWP. As the assumption of a bourgeois revolution followed by a proletarian revolution presupposed, religion should be made a private matter in relation to the state but not in relation to the party. Here we may see how at this time Lenin already believed that the transition period between these two revolutions would be brief. According to him, the separation of church and state, the end of religious discrimination and the abolition of the special legal status of the ROC would be basic goals which the coming revolution would accomplish.<sup>114</sup>

Lenin’s desire to make a distinction between the state’s neutral attitude towards religion and the ideological attitude of the party towards religion is quite revealing, as it indicates that at that time Lenin still believed there would be a transitional phase between the coming bourgeois and proletarian revolutions. Nevertheless, even if the future post-revolutionary state were neutral in its relation to religion, it was impossible to keep religion as a private matter for party members. This dilemma, “private matter”, later proved to be significant for Bolshevik religious ideology. Lenin recognized the criticism which Engels had voiced against the German party programme in Erfurt (1891). The

\*\*\*\*\*  
112 PSS 12, 142-143. “Социализм и религия”.

113 See PSS 12, 142. “Социализм и религия”. See also Conquest 1968, 7; Bochenski 1975, 9; McKown 1975, 109-113.

114 PSS 12, 143-144. “Социализм и религия”. Later Lenin stated that the RSDWP was struggling for complete “freedom of consciousness” and that the Bolsheviks would respect all views in the religious sphere as long as they were not instilled by “force or deception”. PSS 15, 156-157. “Проект речи по аграрному вопросу во второй Государственной думе”.



Erfurt programme had demanded the secularization of the state and the educational system but had simply remarked that religion as such was a “private matter”. Lenin stressed that the expression “private” should not be interpreted as neutralism. Religion should be a private matter only in relation to the state not in relation to the party. Nevertheless, he believed that the fight against religion was not the primary mission of the party, but that it was subordinated to the general battle against capitalism.<sup>115</sup>

The revolution of 1905 was a failure and within a few years revolutionary fervour subsided. In this situation the autocracy showed that it could be conciliatory towards sectarians and other religious organizations when it granted liberty to the Old Believers and other religious groups in Russia. This pacified their radicalism and made them more reluctant to follow the call of the revolutionaries. In addition, S.T. Morozov committed suicide in May 1905, which meant that the Bolsheviks lost an important source of finance. The ruling autocracy also showed some willingness to consider the possible independence of the ROC. A special commission was convoked to discuss the situation but, nonetheless, the ROC remained subordinated to the state until the February revolution of 1917. As for the mood of the Russian intelligentsia, the 1905 revolution represented a turning point. The disturbances and riots had shocked many “prodigal sons” of the Russian intelligentsia<sup>116</sup> who had been “flirting” with revolution; now they flocked back to civilized society. The rationalism, in vogue for many years, gave way to a new mood of mysticism and as a sign of a new era the Russian intelligentsia became more interested in old traditional values. This turning back to the past was evident even before the 1905 revolution. Gradually from the beginning of the 20th century certain members of the intelligentsia had created a discussion circle called Vekhi (Landmarks).<sup>117</sup> In particular, after the 1905 revolution it questioned the past thinking of Russian radicals and classified their values as immoral and nihilist. Vekhi writers acknowledged traditional values and they identified themselves as Christians.<sup>118</sup>

Some former Marxists and colleagues of Lenin converted to this new way of thinking, S.N. Bulgakov (1871–1944) and N.A. Berdyaev

115 PSS 12, 145–147. “Социализм и религия”.

116 Iskra, 1 August 1903, No. 45

117 See, “Вехи. Сборник статей о русской интеллигенции Н.А. Бердяева, С.Н. Булгакова. М.О. Гершензона. А.С. Изгоева. Б.А. Кистяковского. П.Б. Струве. С.Л. Франка”. Репринтное воспроизведение издания 1909 года. Международная ассоциация деятелей культуры “Новое Время” и журнал “Горизонт”. Москва. 1990.

118 Seton-Watson 1967, 634–645; Cunningham 1981, 58–59. See also Zernov 1963, 204–205; Bourdeaux 1965, 39–40; Copleston 1988, 18–26.

(1874–1948) being the most famous. Several societies and groups had earlier reflected the ideas of these former Marxists. The St Petersburg Religious Gatherings (1901–1903), the St Petersburg Religious–Philosophical Society (1907–1908) and the Moscow Religious–Philosophical Society (1905–1908) dedicated to the memory of Vladimir Solovov were the main forums in the intelligentsia’s rising interest in religion.<sup>119</sup> However, their activity was not so serious threat to the Bolshevik faction as the ideological wanderings of A.A. Bogdanov (Malinovsky, 1873–1928), one of the most intimate colleagues of Lenin, and A.V. Lunacharsky (1875–1933). The defeat of the 1905 revolution had disillusioned both Bogdanov and Lunacharsky and as a result they had fallen under the influence of the philosophy of Ernst Mach (1838–1916) and Richard Avenarius (1843–1896). This philosophical searching for the right interpretation of Marxism caused them to seek to reform “dry” Marxist epistemology along “empiriocritical” lines. In order to improve Marxism and the concept of materialism, Lunacharsky even envisaged a future proletarian religion without a deity. The famous Russian writer Maxim Gorky supported Lunacharsky and together they challenged Lenin by establishing their own competing faction inside the Bolshevik Party, a group which received the nickname “the godbuilders”.<sup>120</sup>

Lenin fought fiercely against these “heretics”, partly because they presented open criticism against his leadership in the Bolshevik party, and partly because of their independent-minded interpretation of Marxism. In order to condemn them, Lenin wrote a monograph entitled “Materialism and Empiriocriticism” (1909). This was mainly directed against Bogdanov and he tried to have this Marxist theoretician expelled from the Bolshevik party. He also tried personally to persuade Gorky and Lunacharsky to abandon their “godbuilding” activities. In his personal letters to Gorky he revealed how he rejected the idea of any kind of religion, even a materialist one. For Lenin adapting religion or attempting to reform it was an obnoxious idea. He rejected the notion of using any kind of religious manifestation in propaganda almost with pathological distaste. Religion in all its forms was for him “necrophilia”, a reformed religion might even attract more people than old-fashioned beliefs. Therefore, he declared in a private letter to Gorky, he

119 See Putnam 1977, 56–84.

120 According to George Kline, the “godbuilders” were influenced by the tradition of Russian radicalism which was dedicated to building a better and more sacred world. Moreover, this movement turned Hegel’s philosophical terms (Spirit, Absolute) towards the immanent world. Kline has also stressed the importance of the Nietzschean renaissance at the beginning of the century for the “godbuilders”. Kline 1968, 103–109. See also Read 1990, 97, 117.



found it easier to accept an old-fashioned priest molesting children than a reformed priest with refined methods.<sup>121</sup>

In summing up we may state that one of the most significant reasons for Lenin's sharp critique against religion at this time was his bitter ideological and political confrontation with his party colleagues. The philosophical wavering of certain Bolsheviks, the "godbuilding" movement, as well as Bogdanov's challenge, intensified Lenin's ideological stand. From Lenin's point of view, the post-revolutionary situation after 1905 had given rise to a multitude of doctrinal heresies including one of the most serious ideological sins, compromise with religion.

Nevertheless, Lenin's rivals did not want to combine religion with Marxism for the sake of theism; Bogdanov and Gorky simply wanted to introduce some moral values into Marxist materialism. They did not want to emphasise belief in a supernatural God but, rather, belief in people themselves. Instead of hard, "Leninist" party discipline they wanted to stress morals and ethics which would receive justification from people themselves. Lenin at first objected to these ideas because they contradicted his understanding of materialism. But at the same time he also opposed them because the holders of such ideas were contesting his political leadership inside the Bolshevik party.

55

### **c. The nationality question and religion in Bolshevik thinking**

The question of religion and nationality were closely inter-related in orthodox Marxist thinking. This view, supported by Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin, implied that both religion and nationality were part of the super-structure of the exploiting societies and they would wither away when the socialist society had destroyed the roots of both phenomena. Marx and Engels were quite academic in this matter, underlining the determinism of this development. But Lenin, along with many other Marxist thinkers, expressed the view that the proletariat should play an active part in getting rid of these two obstacles to the advancement of the class struggle.<sup>122</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*  
121 PSS 26, 224–226, 232–234. "Крах II Интернационала"; PSS 48, 227. "А.М. Горькому". For more on Bogdanov's role as a Bolshevik theoretician, see Gloveli 1991, 34–38; and especially Ilmari Susiluoto, "The Origins and Development of Systems Thinking in The Soviet Union. Political and Philosophical Controversies from Bogdanov and Bukharin to Present-Day Re-Evaluations". Suomalainen Tiedeseura. Helsinki. 1982.

122 Compare MEW 4, 480–481. "Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei" and Kline 1968, 132–134. See also Pipes 1980, 32–34.

According to Marxist doctrine, the international proletariat constituted a “totality” without a fatherland. Economic development and the accumulation of capital would lead ultimately to the assimilation of minor nationalities. At the same time, the proletariat would also become more international and as an outcome of the victorious socialist revolution all nations would form an harmonious international family. In order to advance and speed up this international development, the founders of Marxism established the so-called First International in London 1864.<sup>123</sup>

Later Social Democrats realized that the “orthodox” Marxist nationality policy was difficult to apply in the circumstances of Eastern Europe. The empires of Austria and Russia were composed of many different nationalities and in reality one important factor in defining nationalities in these regions was religion. This prominence given to nationality problems was in striking contrast with Marxist understanding in which both nationality and religion were seen as part of the upper structure of society.<sup>124</sup> The Austrian Social Democrats Karl Renner (1870–1950) and Otto Bauer (1881–1938) consequently developed a theory of “national cultural autonomy” which attempted to resolve this problem by acknowledging both Marxism and the importance of nationality. In accordance with this policy, the Austrian Social Democratic Party established in every national region its own particular, national party section. They also tried to form special kinds of culturally autonomous party organs.<sup>125</sup>

The “Austro-Marxists” believed that Social Democrats should recognize national communities as a valuable and secure form of social organization. In contrast to classical Marxist understanding, Renner and Bauer presumed that the development of a class-struggle would not obliterate the differences between nationalities but instead magnify them. The final victory of socialism would partially be the result of this differentiation of nations. The nationality question would then be reduced to the same level as the question of religion; nationality would be a private matter.<sup>126</sup>

In the Russian Empire nearly all radical political groups acknowledged the importance of the nationality question. In line with this trend, Lenin and his party attempted to exploit the dissatisfaction of national minorities. The events of the 1905 revolution had drawn attention to the nationality question and the dilemma of self-

123 MEW 4, 479, 482. “Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei”; Pipes 1980, 21–22.

124 Dunn 1987, 10–11.

125 Pipes 1980, 24. See also Polvinen 1990, 81–83.

126 Kolakowski 1978, 16, 339; Pipes 1980, 25–27.

determination had also troubled the Jewish subgroup of the Russian Social Democratic Party. This independent-minded section of the RSDWP, known as the Bund had adopted the programme of the "Austro-Marxists" eagerly and in the London congress of 1903 had even demanded special autonomy for themselves inside the party. As a result of this "heresy", the Bund was temporarily expelled from the RSDWP and the party denied that Jews comprised a national culture despite the fact that they possessed special customs and religious rites of their own. Nevertheless, the problem of how to approach the nationality question remained unsolved. The RSDWP's 2nd congress simply decided to adopt the right to self-determination and the right to statehood for every nation but did not develop any particular nationality programme for the Russian Empire.<sup>127</sup>

As a logical outcome of this unclear definition in the party programme, the concept of nation was put under extraordinary scrutiny within the RSDWP. What was a nation? Could, for example, the Jewish people also claim to be a nation? In order to answer these and other questions, and to fight against "Austro-Marxism", Lenin gave Stalin the assignment of writing an article on Bolshevik nationality policy and even helped him to find the "right" conclusions.<sup>128</sup> Stalin's article "Marxism and the Nationality Question" can be viewed as a study which articulated in greater detail Lenin's ideas about nationality problems.

Stalin began his article by defining a nation as a community with historical roots and a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up.<sup>129</sup> After outlining the theoretical part of his study, he attacked the Austrian Social Democratic concept of "national cultural autonomy" and maintained that Bauer had accepted a "bourgeois" concept of the nation. Stalin accused the Austrian socialists of preparing the ground for nationalism.<sup>130</sup> The second target of Stalin's attack was the Bund and its demands for national autonomy within the party. In conclusion Stalin declared that the Jewish people did not comprise a nation as they lacked a common territory and language. Their "religious rites" or "decayed psychological remnants" as he termed them would not be sufficient to preserve the Jewish nation in the face of pressure from other nations.<sup>131</sup>

127 KPSS I, 63; Pinkus 1988, 43, 50–52; Iivonen 1990, 108.

128 Deutscher 1967, 119, 122; Pipes 1980, 37–40.

129 Stalin 1939, 7.

130 Stalin 1939, 7–9, 31–36, 37–41; Pipes 1980, 37–38.

131 Stalin 1939, 9. See also Iivonen 1990, 108.

Lenin agreed with Stalin in his attacks on Jewish nationalism and accused the Austrian Social Democrats of reducing the nationality question to absurdity by regarding it as a personal, private matter. As Lenin commented, Jewish people did not constitute a nation, only a caste. On the other hand, Lenin acknowledged that the Jewish people had been severely persecuted over the centuries and that they had been most active in the Russian revolutionary movement. In this way, the Bund's slogans concerning Jewish national culture were playing into the hands of "rabbis and bourgeois". For Lenin a Jew who would fight against these slogans was the best representative of the Jewish people. In this connection, we may recall how for Lenin and the Bolsheviks nationality and religion were simply dangerous weapons. Both were used by the exploiting classes for propaganda purposes.<sup>132</sup>

Theoretically, Lenin was ready to support the idea of national self-determination in relation to nations such as Poland and Finland because he believed that the logic of economics would in the end force them to ally themselves with larger units. But stressing cultural or other differences between nations as such would, Lenin believed, lead in the opposite direction. The questions of nationality and religion could not be reduced to private, neutral matters. Thus Lenin hinted in his pre-revolutionary writings that the nationality and religious questions were not "adiaphora", as the bourgeoisie was always ready to exploit both for their own purposes. In fact, the logic of the bourgeoisie's class position compelled them to manipulate religion and the nationality question against the proletariat. Both functioned as dangerous ideological weapons of the bourgeoisie against the class-struggle of the proletariat.<sup>133</sup>

As Gerhard Simon has put it, the very cornerstone of the nationality doctrine of the Bolsheviks was that the socialist revolution would diminish and end the role of nations as important historical forces. Nationalism was by nature a negative phenomenon. It strove to overcome class antagonism for the sake of mutual national affiliations and mobilized different social strata in the pursuance of a common national objective. From an ideological point of view the nationality question and religion were both seen as products of the past and nationalism especially was seen as an offshoot of developing capi-

132 PSS 23, 318–319. "Тезисы по национальному вопросу"; PSS 24, 122–123, 125–126 "Критические заметки по национальному вопросу"; PSS 25, 14–15, 64–65 "Политические уроки". See also Levin 1988, 12–20.

133 PSS 21, 402–405 "Демократия и народничество в Китае"; PSS 23, 123–124 "Сепаратисты в России и сепаратисты в Австрии"; PSS 23, 145–146 "Пробуждение Азии"; PSS 25, 298–299, 318–319 "О праве нации на самоопределение". McKown 1975, 112–114; Kolakowski 1978, 402–404.

talism.<sup>134</sup> This explains also those moderate opinions of Lenin and Stalin concerning the undeveloped Eastern areas. According to their thinking, national or religious prejudices could not be overcome by a non-existing proletariat in areas where exploited classes had no political consciousness whatsoever. In this respect, both Lenin and Stalin indirectly acknowledged that the fight against nationalism and religion was not the party's prime mission in those areas.

So, the coalescing of nations was part of a "maximum" programme - a long term plan of the Bolsheviks. When classes would wither away, national-mindedness would automatically lose its foothold in society. To sum up, on the question of nationality and religion Lenin and his Bolsheviks opposed granting any ideological concessions; the totality of the class-struggle did not leave any room for religious or national "private matters". But the reality of the class struggle demanded that the fight against both these prejudices should be fought along a general political line. In accordance with this pre-revolutionary Bolshevik ideology dealt with religion and nationality as major obstacles in the way of a socialist society; but even during the pre-revolutionary period, in the face of political reality, the Bolsheviks were able to put their ideological presumptions to one side. According to Lenin's unique political pragmatism these two questions were for the most part subordinate to the general political objectives of the party itself.



---

# II “Storm and Wind” – religious policy after the October Revolution and during the civil war (1917–1920)

60

## 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND TO EARLY SOVIET RELIGIOUS POLICY

The October Revolution and the battles of the civil war changed the character of the party. The distinctions and programmes of the pre-revolutionary period, i.e. the differentiation between the party and the state, had become obsolete when the Bolsheviks achieved power.<sup>1</sup> This situation created, of course, new kinds of problems which Lenin had contemplated in his monograph *State and Revolution*. On the one hand, this pamphlet manifested his understanding of a future socialist Russia and reflected his vision of a Bolshevik City of God. On the other hand, Lenin introduced practical assignments for the revolution. In *State and Revolution* he wanted to demonstrate that the traditional bourgeois mechanics of power and the parliamentary system were only illusions as far as the working-class was concerned. A.F. Kerensky's (1881–1970) “socialist” government only played into the hands of landowners and exploiters.<sup>2</sup>

The main question which Lenin put forward in this monograph was simple: what kind of state would emerge as a result of a future Bolshevik revolution? His answer was partly anarchistic and partly

---

1 See S8, 30–35; Thrower 1983, 118.

2 Maureen 1979, 216–217, 219; Stites 1989, 43.



utopian. He demanded a state where power would be widely spread through the mediation of the iron dictatorship of the proletariat. This new kind of state would be totally different from the old bourgeois one, which, according to Lenin, was simply a manifestation of exploitation and coercion.<sup>3</sup>

In accordance with this vision of a new society, Lenin declared enthusiastically that workers could not adopt the bourgeois state mechanism as such, and that the only possible answer was to destroy the resistance of the dominant class and its tool of coercion, the state. Nevertheless, Lenin believed that during the transition period from a capitalist society to socialism workers would themselves take over the duties of the state and execute the functions of the administration more effectively than the capitalists. Lenin remarked that the Paris Commune in 1871 had shown that the workers could govern themselves. So it would also be in a future socialist Russia. Unlike the bourgeois system, which benefitted only the better-off, the Bolsheviks would create a direct democracy.<sup>4</sup>

61

In *State and Revolution* Lenin identified official religious organizations and churches with the bourgeois system. One of the worst errors of those who believed in the parliamentary system, he pointed out, was their betrayal with regard to religious policy. According to Lenin, other Russian socialists such as the SRs and Mensheviks had diluted their antireligious ideology under the slogan of “religion – a private matter” and sought to make peace with the state church system. Thus these “traitors” to socialism wanted to maintain the system of the bourgeois state with its privileges and wanted to leave religion as a private matter even in relation to the party.<sup>5</sup>

Lenin’s *State and Revolution* implied that there would be no room for the bourgeois state church and because of the fusion of the civil and the public sphere, which this essay demanded, there would, moreover, be very little room left for so-called “private religion” either. This was justified from an ideological point of view. As David B. Ingram has remarked, Marx had once underlined that in a truly democratic new state the alienation between civil society and the state would be dissolved by the revolution. Political emancipation would thus correspond to human emancipation. We may state that in *State and Revolution* Lenin simply interpreted Marx by implying that the bourgeois duality between civil society and the state would be settled

3 PSS 33, 7–8. “Государство и революция”; Lapidus 1978, 89; Stites 1989, 43–44.

4 PSS 33, 29–31, 40–44, 46, 62–63. “Государство и революция”. See also Vihavainen 1990, 108.

5 PSS 33, 43, 76–77. “Государство и революция”.

by the destruction of the bourgeois state system. Revolution would dissolve differences between the private and public interests, between the “private” sphere of life and “public” life.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the dissolution of the state church system represented, in a Leninist sense, more than simply the neutral secularization of society. This Leninist scheme could be justified also on historical grounds. According to Lenin, the Russian bourgeoisie had betrayed democratism and democratic reforms such as the secularization of society, and consequently it was the task of the Bolsheviks to accomplish them. In addition, this monograph revealed that Lenin’s state would not adhere to the practice of the parliamentary system or democracy as such. The direct democracy of the people would follow its own rules.<sup>7</sup>

Although Lenin stressed the ultra-democratic features of his future society, it was clear that he rejected the idea of open democracy for all citizens; the ruling proletariat had a duty to crush the resistance of their former exploiters. Both the theory and practice of the Bolshevik regime ruled out the possibility of open democracy in post-revolutionary Russian society and in the Bolshevik party as well. Gradually, during the course of Bolshevik rule, the democratic ideals of the Russian revolutionary tradition were fused with the “Leninist” conspiratorial tradition. As a result of clandestine activities and the “Leninist” concept of the party, the Bolsheviks had adopted the idea of democratic centralism which placed greater weight on the decisions of higher bodies over those of lower bodies. In theory the highest organ of the Bolshevik party was the congress. It was the only organ empowered to decide general political lines and accept party programmes. For the intervals between congresses they elected a Central Committee to govern the party; to direct the entire work of the party and local party bodies. These organs were in actual fact too unwieldy to be effective. The congress with its many representatives and even the Central Committee were not able to carry out all their official responsibilities. Nevertheless, the Central Committee functioned during the 1920s, together with the party congress, as an important discussion forum for different opinions inside the ruling party. For shaping the religious policy of the NEP, press discussions in particular before and during the 12th and 13th congresses were of crucial importance.<sup>8</sup>

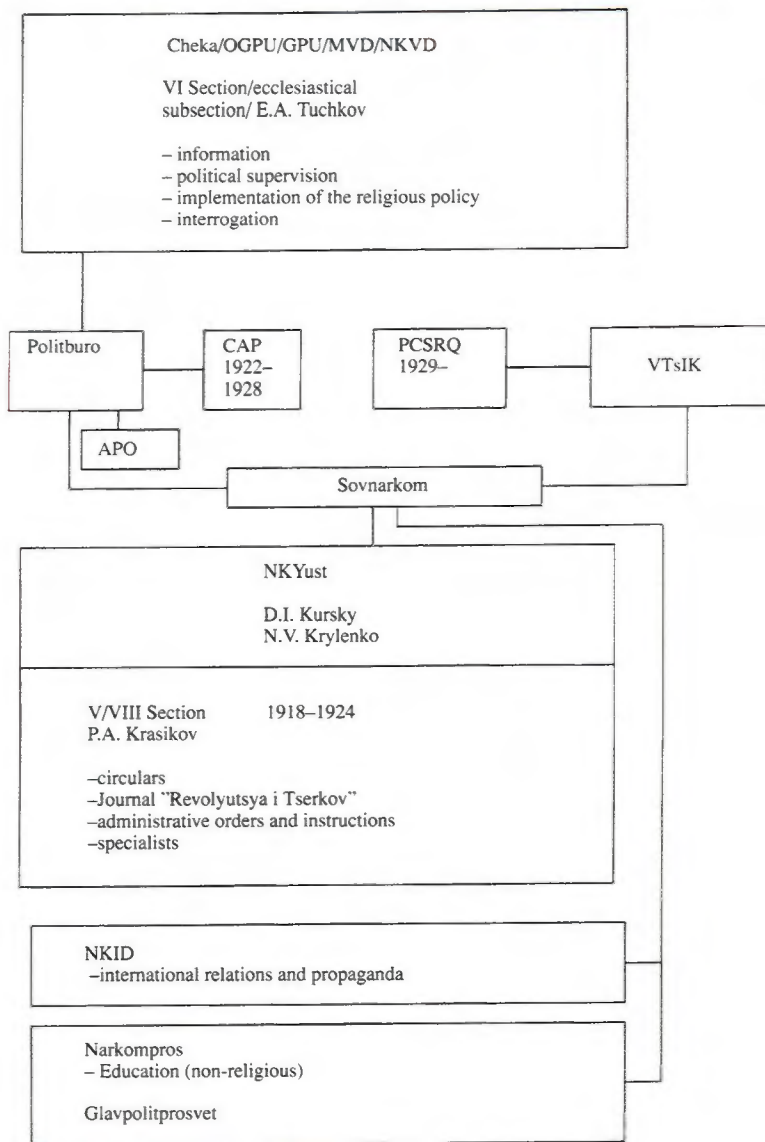
On examining early Soviet religious policy, it is apparent how the day-to-day governing of the Soviet state (until Lenin’s departure) was

6 Ingram 1988, 132–133.

7 Rigby 1989, 8–9. See also Colletti 1972, 220–221.

8 For more on party rules, see, “Программы и уставы КППС”. Издательство политической литературы. 1969. Москва.

## Organizational structure of Soviet religious-political organs 1917–1929



officially concentrated in the Bolshevik government, the Sovnarkom. During the intervals between party plenums, policy making instruments were divided among three major sections, the Politburo, the Orgburo and the Secretariat. The Politburo dealt with current political questions and functioned as a Soviet political cabinet after the death of Lenin, when the role of the Sovnarkom began to decline. The Orgburo was, together with the Secretariat, responsible for organizational and practical work inside the party. These two organs were furthermore subordinated to the Politburo, but in reality the role of the Orgburo and especially the Secretariat became more decisive with the rise of Stalin to supreme power.<sup>9</sup>

During the civil war the party's relations with religious organizations and the ideological battle against religion were matters of "minor importance".<sup>10</sup> The ruling regime was fighting for its survival. Decision making with regard to religious policy as well as its practical implementation was not co-ordinated and in many cases overlapped<sup>11</sup>, different aspects of religious policy being undertaken by different offices. Nonetheless, we may claim that the main burden of civil war religious policy was concentrated in two leading departments of the Soviet administration: justice and security. The People's Commissariat of Justice (NKYust), led by D.I. Kursky (1874–1932) and his deputy N.V. Krylenko (1885–1938), had a special subsection called the Eighth (later Fifth) Department, better known among the communists themselves as the "Liquidation Commission", to deal with early Soviet religious policy. Both men had worked together constructing the Soviet judicial system and N.V. Krylenko especially belonged to the "hawks" when dealing with religious organizations. The "Liquidation Commission" which was formally under their authority was originally, as Otto Luchterhand has argued, modified from the commission which had planned the separation of church and state.<sup>12</sup> This commission was headed by a fierce opponent of religion, P.A. Krasikov (1870–1939), and had the official duty of supervising the implementation of the separation of church and state. Moreover, it used the services of different "comrade-experts", such as the former lawyer I.A. Shpitsberg

9 Fainsod 1970, 178–179.

10 Curtiss 1953, 89.

11 Other opinions have also been expressed, e.g., Philip Walters has maintained that in relation to the ROC, Soviet antireligious actions were centrally co-ordinated even during the civil war. Walters 1993, 6. However, in the light of documentary sources now available this view seems to be quite problematic.

12 Luchterhand 1993, 55. The official name of this subsection was "The Department for implementing the separation of church and state" (Отдел по проведению в жизнь декрета об отделении церкви и государства)).

(1881–1933) and the former priest M.N. Galkin (Gorev).<sup>13</sup>

One of the main assignments of this central organ was to publish a special circular entitled *Revolyutsiya i Tserkov* (Revolution and the Church). This publication contained legal documents, administrative orders and instructions on interpreting the “separation decree” of 1918. As one retrospective protocol of the NKYust Central Administration in 1924 underlined, this organ did not make any distinction between legislation and implementation. The “Liquidation Commission” was simultaneously preparing, consulting, controlling and directing religious policy legislation. Due to its enormous burden of responsibilities, this commission mainly devoted its energy to secularizing Soviet society. Among other things it inspected how successful were Soviet organs in removing old religious symbols (such as icons) from official buildings.<sup>14</sup>

Nonetheless, the “Liquidation Commission” did not have any special instruments to implement its decisions. In addition, the work of this organ took time to get off the ground and was disorganized, as H. Meiner has pointed out in his memoirs. As a result of the general chaos, this religious policy committee had only seven officials, a fact which reveals that the real duty of this organ was simply to consult with other Soviet organs. It could not execute its formal obligations effectively without help from other organs of Soviet power. Simultaneously with its horizontal connections to other party organs, this committee also had vertical connections to local Soviet organs. As the correspondence between the “Liquidation Commission” and local organs testifies, the main burden for implementing the “separation decree” was concentrated at local *guberniya* (district) level or even in local Soviets, where the Bolsheviks created local “Liquidation Commissions”. The central “Liquidation Commission” in Moscow sent out general instructions and reports (via *Revolyutsiya i Tserkov*) informing them of how to implement the “separation decree” and local organs in cities and the countryside then had the more specific task of interpreting these orders. These regional organs worked quite independently and only in the most difficult and important cases did they ask Moscow for instructions.<sup>15</sup>

65

13 H. Meiner in his reminiscences called I.A. Shpitsberg a “personal enemy of God” because of Shpitsberg’s fierce antireligious activity. Meiner 1922, 64. See also *Revolyutsiya i Tserkov* 1920, No. 9–12, 96.

14 GARF2 f.353, op.7, d.26a “Народному комиссару юстиции”; GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.731 “Народный комиссариат просвещения. тов. М.Н. Покровскому (мая 28/19г)”.

15 GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.730 “Отчет. О деятельности 5-отдела Культур Наркомюста за 1923 год”; *Revolyutsiya i Tserkov*. 1919. No. 1, 16–26, 39–42; *Revolyutsiya i Tserkov*. 1920. No. 9–12, 70–96. See also Rothenberg 1971, 69.



The second leading department of the administration entrusted with implementing religious policy during the civil war and later was the Soviet security apparatus. Its main duty in religious policy was to supervise different religious organizations. The nature of this work led them to assume a considerable role in Soviet religious policy. The Cheka and its successors in the 1920s, the OGPU, the GPU and the MVD (the NKVD's ecclesiastical subsection created in 1922, Церковный отдел, concentrated more on administrative matters related to religious organizations),<sup>16</sup> supervised religious organizations for possible challenges to the Soviet system and implemented the actual decisions of the ruling regime.

All the above-mentioned secret agencies served also as information channels for the party by providing information on the activities of different religious groups. Secret information sheets, "svodkas", gave detailed reports about the mood and atmosphere of Soviet society. Some of these "summaries" indicate that this section of the Soviet administration functioned better than many other Soviet organs. For example, one such "svodka" in the 1920s shows clearly that after four years of civil war the Cheka's informants and agents seemed to have penetrated every level of Soviet society. In addition, certain leaders of the secret police belonged to various committees and some, like Evgeny Aleksandrovich Tuchkov (1892–1957), the leader of the 6th section of the Soviet security police, played a prominent role during the interrogation of the ROC's top leaders.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, together with these ideologically-motivated communists, there were also more conciliatory-minded members of the Bolshevik party. Among these we may single out figures such as V.D. Bonch-Bruевич, a close friend of Lenin who had studied the Russian sectarian movement. After the Bolshevik revolution Bonch-Bruевич worked as a key party administrator and was Lenin's executive secretary. His special knowledge of and his relationship to Russian sectarians enabled him to function as a defender of their interests. As another conciliatory-minded top leader inside the Soviet leadership we may mention L.B. Kamenev who often favoured a more peaceful approach in Soviet religious policy. Perhaps rather surprisingly, during the early Soviet period Stalin often favoured a more cautious attitude towards religious organizations.

The Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NKID) and its head G.V. Chicherin (1872–1936) also played a more conciliatory role in Soviet

16 See, for example, GARF1 f.393, op.27, d.1390 (3,4,7), d. 1391, d. 1393.

17 See, for example, GARF1 f.5446e, op.55, d.409 "Сводка". See also NR, 34.

religious policy. The reason for this was obvious: although it felt uneasy about its capitalist neighbours, the Soviet regime also looked forward to the possibility of escaping from the diplomatic isolation it had been placed in after the Bolshevik revolution. This was the main reason why the NKID tried to preserve the reputation of the Soviet state by favouring a more conciliatory approach towards religious organizations. In accordance with these objectives, Chicherin was able to establish good relations between the Soviet state and its eastern neighbours and consequently favoured a more conciliatory Soviet policies towards Eastern religions.<sup>18</sup>

Another branch of government which had a natural interest in religious affairs was the Narkompros, the Commissariat for Education. In theory this office had the task of creating the New Atheistic Man. The commissariat of A.V. Lunacharsky was put in charge of organizing antireligious propaganda and agitation among the Soviet population. Nevertheless, the Narkompros neglected this mission, partly because of material and organizational shortages and partly because it had to concentrate on its educational duties. As a matter of fact, this office had from the beginning of the Soviet regime pressed only for education that was non-religious, not antireligious. Although such militant atheists as M.N. Pokrovsky worked there, it had gained the reputation of being one of the most "conciliatory" of the Soviet organs. This careful and tactful attitude towards antireligious work can be seen as a reflection of an optimistic attitude towards religion prevailing in the Narkompros during the period 1917–1928. Soviet authorities in general believed that religion would fade away in time with the revolution.<sup>19</sup>

Partly due to this failure of the Narkompros it was reorganized, along with antireligious activities in general, in 1920 with the creation of the Glavpolitprosvet (the Central Administration of Political Education). This organ was originally supposed to lead all party and Soviet propaganda and was supposed to be part of the Narkompros. But from the very beginning Glavpolitprosvet competed with the party's newly-established Agitation and Propaganda Department (APO), which came under the authority of the Central Committee. As part of the antireligious battle Glavpolitprosvet established schools, courses, rural reading-rooms, workers' universities etc., in addition to undertaking more openly antireligious activities under the leadership of Lenin's wife, N.K. Krupskaya. For example, Glavpolitprosvet organ-

18 See, for example, GARF2 f. 353, op.6, d.9. "Наркомюст. тов. Красикову 24.мая 1922 года". See also DOBFP, 650–651. "Record by Mr. Gregory of a conversation with M. Krassin. Foreign Office April 14. 1921".

19 Read 1990, 99; Holmes 1993, 127–130.

ized expeditions along the river Volga on the steamboat *Krasnaya Zvezda* with the purpose of distributing atheist propaganda.<sup>20</sup>

The Narkompros based its ideas on the educational concepts of the enlightenment, but these encountered disapproval from the communist youth. The Communist Youth Organization, the Komsomol, had, moreover, an interest in this field and regarded the Narkompros as too soft in relation to the educational policy of the Soviet state. The struggle between the two for control over antireligious education had many manifestations during the 1920s. Debates on antireligious or “non-religious” education were perhaps the most visible manifestations of this conflict, but these constituted only part of the constant battle between these two fronts within the ruling regime over antireligious policy. On one side there were “doves” who wanted to use conciliatory methods in the antireligious battle, while on the other there were “hawks”, ideologically-motivated Bolsheviks who wanted to get rid of both capitalist society and religion at once.<sup>21</sup>

## 2. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE CONFLICT OF DIFFERENT BELIEFS

As a result of the victorious October Revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks set up the first Soviet government, the Sovnarkom, to rule Russia and transform it into a socialist society. The Sovnarkom was theoretically subordinated to the Congress of Soviets and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets, the VTsIK, but this relation proved later to be only a formality and the Bolsheviks acted independently regardless of democratic procedures. Nonetheless, the new government was still very weak. Petrograd was vulnerable to possible German attack and the whole of Russian society was on the verge of collapse. The weak Bolshevik regime was compelled to rule primarily by issuing decrees. Earlier land and peace decrees had already given them authority over the peasant masses. According to Trotsky, the decrees the Sovnarkom enacted during the first months of the new Soviet regime, totalling more than 600, were intended not simply for conventional legislative purposes.

\*\*\*\*\*  
20 ORTs, 48; Fitzpatrick 1970, 175–187, 244–255; McNeal 1973, 187–192, 196–198, 201–202. According to Christopher Read, the Glavpolitprosvet created sub-organs to deal with the theatre, fine arts, literature, photography and cinematography, but he does not mention antireligious work. Read 1990, 171–172.

21 Fitzpatrick 1979, 12, 20–22; Walters 1993, 4.

They were also an effective part of Soviet propaganda. Lenin personally hoped that these revolutionary laws would remain as models for future revolutionary generations if the Bolshevik government were to be crushed by reactionary forces.<sup>22</sup>

Church-state relations were tense from the beginning as the land decree of 1917 had confiscated all the land belonging to the ROC together with that of other major landowners. Of course, in many places this decree only reinforced the existing situation; peasants had during the autumn of 1917 already taken over land on their own initiative. This act, nevertheless, effectively demolished the ROC's economic base and embittered senior church leaders. The Bolshevik solution to the agrarian question had in any event aroused mixed reaction within the ROC. In some places local "white" clergy had co-operated with the peasantry, but in other areas the general iconoclasm and disturbances of autumn 1917 had engulfed both churches and clergy.<sup>23</sup>

The second significant blow dealt against the church was the "Declaration of the rights of the peoples of Russia", an act which abolished the special privileges based on nationality or religion. Later in November, the Sovnarkom announced the confiscation of all monasteries, theological seminaries, academies and schools. Furthermore, the new ruling regime published laws on civil marriage, divorce and the secularized registration of the population.<sup>24</sup> These legislative measures, together with the news of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, greatly annoyed the leadership of the Orthodox church. The ROC had, after all, just gained independence from an autocratic state, convoked a Sobor, and elected its own Patriarch. Mutual suspicions between church and government gradually increased and the confiscation of the printing house of the Holy Synod by the new regime strained relations to breaking point.<sup>25</sup>

The background to these relations was complicated. Although both camps had their moderates who wanted to avoid open conflict, there were also militants on both sides who were ready to escalate the situation. In the eyes of the Bolsheviks, the ROC was a former ally of the Imperial throne and belonged to the category of class enemy. The new regime was especially attentive to the political activity of the church. The sympathies which church leaders showed, for example, towards the imprisoned royal family aroused deep suspicion. This

\*\*\*\*\*  
22 Trotsky 1990 (1930) II, 65–67, 79, 123–124; Carr 1985 I, 125, 355. See also Boiter 1987, 105.

23 DSV I, 17–20; Simon 1974, 28; Keep 1976, 186–199, 388–392.

24 DSV I, 39–41, 210–211, 247–249; SU I, 131.

25 Curtiss 1953, 37–42; Fletcher 1971, 22. See also Evtuhov 1991, 497–498, 511.



ideological antagonism was deepened further by the general chaos and public disturbances. For example, just after the Bolshevik revolution undisciplined soldiers killed a certain arch-priest Ioann Kochurov in Tsarskoe Selo inside his own church. However, these acts of violence were not always directed primarily against the ROC. In many cases, iconoclastic radicals whom the revolution had elevated to a position of leadership did not distinguish between palaces, universities, schools or churches.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, formal relations between the new government and the ROC remained undefined, although the Soviet government was preparing for the separation of church and state. The situation was exacerbated suddenly when at the beginning of 1918 the new Soviet commissar for social affairs, A.M. Kollontai (1872–1952), attempted to confiscate the Aleksandr Nevsky monastery in Petrograd for the homeless and invalids. The monks refused to hand the monastery over to the Soviet authorities and as a result Kollontai asked the Kronstadt marines to take it by force. This attempt failed as the monks were able to summon the civilian population to their aid by ringing the bells. In the ensuing chaos one monk was killed and several demonstrators were wounded.<sup>27</sup>

Kollontai's attempt to take over the Aleksandr Nevsky monastery on her own initiative occurred at a politically explosive time, as peace negotiations were still going on with Imperial Germany and Soviet Petrograd was threatened if negotiations failed. Although the Soviet government made an unsuccessful attempt to cancel Kollontai's operation, the damage had been done. For example, Bonch-Bruевич publicly announced that he was not an enemy of the Church and even said that he would give his protection to the announced church demonstration which might arise out of this incident. As a response to these incidents, the ROC organized a religious demonstration<sup>28</sup> against Soviet power and the newly-elected Patriarch Tikhon (Vasily Ivanovich Belavin, 1865–1925) invited believers and the clergy to organize the people to defend the church from future attacks. Moreover, the leaders of other religious organizations also expressed their indignation at the Aleksandr Nevsky monastery incident.<sup>29</sup>

Bolshevik newspapers responded angrily to Tikhon's announcement. For example on 28 January 1918 I.I. Skvortsov–Stepanov (1870–

\*\*\*\*\*  
26 Stites 1989, 62–64, 70–76; Alekseev 1991, 23.

27 Kollontai 1974, 331–335; Clements 1980, 131–133; Farnsworth 1980, 100–101.

28 Curtiss 1953, 48–49; Schapiro 1965, 85–86.

29 Curtiss 1953, 49–50; Regelson 1977, 226–227. See also AGMIR f.2, op.23, d.23–25.



1928), an active Bolshevik propagandist against religion and a prominent participant in philosophical debates, described Tikhon in a newspaper article with such epithets as “High priest”, “Nero”, “Caligula”, “Hannah”, “Caiaphas” and accused him of trying to initiate a civil war.<sup>30</sup> Yaroslavsky also attacked Tikhon in the press by drawing on biblical proverbs and declaring that the “black ravens” who defend monasteries were worried only because they knew that there would be an end to “idling and the sweet life”. He ended his article with a warning that these “doomed black ravens could not save the bourgeois class from peril”.<sup>31</sup>

But despite this name-calling and invective, the Soviet regime did not interfere with the religious demonstration, which brought thousands of people onto the streets of Petrograd. This is quite surprising when we consider that the Bolsheviks had just disbanded the Constitutional Assembly and had suppressed those protesters who a few days prior to this had attempted to defend this body. There are some obvious explanations for this. Firstly there was a divergence of opinion inside the Soviet coalition government. According to E.H. Carr, some senior Soviet officials did not like the idea of getting involved in a religious war with the ROC and denied that they were persecuting religion as such. The idea of a post-revolutionary “bloody Sunday” was understandably not attractive to the Soviet leaders. In addition, the Bolsheviks at the time were in a coalition government with the Left-SRs and the latter’s representatives in the government underlined the importance of respecting the rights of the church. Another reason was perhaps that, as Barbara Evans Clements has pointed out, Lenin was displeased by Kollontai’s hasty and unauthorized actions.<sup>32</sup>

Nonetheless, the prestige of Soviet power was at stake. The “monastery incident” had placed the ROC and Soviet power on a collision course and this, no doubt, also intensified future Soviet religious policy legislation. Right after Tikhon’s anathema and the subsequent disturbances the Soviet government issued a decree, signed by Kollontai on 20 January 1918, which declared that the government would halt all financial aid to all religious organizations. Simultaneously it issued another decree entitled Concerning freedom of conscience, ecclesiastical and religious organizations. The Sovnarkom had been preparing for the separation of church and state since

30 IPSS, 186–187. “Поповский подход”.

31 YI, 13–14. “Черные вороны”.

32 Clements 1980, 131–133; Carr 1985 I, 135; Alekseev 1991, 40. See also YI, 15. “Тяжелое оскорбление”; YIII, 6–7. “Ко всем гражданам”; Kollontai 1974, 331–335.

December 1917, with a committee made up of members such as the expert on legal matters P.I. Stuchka (1865–1932), A.V. Lunacharsky, professor of law M.A. Reisner (1868–1928), P.A. Krasikov and former priest M.V. Galkin (Gorev). The final decree, which was personally corrected and supervised by Lenin, was enacted on 23 January 1918.<sup>33</sup> The tensions were reflected in the text of this decree. As John S. Curtiss has commented, in publishing this legislative act the new regime “established the principle of the completely secular state, made religion a private matter, and deprived all religious bodies of their property, their legal status, right to maintain schools and subsidies from the government.”<sup>34</sup>

72

The original draft of this decree had proposed that religion should be a “private matter”. This paragraph was not, however, included in the final and official version of the decree – Lenin had personally deleted it. It seems most likely that in doing so he wanted in the short term to avoid legal debates about the word “private”. Nevertheless, Lenin believed that in the long term the revolution would fuse together the private and public spheres of life. His ambiguous model was the example of the Paris Commune, which had liberated the state and the educational system from the harmful “opium of the people”. The final version of this decree was entitled: “Concerning the separation of church and state and the separation of school and church”.<sup>35</sup> This law resembled to some extent the law of the separation of church and state enacted in France in 1905. The difference between these two laws lay in their interpretation. The Soviet decree, and especially its implementation, endangered the whole existence of the church as a social institution. This was understandable when we consider that the Soviet judicial system was not meant to conform with the formal or the bourgeois understanding of legality.<sup>36</sup>

The pre-revolutionary party programme of 1903, and especially the minimum version, had emphasized the importance of democratic reforms and getting rid of the autocracy. But once the Bolsheviks had

33 SU I, 260–261; Pospelovsky 1987, 156. Compare DSV I, 371 and 371–374. See also Alekseev 1991, 28–29, 39.

34 Curtiss 1953, 46.

35 See *Izvestiya*, 21 January 1918, No. 16 (280).

36 DSV I, 371–374; PSS 32, 154–155; *Izvestiya*, 12 January 1918, No. 8 (272); Synowich 1987, 308. The difference between Western socialists and Russian Bolsheviks is striking concerning this question. For example, Otto Bauer, the Austrian socialist leader and an eager initiator of the separation of church and state in Austria, questioned the aggressive Bolshevik attitude towards religion and their efforts to revise the slogan: “religion is a private matter”. McLellan 1987a, 83–84. Concerning the French situation after the 1905 separation, see McManners 1972, 166–167.

achieved power, the whole pre-revolutionary minimum programme and the earlier religious policy demands of that programme became obsolete. Instead of formal legislation the “separation decree” was aimed at pushing the church both politically and economically to the margins of Soviet society. The situation after the Revolution thus nullified the premises of the pre-revolutionary programme and as a result distinctions between state and party were now artificial.<sup>37</sup>

As Lenin had maintained in *State and Revolution*, the dictatorship of the proletariat was a higher form of state. This also implied that, in his understanding, theoretical distinctions between different state powers would become outdated and the question of the state’s neutrality would become obsolete; the state would belong to the workers.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the Soviet power structure presupposed that Bolshevik party leaders would occupy the seats in the Sovnarkom and that all political problems would be solved primarily at the level of the party.

The senior leaders of the ROC soon realized the political challenge of this decree and the convoked Sobor declared that it constituted a direct attack on the ROC in the name of liberty of conscience and announced that those who would be responsible for implementing the decree would be anathematized and excommunicated from the flock of believers.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, there was much inconsistency between theory and practice in the implementation of the decree. Due to the serious political situation and the divergence of opinion among the Soviet leaders, the practical implementation was at first mild, as was the whole introduction of the Soviet system from the beginning. Although waves of anarchy swept through Russia, the Bolshevik leaders were at the beginning quite moderate in their actions and moved only slowly after the revolution. For example, the confiscation of industry was initially both punitive in nature as well as unco-ordinated.<sup>40</sup>

The moderate introduction of the separation decree reflected the weak nature of the Bolshevik regime. It had in fact no means at its disposal to see its decrees implemented. The military threat from Germany was so intense at the time that even in the “separation decree”

37 Paul B. Anderson and Trevor Beeson have interpreted the religious policy of the Soviet era by examining these pre-revolutionary distinctions. However, their view that the Bolshevik party made a distinction between the attitude of state and party may lead to misleading conclusions in the post-revolutionary period. Compare Anderson 1944, 59–61; Beeson 1974, 32–33. See AK, 10–11.

38 Pipes 1980, 243–246.

39 Curtiss 1953, 55–56.

40 Deutscher 1967, 219; Carr 1985 II, 66–73. See also, PSS 37, 139. “VI Всероссийский чрезвычайный съезд советов рабочих, крестьянских, казачьих и красноармейских депутатов”.

the government was obliged to recognize that if military units wanted to maintain their priests they could do so at their own expense. The best example of this coexistence was the convening of the Sobor of the ROC in the Kremlin during the first months of Soviet power without interference from the authorities.<sup>41</sup>

This relatively peaceful enactment of the separation decree was done at the expense of apathy among the population. The official NKVD investigation shows that people in general accepted news of the separation decree with resignation, although the ROC leaders sought to mobilize people to resist the decree.<sup>42</sup> These plans failed because the Bolsheviks thwarted all attempts to resist their authority and, moreover, because the majority of the people were struggling with the general chaos gripping the country. Furthermore, in the case of open resistance, Soviet officials acted mercilessly and suppressed disturbances with the use of armed force. For example, in the Vitebsk district local officials sentenced five people to death for rioting against this decree. These penalties were subsequently commuted to jail sentences but this incident reveals how Soviet power was already able to control the situation. As a Soviet official from the Arkhangelsk district suggested, one possible explanation for this passive reaction to the separation decree was perhaps the fact that at the same time as the Soviet regime passed the decree it showed “foresight in guaranteeing freedom of belief for every cult”. On this point, Western scholars concur. For example, John S. Curtiss has remarked that one reason for the gradual and calm introducing of the separation decree was the fact that Soviet power “avoided a head-on collision with the church”. We may conclude that the general mood of the Russian population could perhaps be best described as submissive. Or, as we see from I.V. Got’e’s (1873–1943) memoirs, some members of the intelligentsia even hoped that the separation decree would renew the ROC’s spiritual well-being.<sup>43</sup> This conciliatory approach was in line with the relatively cautious Bolshevik policy of 1917 and early 1918. Furthermore in early 1918 the Bolsheviks were looking forward to a “breathing-space” and a truce with their class enemies. The period of the Red Terror lay further ahead.

41 SU I, 249; Schapiro 1965, 98–99; Hagen 1990, 21, 36–39.

42 GARF f.3431, op.1, d.550 “Протокол №2. Заседания 27 января 1918г. В II час утра в Епархиальном Доме”.

43 For examples of this, see GARF f.393, op.27, d.1387, ll. 17–24, l. 33, ll. 38–39. Curtiss 1953, 57; Got’e 1988, 17, 103. On how Soviet officials explained the introduction of the “separation decree”, see *Izvestiya*, 1 February 1919, No. 23 (575).



### 3. THE “BREATHING-SPACE” AND THE CONSTITUTION OF 1918

This short “breathing-space” constituted a unique era on the eve of civil war. The Bolshevik party was restricted mainly to journalistic debates with its adversaries. It had not yet systematically suppressed the opposition and the press could work relatively undisturbed. The motivation behind this policy was the simple fact that the Bolsheviks were painfully aware of the destructive anarchistic forces rife in Russian society and could see the first signs of civil war. The new regime needed stabilization. Before the revolution, communists had inspired anarchy among the masses, but they were now anxious to calm the situation. After the peace of Brest-Litovsk in December 1917, the communists were convinced that they would stay in power but there was, nonetheless, a danger that iconoclastic forces would swallow them up if order was not restored. As Lenin put it at the 7th party congress, the ruling regime needed new tactics for winning time and a political breathing-space.<sup>44</sup>

75

According to Vladimir N. Brovkin, this “breathing-space” period commenced on 29 March 1918 with the publication of an interview with Lunacharsky in *Novaya Zhizn*, a newspaper of the opposition intelligentsia. Lunacharsky stressed that the new regime was ready to discuss with “creative forces” and announced that Soviet power was so stable that it did not need to use coercive methods to accomplish its purposes. Lenin himself proposed that reconciliation with the Russian bourgeoisie could be achieved by adopting a kind of state capitalism and by utilizing the services of the former owner-class. This relaxation towards class enemies can be detected clearly in his relatively moderate language from this time on. Former “parasites” were now termed “merchants” or “specialists”, whom communists could learn from when performing their duties. During this “pre-NEP” period the Soviet government even started negotiations with former factory owners on industrial concessions.<sup>45</sup>

This new policy also presented the possibility for a detente between the ROC and the new rulers. Representatives of the Sovnarkom hinted that there was the opportunity for an agreement between the Soviet state and the ROC. Senior officials of the ROC realized the importance of these negotiations and authorized a commission with such church

44 PSS 36, 251–252. “Заседание ВЦИК”; KPSS II, 30–32; Brovkin 1987, 77–78.

45 PSS 36, 255–258, 271–273. “Заседание ВЦИК”; Brovkin 1987, 79–80. See also Chase 1990, 14–15; Trukan 1994, 50.



figures as A.D. Samarin (1866–1932) and professor N.D. Kuznetsov to conduct these talks. During these sessions with representatives of the Sovnarkom, church officials gained the impression that the Soviet regime was ready to rethink its separation decree or even to reverse it.<sup>46</sup>

Samarin gave a vivid picture of these negotiations in his report to the Sobor. He had expected to see the head of the Soviet government in the negotiations but the representatives of the Sovnarkom apologized for Lenin not being able to attend these meetings in person. Nevertheless, the Soviet delegation was impressive, even if Lenin did not participate. On the Soviet side were eminent Bolsheviks such as Bonch-Bruевич, Kursky and Lenin's brother-in-law, M.T. Elizarov (1862–1919). The general atmosphere was almost cordial and both sides used very moderate language. Elizarov even denied that the Sovnarkom had adopted a hostile attitude towards the ROC. Instead, he argued the Bolsheviks treated all religions, including the ROC, benevolently but would not sanction ecclesiastical influence within the Soviet state.<sup>47</sup>

76

It is obvious that with these negotiations with class enemies the ruling regime was attempting to pacify its religiously-minded population by emphasizing that communists were not really persecuting or harassing the church. This conciliatory tone was characteristic of official Soviet propaganda at that time. For example, the Bolshevik propagandist N.M. Lukin (N. Antonov) pointed out in an article that the ROC had forgotten the teachings of the first Christians and had become a tool of the exploiters. The church, when allied with the state, had been able to grab riches from the people. The Bolsheviks also pointed out that the ROC had persecuted other denominations and served the interests of the former state. Therefore people should not believe rumours that the new regime was persecuting the church. On the contrary, every church, not just the ROC, could now conduct its religious life as it wished.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the cordial tone in previous negotiations and Bolshevik proclamations, the mutual distrust and suspicion between these opposing sides was profound. The majority of representatives of the Sobor did not want to make any compromises, especially on issues with regard to secular marriage and divorce. Moreover, the negotiations failed to reach an agreement on the legal status of confiscated church property. Many clergymen clearly saw no reasons for moderating their

46 GARF1 f.3431, op.1, d.103 (1), l. 36; GARF1 f.3431, op.1, d.105 (1), l. 119. See also GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.744 "Протокол Александр Димитриевич Самарина".

47 GARF1 f.3431, op.1, d.105 (1), ll. 71–77.

48 Lukin 1918, 1–2, 2–15, 25–32.

demands, believing as they did that the new regime could collapse at any moment. On the other hand, the Soviet regime was also unwilling to make any substantial concessions to its opponents.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, these negotiations were, despite the mutual suspicions, the first actual attempt to achieve a *modus vivendi* or peaceful coexistence between the new regime and the ROC. The significance of this “breathing-space” and these negotiations lies in the fact that the atheist ruling regime was now for the first time adjusting itself to Russian reality. The ROC and other religious organizations were still an important part of Russian society, and in order to calm the political situation in Russia the ruling regime attempted to compromise with the former state church. One concrete result of these negotiations can be seen in the Soviet legislation of August 1918 which gave specific instructions for the separation of church and state, but also attempted to avoid offending the religious feelings of the “working masses”.<sup>50</sup>

The question of how honestly Soviet leaders attempted to find a peaceful solution with the ROC is of course difficult to answer. It is conceivable that from Lenin’s point of view the whole campaign was only a tactical measure to win time. Lenin had, it should be recalled, used the tactics of “pseudo-negotiation” when the Menshevik-dominated railway union went on strike after the October Revolution. The Soviet government was obliged to negotiate with the strikers as a diplomatic measure and Lenin spun out these negotiations until such time as the new government was able to organize a pro-government railway union. On the other hand, it must be said that the task of negotiating with the ROC was given to Bolsheviks like Bonch-Bruевич, for whom compromise would perhaps have been acceptable. This reflected, as we have seen earlier, a divergence of opinion inside the Soviet government itself; some leaders were more open to compromise, while others disliked any signs of compromise with class enemies. The so-called Left-Communist group<sup>51</sup> opposed any ideological wavering and insisted that the building of socialism was impossible without the destruction of enemies both outside and inside the Soviet state.<sup>52</sup>

For Lenin ideological compromise was out of the question, but as a master of political intrigue he was ready to use any means at his

\*\*\*\*\*  
49 GARF f.3431, op.1, d.105 (1), l. 77; GARF f.3431, op.1, d.550 “Протокол No:2. Заседания 27 января 1918г. В II час утра в Епархиальном Доме”; Curtiss 1953, 57–59; Blane 1971, 307–308. See also PSS 35, 283–284. “Третий Всероссийский Съезд Советов Р.С.и К. д”.

50 SURa, 685; ORTs, 82–84.

51 For more on Left Communists, see Sakwa 1992, 418–425.

52 Schapiro 1965, 130–135; Carr 1985 I, 188–189; Brovkin 1987, 21–27.

disposal to secure Soviet power. This flexible approach was based on his unique political pragmatism. As he explained to party workers in Moscow in November 1918, the party should behave in accordance with the political situation. If the petty bourgeoisie resisted, the new regime should crush them mercilessly. But if the bourgeoisie wanted to co-operate with the Soviet system, the communists should not reject their overtures.<sup>53</sup>

At the same time as the Bolsheviks were trying to appease the bourgeoisie and moderate their policies, Soviet legislative work was continuing. Lenin himself did not personally participate in drawing up the 1918 Soviet Constitution but he supervised the work and saw it as an opportunity to record the achievements of the revolution.<sup>54</sup> This Constitution abandoned the concept of the neutrality of state power and the idea that in regard to religion a state could guarantee the basic rights of the individual. The rights of the individual were dependent on the class to which that person belonged. For example, when workers gained political freedom they no longer needed any protection, while the class of former exploiters did not deserve any civil rights. The latter were “lishentsy” (deprived people) with the rights only of second-class people. Moreover, the Constitution of 1918 did not recognize any concept of “individual” freedom, which smacked of “bourgeois” values. According to the general communist view, only a new society, without a contradiction between labour and capital, could guarantee freedom for the people. Freedom of religion would, it was claimed, be best assured by implementing the separation of church and state.<sup>55</sup>

So although the 1918 Constitution confirmed freedom of religion for every citizen, in reality only the representatives of the working class had actual possibilities to exercise that freedom. For example, the right to publish, the right to vote, the right to armed service and the right to food rations were granted only to the formerly exploited people. Businessmen, people who had hired labour, priests, monks and the mentally ill were left without basic rights by the Soviet jurisdiction. So when the Constitution established the “right to conduct religious and atheist propaganda” it represented Bolshevik propaganda more than actual religious freedom. In practice, only the representatives of the ruling regime had the means to express their views publicly.<sup>56</sup>

53 PSS 37, 231–233. “Собрание партийных работников Москвы. Доклад об отношении пролетариата к мелкобуржуазной демократии”.

54 Unger 1981, 2–3, 10–13, 20–22.

55 DSV II, 552–554; Unger 1981, 14–20. See also the collection of protocols of the Constitution committee: GARF f.6980, op.1.

56 Trifonov 1975, 158; Unger 1981, 13–17.

This inconsistency between propaganda and reality was clearly visible in Lenin's speech to the inhabitants of Krasnaya Presnya on 26 July 1918 when he once used the term "private matter", an expression he had earlier condemned, to express the attitude of the Soviet regime to religion. Lenin almost portrayed himself as an advocate of civil liberties when he declared that, in accordance with Soviet law, everyone may believe or may not, but that the state would be separate from religion.<sup>57</sup>

This "breathing-space" period did not last long. In early autumn 1918 the Soviet regime suppressed the newspapers of the political opposition and crushed its attempts to gain power by democratic means. The Soviet leaders, despite differences among themselves, were now willing to sanction anti-Bolshevik soviets. The masses, which had been pro-government until then were now more and more turning to the opposition and expressions of political antagonism took on even a pro-autocratic or religious form. The seeds of civil war were now being sown and after the summer of 1918 both foreign and domestic enemies intervened to challenge Soviet power.<sup>58</sup>

79

#### 4. THE CIVIL WAR AND THE "ISOLATION OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ENEMY"

The outbreak of the civil war made the prolonging of the "breathing-space" strategy impossible. This became obvious when on 30 August 1918 F.E. Kaplan (Roidman, 1890-1918) attempted to assassinate Lenin. The Bolshevik leaders responded to this violent act by organizing their own Red Terror. In order to preserve its power, the new ruling regime instigated a systematic campaign of terror against potential class-enemies: officers, businessmen, the intelligentsia and the clergy.<sup>59</sup>

The peculiarity of the Russian civil war (1917-1921) lay in the fact that it did not escalate at once. Nevertheless, initial hostilities in time expanded into a full-scale war that ultimately caused the ruin of the whole of society. The new government had to abandon plans to moderate the advance towards socialism and instead resorted to

57 PSS 36, 536, "Речь на митинге в Пресненском районе 26 июля 1918".

58 Brovkin 1987, 259, 294-296; Figes 1989, 248.

59 Leggett 1986, 67.



organizing the economy on communist principles – so-called War Communism. The nature of this policy was simple. During the course of the civil war the Bolsheviks finally nationalized all the means of production. In the countryside they introduced emergency measures in order to acquire enough grain for city inhabitants and the Red Army. This gave rise to many problems, especially in the countryside where the Bolshevik method of obtaining grain, the “surplus-appropriation system”, generated little enthusiasm among the peasants.

However, with regard to religious policy the period of civil war was something of a paradox. Although the waves of violence and destruction by iconoclastic elements touched the ROC and other religious organizations, their basic functions could be performed relatively freely. Even if thousands of bishops, priests, monks and nuns perished as a result of anarchy and the Red Terror, the general organization of the ROC survived intact. The antagonism between former state church leaders and the Bolshevik regime was of course as great as ever. Naturally enough, the leaders of the ROC were aware that the restoration of the old order would serve their interests.

This paradox is even more evident when we examine the activity of the Patriarch. Although the leadership of the church had lost its political platform when the Holy Sobor was disbanded through lack of resources in August 1918, Tikhon could openly criticize the Soviet regime. In his message of 26 October 1918 Tikhon accused the Soviet regime of instigating general anarchy and violence. The promises which the new regime had given had not been fulfilled after one year of Bolshevik rule. Tikhon went on to say that the promised freedom had not been extended to the ROC and the representatives of the church were paying the price of freedom of speech with their lives. The political anathema of the Patriarch concluded in the accusation that the Soviet regime was totally responsible for the degeneration of Russia. This message caused an angry response from the Soviet side, but significantly the Patriarch was not touched.<sup>60</sup>

This incident perhaps best illustrates the general line of Bolshevik religious policy during the civil war. During this struggle for survival the Bolsheviks did not want to set religious organizations against the new regime. As Lenin explained to an assembly of women workers on 19 November 1918, the party should handle religious prejudices with extreme care and avoid offending religious feelings. In doing so Lenin was trying not to provoke a religious war or to embitter those people on whose support the Soviet regime was so dependent. He stressed that the

60 Curtiss 1953, 64–65; Regelson 1977, 251–255.



Bolsheviks should carry out their antireligious fight with caution and conduct it mainly against the root causes of religious prejudices, “poverty” and “darkness”. This “cautious attitude” was an often-repeated theme in Bolshevik literature. For example, I.I. Skvortsov–Stepanov recalled that during its early period of power the Soviet regime was very slow to resort to repressive methods against its ecclesiastical enemies. Or as *The ABC of Communism* (the popular catechism of the 1919 party programme) put it, this cautious approach was justified as a precautionary measure so as not to revitalize or mobilize the almost moribund links between religion and nationality.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, the ruling regime no doubt did not forget Tikhon’s religious protest which, from the Bolshevik point of view, differed only in its nature from the armed resistance of the White generals. Leading Bolsheviks and Soviet organs were constantly reporting on the suspicious political activity of the Orthodox clergy and their alliance with “black-hundred” groups. The members of the ruling regime were especially alarmed by rumours that monks and clergy were organizing “brotherhoods” in order to resist Bolshevik power. According to some reports, clergy were actively attacking the Soviet regime while at the same time the majority of priests were “hand in glove” with the counter-revolutionaries.<sup>62</sup>

So it may be noted that the political terror, which the Bolsheviks used without hesitation against their political enemies, did not touch the ROC or the Patriarch directly. Instead of using terror against the former state church the Soviet leaders had chosen to isolate the ROC politically. The “isolation policy” expresses clearly the political objective of the Soviet regime during the civil war.<sup>63</sup> The content of this policy was quite simple, as P.A. Krasikov explained in the NKYust’s periodical *Revolyutsiya i Tserkov*: the more the forces of reaction

61 RTsKhIDNI f.150, op.1, d.62 “Церковь и государство в СССР (1923)”; PSS 37, 186. “Речь на II Всероссийском Съезде работниц 19 ноября 1918 г.”; АК, 201.

62 GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.731 “Заведующему отделом. Докладная записка 25 сентября 1918”, “Заведующему отделом. Докладная записка 12 декабря 1918”.

63 This term can be detected also from later Soviet researchers. For example, I. Trifonov has remarked that one of the antireligious tactics of the secret police was to isolate the ROC from its connections with the forces of reaction. Trifonov 1960, 31, 33. See also Kenez 1985, 67–69. According to Aleksandr Nezhnyi the political line of the secret police during the civil war was to “discredit” the clergy. *Russkaya Mysl*, 20–26 January 1994, No. 4012. Anyway, according to a certain leader of the Cheka, T. P. Samsonov (1888–1956), the Soviet security apparatus attempted at that time force the high clergy to discredit to religion. NR, 34. “Письмо заведующего секретным отделом ВЧК Т.П. Самсонова Ф.Э. Дзержинскому 4. декабря 1920”.

attempted to preserve religious beliefs, together with the old order, the more the Soviet regime fought against them. According to him, Soviet power was not fighting against the churches as such. As a matter of fact, all "honest elements" in the ROC and among the sectarians who had abandoned mysticism and adopted communist tendencies supported the Soviet regime and its work.<sup>64</sup>

The roots of this "isolation policy" and its ideological justification derived from the 8th party congress and the II party programme of 1919. This congress reflected the moods and methods of "War Communism"; in the middle of civil war there seemed to be no room for compromise. This changed atmosphere is reflected in the II party programme. As Lenin, the main architect of this programme, explained, religious propaganda had connections to capital. The task of the party was to destroy totally the ties between the exploitative classes and organizations for disseminating religious propaganda.<sup>65</sup> In the congress this paragraph did not arouse any particular public debate among communists. Only P.A. Krasikov wanted to revise the suggested version and complained that the draft did not contain any Marxist theoretical explanations concerning religion. He also remarked that the last sentence of this paragraph concerning the need to avoid hurting the feelings of believers might lead to misunderstanding. Believers could say that the separation of church and state or church and school was hurting their feelings. His remarks were not even discussed and in the end the 8th congress accepted only one additional sentence to the programme. L.B. Kamenev explained that this particular amendment was inserted in order to underline the fact that the disappearance of religion would come about as a result of communism. Consequently, the best way to fight against religion was to fight for communism.<sup>66</sup>

According to the accepted programme and its 13th paragraph, the Bolshevik party would not simply be satisfied with implementing the separation of church and state. The final target of the party was to totally liberate the masses from the prejudices of religion. The assumption that religious organizations were rooted in the bourgeois class was characteristic of Bolshevik thinking. For example, according to Lenin, the exploiters used every possible means to infiltrate every level of society. On the one hand, the political machinery of the bourgeois state, the educational system and religious organizations were all interacting with each other. On the other hand, the bourgeois

\*\*\*\*\*  
64 Krasikov 1920, 6-7; *Revolutsiya i Tserkov*, 1919, No. 1, 2-5.

65 PSS 38, 118. "Проект программы РКП(б). Пункт программы в области религиозных отношений".

66 S8, 61-62, 287; *Izvestiya*, 27 February 1919, No. 45 (597).

class utilized all the “non-political” organs of the bourgeois state such as the educational system, private ownership and the churches in order to defraud the people and to stabilize its power. This belief was used to justify the separation of the church and school. The ruling regime was convinced that enlightenment and education were weapons of the class struggle. Science and the liberated educational system now had the task of revealing “clerical cheating and superstition”. Religion and the humanities were the main victims of the Bolshevik educational system. The new schools were to become places where the children of workers would grow up as the technicians of a new world. They would be free and happy without the burden of “bookish knowledge”. Once more, the accepted party programme warned against harming the feelings of believers.<sup>67</sup>

The II party programme reflected also the optimism of the Bolshevik leaders concerning the possible “withering away” of religion. The ABC of Communism was convinced that religion was only a “prejudice” which would die with the advent of a communist society. As a possible method of speeding up the decline of religion, this catechism proposed conducting antireligious propaganda on a large scale.<sup>68</sup>

This religious policy line, which the party adopted during the civil war, resembled the attitude which the ruling regime adopted towards the neutral intelligentsia and the loyal political opposition. The former “exploitative class” was by now crushed, but to some extent the loyal opposition was allowed to carry on working in the Soviet organs. In accordance with Lenin’s scheme, the loyal opposition and neutral intelligentsia were to be allowed to continue their work in Soviet organs and, as Lenin sarcastically added, Soviet power was not so anxious to know what they privately believed. The bourgeoisie could believe in a Constitutional Assembly, or in “god” for all that matter, but engaging in political activities was strictly out of the question.<sup>69</sup> The second and much more practical reason for this cautious attitude towards religious organizations was the fact that the ruling regime was dependent on the peasantry. The soldiers of the Red Army were overwhelmingly of peasant origin, and thus more or less religiously-minded people. The Soviet regime was particularly keen to appease the much-feared

67 AK, 179, 197–199; Bukharin–Pozner; Bukharin 1918, 14–15; PSS 38, 95. “Проект программы РКП(б)”; PSS 41, 399–400. “Речь на Всероссийском совещании политпросветов губернских и уездных отделов народного образования 3 ноября 1920 г.”; S8, 330, 347. See also Zinoviev 1919, 9–10.

68 AK, 199–200.

69 PSS 38, 254. “Чрезвычайное заседание пленума Московского совета рабочих и красноармейских депутатов. Доклад о внешнем и внутреннем положении Советской Республики”.

Cossacks. In its declaration to the “Working Cossacks in the Don, Kuban, Terek, Ural, Siberia and Orenburg districts” the VII congress of the VTsIK stressed that Soviet power did not want to force Cossacks into communes and that it would not tolerate any slandering of churches or religion.<sup>70</sup>

Such was the political significance of the Russian peasantry that an Orthodox priest and future Renovationist leader, V.D. Kranitsky, suggested to the NKYust that the Soviet regime enlist peasant priests to serve in the Red Army. There is no doubt that in suggesting this Kranitsky wanted to show his loyalty towards the ruling regime, but it is nonetheless unjust to characterize Kranitsky as a “willing instrument in the hands of Tuchkov and the GPU”, as Philip Walters has done. Kranitsky’s motivation appears to have been to discredit the higher church leaders in the eyes of the Soviet regime. For example, as a representative of the “white” clergy, he reported to officials that church leaders were “fighting conspiratorially” and “under the banner of religion” against the revolution. This incident shows clearly how easily social contradictions and tensions between “white” and “black” clergy could be exploited by the ruling regime.<sup>71</sup>

The practical goal of the “isolation policy” was to encourage the loyal clergy and to persecute those ecclesiastical organizations and authors who were involved in anti-Bolshevik politics. In some particular cases Orthodox clergymen were more than willing to recognize the Bolshevik revolution. For example, the Archbishop of Omsk and Pavlovsk, Silvester, who had earlier in 1919 been a fierce anti-Bolshevik and a member of the White ecclesiastical administration, in 1920 declared his loyalty to the Soviet regime and explained that “the Lord gives power to whomsoever he chooses”.<sup>72</sup>

The secret police of Soviet power, the Cheka, used more discreet methods rather than brute force against its ecclesiastical class enemies, in some cases enticing clergymen to become collaborators. But this did not rule out the possibility of their using more brutal methods. Lenin even toyed with the idea of paying bounties to Ukrainian anarchist bands to liquidate resisting clergymen, considering it “an excellent plan”. The suggested price was 100 000 rubles for each priest killed.<sup>73</sup>

70 SSR, 140; Lewin 1985, 17–19.

71 Compare GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.795 “О направлении политики Советской власти в отношении к православной Российской Церкви” (12/VII 1919)”, “О службе православного духовенства в Красной Армии. 15/8-1919” and Walters 1991, 257. See also Freeze 1983, 472–473.

72 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180 “В редакцию 14. января 1920 г.”; RTRR, 50–51.

73 TTP I, 279; PSS 50, 143–144. “Телеграмма пензенскому губисполкому”. See also Dziak 1988, 22–23; Knight 1988, 12.



Potential leaders of ecclesiastical protests in particular were vigorously persecuted after the “breathing-space” came to an end. For example, the case of A.D. Samarin and N.D. Kuznetsov is a good illustration of this policy. These two authors had earlier conducted negotiations with the Soviet regime but in late 1919 they were arrested and charged with counter-revolutionary activity. The NKYust’s religious expert on the “Liquidation Commission”, I.A. Shpitsberg, announced that both these ecclesiastical authors were “active enemies of the worker-peasant revolution” and could not be left to go free. Despite petitions to Lenin and several international protests these men were condemned to death, but later their sentences were commuted to imprisonment.<sup>74</sup>

The Soviet justification for these harsh methods was based on the conviction that the “lishentsy” classes were spontaneous enemies of the people. As “former people” they were always under suspicion and when the ruling regime repressed them it was done in order to prevent or punish their “counter-revolutionary” activities.<sup>75</sup> The fundamental problem in defining the Bolshevik administrative methods during the civil war lies in the fact that local terror against churches or religion was in many cases sporadic by nature and unpredictable. The difference between non-political and political activity was quite narrow. For example, one Soviet commentator, N.M. Lukin, remarked already in 1918 in an article entitled “Churches and the state” that it was essential that the “enemies of the revolution” not be allowed to utilize churches for political sermons. Moreover, an overenthusiastic sermon might have been misinterpreted as a “political demonstration”. In addition in the conditions of civil war and the general chaos, Bolshevik terror tended to be “pre-emptive” in nature. All potential class enemies were in danger of being liquidated even before they became engaged in actual counter-revolutionary actions.<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, the public letter of Bonch-Bruevich to the Uniate Exarch in Russia, Leonid Ivanovich Fedorov (1879–1935), clarifies in more detail the nature of this policy. In his answer to Fedorov, Bonch-Bruevich denied that there was any divergence of opinion among the Bolsheviks with regard to religious policy. Bonch-Bruevich stated that the Soviet government was unanimous on this matter and that there were no discordant voices inside the ruling regime with regard to the separation of state and church. He also stressed that there was no hope of changing this line, but he nonetheless gave guarantees

74 GARF2 f. 353, op.3, d.744; “Справка”. “Заключение по делу N.386”, “Председателю Совета Народных Комиссариатов”; Curtiss 1953, 88.

75 Broido 1986, 30–34. See also *Revolutsiya i Tserkov*, 1919, No. 1, 2, 9.

76 Lukin 1918, 33; Pospelovsky 1988, 5–11.



that as long as clergymen were not involved in political struggles there would be no need for them to fear.<sup>77</sup> By means of the isolation policy the Bolsheviks tried to direct the activity of the church towards non-political goals and the performance of purely religious rites was allowed. For example, the Bolsheviks gave permission for religious rites to be conducted in the Kremlin during Easter 1919.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to this relatively tolerant attitude, Bolshevik religious policy also included objectives which caused confusion. The dismantling of the political influence of the ROC seemed to require the elimination of all public and political manifestations on the part of the church. In particular, the ruling regime was concerned about ecclesiastical parties or brotherhoods which might work as anti-Soviet bodies within Russia. Consequently, the NKYust's Eighth Department, together with the security organs, liquidated the so-called Christian Socialist Party<sup>79</sup> and conducted a decisive fight against monasteries.<sup>80</sup> The security organs in particular were concerned at the possibility of clergy achieving political influence in local Soviet organs. For example, the NKVD informed local organs that religious organizations should not be allowed to take part in elections nor should any ecclesiastical figures participate in Soviets. A directive that offertory collections were to be used only for religious and not for "speculative" purposes reveals how deeply officials suspected ecclesiastical organizations.<sup>81</sup>

The question of the fate of the monasteries along with the opening of the coffins of Orthodox saints constituted the most difficult religious policy problem of the civil war. The Bolshevik hostility towards monasteries can be explained by ideological reasons. The new rulers justified their attacks by calling monasteries "nests of counter-revolution". But there were also practical political justifications. Monasteries were difficult to supervise; they had, despite the NKYust's confiscations, maintained some economic resources. Especially after the 8th congress, this anti-monastery activity became more orchestrated and systematic actions aimed at disbanding monasteries received more authoritative support from Soviet leaders. Bukharin and E. A. Preobrazhensky (1886–1937) suggested opening ecclesiastical "mummies" as a good antireligious measure. Moreover, Lenin gave his wholehearted approval to this suggestion and personally ordered Luna-

77 BB I, 351–354. "Из письма священнику г-ну Леониду Федорову 31. марта 1919 г." See also Winter 1972, 24–25.

78 Curtiss 1953, 72, 80–82.

79 See, for example, GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.746.

80 See, for example, GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.771.

81 GARF1 f.393, op.27, d.1389, ll. 3, 44, 111.

charsky to turn monasteries near Moscow into homes for homeless orphans.<sup>82</sup>

Especially after the “breathing-space” and from the beginning of the civil war monasteries were in great danger as systematic efforts were made to close them down. As N.D. Kuznetsov remarked in his protest to Lenin, the attitude of Soviet power towards the monasteries and religion seemed to have become more and more hostile from the beginning of 1919. Professor Kuznetsov protested in particular that the NKYust was violating Soviet laws and accused officials like Shpitsberg of initiating this kind of activity.<sup>83</sup> As was the case with previous protests, this complaint had no effect on Soviet leaders. On the contrary, the MVD’s Ecclesiastical Department dispatched a special order to district (guberniya) level which stressed that monasteries should be turned to more “rational use”. This would seem to imply that a simple matter such as the shortage of suitable accommodation could be used to justify the liquidation of the monasteries.<sup>84</sup>

87

Many Bolsheviks held the view that opening the coffins of saints preserved in the monasteries was one of the most effective ways of undermining the position of the monasteries and the Orthodox faith. According to Russian church tradition, the body of a saint would not decompose. So in order to expose this belief Bolshevik officials organized special openings to which they invited doctors and priests as observers. Although records of these openings reveal how decomposed and even fake mummies caused embarrassment and loss of faith among believers, this activity was, nonetheless, not popular even among communists themselves. For example, the decision to open the coffin of Sergei of Radonezh was made on a vote of 15 in favour and 14 against. In addition, some local organs could modify these activities and take a different attitude towards harassing the ROC. For example, according to one source from Kashinsky uezd, local officials decided that the Soviet regime did not have any right to interfere in the life of religious organizations. Consequently, this local congress stressed that the opening of the coffins without political preparation could be harmful for the revolution.<sup>85</sup>

82 PSS 38, 522. “даты жизни и деятельности В.И. Ленина”; PSS 38, 535, PSS 51, 174. “А.В. Луначарскому”; АК, 200. See also Pospelovsky 1988, 10–15.

83 GARF2, f.353, op.3, d.744 “Преседателю Совета Народных Комиссаров”. See also Alekseev 1991, 82–83.

84 See GARF1, f.393, op.27, d.1390(3); GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.751, 751, 771. See also Curtiss 1953, 74–75.

85 The protocols for opening the coffin of Sergei of Radonezh on 2 April 1919. See: GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.731 “Протокол вскрытия мошей Сергия Радонежского II-го апреля 1919 года (14/4 1919)”; GARF1 f.5263, op.1, d.55(4) “Выписка из протокола N.10, 4-го Уездного Съезда Советов Кашинского уезда в городе Кашине Тверск. губ.”. See also Alekseev 1991, 81.

Nevertheless, the growing activity against the monasteries and the desecration of the remains of Orthodox saints embittered senior church leaders. On 2 April 1919 Patriarch Tikhon tried to appeal personally to Lenin to urge him to end this desecration of the saints. He also declared that if the Soviet regime did not stop this activity, the church would appeal to the people to defend the saints. In any event, the Patriarch's appeal did not have any effect and the damaging publicity from these revelations perhaps forced the Patriarch to submit. In an open letter of 8 October 1920 Tikhon declared that the ROC was not involved in any way in the civil war and stated that the church was neutral in relation to the opposition. In addition, he claimed that the ROC was not associated with any political interests.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, the Patriarch's appeal failed and exposing the "mummy-cult" became part of Soviet legislation on 25 August 1920.<sup>87</sup>

## 5. OTHER RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

In order to explore Bolshevik religious policy towards the Russian Orthodox Church and put it in perspective, we may contrast Soviet religious policy towards the ROC with that towards other religious organizations. In the early Soviet period, other religious organizations were not usually categorized together with that of the former autocracy, and due to their position as religions of national minorities or persecuted sects they were generally treated as victims of the former system. However, the separation decree was extended to them with regard to property and their legal status differed only in the practical implementation. For example, in Ukraine the separation decree was not promulgated until 22 January 1919 when the Soviet system in Ukraine became stable. In addition, this decree also offered the possibility of de-Russifying the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by building up Ukrainian "twenties", local parishes from below. Local communists even sought to undermine the power of the ROC in Ukraine by supporting "the Ukrainianization" of the ROC. However, when sup-

86 GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.766 "Председателю Совета Народных Комиссаров 10. мая 1920"; PSS 38, 522, 535; Regelson 1977, 256–259, 262–264. This same explanation was also used by N.D. Kuznetsov when he appealed to Lenin. See GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.744 "Председателю Совета Народных Комиссаров".

87 SU I, 353–354.

porters of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church organized themselves and this movement gained in popularity as a symbol of nationality local Soviet officials were alerted to the potential danger and condemned this movement.<sup>88</sup>

This “zig-zag” policy in Ukraine constitutes just one example of local modifications in Soviet religious policy. Moreover, combining nationality questions with religious issues complicated the problem. For example, in Eastern areas of the Soviet state this was acknowledged officially at the highest level of the party. As a letter dated 21 February 1920 from the Central Committee to all party committees and political sections stressed, questions of religion and nationality were partly fused together in the East and, consequently, Bolsheviks should take this into consideration when working with Eastern nationalities. So in practice Soviet religious policy towards the Moslem population was from the beginning implemented with care. For example, the Commissar of National Affairs, Stalin, combined nationality questions and the question of religion by appealing to people of Moslem origin by stressing their cultural-religious identity. In his appeal to the “Moslem workers of Russia and the East”, issued on 24 November 1917, Stalin described Moslems as victims of colonialism and allies of the Soviet system. This reflected the readiness of the Soviet authorities to make concessions to local peculiarities in order to maintain its power in the Eastern regions of Russia.<sup>89</sup>

The Bolshevik party was even ready to recognize a special section for Moslem communists in the RCP(b). On 17 January 1918 Stalin established a department within his commissariat devoted to work among the Moslem population. This modification of Bolshevik ideology leaves many questions open. Some contemporary researchers have denied the importance of the term “Moslem nation” when dealing with nationality problems in Soviet Russia. For example, Audrey Altstadt believes that the use of the above term...

confuses nationality with religion – raises religion to the level of the supreme, perhaps sole, motivating force for millions of diverse people...<sup>90</sup>

88 Bociurkiw 1991, 232–233, 235, 244–245; Alekseev 1991, 67. Bohdan Krawchenko has mentioned the rise of the Autocephalous Ukrainian Church in the 1920s, together with other factors, as a sign of growing Ukrainian political consciousness and identity. Krawchenko 1987, 68.

89 KPSS I, 146–147; SU I, 95–96; Pipes 1980, 156–157.

90 Altstadt 1992, 590–591.



Although her criticism is correct in the modern sense, it seems clear that in the early years the Bolsheviks preferred to use this term in preference to, for example, "eastern national communists". It was obvious that in making this exception the Bolsheviks wanted to establish socialism by delaying it until after the civil war. As a matter of fact, one of the leaders of the Moslem communist section was a representative of the Moslem clergy, Mullah Nur-Vakhitov (1885–1918), the first and only Soviet official who came from the ranks of the clergy. Nur-Vakhitov even succeeded in establishing an independent communist party in Kazakhstan. Later White reaction destroyed this party and resulted in the killing of local Moslem communists (including Nur-Vakhitov). But as a sign of moderation, when Soviet forces re-occupied these areas in 1919 one of their first acts was to open all mosques, religious schools and to reinforce the "sharia", Islamic law, as part of the local legal system.<sup>91</sup>

90

The motivation for integrating nationality policy with religion was obvious: Moscow wanted to stabilize its power in these regions. Lenin justified this by a Marxist analysis of the Eastern areas. Communists should act carefully and take into consideration their special circumstances, showing good will towards local autonomy. They should always bear in mind the historical situation; these nations were just becoming liberated from the yoke of feudalism and local communists should assist the emergence of democratic movements there. The question concerning the rights of Moslem clergy remained unresolved for a long time. Although they were opposed to Soviet religious ideology, the Moslem clergy were granted full political rights in these Eastern areas. Lenin himself briefly justified this by commenting that communists had no experience of the Moslem clergy as they had of Orthodox clergy. For reasons of political necessity the Bolsheviks conducted a conciliatory policy towards the Eastern areas and accepted this inconsistency in their religious policy.<sup>92</sup> In any event, this willingness to make concessions decreased in time as the Bolsheviks established their hold on the country. For example, in 1919 the special Moslem communist organization was integrated with the RCP(b).<sup>93</sup>

91 Bennisgen & Quelquejay 1967, 139–140; Pipes 1980, 157–158.

92 PSS 38, 158–159. "VIII Съезд РКП(б). Доклад о партийной программе 19 марта"; PSS 39, 304. "Товарищам коммунистам Туркестана"; PSS 51, 175. "Телеграмма Г.К. Орджоникидзе и записка Л.Д. Троцкому". See also NR, 52; McLellan 1987a, 106–107.

93 PSS 39, 326–331. "Доклад на II Всероссийском Съезде коммунистических организаций народов востока 22 ноября 1919"; DSV I, 367; Bennisgen & Quelquejay 1967, 76, 99–100, 144–149; Nahaylo & Swoboda 1990, 32–34.



For the Jewish population, the October Revolution represented a new epoch. Officially the Bolshevik party opposed anti-semitism and rejected any kind of oppression based on race or religion. As an early decree of 25 June 1918 confirmed, discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin would not be allowed in the Soviet-state. The Jewish worker was therefore a friend and not a foe as capitalists were. In accordance with this early Soviet national policy, the Narkomnats established a special department to handle Jewish affairs. And although before the revolution the Bolsheviks had opposed every effort to organize Jewish communists separately, they were now allowed to establish their own party section inside the RCP(b). Moreover, this section, the so-called *Evsektsiya*, was given the task of conducting propaganda within the Jewish working class.<sup>94</sup>

The upheavals of the civil war, especially in Ukraine, caused terror and suffering among the Jewish population. White interventionists, Red bandits and anarchist groups perpetrated organized pogroms against Jewish civilians. Various sources testify to the fact that the Whites often deliberately harassed the Jewish population and clergymen among the White armies achieved a notorious reputation for their aggressive anti-semitism. The Bolsheviks did not differ on the ground from the Whites but, nevertheless, at the official level the Bolshevik leadership attempted to protect the Jewish population and fight against anti-semitism.<sup>95</sup>

The case of the Catholic church in Soviet Russia was more complicated. It was not connected with the former state church but nonetheless represented a "hostile" national element on Soviet Russian territory. Naturally, the disturbances of the Bolshevik revolution also effected the Catholic population. Especially in Ukraine Catholics suffered considerably from the civil war and as a result of the suspicion of local Soviet officials. One possible reason for this suspicion was the tense relation between the Catholic hierarchy and the Soviet regime. The Catholic clergy, for the most part, refused to acknowledge the Soviet separation decree as legal. Moreover, Bolsheviks saw the Catholic church and the Vatican as a dangerous ideological enemy and as a representative of the bourgeois nationalism of Poland and the Baltic countries. When Soviet relations with the Polish government and with the Baltic states became aggravated, Stalin advocated, as V.A. Alekseev has termed it, a policy of "vengeance and punishment"

94 DSV I, 370–371; DSV III, 93–94; Korey 1963, 78–79. See also AK, 158–259.

95 PSS 38, 242–243; Miller 1970, 94; Pinkus 1988, 54–55. See also Pasmanik 1923, 185–186, 196.

towards “Polish-Catholics” in Soviet Russia.<sup>96</sup> The idea was to “kidnap” Catholic priests and bishops and exchange them for Bolshevik prisoners from the Baltic countries and Poland. In line with this policy, the Catholic archbishop Eduard de Ropp was arrested several times in 1919 but after massive protests and the gathering of thousands of signatures petitioning on his behalf, he was finally set free and later exchanged for a significant Polish communist, Karl Radek (Sobelson, 1885–1939).<sup>97</sup>

These attempts to trade well-known Catholic priests for jailed communists indicates how the actual religious policy of the Soviet Union during the civil war was conducted not for ideological reasons but nearly always in accordance with practical political needs as well. The primary need of the Bolshevik government was to establish Soviet power and in order to do that it was willing to modify its ideology. For example, after the October Revolution the Bolsheviks appeased national minorities by giving them national status and promoting their autonomy under communist authority. Despite the fact that Moslems and Jews both achieved national status in the Soviet apparatus it was only done in order to stabilize communist rule in these areas. Indeed, the Jewish national communists regarded Jewish traditional heritage as a harmful relic. As Zvi Gitelman has remarked, the *Evseksiya* showed less tolerance towards traditional Jewish institutions than ordinary Russian communists did, defining the enemy as the “bourgeois”, the “clerical” or the “Zionist”. In order to prove themselves more loyal than others, Jewish communists not only fought against Jewish capitalists and rabbis but also against the Hebrew language. Their ultimate goal was gradually to assimilate Jews into the Russian population.<sup>98</sup>

The one religious group which perhaps gained most from the October revolution was the sectarian movement. Bolsheviks regarded them as victims of the autocratic system and treated them with kid gloves. At the same time certain sectarians hailed the Bolshevik revolution with enthusiasm. This benevolent “neutrality” towards sectarians is clearly visible in the case of military service. On 4 January 1919 Lenin personally negotiated an agreement with sectarian leaders which in principle released sectarian youths from Soviet military service. However, this decision, taken at the highest level of the Soviet administration, was not a popular measure among communist officials. Archive materials indicate that Lenin’s personal supervision of the

96 Alekseev 1991, 120–124.

97 See GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.738; Dunn 1977, 31–32.

98 Gitelman 1971, 324–328; Gitelman 1988, 111–112. See also Levin 1988, 68–73, 73–78, 80–82.

activities of Soviet officials was not enough to prevent sectarians from being harassed. In many cases, sectarians complained that especially the NKYust had little understanding of sectarians in general.<sup>99</sup> This pressure was gradually increased and the majority of the sectarian leaders were obliged to give way on this issue. At the congress of the Evangelical Christian Union the majority of sectarian leaders decided that military service was an obligation they had to accept.<sup>100</sup>

In accordance with Soviet benevolent neutrality towards sectarians during the civil war they were given the possibility to build up special sectarian agrarian communities. When studying the background of these initiatives, we must acknowledge the importance of the “N. Osinsky memorandum”, which constituted a political plan to establish a union for the peasantry. Osinsky (V.V. Obolensky, 1887–1938) suggested that the “peasant union” should be not a party organization but a relatively free association under the hegemony of the communists. The premises of this organization should be that peasants would have to accept the Soviet system as their only political platform. In the religious policy sphere, Osinsky’s proposal contradicted earlier Soviet principles. For instance, he suggested that religious bonds or religiosity should not prevent someone from joining this union. Only political connections to the former opposition or the kulaks should exclude a person from membership.<sup>101</sup>

Osinsky had suggested this on purpose to diminish the influence of the SR party among the peasants and to isolate them politically. His justification was that by organizing this union the Soviet regime could prevent “petty-bourgeois peasants” from infiltrating the communist party. According to him, the economic unification of the peasants was not enough. As well as promoting the ideological purity of the communist party, this plan could strengthen cultural-educational elements among the peasants.<sup>102</sup> Lenin rejected Osinsky’s plan, although not totally. He considered it premature and proposed that more careful steps be taken in this direction. Nevertheless, it is essential to realize the importance of this proposal. Firstly it hints that the communist leadership was aware of how significant its relations with the agrarian population were. Due to the crisis in food production, good

99 LS, 259; SU II, 222–223, 419–420; Giduljanov 381–382, 386–387. See also GARF2, f.353, op.3, d.780 “Председателю Совнаркома тов. В.И. Ленину (22/ сентября 1920)”. See also AGMIR f.2, op.23, d.23; Klippenstein 1992, 279.

100 Giduljanov 1971, 378–390. See also Conquest 1968, 100; Sawatsky 1992, 242.

101 TTP I, 452–454. Earlier Soviet legislation had forbidden all agrarian communities based on religious ideals. See GARF2, f.353, op.3, d.730 “Циркулярно-Всем Земотделам (30 октября 1919)”.

102 TTP I, 452, 456.

relations with the peasantry were crucial for Soviet power. Secondly, this proposal indicates that some Soviet officials, such as Osinsky, did not automatically connect the peasants' religiosity with political opposition.<sup>103</sup>

Osinsky's proposal acknowledged the importance of also gathering religiously-minded peasants to work with Soviet power. This idea was also supported by a significant representative of the so-called communist-sectarians, I.M. Tregubov. Tregubov noted that the Soviet regime was encountering considerable problems in the countryside, but pointed out that elements of the rural population were ready to co-operate with the ruling regime. According to Tregubov these sectarian-communists, the "honest and industrious" part of the Soviet countryside, were willing to help the Soviet regime. The importance of these sectarian-communists was so great that Tregubov was allowed to convey greetings from them to the 7th and 8th congresses of the VTsIKs. For example, in his speech to the 7th congress of the Soviets Tregubov explained that both sectarians and Bolsheviks had a similar objective, i.e. to build communism in Russia. Accordingly Tregubov appealed to the Soviet regime that they be allowed to form their own party in order to build communism not only in Russia but all over the world. In addition, Tregubov expressed his loyalty towards Soviet power and appealed to all the sectarians of the world, including foreign politicians such as G.N. Lloyd George and W. Wilson, to work for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Russia. This identification with the political objectives of the ruling regime and expression of loyalty to it were perhaps the most characteristic features of relations between sectarian-communists and the new regime. For example, in 1920 Dukhobor communes donated a considerable amount of grain to Soviet officials and, according to V.A. Alekseev, Lenin greatly appreciated this gesture and adopted a "warm" attitude towards sectarians. Alekseev claims that after this Lenin helped sectarian communes through the agency of Bonch-Bruevich.<sup>104</sup>

It is hard to judge how far this "warm" attitude was put into practice, but it is clear that as a result of these initiatives sectarians were able to fulfil their dream of creating agrarian communes based on religious principles. In the opinion of many scholars these religious communes usually functioned better than their secular counterparts. Better working methods and better social coherence between members caused

\*\*\*\*\*  
103 ТП I, 458.

104 GARF2, f.353, op.4, d.418 "Доклад записка о желательном отношении советской власти к сельско-хозяйственным коллективам Русских сектантов (12 ноября 1920)"; VSS VII, 274-276. See also Alekseev 1991, 113.



them to prosper economically. Moreover, for many communists these enterprises were models for a future socialist society and consequently they felt that such communes should be encouraged.<sup>105</sup>

All the above clearly reveals how ambiguous Bolshevik religious policy actually was during the civil war. Due to the general political situation the Bolshevik party had to maintain good relations with the peasantry and as a result the party could only build the foundations of an atheist society by legislation. To sum up: the content of the so-called “isolation policy” was a draw between doves and hawks. Ideologically-motivated “hawks” were unable to instigate general attacks against religious organizations and official Soviet policy towards religious organizations was “neutral”. As L.B. Kamenev explained during the battles of the civil war, “the best way to fight against religion was to fight for communism”. Subsequently, the security organs and the NKYust were only allowed to minimize the political and moral authority of the ROC and it was only after 1919, when the civil war was at its zenith, that they were given a free hand to move against, for example, monasteries. Especially in their relations with formerly unofficial religious organizations moderate communists were able to develop an informal mutual understanding. But as the party programme of 1919 explained, antireligious work was preserved as an inseparable part of Bolshevik policy.

---

105 Kolarz 1961, 289–290; Pospelovsky 1984, 41; Stites 1989, 212–213. For more on Soviet legislation, see SU II, 221–222; Giduljanov, 553–557.



---

# III Trotsky's control of early NEP religious policy (1921–1923)

96

## 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS POLICY DURING THE NEP

By 1921–22 almost all opposition political activity had been driven underground, and the consolidation of the one-party dictatorship was virtually completed. The Communist Party dominated the political life of the country...<sup>1</sup>

As the above quote from Merle Fainsod implies, the one party dictatorship did not emerge immediately in October 1917 but gradually took shape after the civil war. At the same time the remnants of the political opposition were obliged to choose whether they would work secretly, withdraw from politics or join the rank of the Bolsheviks. Many ex-oppositionists as well as new entrants enlisted in the ruling party, which as a result constituted a mixture of the old pre-revolutionary guard and newcomers who had joined the party later. This was a paradox of the post-civil war situation and had an effect on the religious policy of the NEP. Although the decision-making process was restricted to only one political platform, there were even more diverging opinions inside the ruling party than before. During the relatively free atmosphere of the 1920s, this army of “disciplined revolutionaries” sometimes seemed to be no more than a cover organization for competing ideas and different factions.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the early NEP (1921–1923) could best be summed up

---

1 Fainsod 1970, 137.

2 Brovkin 1987, 294–299; Deutscher 1987, 15–18.

by stating that the civil war had almost completely ruined Russian society. The ruling party attempted to preserve the policy of war communism but after the defeat of the White generals and the Polish invasion peasants were more and more reluctant to carry the burden of the wartime economy. At the same time, the demobilisation of the Red Army left thousands of men wandering around the state fomenting violent disturbances in the Russian countryside. However, the most tragic aftermath of the civil war was the famine which swept over the Volga area. Lack of food took its toll, together with typhus. Starving people were forced to abandon their villages and thousands of them died of malnutrition during this exodus.<sup>3</sup>

The political situation was exacerbated when the fortress city of Kronstadt challenged Bolshevik rule in March 1921. The previous “pride and glory” of the October Revolution, the Kronstadt sailors and marines rebelled and demanded an end to the communist dictatorship. They accused the Bolsheviks of betraying the ideals of the Russian revolution and of being poisoned by power. The rebellion, which started as a protest against the ruling oligarchy, included many political demands such as freedom of speech, a free press, free trade and, in addition, the right of peasants to buy and sell their land.<sup>4</sup>

For the communist party the Kronstadt uprising was like a flash of “lightning which opened our eyes”<sup>5</sup> and convinced the Soviet leaders of the urgency for change. The rebellious sailors of Kronstadt were quickly suppressed but the ruling regime realized that it would be necessary to grant some of the essential demands of the rebels, which they accordingly did during the 10th party congress in March 1921. The lesson of Kronstadt was, as Lenin saw it, that the political opposition along with White émigrés were behind the banner of the Kronstadt rebels and had hoped to destroy Soviet power.<sup>6</sup> Although hardly any evidence exists to link the Kronstadt rebels with White émigrés, Lenin was convinced that exiled Russian monarchists had collaborated, together with international capitalism, to manipulate the “petty bourgeois instincts” of the rebels in order to bring about the political restoration of Czarism. Lenin realized that in order to preserve the proletarian dictatorship, the Bolsheviks would have to retreat from socialist principles and reduce tension in the Russian countryside. In accordance with the procedures of War Communism, the government

3 Curtiss 1953, 106; Figs 1989, 267–268, 321–324, 328–330, 341–342.

4 Getzler 1983, 212–217.

5 PSS 43, 138. “Речь на Всероссийском Съезде транспортных рабочих 27 марта 1921”.

6 PSS 43, 4–5, 25–26. “X Съезд РКП(б). Речь при открытии съезда 8 марта”.

had been confiscating all extra grain from the peasants. The new conciliatory line, adopted at the 10th congress, gave peasants the chance to pay tax in kind and sell the rest of the grain on the free market. With these concessions, the ruling party moved towards a mixed economy.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, the government was obliged to restore the monetary system, which had been abandoned during the period of War Communism. This automatically meant that the state was forced to deal with the shortage of hard currency. Printing money was not enough when the ruling regime desperately needed to stabilize markets; hard currency and valuable metals were required to restore the value of the Soviet rouble. The rebuilding of the Soviet economy and the maintenance of an armaments industry required money, and at the time gold was the only valid medium of exchange for these purposes.<sup>8</sup> This shortage of hard currency was later to prove fatal for the ROC. Many churches and monasteries had been confiscated by the Bolsheviks in the wake of the revolution but a nationwide campaign of collecting valuable church items had not yet occurred.

Naturally enough, these concessions to free trade signified an ideological retreat from the immediate implementation of socialism. The loyal political opposition which had played an important part in the fight against the Whites was satisfied. The abandonment of the harsh methods of war communism represented a vindication of their political criticism. For them it seemed to prove that the Bolsheviks' "hasty" leap towards socialism could not work without the assistance of the bourgeois class and the restoration of political freedom. Accordingly the opposition demanded that the one-party system should be abolished. For Lenin and the majority of the Bolsheviks this was an impossible demand and there was no ground for compromise. Returning to the parliamentary system with free parties and an independent press would lead automatically, they believed, to the restoration of capitalism and power to the White generals.<sup>9</sup>

The simultaneous suppression of the political opposition and concessions to free trade, was another paradox of the NEP (New Economic Policy). In a political sense, the content of NEP policy was simple. Economic compromises could not go hand in hand with political concessions. The logical outcome of this paradox was the

\*\*\*\*\*  
7 Getzler 1983, 213–214, 256–258; Carr 1985 II, 280–283, 299–304. See also, PSS 43, 4–5, 24–27. "X Съезд РКП(б). Речь при открытии съезда 8 марта".

8 See RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.164 (Pp 27, 14/5–21); TTP II, 620–624.

9 PSS 44, 105. "Новые времена. старые ошибки в новом виде"; PSS 45, 88. "XI съезд РКП(б)"; Brovkin 1987, 294–299.

decisive suppression of the remnants of the political opposition. The Mensheviks and the SRs were politically liquidated, suppressed or exiled at the same time as the ruling party was forced to accept their economic critique. Consequently, the communist regime organized an ideological and administrative witch-hunt against remnants of the political opposition, Mensheviks, SRs and the anti-Soviet intelligentsia. The most famous incident of this witch-hunt operation was the “show-trial” of the leaders of the SR party, which commenced on 9 June 1921 with extensive press campaigns and propaganda.<sup>10</sup>

In actual fact, the NEP engendered a more hostile attitude towards religious organizations, which during the civil war had been able to preserve their basic functions. Once the Soviet regime began silencing its opponents, religious organizations were also in line for suppression as such organizations constituted an ideal ideological enemy. The time for an ideological attack against religion seemed to be next on the agenda.<sup>11</sup> Anyway, liquidating religious organizations which were closely linked to the peasant population was a daunting task. Although they belonged to the category of enemy, they could not be exterminated in the same way as the Mensheviks or the SRs had been. The sources reveal that the Soviet authorities acknowledged that under the circumstances of the NEP the ruling regime needed to compromise with the peasants and as a result acknowledged the need for easing off their antireligious propaganda. In theory party officials seemed to understand that they could not diminish the authority of the ROC by means of brutal antireligious campaigns if they wanted to appease the peasantry.<sup>12</sup>

Another consequence of this paradox was the party's desire for ideological purity. Purges in the party were motivated by the fear of the effect of any relaxation among communists. The ruling regime wanted also to underline its ideological uniformity. On 9 August 1921 the Central Committee held a plenum and ordered that nobody with a clerical background could become a party member. Party members holding religious beliefs who were from the ranks of the intelligentsia and in responsible posts were also to be excluded from membership of

10 Schapiro 1970, 195–196; Carr 1985 II, 176–178; Broido 1986, 159–160. See also NR, 48–50. “Письмо И.В. Вардина-Мгеладзе: об отношении к партиям мелкой буржуазии направленное в ЦК РКП и исполнительную комиссию МК РКП(б)”.

11 TRRR, 54.

12 “...Этот момент определяемый необходимостью длительного соглашения пролетариата с крестьянством, определяет собой и линию нашу в вопросе об антирелигиозной пропаганде”. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.1 “Всероссийское совещание заведующих агитотделами губкомов и областкомов РКП 7–11 мая 1921”. See also KPSS II, 243.



the party if they remained religious. Only uneducated members of the party who had defended the revolution during the civil war could be allowed to remain in the party, but in such cases other party members would be obliged to educate their religious-minded comrades.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, along with this ideological purification, it must be acknowledged that at the beginning of the NEP the Soviet government had in principle recognized the need for tactical relaxation in its policies towards religious organizations. After adopting the NEP policy the Central Committee sent a special circular which stressed that it was not necessary to over-emphasize antireligious propaganda while the party was adjusting to NEP. This circular stated that especially when dealing with peasants harsh methods should be avoided. The Central Committee's circular remarked that excesses in this sphere did not usually convince the believing peasant but rather embittered him. A special meeting for leading propagandists and agitators, held on 7 May 1921, symbolized the birth of the NEP's religious policy. Leading communist officials recognized that antireligious propaganda should not offend the feelings of believers and should not allow the enemies of Soviet power to claim that communists were persecuting people for their beliefs.<sup>14</sup> This dictate was printed in *Pravda* on 21 April 1921 by the secretary of the Central Committee, Yaroslavsky. In it he announced to all party committees at the district level that any kind of violation of religious feelings of the populace should be avoided.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, the party acknowledged at the same time that it needed new kinds of methods and instruments in its antireligious fight.<sup>16</sup> During the civil war religious policy was executed without co-ordination. Nonetheless, once the party had more time to concentrate on religious policy, it created a multitude of commissions to deal with these matters. The history of these commissions is rooted partly in the power struggle within the party and partly in the party's tradition of manoeuvring in complex political situations. The Central Committee or the Politburo usually created commissions for resolving certain acute

13 KPSS II, 278–280; RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.126. “Намеченные мероприятия”. For protocols dealing with violations the 13th paragraph of the party rules, see RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.52.

14 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.1 “Всероссийское совещание заведующих агитотделами губкомов и областкомов РКП. 7–11 мая 1921”. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.184 “Всем обкомам, облбюро и губкомам Р.К.П. о постановке антирелигиозной пропаганды. Циркулярно. б/д”.

15 *Pravda*, 21 April 1921, No. 89. See also PSS 52, 140. “В.М. Молотову”.

16 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.4 “Протокол. Заседание комиссии при/отделе пропаганды Ц.К.РКП по вопросу об антирелигиозной пропаганде”; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.29 “Протокол заседания комиссии по антирелигиозной пропаганде (28/VII 1921)”.



political problems. Some of them were short-lived, but others functioned for many years. This confusion also extends to monographs and literature. Some authors state, for instance, that the APO's Antireligious Commission was the main co-ordinator of the religious policy during the NEP. For example, John Anderson has suggested that the APO's Antireligious Commission drew up the general lines of the antireligious propaganda together with the Secretariat of Religious Affairs, which was subject to the authority of the Central Executive Committee.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Joan Delaney has pointed out the importance of the Central Committee's commission for implementing the separation of church and state but she bases her conclusions on second-hand information.<sup>18</sup> Isaac Deutscher has even claimed that Trotsky led the Society of the Godless before this organ was officially established.<sup>19</sup>

As we have already seen, in 1920 the party had attempted to intensify this work by creating the Glavpolitprosvet. However, the party's antireligious propaganda and agitation were put under the authority of the APO and the Central Committee. Moreover, archive sources testify to the fact that in 1920–1922 this work was led by Trotsky. The APO had a special Antireligious Commission as well as subcommissions and “working troikas” (рабочей тройки) with members such as I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, Galkin (Gorev), the Bolshevik journalist I.P. Flerovsky (1888–1956) and Krasikov. Trotsky himself gave directives to this organ, and in addition, formed his own commission to assist him in this field.<sup>20</sup>

The second important attribute of the NEP's religious policy was the special attention which the party paid to relations with sectarians. These relations had become more cordial after the VIII congress of the Soviets. During that meeting Ivan Tregubov proposed closer co-operation between the Soviet regime and the “sectarian-communists”. Lenin himself accepted this proposal and as a result of this in October 1921 the Commissariat of Agriculture formed an “Organizational Commission on the resettlement of Sectarians” (Orgkomsekt) to advance sectarian agricultural communes and to obtain land for this

17 Anderson 1991, 690. See also Fouilloux 1992, 929.

18 Delaney 1971, 104–105.

19 Deutscher 1987, 28.

20 See, for example, RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.4 “Протокол. Заседание комиссии при отделе пропаганды Ц.К. РКП по вопросу об антирелигиозной пропаганде б/д”; f.17, op.60, d.29. “Протокол. Заседание рабочей тройки по антирелигиозной пропаганде 23/IX-21”. See especially RTsKhIDNI f.17, op. 60, d. 158 “Протокол. Заседания No. Антирелигиозной комиссии 3 окт. 1922 года 12 часов дня” and f. 17, op. 3, d. 280 (Pp 111, 13/3-22).

purpose.<sup>21</sup> Later Tregubov published a discussion article in which he maintained that sectarians could assist communists in fighting against “petty-bourgeois anarchism, the pernicious spirit of private ownership and egoism”. Tregubov claimed that sectarians had already set up model communes and called on communists to support these experiments, which could constitute models for larger communes later.<sup>22</sup>

These conciliatory signs from the party were affirmed by various rumours and aroused reaction among the party. According to Skvortsov-Stepanov, during the summer of 1921 there were rumours which claimed that the party was softening its antireligious work because of the introduction of the NEP policy. Skvortsov-Stepanov added that Lenin himself had denied these rumours and said that antireligious activity should be intensified among the workers and especially among the peasants.<sup>23</sup>

102

The above-mentioned contradictions reflect the difficulty in interpreting the content of the NEP policy. Many leading communists were painfully aware that the traditional Russian countryside had survived the civil war in better condition than the Russian towns and cities. The peasantry was, moreover, the backbone of Orthodox culture and the ROC had been able to maintain its links with the people. As John. S. Curtiss has said,

The Russian church apparently survived the period of revolution in a strong condition. Nonetheless, in the political field it had suffered a severe defeat...on the other hand, the legend that the Russian Orthodox church was wiped out by the revolution and the civil war had no foundation. The vast majority of the population was still strongly religious, and although the government was against the church, it could do little in the face of the mass support for religion.<sup>24</sup>

Although it had lost its political power and nearly all its wealth after October 1917, the ROC was simultaneously able to maintain its basic role in society and its connections with the rural population. The fate of the ROC and the fate of the peasantry were inextricably linked together

\*\*\*\*\*  
21 VSS VII, 228; *Izvestiya*, 19 October 1921, No. 234.

22 *Izvestiya*, 15 November 1921, No. 256. See also: GARF2 f.353, op.3, d.766 “Протокол. Заседание 2-го Кавказского общесектантского съезда христианских религиозных общин и групп (20-июня 1921)”. See also GARF1 f.5263, op.1, d.55(3) “Письмо в редакцию”.

23 DO, 9; See also PSS 54, 210. “И.И. Скворцов-Степанов”.

24 Curtiss 1953, 104–105.

and the social roots and the backbone of the ROC, the Russian peasantry, as already mentioned, had survived the civil war reasonably intact.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. THE CONFRONTATION OF TWO BELIEFS – THE “CONFISCATION-CONFLICT”

### a. The background to this operation and the assault organized by Trotsky

The introduction of the NEP in 1921 could not save the situation in the Volga area, which was suffering from severe famine. Although the party acknowledged quite early the seriousness of the situation, it could do little. On 25 June 1921 the Politburo ordered the setting up a special hunger commission of the VTsIK, to be known as Pomgol, to “admit of all measures to aid the starving population”. But the government soon realized the scale of the catastrophe and was obliged to appeal to bourgeois charitable organizations for help.<sup>26</sup>

The news of the massive famine and widespread hunger alarmed the Russian intelligentsia and its spokesman, Maxim Gorky, who appealed to the president of the USA for help. Gorky also proposed that the Soviet government form a committee with the purpose of assisting the hungry and collecting money for the purchase of grain. Herbert Hoover responded first and cabled Gorky informing him that the American Relief Administration (ARA) had in principle agreed to aid starving people in the USSR. Although suspicions were great, the Soviet state also gave permission to the ARA to execute its programme of assistance. In any event, the Politburo planned special precautionary measures to limit the ARA apparatus and was ready to arrest all “unreliable elements” of the ARA.<sup>27</sup> Despite the mistrust and

103

25 Isaac Deutscher's remark seems to sum up the situation that prevailed: "...as a social class the peasantry alone emerged unbroken. World war, civil war, and famine had, of course, taken their toll; but they had not cracked the mainsprings of the peasantry's life. They had not reduced its resilience and powers of regeneration...The peasantry had preserved its character and its place in society..." Deutscher 1987, 7–8.

26 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.179 (Pp 42, 25/6-21); Pravda, 23 July 1921, No. 160.

27 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.247 (Pp 87, 31/12-21); Wolfe 1967, 113–114.

suspensions of the ruling party Lenin accepted<sup>28</sup> Gorky's initiative. On 29 June 1921 the Politburo decided to invite certain well-known "non-political" figures to join in an All-Russian Committee of Pomgol for assisting starving people. There was nonetheless a conflict between two competing motives. The Bolshevik government was aware of the political tensions and was worried about the consequences of the famine, but it felt compelled to ask the foreign and internal bourgeoisie for help. At a meeting of leading communist agitators and propagandists in 1921 it was remarked that panic and confusion together with "Russian benignity" could assist the class enemy to exploit this situation. This mistrust was also reflected in the resolution of the Politburo of 12 July 1921 which attempted to limit the role of non-communists in the Pomgol. The Politburo decided to give these "public figures" only two places on the Pomgol presidium. In addition, the communists not only wanted to limit the influence of non-communists in the Pomgol, the Politburo even accepted Kamenev's proposal to create special "pure communist groups" inside the Pomgol to ensure that it would "develop maximal energy in executing the revolutionary measures to help the starving".<sup>29</sup>

The above-mentioned distrust complicated the work of the neutral Pomgol. Lenin became gradually convinced that these "non-political" figures were a political threat to the Soviet state. He believed that the activity of the political opposition, which was disguised under the semblance of "non-political" work and behind proletarian-like slogans, threatened the existence of Soviet power. This was the reason why at the meeting of the Politburo on 27 August 1921 Lenin announced that it was politically necessary to liquidate the neutral members of the Pomgol. As a result, the Politburo decided to empower a representative of the Cheka, I.S. Unshlikht (1879–1938), to arrest forthwith the non-communist Pomgol members.<sup>30</sup>

Lenin's suspicions may have had some basis to the extent that non-communist members of the Pomgol were seen outside Russia as a rival government. The famine, the adoption of the NEP-policy and concessions to foreign businessmen seemed to indicate the weakness of

28 According to Trotsky, Lenin accepted this initiative in principle because he did not consider it "harmful" to Soviet power. TTP I, 392.

29 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.181 (Pp 44, 29/6-21); 17/3/187 (Pp 50, 12/7-21); f.89, op.3, d.1 "Всероссийское совещание заведующих агитотделами губкомов и областкомов РКП"; Wolfe 1967, 108–109.

30 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.195 (Pp 55, 27/8-21). See also PSS 44, 104–107. "Новые времена, старые ошибки в новом виде"; RP, 331. "Ликвидация ВСЕРПОМГОЛА: письма Е.Д. Кусковой к В.Н. Фигнер 1921–1922 гг."; Wolfe 1967, 114–115.



the Soviet government. Foreign powers, in fact, sought to establish contacts with the neutral Pomgol and saw it as a future government of Russia. In the eyes of the ruling regime, this amounted to nothing less than treason. Leading Bolsheviks even believed that the ARA was undermining Soviet rule and working for its own political goals. On a certain level, they were not entirely wrong. For example, the British representative to Soviet Russia, Mr. Hodgson, after negotiating with these neutral members of the Pomgol, suggested to his government that they should direct aid only through those with whom "we are in sympathy".<sup>31</sup>

Despite the fate of non-communists in the Pomgol, Patriarch Tikhon wanted to organize a church campaign for the benefit of starving people in the Volga area. At first the Soviet government did not reject his approach. On 7 July 1921 the Politburo made no objection to Tikhon issuing an appeal for help on the radio. Later in August, Tikhon sent an official appeal to the Eastern Patriarchs, the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York.<sup>32</sup> In order to deal with incoming donations, the ROC sought to organize an independent All-Russian Church Committee. By this time the wariness of the ruling regime seemed to have disappeared because of the seriousness of the situation. On 8 December 1921 the Politburo, at the suggestion of Kalinin, agreed that religious organizations could be allowed to assist in famine relief. The ruling regime, nonetheless, did not want too much publicity about this matter and consequently the Politburo ordered that this decision should not be publicised.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, the ruling regime was also faced with applications from other religious denominations. The Central Moslem Administration had suggested to Stalin and the Politburo that they could donate money to the starving people of the Volga (there were also Moslems in this area). In order to deal with this delicate problem, the Politburo decided on 5 December 1921 to create a commission made up of Kalinin, Stalin and Kursky. This commission gave a guarantee to believers that they could organize collections of money to aid famine-stricken areas. Nevertheless, signalling their suspicion, this commission ordered that ecclesiastical charity should not to be used for "religious demonstrations". These concessions were, of course, quite extraordinary if we consider what had happened to the neutral members of the Pomgol. This co-operation between religious organizations and

\*\*\*\*\*  
31 DOBFP, 714–715; Trifonov 1960, 25–30; Carr 1985 I, 177–179. See also Broido 1986, 42–43.

32 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.184 (Pp 47, 7/7-21); Curtiss 1953, 107.

33 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.242 (Pp 84, 8/12-21).



the government seemed to represent the start of civil peace. On 9 February 1922 the Politburo even gave Patriarch Tikhon permission to announce publicly that precious church vessels which did not have any liturgical value should be donated for famine relief.<sup>34</sup>

In any event, the beginning of the “detente” between the ruling regime and the religious organizations, as was the case with the beginning of NEP policy in general, proved to be rather difficult. At the 11th congress representatives were critical of their leaders, maintaining that with the NEP the party had surrendered to capitalism. Furthermore, the general political situation seemed to provide enough grounds for ideological suspicions. In late 1921 and in early 1922 émigré churchmen and exiled monarchists organized an ecclesiastical congress in Karlovci (in Serbia). The Karlovci Sobor was supposed to deal with religious questions outside Russia, but unavoidably it turned its attention to politics inside Russia. Some of its members expressed a desire for the restoration of the Romanov dynasty in Russia and blamed Bolshevik policies for the famine in the Volga region.<sup>35</sup>

The activities of the Karlovci Sobor confirmed the suspicions of hardline communist leaders. To make matters worse, this meeting sent an appeal to the Conference of Genoa asking the world not to recognize Bolshevik power. In addition, one eminent representative of the Sobor, Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev (Aleksei Khrapovitsky, 1864–1936), blamed all the failures and catastrophes in Russia since the revolution on Soviet power. Moreover, the Sobor urged all nations to help in crushing “Bolshevism” or, as it described it, “the cult of killing, looting, and blasphemy”.<sup>36</sup> From the point of view of the ROC, this incident could not have happened at a worse moment, as the hardliners in the communist party could not have received a better provocation than this belligerent appeal.

The second international convention which increased attention on the Soviet state was the Conference of Genoa which was convened at the same time as the Karlovci Sobor. The Soviet state was allowed to attend this conference in a semi-official capacity. The Bolshevik government regarded this concession as a significant political victory. Lenin expressed the view that it gave them a chance to break out of the international isolation in which the Soviet state had been placed after the October revolution and afforded them excellent possibilities to engage in trade. Lenin explained that in a political sense Genoa would

34 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.241 (Pp 83, 5/12-21); f.17, op.3, d.261 (Pp 94, 9/2-22); Alekseev 1991, 191–192.

35 Curtiss 1953, 108–110.

36 TRRR, 58-62; Curtiss 1953, 113–114.

turn out to be a “breathing-space between the bourgeois world and the Soviet state”. Lenin considered this conference so important that he even thought of attending in person.<sup>37</sup>

The Bolshevik reaction to the appeal of the Karlovci Sobor to the Conference of Genoa was slow in coming. News from the Sobor seemed to have reached Moscow in the middle of March 1922 and the comments of P.A. Krasikov reveal how deep was the antagonism these tidings aroused:

...for these most Christian brothers hunger is a friend and an ally; while a breathing space, a harvest, taking down the blockade, transporting bread from abroad is death...<sup>38</sup>

But, as Joan Delaney has pointed out, in reference to Trotsky, the plan to attack the ROC was already under way. During early 1922 Trotsky had been carefully preparing a strategy for confiscating the valuables of the ROC.<sup>39</sup> In accordance with typical Soviet practice, before every important political enterprise a press campaign always took place. Thus, from the beginning of 1922 Soviet newspapers started to stress that the ROC could do more than simply offer voluntary donations to the Pomgol. It seems obvious that this press campaign had the objective of preparing the ground for more resolute actions against the ROC. Firstly Soviet newspapers pointed out that the valuables of the ROC were the property of the people and that the people now needed them to save human lives. As A.N. Vinokurov (1869–1944) put it in *Izvestiya* on 26 January 1922:

The Soviet state has already donated much in the fight against hunger. A considerable sum of gold was used up in order to buy grain for the starving and otherwise distressed people. Church valuables made from gold and silver have until this moment remained unused...<sup>40</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*  
37 PSS 45, 2–7. “О международном и внутреннем положении Советской Республики. Речь на заседании коммунистической фракции Всероссийского Съезда металлистов 6 марта”; Fischer 1967, 553–556.

38 “голод для этой христианнейшей братии – друг и союзник, напротив, передышка, урожай, снятие блокады, подвоз хлеба из заграницы – смерть”. DO, 107.

39 TTP II, 670–672; Delaney 1971, 108.

40 “...Советское государство отдало уже на борьбу с голодом большие средства. Не мало золотого фонда пошло на закупку семян для голодающих и другие виды помощи. Церковные золотые и серебряные драгоценности остаются до сих пор не использованными...”. *Izvestiya*, 26 January 1922, No.19.

The second objective was to get the support of local clergy for the coming confiscations. For example, an article published in *Izvestiya* and signed by “a peasant” was directed at ordinary parish priests in the countryside. This article, like many of its kind, remarked that it was the church leaders and not the ordinary priests who were consciously withholding church valuables while Russian people starved. As this “peasant” quite eloquently put it:

Among them [priests] are people who are able to understand the call to offer up unnecessary valuables to save our perishing brothers.<sup>41</sup>

This press campaign concluded on 11 February 1922 when *Pravda* announced that the VTsIK had decided to confiscate all valuable items from churches. Later on 23 February 1922 the VTsIK issued an order signed by Kalinin, A.S. Enukidze (1877–1937) and Kursky, entitled: “Instructions concerning discipline in the confiscation of ecclesiastical valuables used by groups of believers.” Subsequently, Patriarch Tikhon sent a letter of protest to Kalinin and, not receiving an answer, declared on 28 February that this kind of confiscation amounted to sacrilege. The ingredients for a collision between church and state were all present.<sup>42</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the government’s ultimatum gave the impression of deliberately wishing to escalate the situation. For example, Metropolitan Antony in his protest to the VTsIK remarked that the Soviet state was altering its policy. According to him, the incidents of 1922–1923 showed that the Soviet regime was not simply isolating the ROC as it had done earlier. Antony now believed the Soviet regime was actually using the internal schism which this policy had created inside the ROC to destroy the church.<sup>43</sup>

Various explanations have been put forward for the confiscation of church valuables. One obvious motivation was the collapse of the monetary system. The Soviet state desperately needed valuable metals for the restoration of the rouble and for obtaining commodities from the West. The task of acquiring funds was originally given to Trotsky and he presided over a commission which attempted to confiscate items of value from museums as well as to sell off former Imperial property in Western countries.<sup>44</sup>

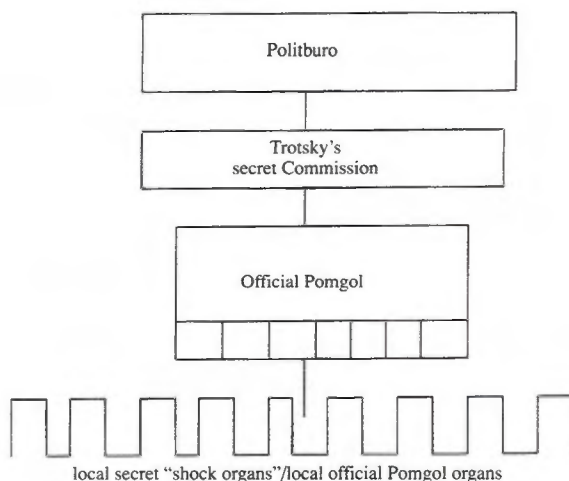
\*\*\*\*\*  
41 *Izvestiya*, 1 February 1922, No. 24.

42 This decree was published on 26 and 28 February in *Izvestiya VTsIK* No. 46, 47. See also *IzvTsK KPSS* 1990 4, 193.

43 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180. “Во ВЦИК I четв. 1923 г”.

44 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.242 (Pp 84, 8/12-21); f.17, op.3, d.257 (Pp 92, 26/1-22).

# Organizational structure of Soviet religious-political organs during the "confiscation-conflict" 1922



109

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has suggested that there also existed a political motivation to discredit the ROC and confiscate its property. According to him, the collection organized by the ROC for famine-stricken areas constituted a political challenge to the totalitarian system. The Bolshevik party could not let the ROC gain further political mileage by allowing it to donate its valuables voluntarily. Making a compromise between the Soviet regime and the church would only have "chained the will of proletariat".<sup>45</sup> Solzhenitsyn supports his claim by outlining the history of the confiscation events in Petrograd. On 5 March 1922 the Metropolitan of Petrograd, Veniamin (Kazansky), declared that the ROC would hand over everything freely and that forceful confiscations would amount to sacrilege. We can see from Petrogradskaya Pravda of 9 March 1922 that this co-operative stance of Metropolitan Veniamin was positively commended in this Soviet newspaper. According to Solzhenitsyn, this idyll of class peace was eventually crushed by orders from the top.<sup>46</sup> A protocol of the Politburo gives some support to this opinion:

- \*\*\*\*\*
- 45 Solzhenitsyn 1974, 257. I. Avdiev confirms Solzhenitsyn's version of the Petrograd events. Moreover, Avdiev emphasizes that Veniamin was shocked when he realized how the state was simply confiscating valuables for its own purposes. Avdiev 1991, 4-5.
- 46 Petrogradskaya Pravda, 9 March 1922, No. 54; Solzhenitsyn 1974, 258; Avdiev 1991, 4-5.



...there can be observed great confusion in assessing the behaviour and agitation of priests. Our newspapers are favourably quoting only the sympathetic calls of priests to help the starving, seeing them as they would be loyally executing the decree of Soviet power...it is necessary to give instructions to local organs not to allow any ambiguity in this question.<sup>47</sup>

A decision of the Politburo of 13 March 1922 reveals that Trotsky had already prepared his own political strategy for confiscating church valuables. The striking similarity between this plan and the previous press campaign clearly shows who was the mastermind behind these acts. In a special letter of 11 March 1922 to the inner circle of the Politburo (Lenin, V.M. Molotov (Skryabin 1890–1986), Kamenev and Stalin) Trotsky criticized the confusion over the confiscation process; there were too many different organs operating simultaneously in the same field. He announced that “his commission”, with members such as G.D. Bazilevich (1889–1938), M.V. Galkin (Gorev), P.P. Lebedev (1872–1933), T.V. Sapronov (1887–1939) and Unshlikht, had dealt with this question. Among the members of Trotsky’s commission were hardliners like R.S. Samoilova-Zemlyachka (1876–1947), who had gained a notorious “reputation” in Crimea at the end of the civil war due to her harsh methods against class-enemies, and a member of the NKYust, P.A. Krasikov. Presumably, because of the economic significance of this matter, A.M. Krasnoshchekov (1880–1937) was also appointed to Trotsky’s commission. He had earlier in 1922 been appointed deputy of Finances in order to restore the value of the rouble. This commission of Trotsky’s had “unanimously” accepted a proposal to create a secret “shock commission” to take charge of the confiscation process in Moscow. On the orders of Trotsky, this organ was to perform all the preparations required. He also demanded that other organs such as the Pomgol should acknowledge the authority of his commission.<sup>48</sup> The Politburo accepted Trotsky’s proposal together with a scheme to let the “Soviet part of the clergy” temporarily join in the organs of the Pomgol in order to obtain valuables from the churches.<sup>49</sup>

47 “В оценке поведения и агитации попов наблюдается большая путаница. Наши газеты приводят просто сочувственные призывы попов о помощи голодающим, видя в них как бы лояльное выполнение декрета советской власти...необходимо предписать местным органам не допускать в этом вопросе никакой двусмысленности”. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.286 (Pp 117, 2/4-22). For favourable comments on the activity of the clergy, see Petrogradskaya Pravda, 7 March 1922, No. 53.

48 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.280 (Pp 111, 13/3-22).

49 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.280 (Pp 111, 13/3-22). According to Philip Walters, there were “differences at the highest level over the anti-religious strategy and the onset



The news from Karlovci came at the same time as the Patriarch issued his proclamation condemning the plan to confiscate church valuables. On 15 March 1922 disorders occurred when officials confiscating valuables were obstructed by people trying to defend church property (especially in Shuya). Subsequently, according to the Bolsheviks, priests began withholding valuables with all the means at their disposal and agitating the “dark masses” to act against the Soviet regime. In reality, these “dark masses” seemed to act more independently than the communists wished to believe. For example, Roger Pethybridge tells us that in Roslav people declared that church valuables belonged to them and that the priests had no right to give them away to the communists. Nevertheless, these disturbances provided excellent grounds for provocation as there seemed to be reason to assume that there existed an “ecclesiastical plot” against the Soviet regime. However, some Western scholars have argued that the collision between the ROC and Soviet power was mainly a reaction to the political challenge of the Karlovci Sobor.<sup>50</sup> On one hand, this assumption could be justified by the Politburo protocol of 9 February 1922 which gives the impression that this organ favoured a peaceful confiscation process. It was announced that Tikhon’s proposal to donate non-liturgical valuables should be published together with an announcement that the clergy could assist the Soviet regime in collecting valuables.<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, according to Solzhenitsyn, the ruling regime unanimously rejected a peaceful option and only some local officials were willing to act in co-operation with the ROC. On the one hand, this would seem somewhat of an overstatement when one takes into account that some members of the ruling regime favoured a non-violent and voluntary confiscation of valuables and that only the inner circle of the ruling regime was aware of Trotsky’s plan. On the other hand, it seems too much of a coincidence that the aggressive declarations of the Karlovci Sobor and the violent incidents in the Russian countryside just happened to coincide with Trotsky’s plans. Without doubt, calls by émigré clergy for the undermining of the Soviet regime constituted a sudden provocation for hardliners in the ruling regime. But Trotsky’s careful preparations for confiscating church valuables implies that this was a conscious battle plan; he had done the groundwork for this

---

of NEP brought these differences into sharper focus”. Walters 1991, 253. This is, of course, quite right, but these differences did not surface while Lenin was still in charge.

50 Curtiss 1953, 114; Pethybridge 1990, 39.

51 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.261 (Pp 94, 9/2-22).

campaign and kept it well hidden so the foreign press would not get wind of it.<sup>52</sup>

All the information available testifies to the fact that the practical implementation of the confiscation conflict bears Trotsky's hallmark. It was partly a tactical measure of his to fund the Soviet regime in a desperate situation and partly a political ploy to fight against the ROC. Lenin accepted Trotsky's policy whole-heartedly, believing that it afforded an excellent opportunity for a political offensive against the ROC.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, the ecclesiastical riots that ensued were so serious that bands of rioting believers could be dispersed only by the use of armed force. The Shuya incident was an excellent "casus belli" for the Soviet regime and even Lenin himself remarked on this in a secret letter to the Politburo, stating that this kind of activity by the ROC should be suppressed ruthlessly. Lenin urged the Politburo to act without hesitation and believed that this was an opportunity to root out the clerical opposition. During the famine the people would accept extreme measures by the Bolsheviks and give them a chance to work with their sympathy or at least with the neutrality of masses.<sup>54</sup> This remark of Lenin demonstrates profoundly his personal sentiments concerning the ROC, which he considered to be a dedicated enemy of Soviet power. The famine provided an excellent opportunity to collect funds and exterminate the class enemy of the people in one sweep. He also criticised the doubts of his colleagues; at first Rykov, Kalinin and Kamenev did not support Trotsky's desire to attack the ROC. Nevertheless, Lenin's opinion decided the case in Trotsky's favour. The motivation seemed to be, as Mikhail Geller has stated, Lenin's hope to strike the ROC a death-blow from which it would never recover. In addition, as Lenin remarked in his letter to the Politburo, it was essential to keep Trotsky's role in the whole affair hidden. The obvious explanation for this was that Trotsky was a Jew and knowledge of his involvement might have increased outbursts of anti-Semitism among the Russian population.<sup>55</sup>

52 Delaney 1971, 108. See Trotsky's secret letter to Lenin dated 30 January 1922. In it Trotsky hints to Lenin that confiscating the valuables from churches was under "political" preparation on different levels (...подготавливается политически с разных сторон...) in order to keep the matter hidden from the foreign press. TTP II, 670–672. For information concerning Tuchkov's journey to Petrograd to inspect the situation, see RTsKhIDNI f.4, op.1, d.443a (PCAP 8, 19/12-22), (PCAP 14, b/d).

53 TTP II 1971, 689; Delaney 1971, 108; Jansen 1982, 137, 139–140.

54 IzvTsK KPSS 1990 4, 192-193. This letter had earlier been published in "samizdat" literature but official Soviet sources had also given some hint of its existence. See Regelson 1977, 280–284; PSS 45, 666–667; BH 12, 244. See also IzvTsK KPSS 1990 4, 193; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d. 283 (Pp 114, 20/3-22).

55 Geller 1985, 41–42; IzvTsK KPSS 1990 4, 192. See also Alekseev 1991, 207.

The swift reaction of the Soviet authorities to these riots reinforces the view that Trotsky was more than prepared to exploit these riots for political gain. The principle of “divide and rule” suited the Commissar of War very well. Creating a schism among one’s political opponents in order to crush them later was no strange course of action for Lenin, nor for the Bolshevik party in general. After the party congress of 1903 Lenin had tried to develop a “raskol” (schism) inside the Menshevik faction. In similar fashion, promoting the “Living Church” proved very effective in weakening the ROC. Furthermore, a loyal church was also useful for purposes of foreign propaganda.<sup>56</sup>

Plans for confiscating valuables and crushing any possible resistance were ready by 20 March 1922 when the Politburo (only Kamenev, Stalin, Trotsky and Molotov attended) decided to send a special delegation to Shuya in order to inspect the situation. The delegation later approved of the way local officials had acted but concluded that they were “not energetic and planned” enough to maintain order in the town. The same day Trotsky introduced a more precise proposal to the Politburo to deal with confiscations and the plan was accepted with some additions by the Politburo. This detailed plan for confiscating church valuables proposed that the ruling regime should create secret local commissions all over the country to carry out confiscations. Together with these secret commissions, it also proposed the setting up of local commissions which would officially conduct negotiations with religious groups.<sup>57</sup>

The vice-chairman of this commission was T.V. Sapronov (1887–1939). Others on the commission like Unshlikht, A.V. Medvedev (1884–1940) and Samoilova-Zemlyachka were members of the security organs, and M.V. Galkin (Gorev) was the expert on religious organizations. Trotsky had demanded from the Politburo that his Central Confiscation Commission should work clandestinely and that the formal work of this confiscation campaign should be directed through the Pomgol. According to his plan, local secret “shock-committees” should be subordinated to a special leading committee which would include Kalinin, Ya.A. Yakovlev (1896–1938), Sapronov, Unshlikht, Krasikov, A.N. Vinokurov and G.D. Bazilevich. For day-to-day work Trotsky proposed creating a committee consisting of Yakovlev, Sapronov, Unshlikht and Galkin. He reserved for himself the place of co-ordinator by proposing that during weekends this organ should meet with him. His instructions for the practical implementation of this process put much weight on secrecy. Special local commissions

56 TRRR, 49–50; Carr 1985 I, 36–37.

57 IzvTsK KPSS 1990 4, 194.

should work in secret together with local famine commissions. It was also important that the make-up of these official Pomgol commissions should not give grounds for chauvinistic remarks. This was probably done in order to avoid anti-semitic feelings. Communists of Jewish origin working on official commissions might have given rise to an increase in anti-semitism among the Russian population. To prepare for the confiscation of valuables, local commissions should organize a special weekend for agitation and propaganda purposes in particular districts. In order to minimize the possible resistance of sections of the population, he proposed that agitators in these campaigns should refrain from attacking religion as such. Instead they should stress the need to help the starving.<sup>58</sup>

In his instructions Trotsky placed much emphasis on the importance of creating a schism (*raskol*) within the ranks of the clergy and stipulated in his directives that those clergymen who openly supported the confiscation process should receive protection. He reasoned this by commenting that although the Bolshevik agitation and propaganda should not integrate with the loyal clergymen, it was important to give the impression that a considerable part of the clergy was behind the actions of the government. He advised that well-known priests should not be touched if at all possible, but that they should be told in advance that in the case of excesses or rioting by the populace they would be held responsible.<sup>59</sup>

Politburo protocols inform us that Trotsky dictated the official reaction of the ruling regime to the events in Shuya at a Politburo meeting on 22 March 1922. As a result of this meeting the ruling regime decided then to arrest the Patriarch and the Synod. Nevertheless, for tactical reasons this was not done at once, but after a delay of 10–15 days. Time was probably needed for organizing the press campaign against Tikhon. It was also decided at this meeting that the “ring-leaders” among priests opposing the confiscations were to be shot at the same time as information about the church disorders of Shuya, Smolensk and Petrograd would be published in the Soviet newspapers. Only after these measures had been carried out should the highest leaders of the church be arrested. This decision underlined also the importance of executing the confiscation process throughout the whole country. Presumably for tactical reasons, the Politburo on 23 March 1922 ordered that no kind of antireligious behaviour should be shown during the confiscation of valuables. Moreover, the head of state,

58 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.283 (Pp 114, 20/3-22); IzvTsK KPSS 1990 4, 194.

59 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.283 (Pp 114, 20/3-22); IzvTsK KPSS 1990 4, 194.  
Compare also *Russkaya Mysl*, 20–26 January 1994, No. 4013 and NR, 34.



Kalinin, was even obliged to call on loyal priests to work in the Pomgol.<sup>60</sup>

In accordance with this directive, the Soviet press started campaigning against the Patriarch and accused Tikhon of being a “Russian Pope” and the Synod of being the “general staff of the counter-revolution”. The headlines of *Izvestiya* for 6 May 1922 also included news of how lower clergy were protesting against the “princes of the Church”. *Pravda*, the party’s main newspaper, attacked the leaders of the ROC the same day by maintaining that the counter-revolution was now using religion for its own purposes. On 4 May 1922 the Politburo, after a short outburst of accusations against the Patriarch and the higher leadership of the ROC, ordered the Moscow Tribunal to put Tikhon on trial and to mete out the “highest measure of punishment” (применить к попам высшую меру наказания – i.e. execution) against those priests already arrested. This order was carried out in part on 9 May 1922, when Tikhon was placed under house arrest in the Donskoi monastery.<sup>61</sup>

115

Trotsky’s plan to create a schism inside the ROC succeeded. The imprisonment of the Patriarch provided the opportunity to organize a revolution inside the church. At the beginning of May 1922 the head of the 6th section of the GPU, Evgeni Aleksandrovich Tuchkov gathered opposition-minded clergy to Moscow and on 12 May 1922 a delegation of priests visited Tikhon and accused him of counter-revolutionary activity and demanded that he temporarily resign his office. After some discussion Tikhon signed a paper renouncing his office temporarily in favour of this delegation. Later on 14 May 1922 this group of priests announced in *Pravda* that they had constituted a “Temporary Higher Church Administration”, VTsU.<sup>62</sup>

This clerical revolution, nonetheless, did not receive the amount of attention from the party press Trotsky had hoped for. On the evening of the same day he wrote a letter to the members of Politburo demanding that newspapers should give more coverage of this “loyal group of clergy” and he called them, interestingly enough, a “smenovekhst” group inside the clergy. He remarked that the ruling regime was not

60 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.284 (Pp 115, 22/3-22); f.17, op.3, d.285 (Pp 116, 23/3-22).

61 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.291 (Pp 5, 4/5-22); *Izvestiya*, 6 May 1922, No. 99(1538); 9 May 1922, No. 102(1542); Curtiss 1953, 120.

62 Walters 1991, 254; Gousseff 1993, 9–28. See also *Pravda*, 14 May 1922, No. 106. On 13 April 1922 pro-Renovationist Bishop Antony (A.A. Granovsky 1860–1927) was accepted onto the central committee of the official relief organization (Pomgol). RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.288 (Pp 2, 13/5-22). See especially Tuchkov’s report to Menzhinsky: RdO, 29–40.



giving up its principle of the separation of church and state or diluting its philosophical-materialist doctrine, but, nevertheless, he commented that it was to the political advantage of communists to see to it that these “smenovekhists” should not be harassed by the old clerical hierarchies. He stressed that newspapers had a mission to lift the spirits of loyal clergy and encourage them to trust that the state would not let them be harmed and added that this should be done within the limits of the state policy not to attempt to interfere in purely religious disputes.<sup>63</sup>

Towards the end of his letter he again criticized Soviet newspapers and asserted that *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, while active in commenting on the Conference of Genoa, did not pay enough attention when there occurred a profound ecclesiastical revolution among the Russian people.<sup>64</sup>

In the above letter Trotsky evaluated the importance of these “clerical smenovekhists”. The Smena-Vekh movement (Changing Landmarks) had developed in the West among a group of Russian émigré writers and essayists who early in 1921 in Prague elaborated their programme in the publication *Smena Vekh*. This group of intellectuals was made up of well-known writers such as N.V. Ustryalov (1890–1938) who believed that through the defeat of the Whites and the autocracy there could occur the possibility of accomplishing a national revival. He believed that the “anti-national movement of the Bolsheviks” would become a national one. Moreover, Ustryalov did not accept the idea that Bolshevism could be identified with demonism. This view had been put forward by the authors of another émigré publication, *Iz Glubiny* (From the Depths), notably P.B. Struve (1870–1953), N.A. Berdyaev and S.N. Bulgakov.<sup>65</sup> The “*Iz Glubiny*” group rejected Ustryalov’s rationalization that the possible national revival of Russia would be reason enough for supporting the Bolsheviks. As Mikhail Agursky has remarked, Struve rejected Ustryalov as a “dangerous seducer”.<sup>66</sup>

According to Trotsky, the Smena-Vekhists belonged to the “white-guardist” and reactionary bloc, but nonetheless the Soviet government needed their services. They had some common objectives with Soviet power but unlike their “fellow-travellers” in literary or military circles they were of limited political value. This view implies that “clerical”

\*\*\*\*\*  
63 *IzvTsK KPSS* 1990 4, 196.

64 *IzvTsK KPSS* 1990 4, 197.

65 “Из Глубины. Сборник статей о русской революции.” Издательство Русская Мысль. Москва-Петроград. 1918. New edition: Издательство Московского университета. СП Ост-Вест Корпорейшен. Москва. 1990.

66 Agursky 1987, 240–244, 248; Carter 1990, 46–48. See also Longinov 1985, 281–283.

and secular *smena-vekhists* were only temporary and tactical allies and that Soviet power did not have any obligations towards them. This attitude explains how and why the ruling regime treated the Living Church as it did.<sup>67</sup>

As a result of this temporary alliance liberal priests were able to publish their own journal, "The Living Church", from 12 May 1922 and to organize themselves officially from 4 July 1922 on by creating an official "Living Church" movement inside the ROC. In accordance with Trotsky's masterplan, the ruling regime supported this new movement and arrested clergymen who did not favour this ecclesiastical revolution. It is difficult to see how this could be judged an impartial policy as the communist regime sought to influence their religious policy.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, liberal clergymen were even able to convoke an ecclesiastical meeting, a second Sobor, on 29 April 1923 in order to deal with the situation. Soviet officials followed the development of this assembly very closely and were even ready to organize a scandal to discredit the chairman of the Sobor if it proved necessary. As a certain Tuchkov's report to Menzhinsky (1874–1934) explains, the ruling regime and its security organs could control this congress as much as they wanted. The Sobor gave ardent reassurances of its loyalty to the Soviet state, even sending warm greetings to Lenin and hailing the Bolshevik revolution.<sup>69</sup>

117

Opposition to the confiscation of church valuables by local committees was suppressed immediately and ruthlessly throughout Soviet Russia. Lenin's earlier call for the execution of rebellious priests was put into effect. In Shuya three people were executed initially and many more executions followed later. One example of this terror followed the meeting of the Politburo on 18 May 1922 when Trotsky demanded the "highest measure of punishment" (execution) for six priests arrested in Moscow. This was carried out at the same time as preparations for the political trials of the leaders of the SR party (held in Moscow from 8 June to 7 August 1922) were underway. Although L.B. Kamenev attempted to revoke this decision, the Politburo agreed with Trotsky and these executions went ahead. Gradually more senior

67 Kemp-Welch 1990, 22–26; Gousseff 1993, 15–16.

68 Curtiss 1953, 134–137; Siegelbaum 1992, 158–159.

69 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.565a (PCAP 20, 4/5-23); RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180. "Обращение Великого Всероссийского предсоборного совещания. К правительству союза советских социалистических республик. 18. июня 1924"; RdO, 31–33. See also Curtiss 1953, 154–156. "Sectarian-communists" supported these actions too; concern over "reactionist" clergymen in the VTsU's administration was expressed also in the articles of A. Volkov and I. Tregubov on 2 August 1922. *Izvestiya*, 2 August 1922, No. 171.

leaders of the ROC in Moscow and Petrograd were arrested as a result of the riots arising out of the confiscation process. In Moscow trials against clergy took place from 24 April to 7 May 1922 and Tikhon himself testified for some of the defendants. The highlight of these prosecutions was, nonetheless, the trial against the ROC leaders from Petrograd and the forthcoming trial of Tikhon.<sup>70</sup>

Both Curtiss and Solzhenitsyn discuss the possible intention of the Soviet regime in trying to smash the ROC by charging its highest leaders, Tikhon, Metropolitan Veniamin and their associates, with counter-revolutionary activity. As we have seen Trotsky and other “hardline” members of the Politburo were clearly in favour of this scheme. However, pressure for more resolute actions against Veniamin came also, according to the archives, from local representatives of the secret police. Representatives of the secret police in Petrograd had been irritated by Veniamin’s prominent role in the collection of valuables and pressed the central organs to arrest him. Moreover, as Dimitry V. Pospelovsky has remarked, Veniamin’s popularity among the youth and workers had no doubt embittered local communist leaders.<sup>71</sup> Although some senior officials of the NKYust attempted to pacify the local security organs, his fate was doomed when Trotsky’s more aggressive line won out among leading communists. It might be claimed with good reason that these trials against Petrograd’s ecclesiastical leaders were among the first political trials in the Soviet state. Renovationist clergymen such as Vvedensky (1888–?) and Kransky testified against Veniamin and despite Vvedensky making a private appeal for mercy to Soviet Prime Minister Rykov, he was not able to save Veniamin and the other defendants. On the contrary, these appeals were not publicised and the testimonies of these liberal clergymen were said to have made a profound impression on the court. Despite international protests the trial was conducted till the end. Soviet officials attempted to underline that the Soviet regime was not persecuting religion as such but simply acting against “counter-revolutionaries”. But as the outcome of this trial Veniamin and four other defendants were executed.<sup>72</sup>

70 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.293 (Pp 7, 18/5-22); Curtiss 1953, 121, 126.

71 Pospelovsky 1991, 275–276.

72 GARF2 f. 353, op. 4, d.382; “Выписка из стенограммы вечернего заседания Петроградского губернского революционного трибунала от 29-го июня 1922 года по делу Петроградских церковников”. See also DMV; Curtiss 1953, 122–123, 126–127, and the correspondence between the NKYust and Petrograd’s local Cheka: GARF2 f.353, op.5, d.255 “Уполномоченному VII отд. Сов.чк.: Петроград Губчека: Уполномоченному 7-го отделен. Совчк. Докладная записка”.

Interestingly enough however, as one of the leaders of the Renovationist movement A.I. Vvedensky revealed in his letter to Rykov, the position of the Renovationists during these trials was complex. In his letter Vvedensky first pointed out how he himself had been persecuted by the conservative representatives of the church but went on to plead with the Soviet regime not to execute Veniamin. Veniamin, he explained, was a weak person who had not been strong enough to act against Tikhon; in reality he had never thought of overthrowing Soviet power. He revealed that Veniamin had forbidden the clergy from entering politics. The “good and weak-minded” Veniamin, Vvedensky said, could have been on the progressive side of the clergy but the events of spring 1922 proved his undoing. Vvedensky also felt that the execution of Veniamin could have unpredictable consequences; he would become a martyr. Vvedensky also felt that Soviet power was strong enough politically to be lenient towards Veniamin and had other ways of isolating him. At the end of his letter he revealed the dual motivation and ambiguous loyalty of the “reformers”:

I believe in God – and I think that He will help me. And I believe in the Russian people and deeply respect the “peasant-workers” power of the people...<sup>73</sup>

## b. Other religious organizations

International protests on behalf of the clergymen did not have any effect and throughout the summer and autumn of 1922 conservative priests and other church dignitaries were arrested for counter-revolutionary activities and church valuables were confiscated. This campaign was not directed solely at the ROC. The authorities also attacked other religions; Jews and Catholics, for example, were repressed in the same manner as the ROC.<sup>74</sup>

The confiscation of the valuables of all religious organizations implies that the ruling regime wanted to strike a decisive blow against organized religion. Officials of the GPU even attempted to create a reformationist group among the Moslem clergy in Russia. This could

73 “но я верую в Бога – и думаю, что он поможет мне. И я верую в русский народ, глубоко уважаю рабоче-крестьянскую власть народную”. GARF1 f.5446с, оп.55, д.86. “Т.Рыкову. 25.июля 1922”. See also the petition of Bishop Antony: GARF2 f.353, оп.6, д.11 “Председателю В.Ц.И.К 11/7-22г.”. For more on the personalities and motives of the Renovationist leaders, see Walters 1991, 256–263.

74 See, for example, TRRR, 171–172. See also ORTs, 51–53.



be seen as part of an official antireligious campaign of the early NEP period. But it may also be argued that the widespread confiscation of valuables caused local communist officials to understand this as an extension of the civil war policy and as a sign of an overall assault against religious organizations.<sup>75</sup>

For example, Soviet Jewry was under fierce attack in 1921–22, especially from the Jewish section of the communist party, the *Evseksiya*. These antireligious campaigns of the 1920s were conducted exclusively by Jewish communists. As an analogy to the “Living Church”, Jewish communists created the “Living Synagogue” movement and started antireligious and anti-nationalist attacks against the “Zionist-Hebrew” front. The *Evseksiya* in particular wanted to weaken the status of the Jewish religious school, the *heder*. As Zvi Gitelman has remarked, the insecurity of the Jewish communists drove them to antireligious campaigns to reassure others of their ideological fidelity. In the atmosphere of the general drive against religion and the confiscation of church valuables, Jewish communists felt obliged to prove their ideological fervour to their non-Jewish communist comrades, although synagogues did not contain the same number of valuable objects as were to be found in Orthodox churches.<sup>76</sup>

In particular, the situation of Roman Catholics in Russia was tense. The great majority of Catholics in Soviet Russia were of Polish origin. According to Dennis J. Dunn, there were various factors in Soviet–Vatican relations such as the ideological motivation, the independence of the Catholic church, traditions of mutual dislike between Russians and the Catholic church, the Soviet government’s suspicion that Catholics were planning a “coup” against it, and finally Catholic opposition to communist internationalism.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, when evaluating Soviet religious policy towards Catholics, it seems obvious that the relation with Catholic Poland was a more significant factor than any of the above. The religious policy towards Catholics in the western regions of the Soviet state was carried out not solely for ideological reasons but also because of the international situation. The Polish–Russian war and the civil war had greatly exacerbated Soviet relations

75 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.122, d.443a (PCAP 18, 3/4-23); Gitelman 1971, 331; Maillieux 1971, 359–363.

76 See reports on the antireligious campaigns of the *Evseksiya*. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.170. “Анти-клерикальная кампания/из отчета ЦБ Евсекции при РКП за период с 15-го сен-по 15 ноябр- 22; Анти-клерикальная кампания/извлечения отчета ЦБ Евсекции при ЦК РКП с 15 ноября-22 г.пр. 15-ое января 1923 года: О борьбе с клерикализмом на еврейской улице. Резолюция принятая на Минском съезде культработников. Сентябрь 1921 года”. Gitelman 1988, 116–121. See also Goldelman 1960, 194–195.

77 Dunn 1977, 32–33.



towards the Catholic church in Soviet Ukraine.

The peace negotiations between the Soviet state and Poland brought to the fore many questions concerning the rights of national minorities in Russia and in Poland. During the negotiations Poland insisted on cultural guarantees for the Catholic population in western Russia and in Ukraine. These cultural guarantees included, according to the Polish interpretation, the official recognition of and privileges for the Catholic religion. This had been a cause of irritation for the Soviet regime, which believed that including religion as a national right for Catholics was nothing more than a Polish plot to interfere in its internal affairs – “to create a Polish ghetto” inside the Soviet state. Nonetheless the Treaty of Riga, which was eventually concluded on 18 March 1921, stipulated mutual respect for the culture, language and religion of other nationalities.<sup>78</sup>

Although relations with Catholicism remained tense in theory, the Soviet regime was willing to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards Catholics and even negotiate with the Vatican before the Genoa Conference in order to escape from international isolation. On 12 March 1922 representatives of the Soviet state and the Holy See signed a written agreement which granted permission to the Vatican’s emissaries to give assistance to the starving people in the Volga area. The Vatican also offered to purchase ecclesiastical objects of value confiscated by the Soviet state.<sup>79</sup>

Other negotiations were held before the Conference of Genoa in May 1922 in which the Vatican tried to obtain guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion for its followers and demanded also the return of Catholic ecclesiastical property. These negotiations, nonetheless, produced few results as the Soviet government was not eager to make exceptions in its religious policy.<sup>80</sup>

Nevertheless, in this case the interests of the NKID and the NKYust collided. The Soviet foreign office (NKID) drew the NKYust’s attention to the rumoured “extraordinary zealotness of local organs” in its religious policy and appealed to the leader of the NKYust, P.A. Krasikov, to change this line of policy. The NKID justified this interference by pointing out that the spread of such rumours abroad could have politically dangerous consequences and explained that the

78 \*\*\*\*\*  
Pravda, 2 April 1921, No. 171; Wandycz 1969, 273–275. See the text of the peace treaty and later Polish protests on violations of the religious rights of people of Polish origin. GARF2 f.353, op.6, d.9 “Уважаемый Господин Заместитель Народного Комиссара (27. апреля 1922 года)”.

79 GARF2 f.353, op.6, d.9 “В Президиум ВЦИК/ Центральная комиссия по Изъятию Церковных ценностей”. See also Stehle 1990, 347.

80 TRRR, 92–93; Solchanyk & Hvat 1990, 52.

Polish government would not hesitate to utilize such rumours in its propaganda to Polish peasants in western Ukraine. Or, as the Soviet representative in Italy V.V. Vorovsky (1871–1923) in his letter to M.M. Litvinov (1876–1951) put it, it was a pity that there seemed to exist nobody in Moscow who could understand the importance of relations with the Vatican. “Even if Krasikov were to stand firm” against him, Vorovsky was ready to improve these relations.<sup>81</sup>

On the other hand, the “hawks” in the area of Soviet religious policy, and especially P.A. Krasikov, opposed every effort to change the religious policy of the Soviet state in relation to Catholics or to the Vatican. As he put it, there was no reason to treat Catholicism differently from other religions or to ease the conditions of arrested Catholics in Russia.<sup>82</sup>

As various sources testify, Catholic Poland was seen as a fierce adversary of the Soviet state. Relations between the two states were not improved by the fact that Soviet officials thought that Poland interpreted the Riga Treaty as a mandate to defend Catholicism (i.e. Polish interests) inside Soviet Russia. Archive sources tell us that the ruling Soviet regime even toyed with the idea of weakening the combination of Polish nationality and the Catholic faith by substituting Polish cardinals with Germans or Italians. As a counter-measure to undermine Polish activity in this field, Soviet newspapers accused Poland of the “brutal violation of the peace-treaty” and, more surprisingly, blamed the Polish government for mistreating the Orthodox minority on Polish territory.<sup>83</sup> The resistance of Catholics irritated the Soviet regime, although it tried in many ways to create a pro-government Catholic church in the Soviet Union. Soviet officials even contemplated the possibility that, if Catholic cardinals were to remain unco-operative, Catholic churches might be handed over for the use of other religions.<sup>84</sup>

The Catholic Church’s “lack of locality” and the Polish diplomatic intervention, together with reports that the Catholic bishops of Polish origin were conducting a counter-revolutionary policy, were probably the reasons for the more drastic attacks against the Catholic clergy that were to ensue. On 2–3 March 1923, Catholic Archbishop Cieplak (1857–1926), Fr. Budkiewicz (?–1923) and certain Catholic priests

81 GARF2 f.353, op.6, d.9 “Наркомюст. тов. Красикову (24. мая 1922)”; “Замнаркому тов. М.М. Литвинову (12. августа 1922)”.

82 GARF2 f.353, op.6, d.9 “В Народный Комиссариат Иностранных Дел (11/ VIII-22)”.

83 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.364 (Pp 16, 12/6-23); f.17, op.112, d.565a (PCAP 41, 12/ 12-23). On the Soviet press campaign against Poland, see *Izvestiya*, 2 August 1922, No. 171.

84 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 7, 5/12-22); Teodorovich 1960, 86.

were arrested and charged with counter-revolution. Cieplak and Fr. Budkiewicz were subsequently condemned to death but only Budkiewicz was executed.<sup>85</sup>

Dennis J. Dunn has described the execution of Fr. Budkiewicz as a “quite extreme” measure. He explains this act as the result of the “temporary ascendancy of the left wing of the Party” within the Soviet government. But according to archive sources, the fate of Budkiewicz was decided by the small inner circle of the Politburo – Stalin, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Tomsy (1880–1936) – and it would be questionable to characterize them as “leftist”. Nonetheless the Bolsheviks, as earlier, attempted to utilize highly positioned Catholic clergy as a tool in their foreign policy. According to a report by the U.S. Ambassador to Warsaw, Hugh Gibson, the Bolsheviks were willing to commute these death sentences in exchange for the release of certain communists held in Polish prisons. The Polish government, however, interpreted this as blackmail and did not take up the offer.<sup>86</sup>

123

### 3. THE INTERREGNUM OF POWER

#### a. The birth of the Commission of Antireligious Propaganda, CAP

During the spring of 1922 Lenin suffered from headaches and insomnia, which greatly affected his ability to work. Slowly but surely the battle for supreme power began. Although Lenin later recovered and returned to his post, it was clear that during the interregnum the party and the state were more and more under the influence of other leaders. While recovering, Lenin had time to re-evaluate some of the characteristics of the Soviet system. On returning to work to take up his post as head of the Sovnarkom, he was disturbed by the general bureaucratic rigidity around him. Above all, he was alarmed by the increased stature and influence of the General Secretary. Stalin's ruthless character, as Isaac Deutscher has suggested, may have represented for Lenin the cultural backwardness of Russia. Lenin was also uneasy about the political situation in Georgia and believed that Stalin had resorted to unduly brutal measures during its annexation.<sup>87</sup>

85 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 6, 28/11-22); Maillieux 1971, 362–363.

86 See RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.349 (Pp 1, 3/5-22); TRRR, 135; Dunn 1977, 35.

87 Trotsky 1930, 215–216; Trotsky 1947, 365; Deutscher 1967, 250–252. See also Borys 1980, 317–318.

So during his last active spell as head of government Lenin began to criticise the Soviet system which he had done so much to create. At first this criticism was directed against certain malfunctionings on the part of the Soviet organs, but later his analysis extended to the whole Soviet political system. Lenin's re-evaluation of the Soviet system was crystallized in his much repeated appeal for the need for culture inside the ruling regime. He stressed the importance of reforming the excessive bureaucracy and the backwardness of the Soviet system. Lack of culture and education seemed to be everywhere, and unless the communists could absorb culture or learn from it they could not hope to lead the country. The basic lesson for the ruling regime was to learn culture and trade. In his last writings, Lenin also demanded a more clearly defined separation between state power and the party. The Soviet state should be allowed to work in peace without the pedantic intervention of the party.<sup>88</sup> His criticism finally escalated into a full-blown political schism between him and Stalin. Lenin reveals in his famous "testament" that he was prepared to remove Stalin from his post because of his damaging effect on nationality policy and rude personal behaviour.<sup>89</sup>

Nevertheless, the political confrontation between Lenin and Stalin developed slowly. Lenin was preoccupied with other matters, such as the battle against possible opponents of Soviet power. He was interested especially in taking up the fight against religion. His wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, has explained in her memoirs that during the NEP religion had shown some signs of revitalization.<sup>90</sup> This revitalization of the church was due to many different factors. Probably the most important reason was that the NEP had improved the economic welfare of the peasants and as a result they were in a position to donate more to religious organizations. Despite the destruction of the civil war churches and sects had preserved their roots in the countryside and consequently this revitalization process happened quite swiftly.

The renaissance of the religious organizations and their strength<sup>91</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*  
88 PSS 45, 61–62. "Письмо В.М. Молотову для пленума ЦК РКП(б) с планом политдоклада на XI съезде партии"; PSS 45, 95–97, 104–105, 116. "XI съезд РКП(б). Речь при открытии съезда 27 марта". PSS 45, 372–373, 377. "Последние письма и статьи В.И. Ленина 23 декабря 1922г. – 2 марта 1923".

89 PSS 45, 344–346, 356–359. "Последние письма и статьи В.И. Ленина 23 декабря 1922г. – 2 марта 1923"; Tucker 1973, 267–273, 275–277; Medvedev 1989, 79–81.

90 Krupskaya 1960, 55–56. See also TRRR, 62–64.

91 Maurice Hindus remarked that during his journey (1923) in Soviet Russia the great strength of religious belief among the populace was obvious. The sects especially were very active during that time. Hindus 1933, 159–163.



was so impressive that Lenin was prepared to conduct an antireligious mission against them. However, the intensification of the antireligious fight was realized in ways different from what he would have wished. According to Trotsky, Lenin had planned that he (Trotsky) should lead the Soviet antireligious work. In any event, Trotsky had been responsible for the “confiscation conflict” and he had supervised the APO’s antireligious commission and carried out the confiscations of church valuables. However, Trotsky was no longer in a position to lead religious policy. During Lenin’s illness the party apparatus had gradually isolated Trotsky from power. For example, in 1923 the pro-Stalinist Yaroslavsky was nominated to be responsible for antireligious work. Commenting later on this appointment, Trotsky said that Yaroslavsky’s nomination as his “deputy” in the party’s antireligious work was one of the intrigues aimed against him by Stalin and the other members of the triumvirate.<sup>92</sup>

This political co-operation in the religious policy sphere between Lenin and Trotsky never materialized. Soon after this Lenin suffered another stroke, which paralysed him physically and prevented him from engaging in further political activities. However, the fact that he planned to work with Trotsky and intended promoting Trotsky to the leadership of the antireligious struggle in Russia, suggests that Lenin approved the religious policy line of Trotsky more than the methods of Stalin’s protégé, Yaroslavsky. The rationale for their political co-operation in this field is understandable; they both placed the same emphasis on the priority of culture in building a socialist society in Russia.<sup>93</sup>

Although Isaac Deutscher can be regarded as a biased commentator, his remarks on the common “conservative” interests and ambitions of Lenin and Trotsky in relation to cultural life seem to be valid:

Lenin also repeatedly indicated to the party and the International his regard for Trotsky as an interpreter of Marxism; and he lent wholehearted support to the outstanding influence Trotsky exercised on Russia’s cultural life... Both rejected the ambition of clamorous groups of writers and artists, especially of Proletkult, to sponsor a ‘proletarian culture’ and ‘proletarian literature’. In educational affairs, which since the civil war both considered to be of paramount importance, and in all matters relating to the advocacy of Marxism, both counselled caution and tolerance; and both discouraged firmly

92 Trotsky 1990 (1930), 213.

93 Trotsky 1947, 365.



the crudity of approach, the conceit, and the fanaticism, which influential party members began to exhibit.<sup>94</sup>

As general secretary, Stalin was able to outmanoeuvre Trotsky without too much difficulty. In the name of co-ordination, the Orgburo suggested that there should be a new organ to direct religious policy under the control of the Central Committee. Stalin could rationalize this decision by claiming that the Politburo was preoccupied with general policies and was not able to concentrate on this matter properly. In addition, one of the main duties of the newly-elected General Secretary was to rationalize the bureaucracy inside the party. Creating one centralized organ to co-ordinate the party's antireligious work fitted in well with his role as a trimmer of unnecessary bureaucracy in the party. But there is no doubt that this was a deliberate tactic of Stalin's to undermine Trotsky's position during the power struggle.<sup>95</sup>

126

Despite Lenin's wishes to put Trotsky in charge of antireligious work this new commission was formed without him. The official name of this body was the "Commission for Implementing the Separation of Church and State under the authority of the Central Committee RCP(b)," but later it was referred as the "Antireligious Commission" or the "Commission of Antireligious Propaganda" (CAP). Moreover, for some unknown reason Trotsky had neglected to attend the APO's Antireligious Commission's sessions and its members had asked advice from the Central Committee about the future of their commission. If Trotsky could not attend, as they suspected was the case, then they suggested the APO should organize another commission to handle matters related to religious policy.<sup>96</sup>

The birth of a new, "non-Trotskyist" antireligious commission, can be traced to a meeting of the Politburo on 19 October 1922 when it nominated the members to the new commission and defined its functions. The CAP (as this commission is referred in this study) was obliged to give a report to the Politburo every second week and was given extensive powers to execute "religious policy". The Politburo also ordered that the CAP should establish links with local sections of the GPU, the NKYust and the APO.<sup>97</sup>

94 Deutscher 1987, 56. Trotsky later claimed that Lenin trusted him totally in political matters. AT III, 130. "Заявление". See also Deutscher 1987, 28–29.

95 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.318 (Pp 32, 19/10-22).

96 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op. 60, d. 158 "Протокол. Заседания No. Антирелигиозной комиссии 3 окт. 1922 года 12 часов дня".

97 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.318 (Pp 32, 19/10-22). The belief that Yaroslavsky was a leading figure in this organ from the beginning seems to be erroneous. According to archive sources, Yaroslavsky attended these meetings for the first time on 27 March 1923. Compare Fatev 1988 and RTsKhIDNI f.4, op.1, d.443a (PCAP 17, 27/3-23).

The importance of the CAP can be seen from its composition. The members of this new commission were veterans in this field. For example, I.I. Skvortsov–Stepanov and P.A. Krasikov were nominated from the APO’s former commission along with P.G. Smidovich (1874–1935), who was a member of party’s special sectarian commission, the Orgkomsekt. As well as the above representatives the composition was broadened with delegates from the security organs: the leader of GPU, V.R. Menzhinsky, T.D. Deribas (1883–1939) and E.A. Tuchkov, together with the journalist I.P. Flerovsky. It is important to note that Yaroslavsky, although he was later to be the chairman of this commission, was nominated to the CAP only from the beginning of 1923. It is also important to realize that the Narkompros never had any actual representatives working on the CAP. Moreover, before the liquidation of the CAP in 1928 the Orgburo nominated representatives from various Soviet organs such as the NKID, the NKVD, the Komsomols and the Godless movement, but none from the Narkompros. The moderate political stance of Lunacharsky’s Commissariat is perhaps the reason for this.<sup>98</sup>

At its first meetings the general targets of the CAP were outlined and these involved three main tasks. Firstly to confirm directives related to the activities of the GPU with regard to liquidating Tikhonite supporters; secondly to gain influence over the VTsU; and thirdly to sponsor the “Living Church” and the left-wing of the church. Moreover, at this first meeting of the CAP, general guidelines for the Soviet press concerning religious policy were drawn up.<sup>99</sup> In addition, this commission was initially engaged in fomenting and supervising the schism inside the ROC. For example, the CAP decided to remove Tikhonite bishops from their posts and suggested to the GPU that they should compromise these clerics. Later this organ formed a commission to consider the internal exiling of priests. Furthermore, the CAP also examined the possibility of widening the schism inside the ROC by recognising autocephalous churches, for example in Ukraine.<sup>100</sup>

In conclusion, Tikhon’s release and Stalin’s outmanoeuvring of

98 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.318 (Рр 32, 19/10-22); f. 89, op. 1, d.11 “Выписка из протокола №30. Заседания Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) об утверждении Е.М. Ярославского и других членами антирелигиозной комиссии”. According to Sheila Fitzpatrick, ordinary communists saw the Narkompros as “disorganized, impractical and excessively sympathetic with the old intelligentsia”. Fitzpatrick 1979, 11.

99 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 1, 23/10-22).

100 RTsKhIDNI f.4, op.1, d.443a (PCAP 1, 23/10-22), (PCAP 2, 31/10-22), (PCAP 5, 21/11-22), (PCAP 11, 30/12-22). The CAP convened from 22 October 1922 to 4 November 1929. The date of the second CAP meeting was 31 October 1923 and not March as O.Yu. Vasileva has suggested. Compare RTsKhIDNI f.4, op.1, d.443a (PCAP 2, 31/10-22) and Vasileva 1993, 46.

Trotsky represented the end of one era in Soviet religious policy and the beginning of the genuine “religious NEP” for the ROC. It is also justified to say that the setting up of the CAP reflected the strong position of Stalin. During Lenin’s illness, Stalin wrested control of religious policy from Trotsky. It could be also argued that the CAP was a “non-Trotskyist” offspring of the Trotskyist confiscation conflict. The CAP, the party’s instrument in religious policy, served as a tactical centre for religious policy activities. Unlike the NKYust’s organs or the APO’s commission, it had a more effective role in guiding Soviet religious policy.

As was the case with its antecedents, the CAP executed the dual policy of supervising and destroying religious organizations. Firstly the Bolsheviks supervised the ROC in order to prevent it from challenging the ruling regime; they also made active efforts to spread schism inside the church. Secondly the ruling regime tried to gain the loyalty of the Russian clergy for the Soviet system. In this way the CAP mixed two conflicting components of the religious policy. Symbolizing the paradoxical political line of the NEP, the CAP tried to obtain the neutrality of the ROC by creating a new pro-government church, but in accordance with its atheist “imperative”, it rejected both “living” and “dead” churches and attempted to bring about the final destruction of all religious organizations. Nevertheless, under the conditions of the NEP, when the ruling regime wanted to appease the peasants, the role of this commission as a board for religious policy affairs was emphasized even more. The Politburo concentrated more on general political issues and the CAP was allowed to exercise Soviet religious policy under the authority of the Central Committee.

This episode indicates in any event that Soviet religious policy was not executed in a vacuum but was always an inseparable part of the general political struggle in the Soviet Union. The interpreting of Soviet religious ideology and the executing of Bolshevik religious policy became more and more the patrimony of those who were winners in the political struggle. It is also interesting to see how in the early 1920s the succession of power was not yet clear and Stalin’s protégé Yaroslavsky was not the infallible “pope of atheism” he is usually described as in later literature. Behind the scenes the ruling regime discussed and intensely debated religious policy matters.<sup>101</sup>

101 See, for example, RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.438 “Протокол по:102. Заседания подкомиссии по антирелигиозной пропаганде на деревне при п/отделе пропаганды ЦКРКП от 12-го сентября 1923 года”.

## b. The fate of Tikhon

The political defeat of Trotsky and the simultaneous change in the early NEP religious policy line are obvious when we study the case of Tikhon. His fate also clearly reveals how the party carried out its religious policy objectives in practice. Tikhon was arrested but his trial did not take place in 1922. The decision to put him on trial was delayed several times. However, a protocol of the Antireligious Commission for 14 November 1922 reveals that the authorities were actively contemplating putting him on trial. The members of the security and Soviet judiciary, V.R. Menzhinsky, Krasikov and Tuchkov were given the responsibility for undertaking the preparations for this trial.<sup>102</sup> Finally, on 30 January 1923 the CAP decided to deal with Tikhon's case on 25 March 1923 and made preparations for official charges to be made against him. The list included accusations that Tikhon had been systematically fighting against Soviet power, that he had relations with émigré organizations and that he had resisted the confiscation of church valuables.<sup>103</sup> The cases of both Cieplak and Tikhon were prepared in the CAP and it was decided on 6 February 1923 that Cieplak's trial would take place in Petrograd before Tikhon's trial in Moscow. Tikhon's case had to be further postponed, most likely due to the numerous international protests over Budkiewicz's execution.<sup>104</sup>

129

Despite these international protests, on 10 April 1923 the CAP ordered that Tikhon be transferred from house arrest to the GPU prison. The general procurator, N.V. Krylenko, had already prepared on 28 February 1923 the official charge in which he demanded the "the highest measure of punishment" be meted out to the Patriarch. The great trial against the "counter-revolutionary Pope" was approaching and tickets were even being printed for this hearing.<sup>105</sup>

However, the case of Tikhon had by now attracted considerable international attention. Tikhon's fate was not only of foreign interest but, as a GPU report acknowledged, his arrest had also given rise to much concern among the Soviet population. According to this secret report, the bourgeois population was spreading rumours of possible disturbances and demonstrations during Tikhon's trial. The report was also convinced that with foreign assistance businessmen, merchants

\*\*\*\*\*  
102 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.433a (PCAP 4, 14/11-22).

103 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 11, 30/1-23).

104 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 12, 6/2-23; PCAP 14, sa). Trotsky urged Soviet officials to answer these protests as soon as possible. See TTP II, 740.

105 GARF f.5446e, op.55, d.409 "Протокол. Сов.Секретно"; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 19, 10/4-23).



and the petty intelligentsia were spreading these rumours and were planning demonstrations and pogroms. More importantly, Tuchkov, the head of the 6th section of the GPU, assumed that, considering the attitude of the workers, it was not clear how they would react to the trial. Some workers, he felt, would not react all that differently from bourgeois elements.<sup>106</sup>

These internal reports and the international protests guaranteed that the ruling regime was aware of the consequences of executing Tikhon. The international repercussions arising out of the execution of Budkiewicz had been so great that even the representatives of the Comintern were forced to turn to Yaroslavsky and ask for some material concerning the religious policy of the USSR in order to calm negative reaction abroad.<sup>107</sup>

As source material indicates, there was significant opposition within the ruling regime to harsh methods in religious policy. Some representatives of the ruling regime even objected to the trial and appealed against the condemnation of Tikhon. For example, in his letter to the Politburo, and especially to Stalin, the Soviet Prime Minister Rykov, remarked that there had been differing opinions inside the CAP concerning the case against Tikhon. Rykov stressed that the case should be postponed until 23–24 April and that it was the Politburo which should decide Tikhon's fate.<sup>108</sup>

In addition, the Commissar of Foreign Affairs G.V. Chicherin turned to the "strong man" of the Politburo, Stalin, to ask him to prevent the execution of Tikhon. As justification for his appeal he mentioned that the execution of Budkiewicz had harmed Soviet power and because of Tikhon's eminent position his execution would cause an even greater furore. Commenting on the aggravated political atmosphere in America and in England with regard to this case, he also mentioned that France was considering bringing the case of Budkiewicz before the international negotiations in Lausanne. Chicherin also warned that the enemies of Soviet power might try to use this case to stir up feelings among Polish peasants. The execution of Budkiewicz could be justified as a warning to aggressive Polish chauvinism, but the case against Tikhon was different. The rest of the world considered it blatant religious persecution. According to Chicherin, the key to this inter-

106 GARF1 f.5446e, op.55, d.409 "Сводка п:1, 17/IV-23; Сводка п:2, 17/4-23".

107 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.161. "Тов. Ярославскому. 14. мая 1923". The release of Tikhon was generally seen as a sign of change in religious policy. For example, see GARF1 f.5263, op.1, d.55(3) "Старшему помощнику прокурора Республики и Зам. Наркомюста 19.10.1923."

108 GARF1 f.5446e, op.55, d.409. "В Политбюро – тов. Сталину. 3.апреля 1923". See also Pethybridge 1990, 41.

national solidarity was the fact that the influential Anglican church felt itself closer to the ROC than it did to Catholicism.<sup>109</sup>

In May 1923 a diplomatic note sent by British Foreign Minister N.G. Curzon (1859–1925) condemned the Soviet government for practising hostile propaganda against the British Empire. This note also protested against the imprisonment and trial of Tikhon.<sup>110</sup> The Soviet regime responded angrily and Yaroslavsky answered Curzon's note, commenting that religion was not persecuted more in the Soviet state than in England. If in England churches were sometimes turned over for secular use, why did Curzon and the Archbishop of Canterbury not protest against this? Nevertheless, on 24 April 1923 the trial against Patriarch was again postponed.<sup>111</sup>

This change of mind did not come easily as we can see from Politburo documents. On 12 April 1923 the Politburo decided to turn down Chicherin's proposal and declared that it did not see any grounds for exempting Tikhon from punishment. The Politburo wanted to emphasize that foreign pressure would not be allowed to interfere with Soviet power. It gave an assignment to the NKID and to the Soviet press agency to declare that Tikhon was not only representing the ordinary counter-revolution but the "aristocratic-landowning" counter-revolution as well. The Politburo also decided to give Yaroslavsky the task of seeing to it that this information campaign should not interfere with the coming trial and also ordered the NKID, the Soviet news-agency (Rosta), Karl Radek and Yaroslavsky to strengthen counter-propaganda in relation to the execution of Budkiewicz.<sup>112</sup>

Nevertheless, the Soviet regime was obliged to reconsider again its decisions. The international reaction and especially the growing opposition of eminent communist figures was too much. The Politburo modified its earlier decision on 12 June 1923 and accepted a proposal of Yaroslavsky's that Tikhon should be informed that his punishment could be commuted if he would make a special retraction acknowledging his crimes and expressing loyalty towards Soviet power. Yaroslavsky further demanded that Tikhon should accept the legitimacy of his arrest, that he should cut off relations with foreign "counter-revolutionary organizations", that he should express his disapproval of the Karlovci Sobor and other foreign ecclesiastical authorities and, finally, that he should accept secular reforms such as

109 GARF f.5446e, op.55, d.409. "Тов. Сталину. Секретарю ЦК РКП. 10. апреля 1923 г". For international protests on behalf of the Catholic priests and Tikhon, see TRRR, 127–128, 133–134, 170, 172.

110 DOBFP, 741–749, 876; Curtiss 1953, 159.

111 YI, 73. "Лорд Керзон и Бор"; Curtiss 1953, 159–160.

112 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.347 (Pp 61, 12/4–23).

those the Soviet regime had carried out with regard to the calendar, etc.<sup>113</sup>

Yaroslavsky's special letter to the Politburo perhaps best demonstrates the real motives why the ruling regime opted to release Tikhon. Yaroslavsky explained to the Politburo that Tikhon's confession would serve as a direct strike against the émigrés. Letting Tikhon go would also be a counterbalance to the increasing role of the Renovationists and would undermine foreign protests. Moreover, Yaroslavsky also believed that if Tikhon were to accept Soviet reforms, it would give rise to a new schism inside the ROC.<sup>114</sup>

The Politburo accepted Yaroslavsky's suggestion to pardon Tikhon if he would "publicly repent of his crimes".<sup>115</sup> The CAP held a special meeting on 12 June 1923 and decided that this could be done by informing Tikhon that he would be released if he admitted his guilt and could give assurances that he would be loyal to Soviet power.<sup>116</sup>

132

After interrogations Tikhon agreed and the Soviet press then published a statement of his in which he denounced himself for his "hostility" to Soviet power and repented of his behaviour. He also declared that he was no longer an enemy of Soviet power and condemned the émigré clergy.<sup>117</sup> Tikhon was released and subsequently committed himself to fight against the VTsU.<sup>118</sup>

So why this change of mind; why did the ruling regime release this "number one enemy of the people"? Possible explanations are many. Perhaps Tikhon's official submission and the growing schism inside the ROC were enough to satisfy the Soviet regime. Moreover, the condemnation of the Patriarch would have made him a martyr inside the Soviet state and, more importantly, abroad as well.<sup>119</sup> Neither was the public repentance of the Patriarch unique. Some members of the political opposition to the Soviet regime had prior to this been allowed to avoid punishment by issuing a public statement in which they hailed

\*\*\*\*\*  
113 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.360 (Pp 12, 14/6-23).

114 See RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.360 (Pp 12, 14/6-23) and especially its appendix: "Краткая мотивировка предложения о Тихоне". See also RTsKhIDNI f.89, op. 4, d. 118 "Письма Е. Ярославский Каменеву. Сталину. Троцкому. Рыкову. Дзержинскому".

115 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.364 (Pp 16, 12/6-23).

116 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.565a (PCAP 24, 12/6-23).

117 Curtiss 1953, 159–160. On Tuchkov's role during the interrogations of Tikhon see: RdO, 34.

118 After his release, Tikhon engaged in a fight against the Renovationists. See Tikhon's letter in which he attacks Kranitsky. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180. "Для сведения. Архипастырей. пастырей и верующих. Резолюция Его Святейшества от 26-июня 1924 года. No: 523".

119 Carr 1958, 44–45, 195; Curtiss 1953, 159–161; Regelson 1977, 297–298, 308–310.

Soviet power and condemned their former political activities.<sup>120</sup>

Mikhail Agursky has argued that the liberation of Tikhon was due to foreign diplomatic intervention. But, he continues,

...such an explanation may account for his release but not for the fact that he was given the opportunity to restore his ecclesiastical authority and contest the legitimacy of the newly-established pro-communist Living Church...<sup>121</sup>

For Agursky, the fact that Tikhon was released and could continue his ecclesiastical career was part of Stalin's own religious policy. Agursky believes that Stalin, who had been educated by the conservative and rigid methods of ROC, favoured a more conservative church than did the Renovationists. This explanation seems to be only partially adequate. It would seem that there is no documentation that would support Stalin's favouring the conservative section of the ROC during the early 1920s. Nor is there any evidence to show that Stalin favoured Tikhon in any way. Moreover, Yaroslavsky, who was one of Stalin's loyal protégés in the Soviet leadership, did not especially support Tikhon. Moderate members of the ruling regime would appeal to Stalin because of his authority over the hard-liners. Thus, the case of Tikhon indicates Stalin's growing influence inside the ruling regime.

133

The role of the Renovationists in the government's religious policy leaves many questions unanswered but it must be stated that the Renovationists showed much more independence of mind than they are usually given credit for and that they definitely were not "puppets" of the communist regime. However, active "collaboration" and "loyalty" were often difficult to distinguish from each other. As we can see from the documents available, the Renovationists were determined to preserve the Orthodox religion to some extent at least, albeit under the auspices of Soviet power. In order to achieve this, they were obliged to act according to Bolshevik rules and obey their wishes. Nonetheless, it would be too much to claim that the ruling regime did not interfere in the internal affairs of the ROC, although Curtiss maintains that there did not exist any close collaboration between the "Living Church" and the Soviet regime:

...such writers have not submitted documentary proof of these allegations, nor has such documentation been available for this study,

\*\*\*\*\*  
120 Fainsod 1958, 137.

121 Agursky 1984, 12.



so that it is not possible to determine the correctness of these charges.<sup>122</sup>

134

However, according to archive sources now available, the ruling regime was more than willing to co-operate with different religious organizations or, to be more precise, to meddle in their internal affairs. It was prepared to use reformers for its own political purposes inside the Soviet Union.<sup>123</sup> Nonetheless, Soviet officials realized that the Living Church constituted a possible ideological threat to communism. This does not mean that they saw no danger in the Tikhonites. As Tuchkov put it in the second meeting of the CAP on 31 October 1922, the ruling regime had a mission to enforce the fight against the Tikhonites too. Tuchkov also wanted to “purge” Soviet organs of Tikhonites by introducing “shock-discipline” against bishops who were in favour of Tikhon. However, the ruling regime wished to gain from the clergy the political recognition of Soviet power and the VTsU was utilized as an organ which could obtain this recognition. Along with these moderate methods, Tuchkov also proposed the use of more resolute measures. In his lecture he, for example, proposed asking the Soviet legal organs to assist the GPU in fighting against the Tikhonites.<sup>124</sup>

It is laborious to explain this dual strategy, i.e. firstly diminishing the role of the churches and secondly obtaining their recognition for Soviet power. This inconsistent attitude is also reflected in the lecture of Skvortsov-Stepanov from that same meeting. He introduced his thesis concerning antireligious propaganda by maintaining that for its own self-protection the ROC tried to break its connections with the autocratic system and to conceal its political objectives under an “apolitical” banner. As he put it, the conservatives in the ROC were putting their hopes in the restoration of the “old economic system” through the rebirth of capitalism in a proletarian dictatorship, and they were consequently trying to hide behind socialist slogans and gain influence among the masses. He also pointed out that there were some groups of clergy who were hoping for the restoration of their privileges,

---

122 Curtiss 1953, 151. Although Lewis H. Siegelbaum has accused church historians of impartiality and blamed them for “hostility” towards Renovationists. However, i.e., John S. Curtiss does not see any reason to believe that Renovationists were Soviet agents. Siegelbaum 1992, 159.

123 According to Mikhail Geller and Aleksandr Nekrich the Bolsheviks sought to organize “an ecclesiastical international” under the authority of Bolsheviks. Geller & Nekrich 1982, 144.

124 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 2, 31/10-22). In addition, the CAP received constant information from the meetings of the VTsU (GPU sources probably) and could take decisions based on this information. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 11, 30/1-23).

but he stressed that this would not happen as all churches would be treated equally in the Soviet state.<sup>125</sup>

The reason for this “sour” attitude towards the Living Church was the realization that the Renovationists were not the obedient tool of the ruling regime that had been expected. Soviet officials realized that the Living Church wanted the restoration of its legal rights as a reward for its recognition of Soviet power. This can be clearly seen from the letter of Kranitsky to Rykov in which he reminded Rykov that, according to its own doctrine, the Soviet state should recognize religion as a private matter and not support atheism over religious belief.<sup>126</sup> For the ruling regime, a Renovationist church with near socialist slogans represented only a new form of competition. The release of Tikhon and the internal schism served rather well the interests of the regime which wanted to diminish the role of religion in society.

Nevertheless, Mikhail Agursky’s explanation is adequate when we come to discuss the religious policy of the late 1930s and especially the period of World War II. At that time Stalin openly favoured conservative, Russian-minded, patriotic clergy but in regard to Tikhon, Stalin’s preference for conservative-minded clergy is not sufficient to explain why he was allowed to maintain his ecclesiastical office. The more plausible explanation of this incident was that officials knew well that the release of Tikhon from prison would open up an internal war inside the ROC. That would make the task of supervision by officials easier. As Tuchkov hinted in one of his lectures on religious organizations, the ruling regime followed this internal schism very closely. He stated that the freeing of Tikhon had led to ecclesiastical chaos, which was, if we read between the lines, a welcome outcome for the ruling regime. In his lecture, Tuchkov commented on how both sides were fighting each other, accusing and reporting on how the other side was engaged in counter-revolutionary activity. The role of the CAP was, as the sources indicate, to keep the balance between Renovationists and Tikhonites. Tikhon’s release gave a boost to traditionalists in the ROC and in order to maintain a balance between Tikhonites and Renovationists, the CAP sanctioned the “tactical” arrest of Tikhonites from time to time.<sup>127</sup>

125 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 2, 31/10-22).

126 GARF f.5446с, op.55, d.340. “Уважаемый товарищ”.

127 “...и ведут отчаянную борьбу за обладание церквями. обвиняя друг друга в контр-революции тайно и явно. донося друг на друга органам власти об анти-советских поступках. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.118. “Доклад о церковниках и сектах за время с 1-го июля по-15 сентября 23 г”; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 52, 17/6-24); f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 53, 2/7-24).

## 4. THE 12TH CONGRESS AS A PACESETTER FOR THE RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE EARLY NEP

### a. Preparations for the 12th congress

Lenin's incapacity to engage in politics meant that his followers were obliged to respond to various political problems without his advice. One pressing question concerning religious policy was whether the NEP should be extended to the religious sphere in the same way as it already had come to encompass the economic and cultural spheres in Soviet Russia. The release of Tikhon had been a conciliatory gesture but there was, nonetheless, no clear reappraisal of Soviet religious policy.

136

The inconsistency of the NEP and Lenin's sudden incapacity alarmed the ruling regime, which at the beginning of 1923 had time to reflect on the progress of the NEP. As Alan Ball has commented, during 1923 the party adopted a more severe attitude towards the "new bourgeois".<sup>128</sup> The problem was that the new situation did not provide clear guidelines for the party leaders. Consequently, during Lenin's illness they attempted to seek to perpetuate his political line. However, this proved to be problematic as it had not always been consistent. As we have seen above, Lenin rejected any ideological concessions to the ROC and to the political opposition and after 1921 the remnants of all former political parties, such as the Mensheviks and the SRs, were purged. The time for opposition had come an end, and a complete submission to the authority of the communist party was demanded.<sup>129</sup>

As we have noted above, creating a schism inside the ROC was part of Trotsky's tactical plan to facilitate the confiscation of church valuables. As Trotsky declared in his "Literature and Revolution" (published in June 1923), a revolutionary church cannot exist, and even if the "Living Church" had blessed the socialist revolution, this was done only in order to conceal its real purpose.<sup>130</sup> Trotsky also pointed out that the renovation of the church involved bourgeois goals. He believed this process was turning the church away from medieval forms, involving mythical rituals and shamanism, towards a more

128 Ball 1987, 39–40.

129 TTP I, 452–454; Tumarkin 1985, 90.

130 Trotsky 1991 (1923), 43.

individualistic relationship with a deity. The “clerical NEP”<sup>131</sup> as Trotsky characterized it, could be compared to what had happened during the NEP in politics generally; if the Soviet NEP involved integrating a socialist economy with a capitalist one, then the clerical NEP involved attaching a “bourgeois graft to a feudal stem”.<sup>132</sup>

In E.H.Carr’s opinion the above quote of Trotsky epitomizes the NEP’s religious policy.

...the rather farfetched comparison rested on the argument that, while socialism could ultimately have no truck with religion, concessions analogous to those made to capitalists under NEP could be temporarily extended to a group which, like Protestants in the west, stood for a bourgeois, capitalist and quasi-rationalist revolt against the extreme superstitions of the old feudal religion.

Carr has remarked that international incidents and the new conciliatory policy towards the peasants helped to establish a “modus vivendi” between a “revolutionary regime and an ancient national institution”.<sup>133</sup> However, this interpretation may lead one to the erroneous conclusion that the Soviet regime and the ROC actually reached a mutual understanding and came to an informal agreement, which was not the case.

Any ideological concession seemed to be impossible at that time because Lenin’s illness and the uncertainty as regards the succession tied the hands of the party leadership. In those conditions the party found itself unable to change its ideological commitment to atheistic materialism even when dealing with a totally loyal church. Nevertheless, it seems inside the party there arose a desire for a more conciliatory approach (although no-one openly dared to challenge the orthodox Marxist dogma) and more moderate politics. On an individual level, it seems obvious that the “right-wing” of the party was not so

\*\*\*\*\*  
131 The expression “нэп церковный” was also used by Metropolitan Antony in his protest to the VTsIK, in which he strongly condemned the new religious policy adopted at the beginning of 1923. See RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180 “Во ВЦИК I четв. 1923 г”.

132 Trotsky 1991 (1923), 43–44. Moreover, Yaroslavsky condemned the “progressive” church movement with almost the same arguments as Trotsky. He maintained that their public acceptance of the socialist revolution and the programmes of the communist party were simply clothes (одежда) in which the “Living church” disguised itself so that they would appear more acceptable to the workers. The proletariat should not be taken in by them, he argued. Instead the Godless-movement ought to fight against all religions, to tear away (разоблачать) “all masking colours” and show the true nature of every priest. YI, 67. “В защитный цвет”.

133 Carr 1958, 41–45.



eager to engage in open confrontation with the ROC. For example, when we examine Politburo protocols we see that more moderate members of the ruling regime, such as Kalinin and Kamenev, proposed more conciliatory methods and, what is more surprising, during the early 1920s even Stalin himself seemed to be one of the more reasonable voices within the ranks of the Bolsheviks with regard to religion. There are indications such as the proposition of Osinsky or the informal negotiations between Zinoviev and Vvedensky that show that behind the monolithic ideological facade of the communist party there were some leaders who were willing to establish an informal “detente” with religion, especially in regard to the peasantry. Moreover, the ruling party was obliged to answer the view expressed by a leading Swedish communist, S. Hägglund, who suggested that being a member of the communist party should not automatically mean that one adhered to atheism. The Comintern condemned Hägglund’s opinion in its Plenum of 12–23 June 1923, declaring that religion was not simply a “private matter” for members of the party and that the communist party would always fight against it. Nonetheless, the fact that Hägglund’s proposition was rejected by the authority of the Comintern platform itself underlines the importance attached to the matter by the Soviet authorities.<sup>134</sup>

The above rumours concerning an ideological civil peace with religion may have played a part in the official rejection of the more severe aspects of the antireligious battle in 1923. The “confiscation conflict”, the so-called “Atheist” carnivals, “Komsomol Christmases” and “Komsomol Easters” caused a counter-reaction among Bolsheviks. For example, one report of the APO explained how excesses sometimes spoiled these events and accused local communists of “amateurish activity”.<sup>135</sup>

The fate of Patriarch Tikhon and the trials against ecclesiastical leaders had caught the attention of public opinion inside the Soviet Union and, moreover, the outside world was interested in the religious policy of the Soviet state. At the same time, the ruling party was preparing for its 12th party congress. The party was anxious to find its way in the circumstances of the NEP, and in relation to the religious organizations the party searched for the right solution to the question what kind of religious political line should be adopted during the NEP?

This theoretical question became a reality when the party confronted

134 YII, 544–545. “Документы”.

135 RTsKhIDNI f. 17, op. 60, d. 438 “Антирелигиозная пропаганда по данным учета местного опыта Агитпропа ЦК”. See also LS, 248; YIII, 220. “Как вести антирелигиозную пропаганду”; Stites 1991, 297–298.

challenges from national regions. For example, some communists were distressed that in Eastern regions of the Soviet state Moslems had access to “official” religious teaching. The CAP closely studied these reports, which outlined in detail how Moslem clergy were becoming more active in the educational sphere. This question received special attention because at the same time the ruling regime was preparing to debate the nationality question. The typical reaction of party officials to this matter can be seen from the protocols of the CAP for 3 April 1923 in which an attempt was made to suppress the Moslem clergy as a politically hostile force. The CAP feared that mullahs had too much influence in the Soviet school system and decided to start a press campaign against them. In order to reinforce its decision, the CAP agreed to send some of its members to the East to fight against the “Moslem reaction” and attempted also to “lobby” its case with the forthcoming congress. This “lobbying” of congress representatives was done by organizing a special “consultation with the most competent local comrades” to discuss matters concerning the Moslem question. The main responsibility for “lobbying” the congress in order to change the party resolution in religious policy was assigned to the famous party historian N.N. Popov (1890–1938). His mission was also to draw up a party resolution concerning antireligious propaganda. The CAP organized a secret meeting of the most important party officials to ensure that “lobbying” inside the congress would also extend to general religious policy. During this meeting Yaroslavsky and Popov were supposed to give a special lecture to instruct these officials concerning religious policy. As a preliminary gesture, the representative of the GPU, Ya.K. Peters (1886–1942) was also given the assignment of actively meddling in the All-Russian Moslem congress and he was given authority to create a “reformist group” inside that congress.<sup>136</sup> These endeavours at “lobbying” by the CAP seemed to have met with success as Lenin was not able to attend the 12th congress, which was held from 17 to 25 April 1923. His absence allowed his followers a free hand to adopt their own policies.

136 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 18, 3/4-23); (PCAP 19, 10/4-23). Later on 19 June 1923, the CAP asked the Central Committee to speed up the approval of the resolution concerning antireligious propaganda. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.565a (PCAP 25, 19/6-23).

## **b. The paradox of the 12th congress: belligerent resolutions and conciliatory speeches**

This congress is of some significance in the sense that it adopted lengthy resolutions on religion which laid the foundations for religious policy in the post-Leninist era. The atmosphere in this congress differed profoundly from that of the 11th congress; procedures went very smoothly, without dissenting voices from the floor. The triumvirate had made a secret deal with Trotsky that their disagreements should be kept secret in the name of party discipline. During the congress arguments regarding nationality policy reared their head again. The delegates from Georgia protested against Stalin's policy towards non-Russian nationalities, but in vain. As Carrere D'Encausse has remarked: "the congress destroyed Lenin's efforts to settle the national question".<sup>137</sup> The triumvirate was able to control the congress and criticism by some party delegates had little effect on the prevailing attitude. In relation to the nationality question, Stalin defended his policy and the critique of the Georgians presented by Ukrainian Prime Minister Kh.G. Rakovsky (1873–1941) had no real impact on the congress which accepted the explanations of the party's General Secretary.<sup>138</sup>

The hidden power-struggle cast a shadow on the congress that followed. Behind the scenes the triumvirate did its best to reassure the party that Trotsky was dangerous and the potential Bonaparte of the Bolshevik Revolution. Moreover, Zinovev's speech to the congress proved to be of particular significance in that it clarified the general political line of the triumvirate for the following NEP period.

Above all, Zinovev's speech underlined the importance of the peasant question. He explained that although the communist party was an urban phenomenon by origin and had only worked among workers, it also needed to advance in the countryside. He maintained that although the party understood in theory the problems of the peasants, practical work among the peasantry remained to be done.

137 Carrere d'Encausse 1982, 151. Jurij Borys's view is even more explicit when he remarks that at the 12th congress the party was "looking for a theoretical foundation for its centralist policy towards the nationalities, a foundation for its negative attitude towards the self-determination principle". Borys 1980, 353.

138 Deutscher 1987, 97–98. As Frederick C. Barghoorn has put it..."Stalin was wise enough, however, to cloak this policy in Leninist phraseology and to present it with sufficient regard for the susceptibilities of the non-Russians to avoid needlessly antagonizing them". Barghoorn 1976, 29. Mikhail Agursky has described Stalin's attacks against Russian nationalism and the "Smeno-Vekh" as hypocritical. Agursky 1987, 296.

We are an urban party with origins in workers' quarters...we have just began to penetrate the countryside...we know theoretically the importance of having proper multilateral relations with the peasants but in practice this poses enormous problems for us...<sup>139</sup>

Zinovev divided the peasant question into different areas and put the nationality question and antireligious propaganda under the same heading. According to him, antireligious propaganda had foremost significance as a part of the educational question. Furthermore, he condemned certain methods of contemporary antireligious propaganda.

...we do not need "antireligious propaganda" on such a scale. Comrades, I do not quite understand why we should agitate in Ukraine for the "sabbath" to be celebrated on Monday rather than on Sunday.<sup>140</sup>

He concluded by questioning the whole agitation in a similar tone and asked the congress to consider the reactions of the Ukrainian peasant to the slandering of religion. Instead of the above practices, Bolsheviks now needed to concentrate on serious Marxist antireligious propaganda. He stressed that the purpose of Soviet power was not to harass the peasantry. As examples of harmful practices, he mentioned some cases in which party members had involved themselves with trivialities in this field. Moreover, Zinovev praised the actions of one particular party organ in the Donetsk guberniya which had prohibited the "Komsomol Easter".<sup>141</sup>

Zinovev defended his careful approach by arguing that in this area communists should be extremely careful because of the importance of the peasant question. Communists should educate themselves and this would take years. This did not, however, represent an ideological retreat or compromise. To quote him again,

I think that in this area it is necessary [to show] great caution, because we should understand the peasant on whom much depends. We shall educate him, but this will take years. We shall not retreat one iota from

139 "Мы - партия городская, родившаяся в рабочих кварталах...Мы только начали продвигаться в деревню...Мы теоретически уяснили важность правильных взаимоотношений с крестьянством, но практически это дается с громадным трудом". S12, 39.

140 "Не надо нам в таком большом количестве вести эту "антирелигиозную пропаганду". Я, товарищи, совершенно не понимаю, зачем нам нужно было агитировать, чтобы праздновали на Украине не воскресенье, а понедельник". S12, 44.

141 S12, 44.



atheistic opinions, not a single iota from Marx, because in this question it is necessary to advance with care...<sup>142</sup>

The resolution which the congress adopted in the religious policy sphere was in sharp contrast to the conciliatory tone of Zinovev's speech. The reason for this inconsistency lies in the fact that the resolution had been prepared by Zinovev's political opponent, L.D. Trotsky, and by the party's Agitprop section which formulated party resolutions on religion and, for example, matters of propaganda, press and agitation. This resolution was passed by the congress on 25 April 1923 without discussion, probably due to the informal agreement which Trotsky and the triumvirate had made earlier.<sup>143</sup>

Trotsky's more belligerent resolution reflects the mood of the "confiscation conflict"<sup>144</sup>. It declared that the revolution had shaken the religious prejudices (предрасудки) of the large working masses and exposed the counter-revolutionary role of clerical organisations, which were in the service of capitalist and autocratic landowners. The resolution explains why religion was still such a significant factor and gives a vivid portrait of the Soviet society of the NEP period. According to Trotsky's resolution, the revolutionary process had been not yet changed the peasant economy. Peasants were still heavily dependent on nature as they had been since time immemorial. In the cities private capitalist production had survived and had even increased under the circumstances of NEP. In addition, the resolution made clear that the Soviet school system did not function as it should in the cities and especially in the countryside. These were the reasons why religious prejudices still survived in Russia and would survive for some time to come. With regard to the position of the ROC, this resolution was confident, maintaining that the Orthodox religion and its hierarchy were in a state of decay and collapse. On the other hand, the resolution noted the growth of sects, whose highest leaders were well-known to have contacts with the European and American bourgeoisie.<sup>145</sup>

In these circumstances the work of the party was to finally destroy religious belief in all its manifestations among workers and the peasant

\*\*\*\*\*  
142 "Я думаю, в этой области необходима...большая осторожность, потому что нужно помнить о крестьянине, от которого очень и очень зависит. Мы его воспитаем, но для этого требуются годы. Мы не отказываемся ни на йоту от атеистических взглядов, ни на йоту от Маркса, но мы должны помнить, что к этому вопросу необходимо подходить осторожно". S12, 44.

143 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.158 "О постановке антирелигиозной агитации и пропаганды"; S12, 706. See also Deutscher 1987, 94–95.

144 For the text of the resolution, see KPSS II, 469–472.

145 S12, 716.

masses. This meant first of all the deepening of systematic propaganda which would reveal to workers and peasants the falsehood of religion. This resolution tried not to offend the feelings of believers, as to do so might lead to conflicting results. It also condemned harsh methods in the antireligious work. Moreover it stressed, for example, that “scoffing” at the cult objects of belief instead of serious analyses and explanations would not accelerate the liberation of the working class from religious prejudices.<sup>146</sup>

The resolution noted that there was a need for the utilization of popular scientific books and literature dealing with the origins and history of religions. In addition, the lengthy party resolution claimed that new brochures and booklets would be needed to give answers on the evolution of the world, life and human relations. These should cover the counter-revolutionary role of religion and especially of the Russian Orthodox church: its birth and evolution, its position in relation to the class-state and the liberation movements among proletarians and peasants. They should also stress the importance of working out the forms and methods of antireligious work by studying the special features of different nationalities. Moreover, this resolution recognized that the clergy of other nationalities in Russia had more influence among their flock than the Orthodox clergy had among Russians and this fact should be taken into consideration when carrying out antireligious propaganda among these nationalities.<sup>147</sup>

This congress and its resolution involved many contradictory elements. Firstly the conciliatory tone of Zinovev was his personal initiative to enforce the union of the working class and the peasants. Seen in this light, Zinovev’s conciliatory speeches and initiatives are understandable.<sup>148</sup> Secondly his new tone represented a substantial change in the party’s religious policy and demonstrated how Trotsky’s religious policy line had been outmanoeuvred. There a number of possible reasons for this conciliatory line. It could have been that the excesses and acts of hooliganism in the antireligious work during the famine of 1921–22 discouraged, as it was feared among communists, the peasants from delivering grain to the ruling regime. However, it is hard to know whether this new pro-peasant line was due more to the urgent need to calm the peasants or whether this neutral religious policy was advocated by Zinovev only as an ideological “weapon” against

146 S12, 716.

147 S12, 716; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.367 (Pp 19, 27/6-23).

148 S12, 44–45. Zinovev repeated these demands in special brochures (published in 1925). See, Новый великий почин. (Рабкоровское и селькоровское движение). Крымгосиздат 1925; Как большевики строят государство рабочих и крестьян. Гос.Изд. 1925 Москва.

Trotsky. The question as to whether Zinoviev's pro-peasant stance was simply an "antithesis" in the struggle for power remains unanswered.<sup>149</sup>

The conciliatory speeches of the triumvirate at the 12th congress had no effect on the internal life of the party, which continued to tighten its ideological purity and expel "unworthy" members from its ranks, religious activity being one of the grounds for disciplinary measures. In the report by the Central Committee it was announced that 383 persons had been expelled from the party for participating in some way or another in "religious rites". The majority of those expelled, however, consisted of people purged for reasons such as "squabbling", "infringement of party discipline", "malfeasance in office", "criminal activity", "drunkenness", "being an alien [class] element", "embezzlement" and "speculation and trade". Expulsions for religious activity amounted to only 5.1% of the total number (7512 persons) of those expelled, but it shows that religion had stubborn roots even within the party itself.<sup>150</sup>

144

These purges reflect the concern of the party about any ideological relaxation in the face of the class enemy. Because of this danger the leadership wanted to preserve the ideological purity of its ranks. According to party documents concerning purges, religious weddings or having links with a religious organization were sufficient grounds for expulsion from the party. Yaroslavsky, as the main executor of party purges, had before him numerous cases of decent young communists marrying the daughters of factory owners and subsequently forgetting their past and getting involved with religious rites.<sup>151</sup>

One of the most popular and "entertaining" methods of antireligious propaganda were debates. These debates, thought up and sponsored by Lunacharsky, were a very popular form of Bolshevik propaganda and attracted large audiences. However, conducting these antireligious debates caused problems for the Bolsheviks as the other side had to be heard too. Sometimes these lectures and debates had the opposite effect to that intended when the clergy won the sympathy of listeners. After the civil war the ruling party was more cautious about debates, and as the Central Committee's circular underlined, "debates which were conducted without great preliminary, scientific-enlightenment preparations were more harmful than good". Without proper preparations of

149 GARF f. 5263, op. 1, d. 55(3) "Старшему помощнику прокурора Республики и Зам.Наркома 19.10.1923"; E.H.Carr has suggested that the slogan "faces to countryside" for Zinoviev was only a weapon in the struggle for power. Carr 1958, 195.

150 S12, 794.

151 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.67. "Чуждых элементов в партии не должна быть". For other documents on the party purges, see RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.78; f.89, op.3, d.70; f.89, op.3, d.251; f.89, op.3, d.80; f.89, op.3, d.81.

this sort, lecturers needed to have great experience, and if no such lecturers were on hand debates were unprofitable. Consequently, these debates were finally prohibited in the late 1920s.<sup>152</sup>

As we can see from the resolutions adopted, the 12th congress thought in terms such as survival (пережиток) and prejudice (предрассудок). Bolshevik ideology and its interpreters perceived nationalistic sentiments and religion as relics or vestiges from the evil era of the past which would vanish as soon as socialism came of age.<sup>153</sup> For example, P.I. Stuchka in his commentary on the Soviet Constitution acknowledged that the nationality question and religion were kindred phenomena. According to him, both functioned as opiates for the people and communists should fight against them.<sup>154</sup>

With regard to both these vestiges, we may note the striking resemblance between this Soviet policy and the situation prevailing before the Revolution when the ROC attempted to root out pagan survivals among the Russian peasantry, not always very successfully. This is perhaps one of the best illustrations of how the communist regime failed to break with the Russian past; the atheist regime adopted the legacy of the past and actually the role of the "state church".<sup>155</sup>

With regard to Bolshevik nationality policy, the 12th congress of the RCP(b) proved to be a disappointment for the Ukrainian and Georgian national communists. Trotsky did not want to commit himself to a fight against the nationality policy of Stalin and as a result national communists and their supporters were defeated. However, due to Lenin's criticism, Stalin was obliged to moderate his condemnation of

\*\*\*\*\*  
152 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.184 "Всем обкомам, облбюро и губкомам Р.К.П. о постановке"; Curtiss 1953, 198–199. As Pravda admitted, these disputes set high standards for communist lecturers. Pravda, 15 September 1921, No. 205.

153 Simon 1991, 135.

154 "Надо признать, что националистические иллюзии – это тот же известного рода опиум для народа, против которого надо бороться решительно, но умело. Поэтому, Коммунистическая партия для своей организации всюду требует единства, другими словами – и здесь отвергает объявление вопроса "частным делом". Stuchka 1923, 186. See also Stuchka 1923, 157–164; 180–187. In relation to the above, it is interesting to note that in defining the term "relics" the Great Soviet Encyclopedia from Stalin's time explains it as "traditions and prejudices inherited from capitalist society". The Encyclopedia also explains that in socialist society there are still vestiges (остатки) of bourgeois ideology to be found, relics of private capitalist psychology and morals. Such vestiges were numerous: non-socialist attitudes to work and towards the property of society, violations of Soviet laws and the correct socialist way of communal life, careerism, etc. Bourgeois nationalism and religious prejudices were also included to this list. BSEc, 409–410.

155 See Gregory L. Freeze, "The Re-Christianization of Russia: The Church and Popular Religion, 1750–1850." *Studia Slavica Finlandensia* VII. 1990.



national communists and the 12th congress approved a resolution which condemned both chauvinist communism and the heresy of national communists.<sup>156</sup>

But, on other hand, the accepted resolutions confirmed the use of conciliatory methods in the antireligious fight. According to the resolutions, the party should fight both Russian and non-Russian nationalistic vestiges with the help of education and culture. Stalin and his Great-Russian protégés in the party had in any event mental reservations on this matter, judging the national chauvinism of the non-Russian republics more harmful than Russian chauvinism. This is also reflected in the debate concerning the so-called "Smena-Vekhists". During the congress Stalin officially (and hypocritically, as Agursky has pointed out) rejected the ideas of the "Smena-Vekhists" while at the same time showing interest in their ideas behind the scenes. For both Stalin and the émigrés the idea of "one and indivisible Russia" was very acceptable. Stalin had been the main architect of the centralized Soviet state and he had been active in the setting up of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).<sup>157</sup>

146

We may see how the 12th congress tackled the practical implementation of Soviet nationality policy and the religious policy which were interlinked. First although the hopes of the Ukrainian and Georgian national communists were crushed, the ambiguous results of the 12th congress gave national republics the chance to promote their own special status, e.g. ethnic equality. Moscow sanctioned the promotion of local languages and national cultures, together with the active recruitment of national cadres, in order to implant the Soviet system in remote areas. In Ukraine and in Belorussia national-minded governments advanced the so-called "Ukrainianization" and "Belorussification" of their republics. According to Gerhard Simon, the "korenizatsiya policy" included as a basic assumption the political supremacy of the communist party. The republics could develop their own ethnic identity but had to accept the hegemony of the ruling regime. Stalin had anyway his own ideas about the "korenizatsiya-policy"; his long-term objective was to coalesce all Soviet nations together.<sup>158</sup>

The case of M.H. Sultan-Galiev (1892–1940) symbolizes the contradiction between Moscow's long-term plan and the independence of local communists. At the 12th congress the majority of communists showed little understanding of the complaints of the Georgians. As a

\*\*\*\*\*  
156 KPSS II, 469–473; Carrere d'Encausse 1982, 151–152.

157 Agursky 1987, 296.

158 Simon 1991, 22–30, 71–72. See also Unger 1981, 50; Subtelny 1990, 387–390.

result, Stalin was encouraged to exercise his harsh line against nationally-minded communists. After the 12th congress was over the one important leader of national communism, Sultan-Galiev, was soon accused and convicted of founding his own conspiratorial organization. He was later, in 1923, expelled from the party for "Pan-Turkism" and "Pan-Islamism". As a seal of official disapproval, the assembly of the leading party members from national republics and oblasts which met from 9 to 12 June 1923 condemned Sultan-Galiev for counter-revolutionary activities and for having conspiratorial connections with Persia and Turkey in order to separate certain Eastern areas from the Soviet Union. The assembly considered his actions to be a reaction against Great-Russian chauvinism but, nonetheless, insisted that Sultan-Galiev had acted against party discipline.<sup>159</sup> This official condemnation strikes one as strange, coming just after the 12th congress. Stalin was the main instigator of this condemnation of Sultan-Galiev, but he couched his attack against Sultan-Galiev in words that implied a certain degree of tolerance, stating that even his "Pan-Turkism" and "Pan-Islamism" would have been forgivable if it were not for his anti-party actions.<sup>160</sup>

In reality, one of the main reasons for these serious accusations against Sultan-Galiev was the fact that he dared to criticize Stalin personally, accusing his "authoritarian" and "chauvinist" Moscow communism of being contradictory to the original ideals of communism. Sultan-Galiev had emphasized that the class struggle among non-Russians should not involve fighting against local religious beliefs. In his opinion, Islam had preserved many important socio-political aspects, and mullahs in Eastern areas had cultural and political authority which communists should take into consideration. Sultan-Galiev held the view that mullahs, unlike Christian priests, had preserved many democratic features. The youngest of the great religions, as Sultan-Galiev termed it, had preserved its vitality and its psychological importance in the minds of the people. Consequently, Sultan-Galiev concluded that without an ideological compromise with religion the communist party could not continue its activities in Moslem areas.<sup>161</sup>

"Sultan-Galievism" spread among local party officials in the Eastern

159 IzvTsK KPSS 1990 10, 77; KPSS II, 487-488; Deutscher 1987, 98.

160 SS 5, 306. "IV Совещание. О правых и "левых" в нацреспубликах и областях. Речь по первому пункту порядка дня совещания: "Дело Султан-Галиева". 10. июня".

161 Galiev 1960 (1921), 226-231; Bennigsen & Lemerrier-Quellejay 1967, 111-116; Simon 1991, 78-79.

parts of the Soviet state, even if the leading figure of the movement was officially ostracized. For example, we can detect from reports from the Tatar-Bashkirian area that local Soviet officials showed little enthusiasm for implementing the antireligious campaigns of the early NEP. They even openly ruled out the possibility of carrying out large-scale antireligious propaganda among the local population. They sought to placate Moscow by arguing that antireligious teaching needed time and the best method of achieving atheism was to teach the natural sciences in the schools.<sup>162</sup>

This reluctance to carry out antireligious propaganda and these “Sultan-Galievist” views were in sharp conflict with Moscow’s line. The central organs reacted violently when they realized that local communists had contradicted their orders to work against religious schools. As one official report declared, the continued existence of Moslem religious schools was due to local passivity:

148

...it is necessary to mention that religious schools did not come into existence because the population was [religious] but mainly because the nature of the religious schools had not been explained [to the local populace], that earlier working comrades did not pay any attention to the great number of religious schools...<sup>163</sup>

As we can detect from the initiatives of the CAP in this field, the activity of the Moslem clergy was seen as a political challenge. Before the 12th party congress the CAP tried to “lobby” the party delegates to sanction Islamic teachings in the Eastern schools. Nevertheless, after the 12th congress the CAP was obliged to acknowledge its defeat and sent out a secret circular which sanctioned religious teaching. The CAP, nonetheless, demanded that religious “schools” should not be allowed in the European parts of Russia and in Siberia.<sup>164</sup>

162 .....  
 “...Вопреки попыткам и стремлениям проводить антирелигиозную пропаганду в массовом виде среди тат.баш. не возможно”, RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.61, d.146. “Тезисы принятые на совещании инструкторов по работе среди татаро-башкир Самарской губернии утвержденные АПО губкома РКП/б/”.

163 ....Здесь необходимо упоминать, что религиозные школы возникли не от того, что население было так настроено, а больше всего от того, что своевременно не раз’яснялось положение о религиозных школах, от того, что ранее разработавшие тов. не обратили внимание на это, даже видя перед собою громадное количество религиозных школ....”, RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.61, d.146. “Отчет о деятельности Татбашбюро Самгубкома РКП за время от 1 декабря 1922 г. по 15 апреля 1923 года”.

164 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.1, d.443a (PCAP 18, 3/4-23; PCAP 19, 10/4-23); f.17, op.112, d.565a (PCAP 21, 15/5-23; PCAP 38, 13/11-23). See also RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.385 (Pp 37, 3/10-23).

The main reason for this change of policy was the conciliatory line which the ruling regime had adopted at the 12th congress. But it is most likely that the creation of a favourable atmosphere among foreign Moslem clergy also had something to do with it. The Soviet regime saw the "exploited nations" of the East as natural allies in the fight against capitalism and tried to establish good diplomatic relations with its Eastern neighbours as well as to encourage national liberation movements in these areas. However, Islam was fused with nationality in the East and the whole question of Islamic identity constituted an ideological problem for the Bolshevik party. Just after the October revolution the communist party had appealed to Moslems and had exploited Islam by creating a special Moslem commissariat under the authority of the Narkomnat lead by an Islamic clergyman Mullah Nur-Vakhitov. This was indeed a strange situation. For at the same time as the activities of religion were more or less restricted in other parts of Soviet Russia, in Eastern areas mosques flourished, the "sharia" legal system functioned undisturbed, and mullahs were not restricted in their civic rights as clergymen were elsewhere in Russia.<sup>165</sup> Lenin himself had underlined the importance of taking into consideration local circumstances in the East. Class antagonism had not yet developed in these areas and communists should first try to get rid of the remnants of feudalism.<sup>166</sup>

As Pedro Ramet has acknowledged, the "korenizatsiya-policy" had as its political objective the "de-politicization" of the Moslem consciousness. Instead of forming larger administrative units in the Moslem area the Soviet regime established smaller administrative units based on nationality. Bonds of nationality and not of religion or language were supposed to be the cement in such Soviet regions as the Tatar republic, Uzbekistan and Bashkiria. As a sign of this changed policy, in 1920 the Commissariat of Nationalities was reorganized and the Commissariat for Moslem Affairs was wound up. Nonetheless, religion and nationalism were still useful propaganda tools in Eastern areas. For example, the NKID realized the importance of the Moslem clergy in moulding public opinion in Moslem countries and attempted to utilize them. In his letter to Yaroslavsky dated 10 August 1923 Chicherin proposed even utilizing the Moslem clergy and Moslem

\*\*\*\*\*  
165 SU I, 95-96, 258; DSV I, 367; Bennigsen & Lemerrier-Quelquejay 1967, 89, 139-140, 144-149; Pipes 1980, 156-157.

166 PSS 38, 158-159. "VIII Съезд РКП(б). Доклад о партийной программе 19 марта"; PSS 39, 304. "Товарищам коммунистам Туркестана"; PSS 39, 326-329. Доклад на II Всероссийском Съезде коммунистических организаций народов востока 22 ноября 1919"; PSS 51, 175. "Телеграмма Г.К. Орджоникидзе и записка Л.Д. Троцкому".



ideology “to enforce there [in Persia] their political line”. He believed that the Moslem clergy within Soviet boundaries should be forged into a “political weapon” for influence over the masses in Persia. Therefore, the teachings of Islam, together with the “sharia”, should be used for preparing the ground for socialism among Moslems.<sup>167</sup>

This clarifies the error of Sultan-Galiev and other independently-minded Moslem communists. They had acted in accordance with the idea that unifying the Soviet East would be achieved by utilizing religion and language and not primarily through Marxist doctrine. This opinion was accepted during the civil war when the Soviet regime sought to utilize ethno-religious feelings in order to create a pro-Soviet East. It was also of some use in Soviet foreign policy after the civil war when the NKID tried to appeal to the people of the East. But during peacetime, in the NEP period, it was realized that this thinking was harmful inside the Soviet Union.

150

The ruling regime in Moscow was not eager to encourage the idea of “Moslem consciousness” once it had stabilized its power. But as a sign of the relatively free atmosphere of the early 1920s Sultan-Galiev was released in 1924, despite the serious accusations Moscow had levelled against him. However, his case indicated that the policy of “korenizatsiya”, using national culture and language for enforcing communism on the Soviet periphery, could not sanction the idea of utilizing Moslem religion or national-mindedness as such, except as a tactical weapon in building a more centralized Soviet state.<sup>168</sup>

The outcome of the 12th congress with regard to religious policy was clear. The leading *troika* was ready to be conciliatory towards the peasants and did not want to insult their feelings by sanctioning further antireligious assaults. The triumvirate of Zinovev, Kamenev and Stalin was also taking over in the religious policy sphere and Trotsky's influence was slowly diminishing.

\*\*\*\*\*  
167 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.117 “Тов. Ярославскому 10.8.1923”; Ramet 1989, 32–33. See also GARF f.5263, op.1, d.55(3) “Наркомюст тов. Красикову копия тов. Менжискому”.

168 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.3. “Статья По Красной Башкирии (1х-я областная Башкирская конференция РКП (б). Написанная для газеты Правда. Автограф. Машинописный текст”.

### c. Trotsky's comments on the 12th congress – the justification for Bolshevik rituals and the birth of the antireligious press

Although Trotsky was outmanoeuvred he tried to challenge the triumvirate with his journalistic critique. During the early 1920s he had been very active in press discussions. In a series of articles published in Pravda in 1923, he now began to propose novelties in religious policy.<sup>169</sup> The approach of these articles could be described as educational, emphasizing as they did the importance of enlightenment and culture in building socialism in Russia.<sup>170</sup> This attitude of his can easily be detected in his article “Vodka, Churches and the Cinema”, which was first published in Pravda on 12 July 1923. In this article he underlined the possibilities of the cinema for modern society and especially for the antireligious struggle. According to Trotsky, the cinema was not only competing with the pub but also with churches and he suggested that this contest would ultimately prove fatal for churches.<sup>171</sup>

151

In the same context, Trotsky commented on the religious situation in the Soviet Union and explained the reason for the persistence of religious behaviour among its population. Reviewing the religiousness of the Russian working class, he asserted that it was almost non-existent and professed the view that church dogmas and the teaching of religion had never had a profound impact on the consciousness of Russians. The simple explanation was that:

...there is hardly any religiousness in the Russian working class. In fact, it has never been [religious]. The Orthodox church was an everyday ritual and bureaucratic organization. It did not succeed in penetrating deeply into the consciousness [of the Russian populace] or succeed in connecting its dogmas and canons to the inner experiences of the masses. The reason for this was the lack of culture of old Russia and its church...<sup>172</sup>

169 Knei-Paz 1979, 282–283.

170 See ST XXI, 4–26.

171 ST XXI, 24–25. “Водка, церков и кинематограф”.

172 “...религиозности в русском рабочем классе почти нет совершенно. Да ее и не было никогда по-настоящему. Православная церковь была бытовым обрядом и казенной организацией. Проникнуть же глубоко в сознание связать свои догматы и каноны с внутренними переживаниями народных масс ей не удалось. Причина здесь та же: некультурность старой России, в том числе и ее церкви...”. ST XXI, 25. ST XXI, 25. “Водка, церков и кинематограф”.

As a result of this presumed non-religiosity of the Russian working class, Trotsky thought that the liberation from the yoke of religion would be much easier for the Russian working class than had been expected, although he acknowledged that this process would be more difficult among peasants than among workers. This was not, however, proof of the peasant's deeper and more intimate relations with the church. On the contrary, he thought that the peasant's relationship with the church was "passive and monotonous". Trotsky was convinced that the ROC offered the working class more for its social needs than for its spiritual needs and that its role was to give entertainment to the masses. Religion was for Russians more a habit than a true conviction. In addition, icons were more of a decoration than items of veneration as such and workers did not attend churches for religious purposes but mainly for entertainment. And entertain the church was most certainly able to do! It was "luminous and populous", the priest wore colourful garments and the singing was beautiful. On the other hand, factories, families and everyday street-life did not offer the same "social-aesthetic attraction" as the church did, but nevertheless he believed that the working class was not actually very religious. They did not respect the religious hierarchy and they did not place any trust in the magic power of rituals.<sup>173</sup>

We may see how Trotsky assumed that the church was exploiting people's need for theatricality; by making use of theatrical methods such as vision, hearing and sense of smell. Consequently, Trotsky believed that the liberation of the large masses from rituals and churches could not be brought about simply by antireligious propaganda. He believed that people usually did not have a deep attachment to religion but they had desires and aspirations for something which was related to

...the informal, the inert, the consciously unpredictable; related to existing, to the spontaneous; related to street idlers who do not waste an opportunity to take part in [religious] processes or services, listen to music or wave their hands.<sup>174</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*  
173 ST XXI, 25. "Водка, церков и кинематограф". See also Knei-Paz 1979, 284–285.

174 "...бесформенная, косная, не проведенная через сознание связь бытовая, автоматическая, и в том числе связь уличного зеваки, который не прочь при случае принять участие в процессии или торжественном богослужении, послушать пение, помахать руками.". ST XXI, 25–26. "Водка, церков и кинематограф".

As an alternative, Trotsky suggested that such needs should not be destroyed but that they should be substituted by new forms. Consequently, it was necessary to produce secular entertainment for the masses, and he suggested that the best way of doing this was to exchange the entertainment of the church for the cinema. To sum up, Trotsky wanted in this article to highlight the difference between the old Orthodox tradition and the new communist society; in the fierce battle between the icon and the cinema, the latter was predestined to win. The cinema, in his opinion, was one of the most effective weapons in the antireligious battle.<sup>175</sup>

This view of Trotsky's may be justifiably described as being both "primitive" and "simplistic". So far the cinema has not substituted religion as entertainment.<sup>176</sup> However, Trotsky's view reflects the basic assumption of the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia which believed that Russians, and the workers in particular, were not religious. It also coincides with the view of Belinsky and Lenin that the Russian peasants were not pious but rather "superstitious". Other Russian writers such as F.M. Dostoevsky (1821–1881) had held quite opposite opinions. The reality, as Moshe Lewin has suggested, was conceivably a compromise between these two views. The "muzhik" believed in God and called himself a "Christian" but knew nothing of dogma. His faith was a mixture of pagan and Christian belief.<sup>177</sup>

Later in his article "Family and Rituality"<sup>178</sup> Trotsky commented further on the role of religion in Soviet Russia. He explained that clerical organizations had forced even non-believers to acknowledge three major stages in the individual's life, birth, marriage and death. However, the workers' state had liberated people from these shackles, announcing that a citizen could be born, get married and die without having to have recourse to "magic". To convince people of this was not easy because "life is much more difficult to strip of ritual than the state". Trotsky explained this by commenting that the life of the working family was monotonous and exhausting. The drabness of life was the main reason for the high consumption of alcohol and church-going. In order to answer the people's need for theatricality, he suggested that the proletarian state should substitute religious feasts with revolutionary celebrations.<sup>179</sup>

175 ST XXI, 26. "Водка, церковь и кинематограф". Or as Krupskaya remarked in relation to this question, the new communist morality would finally uproot religion. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.186, l.18. See also Ferro 1986, 1–3.

176 Pospelovsky 1987, 32.

177 Lewin 1985, 59–62.

178 Pravda, 14 July 1923, No. 156.

179 ST XXI, 39–43. "Семья и обрядность"; Stites 1991, 296.



Trotsky's above ideas were to see fruition in popular Bolshevik ritual-building in the 1920s. As a certain S. Levman remarked in the newspaper "Trud", Trotsky's ideas "could lead to new revolutionary ceremonies and new social habits".<sup>180</sup>

These above writings reveal how in the 1920s Soviet society was forming its own hagiography and social forms; zealous communists were challenging traditional rituals with their own atheist ceremonies. Communists drew on the patterns of their traditional competitor and fused them with Marxist understanding when endeavouring to develop three new ceremonies as substitutes for religious sacraments. The so-called "Octobering" (Oktyabrina) was to be a substitute for baptism. As a sign of "national and generational revolt against the Greco-Russian Orthodox culture" it represented a new atheistic way of life. Likewise the Red Weddings signalled emancipation and liberation from the clerical yoke. Revolutionary Funerals were the most complex of these new celebrations and resembled their Orthodox equivalents with their concept of martyrs, mourners, eulogies and ritual flags. Zinovev, the leader in Petrograd, was an able organizer of communist funeral rituals. Most of this atheist ritual paraphernalia was abandoned after the 1920s and these events "succumbed to dry bureaucratic forms", as Richard Stites has put it.<sup>181</sup>

We may see how Trotsky, unlike Lenin, underlined the importance of social habits and feeling as sources of religious belief. Although he denied the importance of religion as such among Russian workers, he was ready to acknowledge the relevance of its social aspects for workers and especially for peasants. This opinion was based on the conviction that people had aesthetic instincts and social needs which should be satisfied and he believed that the ruling party should meet these demands in the secular arena and substitute the church with the cinema. The idea of aesthetic instincts "per se" finds echoes in the history of Bolshevism. The "god-builders" earlier in the century had experimented in planning revolutionary cults as substitutes for religion. After the 1905 revolution Anatoly Lunacharsky and Maxim Gorky had considered fusing religious elements with socialism.<sup>182</sup>

Moreover, the above ideological contributions of Trotsky in the religious policy sphere had much practical significance during this time when the battle against religion using coercive methods was not producing results. In other words, Trotsky initiated some new ideas in the antireligious battle in Russia and these concepts would materialize

180 Trud, 9 September 1923, No. 202.

181 Stites 1991, 299–305.

182 Stites 1991, 295. See also Stites 1990, 16.

in debates inside the communist party even after their original creator had been cast out as a heretic.<sup>183</sup> But during the interregnum and the NEP period these ideas were hailed enthusiastically among communists.

The dilemma of substitutive rituals remained unresolved although the party tried to create “revolutionary counter-celebrations” such as the “Komsomol Easter” in 1923 and to develop secular places of entertainment such as “people’s houses”, workers’ clubs, etc. These institutions, nonetheless, did not always satisfy the people. The preoccupation with bureaucracy and routine dogged the communist ritual-making, which became not so much a form of entertainment as a form of antireligious propaganda. We may even state that the antireligious campaigns against religion did not undermine the popular forms of faith which were based on rites and customs. For the traditional peasantry, in particular, everyday life remained more or less as it had been until the end of the NEP.<sup>184</sup>

155

Furthermore, the “confiscation conflict” had not destroyed the ROC and the aggressive antireligious campaigns of the Komsomols had aroused the mass of the peasantry against the excesses of the antireligious campaign. The “Komsomol Christmas Carnival” in 1922 gave rise to general criticism. Even the CAP was obliged to propose that these antireligious campaigns should be conducted in a more “serious” tone and that members of the Komsomol especially should be summoned to hear the political motivation for this campaign. This incident reveals how sensitively the ruling party reacted to public opinion and how it was even ready to restrict its activities in this sphere as a result.<sup>185</sup>

We may also see how communist artists introduced these new celebrations into their revolutionary art and used old religious motifs in their works in order to mock religion or encourage pseudo-religious feelings of loyalty towards communism.<sup>186</sup> The practical implementation of these carnivals differed in many places. Contemporary reports in the archives reveal the general unenthusiastic mood for this campaign in some places. For example, in the Irkutsk and Che-

183 The programmes of the Jewish antireligious circles included, even as late as 1927, Trotsky’s literary works. See GARF f.5407, op.1, d.17 (начиная с листа 263) “Программа для еврейских антирелигиозных кружков”.

184 Altrichter 1991, 205; Stites 1991, 298–299

185 Curtiss 1953, 202–203; Stites 1991, 297. See also Young 1989, 160–162, 168–171; Geldern 1993, 217.

186 Polonsky 1960, 181; Geldern 1993, 56, 66, 79–81. See, for example, Dimitri Moor, *Азбука красноармейца*. Отдел Военной литературы при революционном военном совете республики. Государственное издательство. 1921. Москва.

remkhovo districts the antireligious campaign against “Ramadan” met with little success. Despite the official optimism, the report in question acknowledged the fact that “cultural-enlightenment work” was poor and serious study “in the field of antireligious propaganda” should be undertaken.<sup>187</sup>

This abundance of antireligious activity was gradually halted by the ruling party after the 12th congress. The Central Committee’s secretary, Stalin could read the feelings of Soviet society and his party very well and in his characteristic style placed the blame for excesses on local officials. In his letter to all party bodies he accused local organs of “violations” in the antireligious struggle. He explained, for example, how some local organs had closed Baptist chapels for “political reasons” or because these religious organizations had not fulfilled all their registration obligations. According to Stalin, these episodes indicated how

156

carelessly, unseriously and light-heartedly some local organs of the party and state considered so important a question as freedom of religious conscience. It seems that these organizations and organs of power do not understand the fact that their brutal, indiscreet acts against believers, who constitute a huge majority of the population, cause incalculable damage to Soviet power and are threatening to destroy the achievements of the party...<sup>188</sup>

Stalin banned the closing of churches, prayer-houses and synagogues for failure to comply with “registration formalities”. In the name of the Central Committee he also forbade the suppression of prayer-houses by majority voting of the village assembly and outlawed superfluous taxation. Moreover, he prohibited arrests of a “religious character” if they were not connected to obvious counter-revolutionary activity. The Central Committee also wanted to emphasise that the “uprooting of

187 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.61, d.132. “Сводка о ходе антирелигиозной кампании “Рамазан” в г. Иркутское и Черемховском районе”. See also RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.61, d.132. “Доклад (тов. Вагаутдинова)” and “Тезисы (Тов. Диниужаметова и тов. Гаупова)”.

188 “...как неосторожно, не серьезно, легкомысленно относятся некоторые местные организации партии и местные органы власти к такому важному вопросу, как вопрос о свободе религиозных убеждений. Эти организации и органы власти, видимо, не понимают, что своими грубыми, бестактными действиями против верующих, представляющих громадное большинство населения, они наносят неисчислимый вред советской власти, грозят сорвать достижения партии в области разложения церкви и рискуют сыграть на руку конт революции”. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.184. “Всем губкомам, обкомам, краевым к-там, нац. ЦК и бюро ЦК. Циркулярное письмо РКП 30. (Об отношении к религиозным организациям) 16.VII-23”.

religious prejudices” was not dependent on harassing believers. Excesses in this area simply reinforced these prejudices when communists should be adopting tactful relations with believers. This circular stressed that communists should simply present patiently their criticism of religion and outline the history of gods, cults and religion. Moreover, the Central Committee warned that this policy did not mean a weakening of the vigilance of communist organs; they should be alert so that religious organizations could not turn religion into a weapon of counter-revolution. Furthermore, as a political gesture of conciliation and as an exception from the general rule, the Politburo granted permission for the opening of religious schools in remote Eastern areas.<sup>189</sup>

Even the nominal head of state, Mikhail Kalinin, along with other party propagandists, was sent to explain this “revised” policy to the peasantry and the non-party masses. For example, on 31 July 1923 Kalinin had to pacify people who complained that their priest had fled. Peasants complained that the Soviet regime seemed to be persecuting priests. Kalinin condemned such behaviour and commented that Soviet power was not fighting against religion by administrative methods but rather by strength of conviction. The mocking of priests or acting violently towards them was not communism; it would only make priests into martyrs.<sup>190</sup> More importantly, he stated that harsh methods should be directed only against the politically hostile elements of the church; others could work in peace. The Soviet regime would not interfere with the beliefs of individuals.<sup>191</sup>

The decline of the brutal antireligious attacks represented also the start of more delicate methods in the antireligious fight. Thus it could be stated that the birth of the antireligious press was a natural outcome of the 12th congress. This need for organized antireligious propaganda was already acknowledged by Lenin himself just after the civil war when the party had realized that it needed instruments to aid it in atheist propaganda. In March 1922 Lenin himself criticised indirectly the Narkompros and suggested that the party should create a new journal, “Pod znamenem marksizma” (Under the Banner of Marxism), to serve in this area. According to Lenin, Lunacharsky’s Commissariat had

189 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.385 (Pp 37, 3/10-23); YI, 58. “Планы церковников и тактика трудящихся”.

190 See Kalinin 1968, 40–41. “Из беседы с представителями населения сел и деревень, расположенных вокруг станции Сковородно Читинской железной дороги”.

191 Kalinin 1968, 41–42. “Из беседы с представителями населения сел и деревень, расположенных вокруг станции Сковородно Читинской железной дороги”.



utilized unsatisfactory methods in this struggle; publishing 18th century enlightenment literature was more effective than the “dull and boring” Soviet antireligious propaganda.<sup>192</sup>

Lenin’s request for the production of new antireligious literature was effective. The first result of his appeal was the founding in 1922 of a non-party publishing house called “Ateist”. It specialized in translating the works of bourgeois atheists with Marxist commentaries. The Moscow party committee published a collection of essays entitled “Kommunizm i religiia” (Communism and Religion) and the newspaper “Nauka i religiia” (Science and Religion), edited by ex-priest Mikhail Galkin (Gorev). The disturbances of the “confiscation conflict” and open antireligious manifestations did not allow opportunities for more peaceful propaganda.

Although many researchers such as John S. Curtiss have detected in the end of the civil war the seeds of the organized antireligious movement, it is perhaps more justified to claim that the failure of the hardliners and the CAP to remodel the resolutions of the 12th congress and the fact that the party rejected administrative methods in general in its antireligious propaganda was the real turning point. The abundance of antireligious publications after the 12th congress points towards the ideological objectives of the ruling party in this area; the party was to concentrate on written propaganda instead of fighting directly against religion.

“Bezbozhnik” (established in December 1922) was published weekly and was later to play a leading role in the party’s antireligious propaganda. After the 13th congress, a special meeting of correspondents and subscribers of “Bezbozhnik” was convened in the autumn of 1924, where a new society called “The Friends of the Newspaper Bezbozhnik” was created. This organization was given the name the “League of the Godless” and later it renamed itself the “League of the Militant Godless”. It was in time to become an auxiliary weapon in the process of creating then New Atheist Man from the ashes of capitalism. It immediately became a centre of the most ardent antireligious feelings and its members were in favour of a more active struggle against religious prejudices and vestiges.<sup>193</sup>

Other leading party propagandists also created other new papers for antireligious propaganda, for example the journal “Antireligioznik” was dedicated to more scholarly purposes in the party. Workers had their own satirical publications, “Ateist” and “Bezbozhnik u stanka”

192 PSS 45, 23–27. “О значении воинствующего материализма”.

193 Compare Sheinman 1988 and Curtiss 1953, 205–210. See also Delaney 1971, 114–116.

(*Godless on the Bench*), published by Moscow antireligious circles and edited by M.M. Kostelovskaya (1878–1964). This newspaper had close links with the “Moscow Society of the Godless” and its editors followed their own independent line in the antireligious battle, as we can detect from CAP protocols.<sup>194</sup> Peasants had their own special atheist newspaper, “*Derevensky Bezbozhnik*”, and in time the Ukrainians also got their own special atheist newspaper, “*Besvirnik*”.<sup>195</sup>

Nonetheless, as Walter Kolarz has remarked, the role of the Godless-movement was marginal during the first half of the 1920s when the ruling regime wanted to pacify peasants by making concessions. Moreover, as Joan Delaney has suggested, the organizing of Godless cells throughout the country encountered resistance in Ukraine and within the Red Army. The obvious reason for this unenthusiastic reception was Trotsky’s dislike of Yaroslavsky’s antireligious line. Ukraine had a “pro-Trotskyist” as Prime Minister, Kh.G. Rakovsky, and the Red Army was under Trotsky’s high-command until 1925.<sup>196</sup>

159

In conclusion we may state that the early NEP period in Bolshevik religious policy can be characterized as the rise and fall of Trotsky. He led the party’s antireligious work and was the mastermind behind the “confiscation conflict” in 1921–1922. With the approval of the inner circle of the Politburo, Trotsky combined practical and ideological objectives in his campaign against the ROC. This attack was carried through although at the beginning of NEP the party had acknowledged the importance of seeking conciliation with the peasantry and their prejudices. The Soviet security organs were able to assist Trotsky in his manoeuvre by organizing a schism inside the church and directly meddling in internal church affairs. After Lenin’s withdrawal from politics the position of Trotsky became more vulnerable and inevitably Stalin and his allies succeeded in undermining his position in religious policy affairs by organizing a new religious policy organ under the direct command of the Central Committee. Trotsky’s fall was sealed at the 12th congress where the “triumvirate” were able to undermine his resolution by their conciliatory speeches. This “religious NEP” which thus had its origin in this congress had earlier been implemented among the national and ethnic religions and some communists in Eastern areas even openly sponsored peaceful coexistence with the local religions.

The reason for the conciliatory attitude of the “triumvirate” was apparent. The fate of the party was very heavily dependent on the peasants and their grain. The party, consequently, attempted to adopt a

\*\*\*\*\*  
194 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.443a (PCAP 13, 20/2-23).

195 Curtiss 1953, 210; Delaney 1971, 115.

196 Kolarz 1961, 8; Delaney 1971, 116.

sensitive approach to the peasantry and their prejudices. But along with this desire for a peaceful approach other voices could also be heard inside the ruling party.<sup>197</sup> Critical voices among the communists gained strength due to the political events that occurred after the congress. In the summer of 1923 there was some political unrest in the industrial areas of Moscow and Petrograd. The almost moribund opposition attempted to engage in conspiratorial activity and the communist opposition within the party also reorganized itself (Workers' Truth, Workers' Group). Unexpected strikes and riotous disturbances among workers alarmed party leaders and electrified the security apparatus. This acute political crisis was at its peak when the news spread of Lenin's death on 21 January 1924.<sup>198</sup>

197 Deutscher 1987, 7–8, 96–97.

198 АТ I, 86–88. “Подписи к заявлению в Политбюро ЦК РКП о внутрипартийном положении от 15 октября 1923 года”; Carrere d’Encausse 1982, 154–156.

---

# IV The role of religion in the power struggle at the height of the high NEP (1924–1927)

## 1. DIVERGING LEADERSHIP AND THE LEGACY OF LENIN

161

The death of Vladimir Ilich Lenin on 21 January 1924 symbolized the beginning of a new epoch in the Soviet state. The founder of socialist Russia was dead and his followers were left alone to continue his work. It was characteristic that all the rivals considered the legacy and heritage of Lenin as one of the most decisive factors in this struggle. During this early stage the party was still heavily under the spell of Lenin's personality. Given this fact, none of the communist leaders could hope to substitute for the founder of the Bolshevik party. In other words, Lenin personified the party (despite his death), and his disciples were consequently forced to follow in his footsteps. As a result, the Bolshevik party and its leaders could exercise supreme power only collectively and along Leninist lines. As Robert Tucker has remarked, the absence of the leader and the difficulty in finding correct Leninist directions was solved by inventing the cult of the great revolutionary and his philosophy that came to known as Leninism.<sup>1</sup>

The roots of this cult of Leninism can be traced back to the personal charisma of Lenin among communists and non-communists in Soviet Russia. He was indeed a popular leader and his name symbolized all the positive achievements of the Bolshevik revolution. For the peasant masses<sup>2</sup>, his name was linked to the success of the agrarian revolution

---

1 Tucker 1973, 305, 311; Tucker 1990, 39.

2 Even his old political opponent, L. Martov (Yu.O. Tsederbaum, 1873–1923) acknowledged the political charisma which Lenin enjoyed among peasants. Getzler 1992, 100.



of 1917 and not even the violence and disturbances resulting from the grain collections during the civil war had dented his reputation. Lenin was seen by the ordinary people as a “good czar surrounded by bad commissars”, as a “true Russian among Jewish communists”.<sup>3</sup> The Soviet leadership and Stalin in particular saw this new pseudo-religious cult as a means of enforcing the popularity and legitimacy of their own position. As Nina Tumarkin has commented in her monograph, “*Lenin Lives! The Cult of Lenin in Soviet Russia*”, when Lenin died the party tried to fuse religious and political rituals in order to mobilize the Russian population.<sup>4</sup>

The second important stage in creating the Leninist legacy was the adoption of Leninism as the new theoretical doctrine of the party. In order to lay the foundation for this doctrine it was declared that Lenin's doctrine lived on even though he was dead. These proclamations were at the same time pledges of faith and loyalty to the existing system.<sup>5</sup> Stalin was quite ready to utilize these pseudo-religious, anti-semitic and nationalistic feelings in the power struggle. He was, unlike Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, a “non-Jewish” member of the ruling regime. On many occasions he identified himself as a real “Russian” Bolshevik and his Russian party faction emphasized that the successor of Lenin could not be Jewish.<sup>6</sup> So it was understandable that the cult of Lenin came to be one of most important ideological weapons which Soviet leaders, and especially Stalin, used in this struggle. This semi-spontaneous idolizing of Lenin proved highly advantageous for Stalin. As the ex-theologian among the Bolsheviks, Stalin was obviously well aware of the stubborn religious feelings among the peasants. According to Nikolai Valentinov, Stalin had suggested at a decisive Politburo meeting that Lenin should be buried in the “Russian way”. The question of his possible eventual embalment was discussed for the first time by the Politburo in late autumn 1923 (while Lenin was still alive). Stalin and Kalinin were enthusiastic supporters of embalming Lenin's body, but Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev opposed it. During that meeting Trotsky pointed out the resemblance of these plans with the traditional embalming practices of the ROC and remarked that “scientific Mar-

3 Tumarkin 1983, 109; Valentinov 1991a, 143–144.

4 Tumarkin 1983, 165, 212; Clark 1988, 486.

5 Tumarkin 1983, 165; Valentinov 1991a, 149.

6 Tucker 1990, 41. Trotsky described Stalin's attitude towards anti-semitism as “friendly neutrality”. Trotsky 1947, 399–400. Using anti-semitic propaganda in the interparty struggle was against Bolshevik dogma, which maintained that only enemies of Soviet power were willing to make use of the anti-semitic feeling among the population. See the slogans: “Долой жидов-коммунистов!”. ТТР I, 491.

xism” should have nothing to do with such plans. Nonetheless, when Lenin died in January 1924 Stalin’s proposal won the day. The body was first embalmed and displayed for forty days (the traditional period of praying for the dead) and then placed in a special mausoleum.<sup>7</sup>

The “usefulness” of this official immortalization of Lenin was indisputable. The new cult could substitute for old religious manifestations in a new atheistic state which had centuries-old Orthodox traditions. As we have seen already, the Russian Orthodox Church, the former ecclesiastical authority in Russia, had earlier preserved the bodies of saints. Isaac Deutscher explains this process of mixing Marxist and religious components as a parallel phenomenon to what happened during the time of the early church when Christianity spread by absorbing and adapting certain elements from paganism. In similar manner Western Marxism on coming to Russia also absorbed certain elements from the Russian past.<sup>8</sup> Despite the protests of Lenin’s widow, Krupskaya, the world’s first Marxist-orientated state decided to sanctify the memory of its founder by embalming him. The mausoleum was to be the centrepiece of the civic cult of Lenin.<sup>9</sup>

Subsequently, Leninism was slowly but surely promoted as the official ideology of the Bolsheviks. So it was not surprising that competing leaders published hagiographies<sup>10</sup> of the deceased “Vozhd”, thus producing their own interpretation of Leninism. In particular Stalin and Zinoviev were eager to draw historical portraits in which they highlighted their closeness to (and the distance of others from) the deceased leader. Moreover, quotations from the collected works of Lenin appeared to be significant factors in the ideological arguments wielded in this fierce contest for supreme power. These collected works functioned also as guidelines when Soviet leaders tried to find justification for differing policies. The memory of Lenin was used more and more to “fight the political battles of the movement”.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the common emphasis on unity and the assertion that it was following the “path of Lenin”, the party began to disintegrate into

\*\*\*\*\*  
7 Tumarkin 1983, 174–176, 180; Valentinov 1991a, 147–148.

8 Deutscher 1967, 269. Andrei Sinyavsky has commented on the Lenin cult by underlining its pseudo-religious dimensions. According to him, Lenin’s corpse was turned into an artificial holy relic and a mausoleum built for him which was like a temple constructed without faith in God. Sinyavsky 1990, 112–113. The religious and mystical tone of the communist glorifiers of Lenin manifested itself in various forms. Some writers even deified Lenin in such a manner that his figure achieved Christ-like features. Nina Tumarkin has noticed the interesting fact that such writers were in general of Jewish origin. Tumarkin 1983, 167–169.

9 Tumarkin 1983, 177; Tucker 1990, 38.

10 Gill 1990, 182.

11 Tucker 1973, 306; Tumarkin 1983, 246.

different factions. This process appeared to be unavoidable. The fundamental reason for these differences of opinion was the nature of the state itself. Soviet Russia did not fulfil the classical Marxist prerequisite for a "socialist country". Instead of an urbanized and industrialized socialist society, Russia was an underdeveloped agricultural country burdened by relics from the capitalist era. The general communist consensus was that the building of socialism in Russia required not only the development of prosperous industry but also a thoroughgoing renewal of the society and people. The success of socialism demanded throwing off the vestiges of the capitalist period: impoverishment, illiteracy, bureaucracy, idleness, debauchery and, last but not least, national-mindedness and religiosity. All factions in the ruling party were unanimous about the final goal of this atheistic society, but the methods espoused by different factions to achieve this end varied.<sup>12</sup>

164

This divergence of opinions had many sources. Before the October Revolution the Bolsheviks had possessed democratic traditions which enabled them to form factions freely and present competing programmes. After the October revolution of 1917 these debates continued and various coalitions of party members prospered. The so-called "Workers' Opposition" was the first of these groups to achieve a more fixed form. Party discipline was achieved, however, at the 10th Congress in 1921 when the highest leadership demanded the immediate dissolution of all opposition groups on pain of instant expulsion from the party. As a result of this, free discussion gradually declined and inner democracy within the Bolshevik party was step by step ruled out by the party administration. Nevertheless, this development was slow and during the 1920s members were free to express their opinions to quite an extent.<sup>13</sup>

The principal topic for this post-Leninist divergence of party opinion was concentrated on the simple question: what was to be fate of socialist Russia living under the conditions of the NEP and surrounded by the capitalist world? In answer to this question the party divided, as Isaac Deutscher has pointed out, into three major factions: the radical "left", the Stalinist "centre"<sup>14</sup> and the "right". This internal difference of opinion originally crystallized around agriculture policies and matters concerning industrialization but later it came to cover nearly all political matters. Moreover, each opposing faction cited Lenin for its own purposes. Despite their unanimous agreement on "following the

12 Tucker 1973, 368–369; Deutscher 1987, 37–38. See also Pethybridge 1974, 48–49.

13 Schapiro 1965, 314–317; Deutscher 1987, 228–229.

14 Deutscher 1987, 246.

path of Lenin” rival leaders had different ambitions and approaches for implementing socialism in Russia.<sup>15</sup> These labels among the ruling regime were also reflected in Soviet religious policy.

For the Left-Communists and hardliners of the party the NEP in general represented an ideological and political retreat from Marxist orthodoxy. This Bolshevik “Left” consisted of many differing heterogeneous groups with various political ambitions and included members such as Preobrazhensky, Yu. Larin (1882–1932), and to some extent even Trotsky.<sup>16</sup>

The “Left” saw two theoretical threats in continuing the NEP policy. The first was connected with the problems of the planned economy. The industrialization and development of heavy industry was regarded as the only guarantee of maintaining proletarian hegemony in socialist Russia. In any event, developing heavy industry without state planning was considered an impossible task. The second reason for discrediting the NEP was that according to Marxist theory basic economic structures determined the “superstructure”. The Left-Communists also believed that socialist achievements were in danger and that petty-bourgeois elements such as kulaks, business-men and priests would finally restore capitalism in Russia. The complexity of this problem can be seen from the fact that Zinovev, who did not originally belong to the Left-Communists, called the NEP policy a “strategic retreat” adopted at the 10th Party Congress in 1921.<sup>17</sup> Generally speaking, the NEP policy was characterized among Left-Communists also as a “Peasant-Brest” to describe its temporary political nature. This point of view was based on the common fear inside the party that economic concessions would give more vigour to the political opposition – the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries.<sup>18</sup> The left wing of the party demanded the end of the NEP policy, the acceleration of industrialization in Russia, and active encouragement for socialist revolutions abroad. Funds for this more rapid industrialization were to be accumulated from agriculture and the peasants were to be educated in the collective use of land.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, the “Right” of the party wanted to advance at a slower pace in building socialism. This “gradualist” faction also wanted to build up industry but on the terms of the peasantry. The right-wing (e.g. Bukharin, Tomsy and Rykov, etc.) believed that the Soviet state

\*\*\*\*\*  
15 Schapiro 1970, 310, Pethybridge 1974, 6–7; 211–215; Service 1979, 163.

16 Merridale 1990, 27.

17 See, for example, Zinovev 1926, 226, 315.

18 Service 1979, 160; Conquest 1986, 58.

19 Deutscher 1987, 234–238.



would survive even if it were to make some compromises with the peasants. Only the most essential parts of the economy should be under the control of the communist party. The main error the party could make was to use coercion in trying to instruct the peasants in the collective use of land. The peasants should be treated with special care and concern; a proletarian state should not break the alliance between the working class and the poor and “middle” peasants. Capitalist and petty-bourgeois phenomena among peasants should be tolerated and carefully educated away. The main principle should be that everything which separated the party from the peasant, was against the interests of the party. It was natural enough that the defenders of a more conciliatory religious policy were also rightists in the inner-party debate.<sup>20</sup>

The divergence between “left” and “right” was also reflected in the sphere of Soviet philosophy. The right-wing identified itself more or less with the ideas of the Mechanists. According to this Marxist philosophical school, economic forces would inevitably lead to one final telos and the world was undergoing a process of change in order to find an equilibrium. They interpreted Marx by underlining the antagonism of economic and material forces, which would inevitably determine the direction of the system. This opinion suited well Bukharin’s “determinist” and gradualist position after the introduction of the NEP. In religious policy, this view justified conciliatory methods; as socialism gradually overcomes capitalism, so too will science and enlightenment overcome the “darkness” of religion. It was not so vital, therefore, to speed up the antireligious fight when material forces would in the long run overcome religion. The second philosophical school, so-called Deborinism, was named after its most famous proponent, A.M. Deborin (1881–1963). According to Deborinism, all change was accomplished by dialectical leaps and intense development. In order to make changes in the world or put socialism into practice, it was more favourable to create an intensity of changes. Thus in religious policy this justified moving more resolutely on the antireligious front.<sup>21</sup>

Dimitry V. Pospelovsky has to some extent denied the significance of these “right” and “left” labels when investigating Soviet religious policy and has described their use as confusing.<sup>22</sup> When considering the

\*\*\*\*\*  
20 Deutscher 1987, 243; Merridale 1990, 48–49.

21 Wetter 1963, 130–135, 138–142, 144–149; McLellan 1987b, 127–128. See also Hecker 1933, 158–167, 176–187.

22 He has this to say on the matter: “Although the Soviets constantly used the labels “leftist” and “rightist” in attacking each other, I feel very uncomfortable with these confusing terms, especially since their position, at least regarding religion and

complexity of the power struggle and the “opportunistic” twists and turns of some political leaders, this criticism is valid. For example, Bukharin was one of the most eager initiators of War Communism in the period 1917–1921 though after 1921 he emerged as a pace-setter for conciliatory politics. Without being specific it is quite difficult, however, to comprehend different arguments in the religious political debate inside the ruling party.

As we have noted before, religion was seen, together with national-mindedness, as one of the most significant relics (пережиток) of the capitalistic era.<sup>23</sup> In fact, this attitude expressed a common ideological standpoint and nearly everybody in the ruling party accepted it. From the beginning of the Soviet era, religious policy in the Soviet state was subordinated to the interests of general policy. This meant that during the civil war, despite the hostile ideological party doctrine, limited activity by the ROC was tolerated after an initial outburst of administrative prohibitions. Bolshevik religious policy was conducted using flexible methods.<sup>24</sup> During the civil war the regime used administrative measures against the ROC only when politically necessary. In this sense the campaign of 1921–23 was only a short frontal attack against religious organizations.

Accordingly, the problems in post-Leninist religious policy were broadly similar to those in general policy. The dilemma was simple. What was the best way to conduct the cultural fight against the relics of the capitalistic era in the minds of the peasantry?<sup>25</sup> The relation between the ruling regime and the peasantry was traumatic for both sides. The Bolshevik Party was originally an urban phenomenon; its supporters originated from towns and factories. Its rural members were sometimes blamed for being under the influence of “petty-bourgeois spontaneity” – kulaks and priests. Moreover, the Soviet power had little means to put its will into effect in the countryside. Communist newspapers and periodicals were sent to the countryside but in many cases peasants were illiterate or could read only with great difficulty. Instead of local communists the main figures in rural areas were often village priests. The influence of the church was a major obstacle to socialism. For example, in the census of the population in 1926 there were still over 60 000 full-time priests in Soviet Russia and religious

\*\*\*\*\*  
methods of fighting it, varied quite pragmatically – opportunistically, more in terms of practical consideration than in theoretical principles”. Pospelovsky 1987, 31–32.

23 AK, 150–153, 194–195. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky wrote this book when they were close to each other politically. Deutscher 1987, 230–231.

24 Wesson 1972, 118.

25 Carr 1958, 44–45; Fainsod 1958, 432.

rites were usually observed among the peasant masses.<sup>26</sup> The alien “class-nature” of the countryside created a major dichotomy inside the party. Should the party carry on with its “pro-muzhik” line and adopt a careful approach to the old relics connected with the peasants, i.e. religion, national-mindedness and “non-culturalism” (illiteracy)?

This discussion followed the lines of the original debate between the “Left” and “Right”. If the move to a fully socialist society were to be rapid, then the obstacles to development should be removed more speedily than in the envisaged scheme of the Right. During these heated debates different factions tried to analyze the role of the peasants and the character of the kulak, the businessman, the believer and the sectarian. All the above factors were highly significant when dealing with Bolshevik religious policy.<sup>27</sup>

Lenin himself had also devoted a great deal of attention to these questions. It seems obvious that he had realized the importance of culture in building a socialist Russia. The Cultural Revolution of Lenin, as Carrere D’Encausse has remarked, included “the need for a modest and coherent advance, rejecting rash theories and untried experiments”. This “culturalization” was for Lenin getting rid of “oblomovism”; he underlined the importance of the co-operative movement as a possible solution for achieving socialism in Russia. However, in his last written works he recognized the need for “culturalizing” the peasantry as the most vital prerequisite for the survival of Soviet power.<sup>28</sup> Despite his death, Lenin’s legacy and his political heritage had an influence on the 13th congress of 23–31 May 1924.

## 2. THE DEBATE ON RELIGION AND THE 13TH PARTY CONGRESS

The debate in question took place two months before the official convocation of the 13th congress and it started when M.I. Kalinin published in *Pravda* on 16 and 17 April 1924 his theses concerning work in the Soviet countryside. In his proposal, which was later accepted as an official resolution in the congress, Kalinin rejected administrative methods when dealing with the peasants. His theses were intended to stabilize the countryside in accordance with NEP policy and accomplish an alliance with the peasantry. The 13th

26 Davies 1980, 51–55; Pethybridge 1990, 67, 359–360. See also SSS II, 97

27 Deutscher 1987, 227. See also Nikitin 1979, 102–103.

28 Carrere D’Encausse 1982, 143–144; Tucker 1990, 31, 42–43.

congress was a landmark in Soviet religious policy, the party officially abandoned earlier aggressive antireligious campaigns and introduced antireligious propaganda based on enlightenment and scientific explanations. This resolution, with its conciliatory language towards the peasants and especially towards sectarians, symbolized the continuation of the "religious NEP", adopted earlier in the Soviet system.<sup>29</sup>

Kalinin's proposals attracted considerable attention inside the ruling regime. His "liberal" antireligious methods in particular irritated many leading communists. The first response to Kalinin's proposals was an article by I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov published on 25 April 1924.<sup>30</sup> Stepanov suggested another approach which underlined "sociological" explanations in antireligious work in accordance with the ideas of the "Mechanistic" school.<sup>31</sup> According to Stepanov, the fundamental difficulty in Kalinin's draft was the interpretation; it could offer grounds for neutralism. The basic argument between Kalinin and Skvortsov-Stepanov, however, arose from the sectarian question. Stepanov could not agree with Kalinin's favourable opinion of the progressive economic role of the sectarian movement or Kalinin's proposal to use them as assistants in the Soviet economy. Sectarians were not pro-Soviet; these sects were hand in glove with the village bourgeoisie. He justified this by remarking that there was no historical basis for treating sectarian movements better than other religious groups. He admitted that sectarians had played an important role, e.g. in Germany in the 15th century and in England in the 16th century, but later they had turned out to be exploiters. He also strongly rejected Kalinin's notion that sects were "rational" by nature, and claimed that they could not benefit Soviet power. Sectarians were simply enticing some young people who wanted to gain privileges and be released from certain civic duties (such as serving in the army).<sup>32</sup>

The difficulty of the sectarian question, as Skvortsov-Stepanov remarked, was the social make-up of sects in general. He believed that Kalinin's resolution would lead to questions such as: would this or that particular sect result in a more stable union between the proletariat and peasantry? Skvortsov-Stepanov was afraid there was a danger that this resolution would lead to a possible union between the peasantry and the

29 "Тезисы тов. Калинина о работе в деревне, одобренные ЦК РКП". Pravda, 16 and 17 April 1924, No. 87,88. See also Tirado 1993, 486.

30 "Тринадцатый пункт тезисов о работе в деревне". Pravda, 25 April 1924; VII, 537-538. "Документы".

31 See Pravda, 25 April 1924; VII, 538. "Документы".

32 Pravda, 25 April 1924, No. 95; VII, 538. "Документы". See also Pospelovsky 1987, 31.



developing bourgeoisie in the villages. In conclusion, Skvortsov–Stepanov stated that even the possibility of working with sects would ultimately lead to negative results. Finally, he proposed the deletion of the part of the resolution which dealt with sectarians and further study of this question.<sup>33</sup>

Stepanov's proposal revealed the basic fear of the ruling regime during the NEP: would co-operation with alien elements endanger the existence of Soviet power? Stepanov's solution hinted at the possibility that the Soviet regime should find out which sectarians were pro-Soviet and could be turned into builders of socialism. In answer to Skvortsov–Stepanov's critical remarks the moderate party leaders attempted to assert that sectarians were mostly composed of the exploited elements of the Russian countryside. This can be seen for example in the article of the pro-sectarian V.D.Bonch–Bruevich, in which he denounced the arguments of Skvortsov–Stepanov and maintained that sectarian organizations in ninety nine cases out of a hundred belonged to the poor and middle peasantry. Members of sects were usually poor peasants or even belonged to the "Lumpen-proletariat". The activity of these sects was usually based on collectivism and they fought against socially-harmful phenomena such as drunkenness, debauchery, smoking, stealing, narcotics, gambling, etc. Moreover, Bonch-Bruevich remarked that the economic situation of the sectarians was always better than that of their Orthodox peasant neighbours. The reason for this, however, was that their mutual co-operation was based in many cases not only on collective methods of production but on a communist way of life.<sup>34</sup>

Bonch-Bruevich characterized sectarians as an "avantgarde, leading population on the agricultural peasant front" and stated that refusing to use them in "restoring the economy would not only be peculiar but criminal". He also acknowledged the merits of the sectarians in the battle against illiteracy and advised the forthcoming congress to hand over run-down state farms and communes to them. Finally, he urged the Soviet regime to give them "full freedom to comprehensively develop themselves". He demanded that Soviet power should give guarantees to sectarians and reassure them that they should feel free from every kind of "illegal, fault-finding, humiliating" hindrance.<sup>35</sup>

This article, written by a prominent representative of the ruling regime, was an open recognition of the sectarian movement. But on the other hand, the same issue of Pravda contained another article which

\*\*\*\*\*  
33 Pravda, 25 April 1924, No. 95; YII, 538. "Документы"

34 Pravda, 15 May 1924, No. 108; YII, 539–540. "Документы".

35 Pravda, 15 May 1924, No. 108.

strongly attacked the conciliatory tone of the proposed resolution. In an article entitled "Enlightenment, sectarians and prejudices", V. Dubovsky argued that enlightenment alone was not the best weapon against religion. His attack against Skvortsov–Stepanov's opinion reflected "Deborinist" assumptions. He rejected Skvortsov–Stepanov's article and underlined the need for enlightenment and a "sociological approach" in Soviet antireligious work. According to Skvortsov–Stepanov, religion was simply the result of ignorance and darkness. But, as Dubovsky also commented, religion was more than lack of knowledge, it was:

...a primary and most dangerous enemy of communism and the proletarian dictatorship...<sup>36</sup>

The problem of enlightenment lay in the fact, as Dubovsky put it, that enlightenment seldom destroyed "god" but more often than not "refined" the concept. Only enlightenment combined with the exposing of the class nature of religious belief would be an appropriate approach to this question. Therefore he urged the ruling regime to

reveal the injury which they bring to... the class interests of the workers, to reveal the dangers which are threatening these interests in future...<sup>37</sup>

Moreover, Dubovsky did not view sectarians as representatives of the poor elements of the village but on the contrary he maintained that sectarians were "with the kulak elements of the peasantry". Dubovsky was sure that sectarians were eager to educate themselves, for example in science and agronomy, only because they hoped to become economically as strong as German and Danish peasants. Finally, he declared that words like "prejudices" and "superstition" were not communist but clerical language; for communists these words should be in the same category as "booze, cocaine and syphilis". This article portrays clearly the moods of the more class-minded and belligerent left-wing of the party. Dubovsky characterized religion as an enemy and his language represented the atmosphere of the civil war. Even Skvortsov–Stepanov's critical attitude towards religion was not enough; Dubovsky condemned Skvortsov–Stepanov for his assertion that religion would inevitably die of its own record when the social

36 "...Она есть один из главных и опаснейших врагов коммунизма и пролетарской диктатуры". Pravda, 15 May 1924, No. 108.

37 Pravda, 15 May 1924, No. 108; YII, 540. "Документы".

roots of religion disappeared.<sup>38</sup>

On the eve of the congress Yaroslavsky also participated in the debate and wrote an article for Pravda. He declared that the party should not grant any extra privileges to sectarians. In this article he challenged the views of Kalinin and reasoned that in the proposed draft there was no mention of relations between sectarians and antireligious work. According to Yaroslavsky, sectarians were now gathering counter-revolutionary elements into their ranks and there was no reason to deal with them any differently than with other religious organizations. In conclusion he stated that

This is why we regard this resolution as erroneous. It would be best of all if the second paragraph of the 13th point were totally rejected or thoroughly revised.<sup>39</sup>

172

This criticism continued on the second day of the congress when S. Minin presented his own article on the party resolution. Like Trotsky before him in 1923, Minin denied the importance of religion for the peasantry and especially for the Red Army. He agreed with Skvortsov–Stepanov that Kalinin’s resolution did not take into consideration different social classes and groups inside the sectarian movement. Minin believed that for the poor peasants, the sectarian movement was a stage on the road to atheism, but for rich peasants it was a just a new kind of religion. There was always a danger that people would join the sectarians for economic reasons. Therefore he believed that there was a danger that peasant speculators would join the sectarians because of their privileged position.<sup>40</sup>

The dispute over the above reached a new level when Ivan Tregubov, a famous pro-sectarian communist, wrote an article in Izvestiya VTsIK defending the conciliatory tone of Kalinin’s proposal. He pointed out that Lenin himself had proposed co-operation with sectarians in building model state farms.<sup>41</sup>

These debates give an idea of the relatively free atmosphere of the 1920s and the above views represent all views on this question. This press discussion exposed the different factions in the Soviet religious

\*\*\*\*\*  
38 Pravda, 15 May 1924, No. 108; VII, 541. “Документы”.

39 “...Вот почему мы считаем эту постановку неправильной. Лучше всего было бы этот второй абзац 13-го пункта совершенно выбросить или коренным образом его переработать”. Pravda, 23 May 1924, No. 115.

40 Pravda, 24 May 1924, No. 116.

41 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180. “Сотрудничество сектантов в советско-коммунистическом строительстве. (Внимание XIII Съезд РКП)”; Izvestiya, 27 May 1924, No. 119.

policy. Kalinin's proposal followed the line of the ruling triumvirate, while Skvortsov–Stepanov's represented the view of the "Mechanists" who believed that enlightenment would inevitably destroy religion. Dubovsky, for his part expressed "Deborinist"-like critique of class-minded hardliners, while Tregubov, Bonch-Bruevich and Lunacharsky were members of the moderate "lobby" inside the ruling regime.

The actual 13th congress began on 23 May 1924 with Zinovev's political lecture on the general politics and common aspects of party work. This duty had been earlier performed by Lenin and the gesture was understood as a clear indication of the succession of power. In his opening speech, Zinovev examined contemporary topics in the USSR and one of the items to which he draw special attention was party's activity in the countryside. One of his main messages in this context was that party should enforce its cultural influence there.<sup>42</sup>

However, the "left-opposition" close to Trotsky made an effort to challenge the triumvirates and the party apparatus. The spokesman of the "left" was Preobrazhensky, who accused the party of being alienated from the masses, from the younger generation, etc. Preobrazhensky also demanded more decisive actions against rich peasants. The party should also recognize the danger of private capital to socialism. However, the congress did not accept these accusations and condemned the opposition gathered around Preobrazhensky and Trotsky as a "petty-bourgeois deviation".<sup>43</sup>

During the congress Kalinin had the possibility to answer criticism which had been delivered in the newspapers.<sup>44</sup> With regard to his conciliatory attitude towards the peasantry, Kalinin tried to justify his proposals by referring to Leninist guidelines. According to Kalinin, the NEP policy had fulfilled its purpose but he also described how the improved position of the peasant economy had lead to the social differentiation between the poor, middle and rich peasants. Kalinin paid attention to the criticism of the left-wing and admitted that during the NEP-policy the differences between these classes had widened and wealthy peasants had become politically active.<sup>45</sup>

He began his justification with quotations from Lenin and draw attention to the co-operative movement in general. He remarked that communes had flourished during the first revolutionary period but the situation then began to deteriorate. Problems concerning individuality

\*\*\*\*\*  
42 S13, 94–97, 107–108.

43 S13, 146–151, 184–187, 191, 771–777.

44 S13, 434–436.

45 S13, 434–443.



and working discipline emerged.<sup>46</sup> Kalinin stressed that regardless of various problems in the Soviet co-operative movement, the peasant question in the Soviet countryside could not be solved by administrative methods but only by strengthening the co-operative movement further.<sup>47</sup>

In this context, Kalinin outlined his initiatives concerning the party's attitude to the countryside intelligentsia. For example, during the NEP nearly all agronomists were unemployed but the Soviet state could use their services in its work in countryside. Kalinin suggested that agronomists should also take part in organizing peasant celebrations so essential to the peasant's way of life and so occupy the post of "secular priests" in peasant society. Peasants for their part should employ agronomists instead of the useless priests they had been supporting since the revolution. He wondered why the Spring time feast (the Day of the Trinity according the Orthodox almanac) could not be a celebration of productivity, etc.<sup>48</sup> He also urged that these kinds of celebrations, led by agronomists or forestry specialists, should be planned in more detail.<sup>49</sup>

Kalinin's suggestion seemed to be a compromise between the proposals of Trotsky and Zinovev. Trotsky had earlier proposed organizing secular feasts for workers and Zinovev had proposed using the neutral and "honest" village intelligentsia (teachers, agronomists, doctors, etc.) for Soviet purposes. Moreover, this proposal mirrored the suggestions proposed in the XI All Russian Congress of the Soviets when some of the representatives demanded that agronomists help more in the Soviet countryside. Later in 1925, certain peasant members of the XII All Russian Congress of the Soviets underlined the importance of agronomy in the antireligious work in the countryside and thought that the work of agronomy would automatically diminish the effect of the "batyushka".<sup>50</sup>

Kalinin explained his idea by maintaining that it was easy to convert peasants to these secular celebrations because the peasantry, according to him, was not really religiously-minded. They did not visit the church all year around, only during great feasts like Easter. In line with Trotsky's earlier claims, Kalinin believed that peasants were not genuinely religious but only accustomed to pre-revolutionary forms of social life; it was nice to be with other peasants, to chat with others and

46 S13, 438.

47 S13, 442-444.

48 S13, 447.

49 S13, 447. See also Fainsod 1958, 433.

50 VSS XI, 25; VSS XII, 207-208. Compare ST XXI, 39-43 and Zinovev 1926, 51-52.

quarrel with the priest.<sup>51</sup>

Kalinin also criticized the approach of Skvortsov–Stepanov’s article in the religious policy sphere and declared it a “professorial” approach to the fight against religious prejudices. Nevertheless, Kalinin agreed with Skvortsov–Stepanov to some extent and remarked that the party programme should be made more precise. But it should be formulated so that it could not allow for a “talmudist” interpretation, so the programme itself would not limit antireligious propaganda simply to “materialistic explanations” as Skvortsov–Stepanov demanded. As a political gibe in Skvortsov–Stepanov’s direction he remarked that the revolution had created Soviet power and the party was not really the party of “professors”.<sup>52</sup>

In accordance with the general conciliatory methods of the NEP, Kalinin urged that the party should adopt more careful policies with regard to the churches and religion. He used the example that if before the revolution someone had entered a church with his hat on, it would have been taken as a great revolutionary demonstration, as it would have been a risky deed which could have led to punishment by the authoritarian regime. After the October Revolution it would have been understood only as children’s play. Nevertheless, Kalinin sought to refute all accusations levelled against him for advancing a neutral attitude toward religion. He declared that restricting the antireligious struggle and advocating religious neutrality was incompatible with communist party ideology. The party could never be neutral in this context; otherwise the enemies of the Soviet power could usurp the Soviet machine. While it was proper to abandon earlier administrative methods in the antireligious battle, neutrality in this matter was out of the question.<sup>53</sup>

Kalinin also mentioned examples of “wrong administrative methods” in earlier antireligious work and pointed out that the persecution of religion only revitalized it. Moreover, Kalinin did not agree with Skvortsov–Stepanov either who had maintained that the 10 million sect members were simply exploiters. He justified this standpoint by appealing to the authority of the triumvirate and related how in a private conversation Zinoviev had acknowledged that these 10 million sectarians could not all be kulaks. Kalinin also reminded the representatives that during the pre-revolutionary era the party had co-operated with sectarians.<sup>54</sup>

51 S13, 448.

52 S13, 449.

53 S13, 450.

54 S13, 450–451.

This interesting lecture was followed by a speech given by Lenin's widow, Nadezhda Krupskaya. In relation to work in the countryside, Krupskaya underlined the importance of the village. She criticised especially the failures of the NEP system and stressed that class struggle in the countryside was inevitable.<sup>55</sup> She also drew attention to the poor conditions of teachers and emphasised that the party needed antireligious propaganda and the correct Marxist attitude in educational questions. In relation to this, she complained that poor peasants did not have the same possibilities to educate their children as the kulaks. This created cultural inequality between the children of the poor peasant and those of the kulak. Even more alarming in her opinion was the fact that illiteracy was growing.<sup>56</sup>

It is intriguing to realize that although the delegates were "haunted by the fear of weakening the Party by their differences",<sup>57</sup> the congress was not yet the monolithic construction it was to become a few years later. For example, a certain delegate, S.A. Bergavinov, criticised the moderate approach towards the intelligentsia advocated by Zinoviev. As his main argument, he remarked that during the civil war teachers had collaborated with the kulaks and consequently the party should be cautious when using teachers in its cultural work. He also underlined the suspicious class origin of teachers. Some 50% of them came from clerical families; they were actually sons and daughters of priests. He also objected to Kalinin's positive approach to sectarians. First of all, sectarians did not pay taxes, they did not serve in the Red Army, and they maintained too good relations with the kulaks. He also recognized the danger of the sectarian movement if it gained wider support among the poorer sections of the population. It was a development that the party could not permit and Bergavinov urged that they needed a more careful and more intellectual struggle against sectarians.<sup>58</sup>

This suspicious and hostile speech indicated the limits of criticism of the leadership. Although the triumvirate could unite its followers against the critics of the "left", it was not able to silence suspicions among ordinary communists when dealing with such delicate questions as sects. Despite the conciliatory policy of the NEP, distrust of socially and ideologically alien elements was widespread. Communist representatives who had just fought a civil war against these ideological enemies now felt ill at ease co-operating with them. As one peasant put it during the XI All-Russian Congress of the Soviets, the intelligentsia

55 S13, 452–454.

56 S13, 455–457.

57 Carrere D'Encausse 1982, 163.

58 S13, 470–471. See also Agursky 1987, 3; Fainsod 1958, 431.

(agronomists) were usually the sons of landowners who instead of doing good caused only harm.<sup>59</sup>

In the next speech, Rykov, the Prime Minister of the Sovnarkom and the representative of the right, tried to calm these fears. He started by acknowledging Bergavinov's criticism to some extent, but for the most part he denounced these "leftist" views. He criticised Bergavinov for attacking the NEP and explained to the congress that the "cessation of the NEP" would not be a wise policy. There were over 1 million unemployed in the country and the state budget deficit was over 400 million roubles. Moreover, Rykov explained that the Central Committee was aware of the facts about teachers and knew of their suspicious social background. Nevertheless, he asserted, this suspicion was groundless. Teachers had acknowledged the Soviet system and they could be used in the same way as engineers. Thus "every teacher should be treated with care, with neutrality".<sup>60</sup>

Religious sects were, however, a different matter. Rykov stated that sects differed from each other. Consequently, the seeds of revolution might be sown in the soil of some religious movements. He reminded his audience, as Kalinin had done, that in pre-revolutionary times sects had sometimes worked together with the party. Moreover, during the period of the newspaper "Iskra", the party drew up a plan for using these movements for revolutionary purposes. For this reason, Rykov pointed out that:

Those sectarian tendencies must be used in every possible way. [They] are served up with spiritual and religious dressings, undertake revolutionary assignments and are sometimes close to abandoning private property...<sup>61</sup>

At the end of this discussion a representative of the teachers' union brought greetings to the congress. This speech was connected to an initiative launch by Zinovev. During his time in Leningrad Zinovev had held quite an independent position and he could exercise a considerably unconstrained policy.<sup>62</sup> He had introduced to the Leningrad area his own policy of the "out-stretched hand" and in general had invited people from the intelligentsia to join in building the

\*\*\*\*\*  
59 VSS XI, 77; Fitzpatrick 1991, 20; Deutscher 1987, 113–117.

60 S13, 472–477.

61 "...те сектантские течения, которые под духовным и религиозным соусом проводят революционные задачи и которые иногда близки к отрицанию частной собственности, нужно использовать всячески и целиком". S13, 477.

62 Korey 1963, 254.



Soviet state. So it was natural that it was Zinovev who greeted the teachers and invited them to work with communists.<sup>63</sup>

He did not, however, treat the intelligentsia as a whole. Zinovev believed that only the friendly and neutral intelligentsia should be addressed with a call for co-operation. Doctors, teachers and agronomists were no doubt less suspicious representatives of the intelligentsia. Moreover, working with them in the antireligious field could be advantageous as they had in many cases a close relation to the peasants and could be utilized in the fight against religion and illiteracy. Advocates, lawyers, professors and clergy did not belong to the "useful" part of the intelligentsia and, for the most part, the ruling regime suspected them and regarded them as counter-revolutionaries. For example, one party source claimed that the hostile section of the intelligentsia had often concealed itself in ecclesiastical councils and in the sectarian movement.<sup>64</sup>

178

Despite critical voices among the party the conciliatory tone towards religion and the sectarians was finally accepted along the lines of Kalinin's proposal. The final party resolution also included Zinovev's call for an "outstretched hand" policy and a conciliatory attitude towards the friendly and neutral intelligentsia was officially adopted. As Rykov had hoped, the sects were recognized as elements which had suffered during the period of Czarism. The main attention at this congress was anyway concentrated on a devastating attack against the "left" front. The party apparatus and especially the triumvirate chose the most natural way of defence; it criticized the "left" for its anti-peasant policy.

Kalinin's resolution admitted the relevance of sects. The resolution declared also that the party should carry out only non-coercive antireligious propaganda in the countryside. Moreover, it underlined that the party must "liquidate" all administrative measures in the fight against religious prejudices and ban practices such as closing churches, mosques, synagogues, playrooms, etc. In accordance with Kalinin's proposal, the resolution underlined that the character of antireligious propaganda should be based on materialistic explanations of nature and

63 S13, 480.

64 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.186. "Вузы и антирелигиозная пропаганда"; "Методы антирелигиозной пропаганды"; S13, 484-485. In accordance with this policy, the Politburo decided on 24 April 1924 to improve the economic situation of teachers. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.434 (Pp 86, 24/4-24); RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.755 "Информационная сводка по письмам корреспондентов и читателей "учительской газеты"" (5.12.1925)". On party policy towards teachers, see Bukharin 1990, 20, 32, "Путь к социализму и рабоче-крестьянский союз 1925 г."; Bukharin 1989, 163, "Экономика переходного периода. Май 1920 г".

society. It was important that the peasantry should have things explained in familiar terms. Finally, this resolution stressed once again that the religious feelings of believers should not be insulted. The final victory over religion would be a question of time; it could be achieved by the spread of the enlightenment. This kind of careful approach was necessary, especially, in the Eastern republics and districts.<sup>65</sup>

The congress also recognized the cultural aspect in its work. It was important that the peasant population should become acquainted with the party's propaganda. So it was not surprising that the fight against illiteracy was considered an important part of the resolution. As the resolution put it, the fate of Soviet power was dependent on the peasant question.<sup>66</sup> In the 12th congress the conciliatory tone of Zinoviev had initiated the "religious NEP", but before the 13th congress the Bolshevik party had not officially acknowledged this change. So Kalinin's resolution and the aftermath of the above debate indicated clearly that the party had entered a new era in its approach to religious organizations. This policy had been delayed for two years from the beginning of 1921.<sup>67</sup>

The importance of the 13th congress was that it constituted a short breathing-space in the political struggle over the future of the Soviet Union. Both hardliners and moderates interpreted the results of the 13th congress in their own way. For the hardliners the resolution represented a temporary setback, but moderates saw it as the start of a long and steady transition period. On the one hand, the conciliatory resolution of the 13th congress represented the semi-official acknowledgement of religious organizations and the sectarians. These signals could be understood as indications of reconciliation with, in addition, church-state implications. It was more than clear that the resolutions of the 13th congress could be understood as a "de facto" recognition of both the "Living Church" movement and the "Tikhonite" church, implying that there was a possibility for lasting civil peace in Soviet Russia.

But was this prelude to a civil peace genuine or only a temporary breathing-space masterminded by the triumvirate? The answer to this question can perhaps be found from the year 1919 when, according to Anatoly Levitin and Vadim Shavrov, Zinoviev and Vvedensky at a meeting in Petrograd discussed the possibility of achieving an informal "concordat" between progressive Orthodox clergy and the Soviet state. Zinoviev was of the opinion that a concordat at that time was scarcely

65 KPSS III, 84-85.

66 KPSS III, 86-87, 100.

67 Siegelbaum 1992, 159.

possible, but he did not rule out the possibility of such in the future. As Zinovev said,

...and as you know, I do everything in my power to avoid any kind of intensification in relation to the churches here in Petersburg...

180

Zinovev also acknowledged that Vvedensky's progressive group could have great international importance and promised that if they managed to organize themselves, communists would support them.<sup>68</sup> These political initiatives of the 13th congress – the policy of the “outstretched hand” and calls for co-operation with the neutral intelligentsia – were, however, simply tactics in Zinovev's campaign for the leadership of the party. But we cannot exclude the possibility that he would have concluded a “concordat” with religious organizations if he gained power. In any event, it is undeniable that Zinovev undertook his political initiatives quite independently and even initiated his own foreign policy from Leningrad.<sup>69</sup>

One of his adversaries and the spokesman of the defeated “left”, Trotsky, shared the criticism of the results of the 13th congress. He published a lengthy article in *Pravda* on 23 June 1924 (no. 165) entitled “Leninism and workers' club” in which he commented on the resolution concerning religion at the 13th congress. According to him, the antireligious battle during the revolutionary years had been a success, but the situation had changed when the propaganda reached a politically less conscious stratum in the countryside and cities. He now believed that the period of frontal attack in the antireligious battle was over and it was time for other methods. This “truce”, however, did not represent the abandoning of antireligious attacks on a wide front. He also defended the religious policy practised earlier, commenting that the moves against religion had been justified. He compared this situation to conventional warfare and stated that the Bolsheviks were now resting after a battle. He warned also that an unprepared frontal attack could lead to unpleasant results and cited a story from Norway where a hasty antireligious push had complicated the situation inside the communist party. This was also the danger when dealing with peasants who were more connected to the obsolete economy. Looking to the future, Trotsky predicted that the party would finally defeat religious prejudices only through the electrification and “che-

68 Levitin & Shavrov 1978, 54.

69 During this time he even exercised his own foreign policy. Wesson 1972, 127–128. For more on Zinovev's position as a leader of the Northern Commune, see Deutscher 1987, 3–4. See also Carr 1978a, 318–324.

micalization” of agriculture; simply closing the churches would not produce decisive results – on the contrary, it would revitalize religion.<sup>70</sup>

The change in the party’s religious policy line was clear. For example, trade unions were the first to take a more “neutral” stance towards religion after the 13th congress. On 9 June the newspaper of the Soviet trade unions, “Trud”, published a more profound interpretation of the decisions of the 13th congress. Firstly it commented that in the recent past some local leaders of trade union organizations had used certain “abnormal practices” in antireligious propaganda.<sup>71</sup> But now, Trud declared, the revolutionary trade union movement would defend the economic interests of the workers irrespective of their nationality, religion or political conviction. According to the new line it would be unjust to persecute or expel members because of their religious or political convictions.<sup>72</sup>

181

### 3. TOLERANCE AND AGITATION – THE AFTERMATH OF THE 13TH CONGRESS

#### a. The sectarian movement and the ruling regime at the height of the high NEP

One of the main architects of the Soviet religious policy, Emelyan Yaroslavsky, had suffered a setback in both the 12th and 13th congresses. The lobbying of the CAP did not persuade the party to adopt a firmer attitude towards religion and the resolution of the 13th congress granted many “privileges” to the sectarians. As a matter of fact, Yaroslavsky criticized the relaxed mood of the 13th congress. For example, he claimed that sects had a negative effect on Soviet society; they were exploiting labour and were concealing their true nature. Yaroslavsky was certain that sectarianism defended only “the will of god” and it disguised certain class interests under the banner of religion.<sup>73</sup> The Soviet state should especially oppose the co-operative

70 ST XXI, 153–155. “Ленинизм и рабочие клубы”.

71 Giduljanov 1971, 25–26.

72 Giduljanov 1971, 27.

73 YI, 93. “Религия и селькор”. See also YI, 95. “Церковники в выборах”.



movement of the sectarians which was contributing only to religious fanaticism.<sup>74</sup>

In his thesis on antireligious propaganda he even found fault with the previous ineffective work of the Central Committee.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, in his critique against the communist leadership Yaroslavsky was quite moderate. The campaign of appeasing the neutral intelligentsia proved also to be an advantageous opportunity for Yaroslavsky as it presented him with the chance to call on teachers and agronomists to join in the antireligious battle. According to his reasoning, teachers could not, even for tactical reasons, be distanced from antireligious propaganda.<sup>76</sup> This criticism reflected the ordinary "leftist" mood of rank and file communists at that time. The young intelligentsia and Komsomol activists felt frustrated during the "normalcy" of the NEP policy, finding themselves with "reduced outlets for their enthusiasm".<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the results of the 13th congress did not discourage Yaroslavsky. It is obvious that he interpreted the resolution of the 13th congress as a demand for more organized antireligious activities.<sup>78</sup>

The Soviet sectarian movement soon realized that the situation had changed in the wake of the 13th congress. Sectarians were even allowed to publish a review in which they commented on this party resolution by stressing that due to the new policy local officials could not use earlier administrative methods in their antireligious work. It was also remarked that local authorities could not "invent" their own legislation for use against religious organizations.<sup>79</sup>

After the 13th congress moderate communist leaders sponsored

74 YI, 105. "Церковь и государство в СССР". This article was written for the German "Jahrbuch für Politik-Wirtschaft und Arbeiterbewegung" in 1925. Yaroslavsky's negative view concerning sectarians could be seen clearly from his special lecture to the Orgburo, in which he accused sectarians of antimilitarism, unwillingness to pay taxes and opposing culture. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.120. "К докладу в Оргбюро 1-XII-242".

75 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.104. "Тезисы доклада о задачах, формах и методах антирелигиозной пропаганды в городе и деревне. Машинописный текст. (б/д)".

76 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.99 "К Всесоюзному съезду учителей".

77 Curtiss 1953, 202; Erlich 1960, 174.

78 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.104. "Тезисы доклада о задачах формах и методах антирелигиозной пропаганды в городе и деревне. Машинописный текст. (б/д)".

79 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.186. "Полезные сведения для верующих и особенно для народных религиозных общин. Постановление XIII Съезда Российской Комм. Партии (Большевиков)". In order to secure a conciliatory attitude towards sects, Ivan Tregubov sent an article published in Izvestiya to Stalin, together with an announcement in which he asked the General Secretary for reassurances that sectarians could freely organize their congress. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.180. "Генеральному секретарю РКП тов. Сталину. Заявление."

co-operation with sectarians. The special commission dedicated to work among sectarians, the so-called “Orgkomsekt”, underlined in a memo to Zinoviev, Kamenev, Kalinin, Popov and Smidovich the importance of the resolution of the 13th congress by suggesting that the Soviet government should now give full freedom to all sectarians in Russia and guarantee that sectarians could develop their “collective life-forms”. Moreover, the Orgkomsekt demanded a complete amnesty for all sectarians. This indicates that the security organs of the Soviet state were slow to comply with the decisions of the 13th congress and that the Orgkomsekt complained to the higher leadership that the GPU and the NKVD had acted contrary to the objectives of the “Orgkomsekt” and had paralysed the work of this commission.<sup>80</sup>

These complaints indicate how the ruling regime attempted to adjust to the new “class peace”. In order to find out who in the sectarian movement could be utilized in Soviet work, the party apparatus began its official analysis of the sectarian movement. At first the Central Committee’s Orgburo gave an order for the drawing up of a special circular,<sup>81</sup> which was later sent to all party committees. In this circular the Central Committee ordered that information be collected concerning the state of antireligious propaganda and details of sectarians in the Russian countryside.<sup>82</sup>

According to this circular, the party should not consider sects as a single unit but as a multi-faceted movement. As the circular underlined, there were sects which, for example, opposed military service, taxes and Soviet cultural activities, but there were also sects carrying out important economic and cultural duties. This was the main reason why all party organs should adopt a careful and “wise” attitude towards sects. It also attempted to pacify party members by remarking that at the same time as the sectarian movement was growing, the antireligious movement was also experiencing growth. Consequently, responsible organs should take this into consideration, together with the resolutions of the 12th and 13th congresses, and adopt a more systematic attitude in

80 GARF2, f.353, op.8, d.8 “Записка о восстановлении деятельности особой комиссии “Оргкомсект” при наркомземе и особой реформе по сектантскому вопросу в связи с постановлениями XIII съезда РКП”.

81 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.122 “Выписка из протокола по: 51, заседания Оргбюро ЦК РКП (б) от 15-XII-24 г”.

82 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.184. “Приложение No. 2 к циркуляру No. 78 от 30 января 1925 г. Схема No. 2. О состоянии антирелигиозной пропаганды”: “Приложение No. 1 к циркуляру No. 78 от 30 января 1925 г. Схема No. 1 О развитии сектанства в СССР”. See also RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.122. “Выписка из протокола No. 51, заседания Оргбюро ЦК РКП (б) от 15-XII-24г” and f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 62, 16/12-24).

their antireligious propaganda.<sup>83</sup>

The motivation of the inquiry was, as we have seen, to bring the “cultural-economic elements of the sectarians into the mainstream of Soviet life”. However, the religious policy committee of the party, the CAP, interpreted the resolution in its own way and on 22 November 1924 ordered the OGPU to infiltrate the sectarians in order to expose their true class nature.<sup>84</sup> The CAP was especially alarmed about the influence which the sectarian movement exercised among the youth. As a result of the new policy, the CAP was not able to restrict the growing number of sectarian hospitals, co-operatives and charitable establishments, but it directed that these enterprises should not be afforded any official religious recognition.<sup>85</sup>

As we can see from the above, the ruling regime allowed sectarians to act relatively freely during the high NEP. In accordance with CAP protocols, sectarians were granted permission to organize their central administrative functions and they could to some extent get their bibles printed. This civil peace of the high NEP did not, however, prevent political supervision by the security organs. Security officials continued to scrutinize the activities of religious organizations for evidence of a threat to the state. On 6 February 1926, for example, the CAP gave permission to the Baptists to initiate religious courses not in Leningrad as they wished but in Moscow. Or, if we take another example, the case of the Mennonites is especially revealing. The representatives of this sect attempted to utilize Soviet nationality policy for their advantage by declaring themselves Dutch and demanding that Soviet officials send them Dutch communists in order to promote the Soviet cause in their villages. Moreover, they presented a list of demands, which included such things as the building of special prayer-houses and religious schools as well as the establishing of biblical courses. In other words they demanded nearly the same privileges as Moslems had in the Eastern areas. In return, Mennonites promised to work for the Soviet economy in their co-operative movements. This exceptional manoeuvre embarrassed the Soviet authorities, who had of course very few Dutch speaking communists

83 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.184. “Всем ЦК. Нацкомпартий. Облбюро ЦК. Обкомам. Крайкомам. Губкомам и Окружкомам РКП (б-ов). О сектантском движении и об антирелигиозной пропаганде (No. 78 от января 1925 года)”.

84 ...поручить ОГПУ провести работу среди сектантства по линии их классового разоблачения. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 59, 22/11-24).

85 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 59, 22/11-24); f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 60, 28/11-24).

among their ranks.<sup>86</sup>

The case of the Mennonites was quite unique and their demands were promptly turned down. Although the 13th congress had acknowledged the importance of sectarians, the ruling regime wanted to strip the Mennonites of their religious identity and to turn them simply into a national group. As Agitprop sources suggest, the Mennonites were allowed to rebuild their agricultural unions and strengthen their co-operative movements only under the condition that such work would be done without the use of any religious slogans.<sup>87</sup>

The major problem concerning the sectarian movement was, however, the question of serving in the Red Army. During the high NEP, the Soviet security organs and CAP actively concentrated on fighting against the anti-militarism of the sectarian movement. For example, the GPU was active "to make influence" in sectarian congresses so that Soviet sectarians would accept military service as a rule.<sup>88</sup> However, the case of the Tolstoyans was particularly problematic. This sect did not accept any military service at all. The problem, however, was that due to its atheistic nature, officials could not classify it as a religious sect enjoying exemption from military service for religious reasons. As a result, young Tolstoyans were put in jail as deserters. This decision was not anyhow unanimous among Soviet officials; even a certain so-called "religious affairs specialists" inside the ruling regime acknowledged that the Soviet Supreme Court and the NKVD had made a mistake when they denied young Tolstoyans the possibility of exemption from military service.<sup>89</sup>

As already mentioned, the ruling regime began to feel anxious about the growth of the sectarian movement. According to one report, the growth of the movement among the peasantry coincided with the economic rise of the kulaks. At first Soviet officials attempted to restrict this growth by encouraging conflicts between the ROC and sectarians. This plan was devised by the secret police and on 15 May

86 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 69, 6/2-26); GARF1 f.5407, op.1, d.20 "Об эмиграционном движении меннонитов"; GARF2 f.353, op.8, d.8 "В Центральный Комитет СССР. Докладная записка": "Социально-революционное значение сектанства". See also Kolarz 1961, 277-279.

87 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.776 "Протокол совещания по работе среди меннонитов при агитпропе ЦК РКП (б) от 28/X-25"; "секретариат ЦК РКП(б): Фракция сельскосоюза (ноября 18 дня 1925)".

88 See RdO, 38-40.

89 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.165. "О положении в СССР единомышленников Л.Н. Толстого так наз. Толстовцев в отношении их освобождения от военной службы по религиозным убеждениям"; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 71, 5/3-26); (PCAP 80, 24/12-26); RTsKhIDNI f. 613, op. 3, d. 197. "В Н.К.П.К.И. С.С.С.Р.".



1926 it was introduced to the CAP by Tuchkov. In his lecture to members of the CAP he underlined the positive results of this policy. There would be no risks to the regime, as this fight would simply result in the expression of “dogmatic banalities”. This strategy was also used in dealing with Renovationists and Tikhonites. The primary aim was to “divide and rule”, to make the religious-minded fight against each other and thus hamper their activities without any direct interference on the part of Soviet officials.<sup>90</sup>

Creating a schism against politically harmful clergymen was a normal tactic of the CAP. Interference and active meddling of this sort was such a normal practice that a prominent communist official in Soviet Armenia, A.M. Nazaretyan (1889–1938), in a lecture about the Armenian church in December 1926, mentioned as a rare occurrence that a pro-government opposition had grown up inside the Armenian church without the assistance of the ruling regime.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, the tactic of fomenting schisms inside religious organizations was also utilized in connection with Orthodox organisations abroad. The Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, suggested in a meeting of the CAP that the Soviet regime should organize Renovationist groups inside foreign Russian Orthodox religious assemblies in order to turn them against old-fashioned clericals.<sup>92</sup>

## b. The development of the ecclesiastical schism

Although the 13th congress was conciliatory in its resolutions it did not suggest any particular solution to the ecclesiastical schism. The CAP kept a watch for possible anti-Soviet manifestations among both the Tikhonites and Renovationists and more importantly it tried to preserve the balance between them. For example, when the Tikhonites were prospering too much, the CAP decided to organize “tactical repressions” against them in order to boost the fortunes of the Renovationists.<sup>93</sup>

However, Tikhon’s release was a turning point in the Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical schism. After that it was clear that the Renovationists would gradually be defeated by the Tikhonites, as the

90 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 73, 15/5-26); f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 80, 24/12-26); f.17, op.60, d.793 “Сектанство и антирелигиозная пропаганда (27/30 апреля 1926 года)”.

91 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.187. “Докладная записка о состоянии Армянской церкви”.

92 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 74, 6/6-26).

93 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 53, 2/7-24).

majority of the laity and the priests were faithful to the Patriarch's church. At the same time, the ruling regime took a more reserved attitude towards Renovationists. Dmitry V. Pospelovsky maintains that informal recognition of the Tikhonite church occurred as a result of the failure of the Renovationists to "attract and keep the masses of Orthodox believers".<sup>94</sup>

One can, however, also think of other explanations for this change of policy. As we have seen earlier, the Renovationists were not as submissive as the government believed they would be. For example, even the obedient Kranitsky demanded in his letter to Rykov in 1922 that the Soviet "separation decree" should be altered in Soviet Russia. Kranitsky insisted that the state should not support atheism because the Bolsheviks had earlier advocated that religion should be a "private matter". In addition, the ruling regime was anxious to limit the influence of the Renovationists among the population and wanted to cut back on its support for them. Kursky, the leader of the NKYust, proposed in letter of 21 May 1924 to Soviet Prime Minister Rykov that there should be free competition between the Renovationist and "Tikhonite" churches.<sup>95</sup>

187

However, this policy of non-intervention in the ecclesiastical schism was put to the test when Patriarch Tikhon died on 7 April 1925. Two days later, on 9 April 1925, the Politburo decided to publish a short announcement concerning Tikhon's death. This announcement was of particular significance because it contained Tikhon's famous "last will" in which he declared his loyalty to Soviet power. In this will Tikhon urged Russian Orthodox believers to join him in welcoming the Soviet government; the ROC should not compromise in matters of faith but should be sincere in its relations with the Soviet regime. The ROC should not fight against the ruling regime but against its own true enemies – sectarians, Catholics, Protestants, Renovationists and, interestingly, the Godless-movement. It is not possible here to enter into a discussion concerning the authenticity of Tikhon's will, but whatever the case, the will seemed to serve the interests of the Soviet state extremely well.<sup>96</sup>

Tikhon's will did not tarnish his memory among the Orthodox laity. His funeral was in fact an outstanding event. As Leonard Hodgson, a representative of the British Foreign Office in Russia commented, the

94 Pospelovsky 1984, 54–55, 61.

95 GARF f. 5446с, op. 55, d.340 "Уважаемый товарищ"; f.5263, op. 1, d. 57(1) "Председателю Совета Народных Комиссаров тов. А.И. Рыкову мая 21. 1924".

96 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.496 (Pp 56, 9/4-25); Curtiss 1953, 176.

funeral of Patriarch Tikhon was a “very remarkable demonstration of public feeling”. He also noted that all classes of society attended.<sup>97</sup>

The veneration shown Tikhon’s remains must have come as an unpleasant surprise for the ruling regime. The public outburst of religious feeling during the funeral ceremonies implied that religion could mobilize strong feelings and gather the masses behind it. The question of Tikhon’s successor proved to be complex as Tikhon had nominated three different clergymen as his choices for Locum Tenens. After the death of Tikhon, the Renovationists called an All-Russian Sobor in which they attempted, as it would seem, to end the schism on their own terms. Nevertheless, one of the Locum Tenentes, Peter (Petr Fedorovich Polyansky, 1863–1936), the Metropolitan of Krutitsy, turned down this offer and made a public announcement rejecting the overtures of the Renovationists. Another Locum Tenens, Metropolitan of Yaroslavl, Agafangel (Aleksandr Lavrentivich Preobrazhensky, 1854–1928) was prevented from taking over the duties of Patriarch in Moscow as Soviet officials did not allow him to travel to the capital.<sup>98</sup>

The CAP reacted to Peter’s declaration by attempting to organize another schism among the Tikhonite clergy and to foment opposition against Peter. In order to accomplish this, the CAP tried to “compromise” Peter by using material from the Renovationist meetings. The CAP feared that the Tikhonites were allying themselves with opposition-minded clergy and accordingly it advised the secret police, the OGPU, to put former ecclesiastical leaders such as V.K. Sabler (1847–1929) “and other anti-Soviet monarchists” under special supervision.<sup>99</sup>

Despite its efforts, the CAP did not succeed in creating another schism or in undermining Peter’s authority among the Tikhonites. This was an obvious reason for his subsequent arrest. On 9 December 1925 the CAP decided to arrest Peter for “carrying on religious policy which was clearly hostile to Soviet power”. The actual arrest took place on 25 December 1925.<sup>100</sup> At this point, the CAP gave its support to its own candidate, the pro-Soviet Metropolitan of Leningrad, Grigory (Nikolai Chukov, 1870–1955). In addition, the CAP attempted to strengthen his position by organizing a schism among the different Locum Tenentes. Although Grigory received the backing of the government, he could not get the support of Sergei (Ivan Nikolaevich Stragorodsky, 1867–1944), another of the Locum Tenentes, who later claimed to be the supreme

97 BDOFA 8, 30.

98 Curtiss 1953, 179.

99 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 66, 11/11-25).

100 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 68, 9/12-25).

authority of the ROC. The CAP answered by arresting all the other Locum Tenentes.<sup>101</sup>

Previous machinations indicate how the ruling regime meddled in the internal affairs of the ROC and how it had even attempted to nominate its own candidate to the Patriarchal office. As a result of this, Tikhon's eventual successor in the Patriarchate, Metropolitan Sergei, was obliged to negotiate for years with the Soviet regime and his semi-official leadership of the ROC had to be propped up behind the scenes by the government as late as May 1927 when Sergei announced a "full and unconditional" declaration of loyalty to Soviet power.<sup>102</sup> However, one possible reason for Soviet recognition of Sergei may have been the realization that the Renovationists were engaged in "harmful" activity. The ruling regime had observed that the Renovationists were utilizing their favoured position in order to distribute propaganda of a "harmful, idealistic-philosophical character".<sup>103</sup> In addition, the constant suspicions of the CAP and the arrests of the Locum Tenentes demonstrated how the ruling regime was not certain of what kind of religious policy it should adopt. This "zig-zag" policy indicates clearly how the regime had not yet made up its mind with regard to the ROC and the Patriarchate. One important reason for this was the bitter power struggle inside the party. This inconsistency was reflected in different ways. For example, moderate officials sought to preserve the prestige of the Soviet state abroad and the question of removing icons from the walls of the Kremlin caused the intervention of Prime Minister Rykov. In his letter to A.S. Enukidze, Rykov expressed his concern about the extreme revolutionary fervour of some communists concerning this matter. The ruling regime had nominated a commission to tackle this problem and, according to Rykov, one of its members, Zhidelev, had shown more revolutionary "diligence" than understanding and tact. Foreign archaeologists and observers would certainly accuse them of "vandalism" if they did not handle this matter with care.<sup>104</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*  
101 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 72, 24/4-26); Curtiss 1953, 183.

102 Fletcher 1971, 54-57.

103 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 71, 5/3-26); Curtiss 1953, 184-185; Carr 1978b, 383.

104 GARF f.5446e, op.55, d.735 "Председатель Енукидзе А.С.": Conquest 1968, 19-20.



### c. The questions of national minorities and religion after the 13th congress

Another practical consequence of the 13th congress was the continuation of the korenizatsiya-policy. As a result of this, local party organs were allowed to utilize the services of the loyal intelligentsia and even of leftist Moslem clergy in Eastern areas.<sup>105</sup> This was a considerable concession, which was in sharp contrast to the situation pertaining in other parts of the Soviet state. As party historian Popov remarked in his lecture to party secretaries in 1924, there was a great difference between the practices of central Russia and the more remote areas concerning membership of the party. Unlike in Eastern areas, in central districts party officials expelled ordinary communists for taking part in religious rites.<sup>106</sup>

190

So after the 13th congress religious organizations in the Eastern areas could grow. An official initiative to obtain land for Jewish peasants reflects this conciliatory policy. During the high NEP the communist regime encouraged Jewish settlers to obtain land for the Soviet Jewish population, thus creating an independent Jewish national area. In accordance with this policy, the Politburo established a committee in order to locate a possible homeland for Jewish agricultural settlers. This committee with members like Kalinin, M.I. Latsis (Sudrabs, Ya. F. 1888–1938), S.V. Kossior (1889–1939), Chicherin, V.V. Kuibyshev (1888–1935), S.M. Dimanshtein (1886–1939), Yu. Larin and G.I. Petrovsky (1877–1958) made a proposal which suggested several possibilities for resettling Soviet Jews. The committee recommended establishing Jewish agricultural settlements in thinly populated areas such as the Crimean peninsula, the Kuban-Azov area, Altai, Novorossiisk or in the district of Salskovo.<sup>107</sup> This memorandum, together with the setting up in January 1925 of a special organization, OZET (Society for Settling Jewish Toilers in Agriculture) suggested a new kind of policy towards the Jewish population. In contrast to common Soviet practice, even “lishentsy” were allowed to work in this organization.<sup>108</sup> According to this policy, the Jewish population could establish their own agricultural collectives in which their religious habits would be observed and religious schools could function.<sup>109</sup>

105 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op. 112, d.473 “Мероприятия по проведению в жизнь решений XIII-го съезда РКП и ЦК по национальному вопросу”.

106 Popov 1924, 124.

107 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.546 (Pp 10, 11/2-26); (Pp 39, 8/7-26).

108 See GARF f.7541, op.1, d. 12, l. 3.

109 Kolarz 1961, 377–380; Pinkus 1988, 62–65, 102.

The motivation for this initiative lay in the fact that in the atmosphere of the high NEP some Soviet leaders wanted to resolve the Jewish nationality question by giving them the possibility of forming their own nation. The idea was, as Mikhail Kalinin outlined it, to provide land for working Jews in one particular place. If hundreds of thousands of Jews in a compact group were to move into one area, they would constitute a nation according to Bolshevik thinking. Forming a nation could also resolve their economic problems and would help them maintain their national identity. Plans to settle Jews in agricultural colonies, however, met great resistance among the local population. The only place where no local resistance occurred was the area of Birobidzhan in the Soviet Far East.<sup>110</sup>

The “korenizatsiya-policy” also benefitted the position of the Moslem religion, despite the fact that these “privileges” for Islam had irritated many communists. After 1921 hardline communists had tried unsuccessfully to curtail the religious teaching of the mullahs, but the “lobbying” of the CAP with regard to this matter met with no results. The 13th congress represented the official recognition of privileges for the Moslem population. One of the most interesting outcomes of this was the initiative to utilize the intelligentsia and the reformist Moslem clergy with the express purpose of strengthening Soviet power in Eastern areas. In conclusion we might state that the large Moslem population of the Eastern parts of the Soviet state could practise its religion freely and without hindrance. During the summer of 1924 the Commissariat of Nationalities even sent a special letter in which it confirmed the restrictions on the persecution of mullahs. Moreover, while this letter to the Tatar-Bashkiria Gubkom bureau forbade the use of Soviet premises for religious teaching local officials were even more conciliatory than Moscow. For example, in one of their reports to Moscow local communists explained that the sympathetic treatment of the Moslem clergy was a result of the “social-economic” national character of the Moslem religion.<sup>111</sup>

Moreover, as another local source explained in “Sultan-Galievist” mode, the main reason for a different attitude to Islam in remote regions was the fact that this religion was a younger religion than others and that it had preserved more effective roots in the local population. There were also historical reasons. During the autocracy Islam had been persecuted for national reasons and local people regarded the Moslem

110 Gitelman 1988, 142–150.

111 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.1, d.473. “Мероприятия по проведению в жизнь решений XIII-го съезда РКП и ЦК по национальному вопросу”; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.61, d.167. “В Тат.Баш. бюро губком РКП В Антирелигиозную комиссию при ЦК РКП (б)”.

clergy as national heroes oppressed by the religion of a conquering people, i.e. Christians.<sup>112</sup>

Although the ideas of Sultan-Galiev had earlier been condemned and many influential communists had objected to them, many local communists utilized his justifications without any hindrance and linked them with the nationality question. So Moscow had to move slowly in this sphere. So far, the party's relations with the peoples of the East and their religion were motivated by its conciliatory "general Eastern policy".<sup>113</sup>

This breathing-space of the high NEP, nonetheless, was anyhow quite short. Gradually, the ruling regime showed some concern for the ideological situation in its Eastern areas where the activity of the Moslem clergy was seen as underlining the need for unification in the Soviet state. For example, the congress of Moslem clergy in Ufa in 1926 was seen as a sign of the growing political awareness of the Moslem population. As one surveillance report drawn up by the Agitprop maintained, all the activity at this congress was guided by the political ambitions of the Moslem clergy. According to the worried Soviet officials the Moslem clergy were now trying to gain influence among the peasants in order to "fanaticise" them. So it was understandable that the XIII All-Russian Congress of the Soviets gave expression to the concern of officials in this matter in 1925. This congress discovered that the Moslem clergy were obstructing Soviet work in the underdeveloped republics. For example, one of its delegates from the East declared that the new bourgeoisie was promoting religious ideas through the agency of the mullahs. He accused the Moslem clergy of fighting for religious schools and engaging in counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet activity. He also remarked that all anti-Soviet, kulak elements in the countryside were concentrated around "mullahs" who were "very skilfully exploiting the ignorance of the peasant masses".<sup>114</sup>

112 "...Руководители мусульманской религии в большинстве, в глазах народа занимали положение...угнетаемых за на род, за нацию...и считались героями...мучениками, переносящими гнет и гонения со стороны правительства и других сильнейших религии и в частности со стороны религии...господствующей нации... христианства. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.186. "О методах антирелигиозной пропаганды среди Башкиро-татарского населения АБССР (без имени)".

113 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.186; "О методах антирелигиозной пропаганды среди Башкиро-татарского населения АБССР (без имени)"; 89/4/104 "Тезисы доклада о задачах формах и методах антирелигиозной пропаганды в городе и деревне. Машинописный текст. (б/д)". As CAP sources indicate, sometimes the reason for lack of antireligious work among the national minorities was simply shortage of material. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 73, 15/5-26).

114 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.796 "Материал о съезде мусдуховентсва в Уфе"; VSS XII, 427, 445.

Despite this harsh language and the fact that during 1925–26 the ruling regime was only step by step abolishing the Islamic (sharia) courts the situation in the Eastern republics remained stable until the end of the NEP. The resolution of the 13th congress had warned about hasty antireligious propaganda in the East and this was the reason why communists continued their tactful policy towards the Moslem population. A superb example of this careful policy was the speech of the nominal head of the Soviet state on 8 February 1925. Kalinin explained to his Moslem audience in a very cautious and diplomatic manner the reasons why mullahs and kulaks could not take part in elections. During this speech Kalinin dealt with the Islamic religion with the utmost respect and, using religious arguments, persuaded his audience to listen to his appeal for the equality of men and women. Kalinin explained that Mohammed had been a very wise man and would have written the Koran differently if he had lived in the modern era.<sup>115</sup>

193

#### **d. The Soviet regime and Catholics**

The conciliatory religious policy atmosphere was also reflected in Soviet relations with the Catholic church, which had worsened since the Soviet Union had expelled the representatives of the Vatican famine relief mission in 1924. Nevertheless, during 1925 the Soviet regime proposed negotiations in order to settle issues on finances, the religious education of the Catholic population, the appointment of bishops, the promulgation of papal bulls, and general communication between the Vatican and the Soviet Union.<sup>116</sup>

For many representatives of the ruling regime, any political compromise with the Vatican was a bitter pill to have to swallow. As Krasikov put it in his letter to the Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, any concordat with the Vatican would be harmful for propaganda and would discredit Soviet power in the eyes of the European and American proletariat. According to these hardliners there was no need to treat the Vatican any differently from other religious organs.<sup>117</sup>

Despite these warnings an official meeting between Soviet Foreign

115 Kalinin 1958, 218, 222–223. “Из беседы с дехканами кишлака Багаудин Бухарского уезда”. See also Conquest 1968, 70–71.

116 Dunn 1977, 36; Conquest 1968, 82–83. See also the protocols of the Politburo meeting of 2 December 1924. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.480 (Pp 40, 2/12–24).

117 GARF f.5263, op.1, d.55(1) “В народный комиссариат по иностранным делам (22. марта -24)”; GARF f.5263, op. 1, d. 55(2) “В Наркоминдел тов. Чичерину ноября 24.23 г.”.



Commissar Chicherin and Papal Nuncio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII) took place in Berlin, the first on 6 October 1925 and again on 14 June 1927. These negotiations dealt mainly with the possibility of the legal recognition of Catholicism. Simultaneously the Vatican sent its emissary Michel d'Herbigny (1880–1957) to the Soviet Union for more detailed negotiations. Together with his official duties he had a clandestine mission to secretly consecrate new Catholic bishops in Soviet Russia. This “dual diplomacy” did not produce lasting results. D'Herbigny was able to consecrate some bishops but quite soon, in August 1926, he was expelled and the bishops he ordained put in prison.<sup>118</sup>

According to Dennis J. Dunn these negotiations, nevertheless, reveal that the Soviet regime, under Stalin's leadership, had become alarmed at the weakening of the mutual agreement formulated in Rapallo in 1922 and feared an attack from the capitalist world. In order to “open other avenues of contact with the western world”, it would seem that the Soviet government was willing to negotiate also with the Vatican.<sup>119</sup> However, this was not the sole reason for their actions. The Soviet government was, of course, anxious to reduce the threat of foreign intervention, but the real motivation for this detente seems to have been the desire to de-nationalize the Soviet Catholic church which was Polish in origin. Moreover, the Soviet regime also exercised dual diplomacy. Firstly it bargained with the Vatican and at the same time it attacked the nationally-minded cardinals in Ukraine and in Belorussia. As we can see from the protocols of the CAP, the ruling regime tried to apply its “divide and rule” tactics by creating different blocks among the Catholics.<sup>120</sup>

At the height of NEP and during the negotiations between Krasikov and Pacelli it was decided at a meeting of the CAP that the Soviet state did not propose to make compromises on the decree of 1918 and on formal religious policy jurisdiction.<sup>121</sup> The negotiations were formally broken off in 1926 when the Soviet secret police discovered the clandestine activities of d'Herbigny and this intensified the suspicions of Soviet hardliners. The second and much more important reason for cessation of these negotiations may have been that the internal power struggle was turning the Soviet Union in a leftist direction and that

\*\*\*\*\*  
118 Dunn 1977, 36; Stehle 1990, 348. According to Nicolas Zernov, Rome wanted to undermine the ROC and strengthen Uniate Catholics by sending d'Herbigny to the Soviet Union. Zernov 1963, 254–255.

119 Dunn 1977, 36.

120 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 66, 11/11-25). See also RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.86, l.12.

121 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 74, 6/6-26).

Stalin favoured the “Soviet war option”. The Catholic church with its international connections was a suitable scapegoat.<sup>122</sup> The axis of nationally-minded Poland and the “aggressive” Catholic church was a formidable threat in the minds of the Soviet leadership and this foreign danger even had repercussions in antireligious activity and in official propaganda. For example, Yaroslavsky’s speech in Warsaw to the international assembly of freethinkers in 1927 underlined that religion and national-mindedness were both understood as dangerous weapons used by the capitalist world against the workers. He declared that the proletariat of Poland should fight against the two weapons of capitalism: religion and nationalism.<sup>123</sup> The Catholic church remained the most formidable ideological enemy of the Soviet regime until the mid-1930s when Stalin attempted to build a common front against Nazi Germany and the French communist leader Maurice Thorez, with Soviet support, introduced the “policy of the outstretched hand” with regard to Catholics.<sup>124</sup>

195

#### 4. THE AGGRAVATED SITUATION BEFORE THE 15TH CONFERENCE AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW ANTIRELIGIOUS LINE

The inner-party feud between Trotsky and the triumvirate culminated at the beginning of 1925 with the resignation of Trotsky from his post as War Commissar. The triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin was now relegated to history. These contenders for power were obliged to find new allies and could no longer afford to neglect the criticism of the “left”, which still had influence among the party’s ranks. The defeat of the “left” in the 13th congress had dealt leftist policies a severe blow. But the younger generation especially was frustrated; the ideologically devoted and militant Komsomol movement was longing for a chance to

\*\*\*\*\*  
122 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 77, 8/10-26), (PCAP 80, 24/12-26); Dunn 1977, 36–37.

123 GARF f.5407, op.2, d.7. “Всеобщий съезд союза свободомыслящих Польши состоявшийся в Варшаве 17. марта 1927”. Nevertheless, relations between the Vatican and Poland were not as cordial as the Bolsheviks believed; often the objectives of papal policy towards the Soviet Union and Polish foreign policy conflicted on the question of religion. Pease 1991, 527.

124 Kolarz 1961, 190–191.

display heroism against class enemies. During the "normalcy" of the NEP the Komsomol movement was obliged to wrestle with less heroic problems, such as the consumption of vodka and the sexual ethics of the younger generation.<sup>125</sup>

The relatively free religious policy of the high NEP did not please the more ardent members of the ruling regime. In particular, some militant Komsomol leaders were often in conflict over official restrictions. One of the main targets of their criticism was the Narkompros, the Commissariat of Education, which was seen as too "soft" and mild in relation to class enemies. As a matter of fact, it did not sponsor specifically atheist education but concentrated on non-religious teaching without any special emphasis on atheist doctrine.<sup>126</sup>

The Narkompros was, nonetheless, also a target of the Komsomols as a defender of the vestiges of the old pre-revolutionary society. There were also "real enemies" of the people and one of the most formidable of these was the Russian Orthodox Church. It was one of the few associations that had survived from the pre-revolutionary period and, in 1925, even less than hawkish Kalinin had acknowledged this. According to him, the ROC was the "only anti-Soviet, legally acknowledged organization" in the Soviet Union.<sup>127</sup> Nevertheless, the militant younger generation was forced to retreat on this issue when the communist leadership opted for the policy adopted at the 12th and 13th congresses. In accordance with the slogan of "revolutionary legality", officials attempted to restrict the most aggressive forms of Komsomol activity. As a result, in the Russian countryside and in some Eastern Moslem areas the Komsomol movement even became weaker and religious organizations gained ground among the population.<sup>128</sup>

The disintegrating of the senior leadership also had an effect in the sphere of religious policy. Before the opening of the 14th conference of the RKP(b) in Moscow on 27 April 1925, Yaroslavsky and the CAP encountered heavy criticism. M.M. Kostelovskaya, the editor of

\*\*\*\*\*  
125 Baum 1987, 16–23; Fisher 1959, 128–130. See the protocols of the Komsomol VII All-Union congress, where the leadership of the Communist Youth directed its criticism against "drunkenness and hooliganism" among ordinary Komsomols. SSLKSM VII, 28–31. Only a few representatives warned the congress of the danger posed by religion, i.e. religious sects and Moslem clergy. SSLKSM VII, 90–91; 211. See also RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.85, d.288, ll. 68–70, 71.

126 Fitzpatrick 1979, 12–13, 22.

127 Kalinin 1968, 43.

128 SSS III, 266–267; Fisher 1959, 128. See also Giduljanov 1971, 33–34, 239–241 and RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.61, d.167 "ав. Агитпропом (28.июня 1924)". The CAP also condemned the activities of the Komsomol in the antireligious battle. See RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 53, 27/-24). For foreign observations, see BDOFA 8, 20; Pethybridge 1990, 351–354, 360.

“Bezbozhnik u Stanka” in Moscow, published an article in Pravda on 25 January 1925 with the headline “Concerning the mistakes in antireligious propaganda”. In this article Kostelovskaya condemned previous antireligious propaganda as administrative by nature and stated that the party’s antireligious propaganda had been perverted and had declined to the level of confiscating church-bells and closing down churches. This “deviation”, as Kostelovskaya called it, had been promoted by some antireligious workers. Moreover, it had developed in accordance with the erroneous principles of not separating politics and propaganda from each other. Moreover, Kostelovskaya criticised antireligious propaganda as being inconsistent: the propaganda in the countryside differed greatly from that in the cities. One way out of this problem was, according to Kostelovskaya, abandoning the old methods of work in this field.<sup>129</sup>

This criticism could be seen partly as a personal attack on Yaroslavsky. Nevertheless, the publication of such an indirect attack on official antireligious propaganda reflected the growing influence of the left. Ordinary members of the party felt themselves alienated in the NEP conditions and “leftist” slogans gained ground. In this sense, Kostelovskaya’s article reflected the mood of the independently-minded antireligious circles in Moscow and it expressed the feelings of the “left” of the party, who were, nonetheless, allowed to voice criticism within certain limits, and of party members who were worried by bureaucratic attitudes within the party administration.<sup>130</sup>

Yaroslavsky replied angrily to Kostelovskaya’s criticism in Pravda and described it as a personal attack on himself. In his protest to the editorial board of Pravda, he complained that he had not been given the opportunity to comment on Kostelovskaya’s article. Moreover, the CAP, which functioned under Yaroslavsky’s leadership, was convened in order to condemn the Pravda article.<sup>131</sup>

During this meeting Kostelovskaya defended herself by claiming that as a member of the party she had the right to express her views in Pravda. The main argument she put forward in her defence concentrated on the fact that she and other representatives of Moscow’s antireligious workers had been overlooked in the antireligious work in general. Before the 13th congress she had complained about this to the

129 Pravda, 25 January 1925, No. ; See also RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.14.

130 Alekseev 1991, 282–285. See also Zinovev 1926.

131 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.14. “В редакцию газеты “Правда”. Сов.Секретно января/1925”; “О методах антирелигиозной пропаганды (вынужденный ответ тов. Костеловской)”; RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 64, 14/2-25).



party, but in vain. Kostelovskaya repeated her criticism and stated that the CAP itself was occupied only with administrative work and was not really active in antireligious propaganda. To some extent her complaints seemed justified; although she was a member of CAP, Yaroslavsky had hardly bothered to invite her to attend meetings.<sup>132</sup>

This episode indicates that behind the scenes there was a tense power struggle within the party. Gradually, the official speeches became more and more critical of the NEP policy<sup>133</sup> and initiatives such as “faces to countryside” and “revitalizing the soviets” were forgotten. For example, these suspicions were expressed in Yaroslavsky’s article “Clerics in the elections”, published on 29 March 1925. When the 14th conference failed to mention churches as possible enemies of the Soviet power, Yaroslavsky was, nonetheless, ready to classify them as such. In the above-mentioned article he explained the reasons why clerics could not vote or be candidates. The church had always served the landowners and capitalists. He also reminded his readers of the history of the ROC during the civil war; clerics had at that time cursed Soviet power and helped the Whites. After the consolidation of Soviet power, priests and sectarians were obliged to conceal their anti-Soviet character and preach in more subtle ways against Soviet power.<sup>134</sup>

Yaroslavsky’s attention and concern seems to have been well justified. The Soviet elections of March 1925 were a source of disappointment to the ruling party; over two thirds of electorates in rural areas did not vote at all. In many places the peasants became politically active and demanded independence from the party. These demands were intensified in response to Komsomol activity in the elections. For the younger generation of Bolsheviks, the Soviet elections gave them the opportunity to show their ideological fervour. Senior party officials, however, tried to restrict the activities of the Komsomol, especially their harassment of the peasants. During the village elections the Komsomols had used questionable means in their campaigns and the Politburo issued special instructions which underlined the importance of fighting against “crude and tactless” tyrannizing of peasant voters by the Komsomols.<sup>135</sup>

These calls for moderation came too late in many places. The

132 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 64, 14/2-25).

133 KPSS III, 177, 189, 238–239; K14, 85, 94–95, 109.

134 YI, 94–95. “Церковники на выборах”.

135 ...“Необходимо бороться самым решительным образом с наблюдающимися в последнее время попытками некоторых комсомольцев грубо и бестактно продиктовать свою волю избирателям”. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.486 (Pp 46, 27/7-25). “Всем областным бюро ЦК. ЦК нацкомпартий, крайкомам, обкомам, губкомам и оружкамам РКП”.

hard-pressed peasantry had in some areas lynched party officials as a result of Komsomol harassment. The political tensions inside the party and also the peasant upheavals during the autumn of 1924 in Georgia disillusioned the ruling regime. Initiatives of the ruling party to pacify the peasantry seemed to be futile.<sup>136</sup> In particular the rebellion in Georgia traumatized the ruling regime, which tried to calm the situation by sending the Soviet president Mikhail Kalinin to the region. He attempted to pacify his Georgian audience by outlining, for example, the conciliatory line of the Soviet communist party and claiming that communists did not want to destroy the Orthodox church by force. For them to do so would be folly as history had shown that the attempts to convert Georgians to Islam had failed. He also claimed that purging the priests and closing down the churches would not be the correct policy; the purged priest would only acquire the authority which he now lacked. Kalinin remarked that the government had admitted the mistakes of local authorities in this area and he declared that the battle against religion should be confined to the ideological level. The conciliatory line of this policy was manifested in his calls for a cautious policy towards non-party people because even among believers there were people who supported the communists.<sup>137</sup>

## 5. THE DEBATE OF 1926 AND THE 15TH CONGRESS AS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE NEP RELIGIOUS POLICY

The 14th congress of the Communist Party was held from 18–31 December 1925 under the shadow of the above political crisis. The situation in this congress was very different compared to earlier party meetings as the triumvirate of Zinovev, Kamenev and Stalin was now defunct. In this new situation Stalin allied himself with the rightists (Bukharin, Rykov and M.P. Tomsy) against the “New Opposition” and he gained control of the party through the party apparatus.

The outcome of the 14th congress was a clear victory for the pro-peasant wing of the party.<sup>138</sup> Another consequence of the congress

136 Deutscher 1987, 227–228.

137 Kalinin 1958, 231–233. “Из беседы с крестьянами деревни Ганирчака (Грузия)”.

138 S14, 517–519, 819.

was that Zinovev and many of his followers in Leningrad were obliged to resign from their posts, supporters of Stalin and Bukharin taking their places. After the battle in the 14th congress the two ex-triumvirs and Trotsky were both in the same situation; the Stalinist apparatus had beaten them. So it was therefore natural that these three “oppositionists” should come together in order to fight against the coalition of Stalin and Bukharin.<sup>139</sup>

Probably due to the tense political situation, the 14th congress did not handle religious political matters as such. Although the CAP had made proposals to the 14th congress, it is obvious that the leadership did not want to bring this topic before the congress prior to the planned meeting of antireligious workers in April 1926.<sup>140</sup>

The year 1925 was a watershed in the NEP; the mood of general optimism was fading. The harvest of 1925 had been good but the marketing had been a catastrophe for the government. The shortages of food supplies and high prices of bread aroused growing animosity among the industrialized population. The ruling party had split into a small but bitter opposition and the centre-rightist majority. The New Opposition had suffered a devastating blow during the 14th congress and its members had been expelled from important party offices.<sup>141</sup>

The result of this coalition became known as the “Joint Opposition” (Zinovev, Kamenev, Trotsky). It organized itself within the party and was seeking support from rank and file ordinary party members. At the same time the party apparatus tried to suppress the opposition and its critics as much as possible. The Joint Opposition rallied against the Stalinist apparatus and in favour of inner-party democracy. It urged the up-grading of workers’ wages and insisted on a more zealous attitude against the remnants of the capitalist era. Its main critique concentrated on the claim that while the governing clique was making concessions to both internal and international enemies, the Soviet state was slowly sliding back towards capitalism.<sup>142</sup>

Kostelovskaya’s protest in March 1925, together with the general political crisis inside the party, had given reason for fundamental discussion on religious policy matters inside the ruling regime. A general meeting of the party’s antireligious workers convened in the midst of this internal power struggle on 27–29 April 1926 in order to find a unified solution for their work. A desire for unity characterized

\*\*\*\*\*  
139 Deutscher 1987, 259–266.

140 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.775 (PCAP 68, 9/12-25).

141 Deutscher 1987, 271–273.

142 AT II, 54–55. “К чему стремится оппозиция”; AT II, 74. “Вопросы и ответы, написанные мною для пропаганды”; AT II, 83–84. “К пятнадцатой партийной конференции”. See also Deutscher 1987, 271–271.

this meeting. In accordance with demands of discipline, all speakers were haunted by the need for ideological unity but at the same time they accused each other of ideological errors. For example, during the opening speech the representative of the Agitprop, V.G. Knorin (1890–1939), underlined the special nature of this meeting and the importance of co-ordinating the party's antireligious activity. He pointed out how the CAP had wished for more co-ordinated methods in this work and claimed that the party could not carry out all its antireligious work without assistance. There was a need to make the resolutions of the 13th congress more specific; resolutions accepted in earlier congresses were of too general a nature and had given rise to the "most diverse interpretations and most erroneous deviations". These deviations were firstly "liquidating atheist work" and secondly over-emphasizing it. In conclusion, Knorin expressed the hope that the 15th congress would place the question of religion on its agenda.

Kostelovskaya was allowed to present her criticism of the religious policy the CAP and Yaroslavsky. According to her, problems in the religious policy sphere were partly related to the fact that instead of tackling ideological questions the 14th congress had concentrated on the economy. Her very "leftist" diagnosis of Soviet society underlined the threat the countryside posed for socialism in Russia; she believed that religion had been revitalizing in the countryside. Moreover, she expressed strong criticism of antireligious agitators ("grandeers" as she termed them) who could not adapt to the contemporary situation. In the ensuing debate she indirectly accused Yaroslavsky of taking a "deviationist standpoint" and stated that Yaroslavsky's book, "The Bible for Believers and non-Believers", was no use whatsoever in antireligious work. According to her, Yaroslavsky's booklet was simply inspiring people to study Assyrian-Babylonian mythology. On the other hand, Yaroslavsky found Kostelovskaya's articles "artificial, abstract, theoretical and armchair-learned". However, the main result of this meeting was the attention which the ruling regime paid to the rumoured revitalization of religion and to the "danger" which the sectarian movement seemed to represent.<sup>143</sup>

As a result of this meeting a draft programme for use in antireligious propaganda was drawn up. This manifesto was a mixture of conciliatory and "leftist" viewpoints inside the ruling regime. On the other hand, the assembly emphasized that the fight against religion could be successful only if the party understood correctly the circumstances of religious prejudices. Moreover, it even underlined

143 See the protocols of this meeting: RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.791; f.17, op.60, d.792.



that it was important to abolish “mechanical” methods such as closing down churches, confiscating church bells, or organizing the antireligious struggle simply on the basis of atheist carnivals or demonstrations.<sup>144</sup>

Nevertheless, increased criticism of the sectarians was the clear result of this meeting. It was concluded that the time for neutrality had now passed and it was time to reject the “rightist deviation” in antireligious work, which had “idealized the sectarian movement”. Nevertheless, this meeting condemned also the “left deviation” which maintained that all sectarians were counter-revolutionaries. In conclusion, this meeting underlined that in accordance with the general understanding of the NEP, the main method in the antireligious battle was to “class-unmask” the role of religion and carry out cautious antireligious work in the countryside. Nevertheless, this meeting acknowledged that there had been incorrect interpreting of the resolution of the 13th congress and warned that social activities and different co-operative enterprises should be directed towards the Soviet system.<sup>145</sup>

202

The other practical conclusion of this conference was the growing pressure against the Moslem clergy, which party officials considered to be a harmful element in Soviet society. As we can see from a protocol of 7 December 1926, the CAP had designed a plan to fight against the Moslem clergy and sent out a circular to inform local officials of this change of policy. In addition, on 24 December 1926 the CAP decided to limit the extent of religious schools in Moslem areas by restricting religious education to children over 14 years of age.

Later a more precise plan drawn up by Tuchkov was accepted in the CAP and at the beginning of 1927 this was sent to the Orgburo. This modified plan was not accepted without resistance in the CAP – it was eventually passed by 10 votes to 7, a revealing fact which indicates that there were a considerably number of moderates inside the CAP. The final accepted version included a special mention of the political education of local communists; the party wanted to purify its ranks of moderate comrades who had restricted antireligious propaganda in Eastern areas of the state.<sup>146</sup> In this plan, the CAP decided to classify

144 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.123. “Задачи и методы антирелигиозной пропаганды”.

145 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.60, d.793 “Тезисы приняты партийным совещанием по антирелигиозной пропаганде 27–30 апреля 1926”; “Сектантство и антирелигиозная пропаганда”; “Задачи и методы антирелигиозной пропаганды”; “Практические предложения по вопросу о сектантстве, принятые на антирелигиозном совещании при ВКП(б) и антирелигиозной комиссией ЦК”.

146 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 86, 21/4-27); RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 78, 7/12-26); (PCAP 24/12-26); (PCAP 81, 15/1-27).

Moslem clergy as “lishentsy”. This operation together with economic measures against the mullahs and initiatives to enforce cultural enlightenment in Eastern areas were signs of change. The party was now more ready to tackle the question of Islam. However, this policy caused substantial protest among the Moslem population. For example, as one protest from “all the Moslems of the village of Ala-Ilda” expressed it, villagers simply “could not live” without the services of the local mullah.<sup>147</sup>

Subsequently, by means of the above plans, the ruling regime tightened its grip in relation to the Catholic church. The main reason for this was the threat of war, which seemed to justify Moscow’s plans to go back on its earlier concessions. For example, the nationally-minded Ukrainian government was compelled to resign and Moscow sent its emissaries to take control. One of these emissaries, Yaroslavsky, emphasized to the Ukrainian Central Committee the threat of war; Soviet power faced imminent danger from Catholic clericalism and Jewish nationalism. At that moment Moscow was not yet ready to “Russify” Ukrainians but concentrated more on resolving the Jewish question and the problem of people of Polish origin in western border areas. In accordance with this policy Yaroslavsky questioned the whole “korenizatsiya” policy in relation to the Jewish population. It was “amazing” how the Jewish people were allowed to organize an “artificial evreizatsiya” policy among the Jewish people. Yaroslavsky also criticised the proposal to give the Jews their own schools. As the Jewish masses were not willing to learn or use the Jewish language this was unnecessary. According to Yaroslavsky, the political and cultural situation among people of Polish origin did not favour the Soviets. The Komsomol movement was weak, Catholic cardinals acted as the agents of the Polish government and local teachers listened to them more than to Soviet officials.<sup>148</sup>

The question of the sectarians was more complex. The 13th congress had accepted the decision that the sectarians could be directed to assist the Soviet system. The assembly of leading antireligious workers came to the conclusion that sectarian communes and co-operatives should be directed towards general co-operative work, which meant that the government should encourage only secular co-operatives. The religious co-operatives were believed to be exploitative in nature. The assembly

147 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.117. “В Оргбюро проект постановления. Января 1927”; “От всех мусульман деревни Алан-Илда”.

148 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.3, d.86. “Доклад на пленуме ЦК КП (б) Украины о проведении в жизнь решения партии по национальному вопросу. Стенограмма-машинописный текст с правками и пометкой автора”. See also Krawchenko 1987, 136.

accepted the view that it was essential to fight against “idealizing” the sectarian movement as a “revolutionary” element.<sup>149</sup>

With a resolution adopted in accordance with the above, the CAP together with the OGPU held a special meeting on 15 January 1927 at which they drew up a battle plan against the sectarian movement. On 7 April 1927 the Central Committee accepted this circular at a Politburo meeting. In its opening paragraph this secret circular pointed out the remarkable growth of the sectarian movement and mentioned how sects were distracting workers from building socialism. This circular also revealed how some kulaks and elements of anti-Soviet organizations were hiding under the banner of religion. Therefore, the Central Committee ordered that the cultural-enlightenment work in those areas should be strengthened. The “idealizing” of the sectarians was a deviation which communists should fight against at the same time as they fought against the ideas that all sectarians were counter-revolutionaries.<sup>150</sup>

204

This circular promoted the same procedures that were earlier implemented in relation to the Mennonites, i.e. sectarian co-operatives should conform to the “general line of Soviet life”. In accordance with this policy it was possible to create co-operatives with sectarians only when they lived as a solid mass and under the condition that they would follow the general, Soviet co-operative line. Party officials should pay attention to the law on the separation of church and state; there should be no kind of religious privileges, religious organizations had no juridical right etc.<sup>151</sup>

The outcome of this special assembly of leading antireligious workers and the Central Committee circular show how the question of religion was one of the burning issues of late NEP society. The resolution of the 13th congress did not meet the expectations of the time. Both the opposition and some members of the Stalinist group were opposed to the previous resolutions. Consequently, the “Joint Opposition” was expressing the general mood of the ruling regime when it demanded that the party should conduct a “decisive struggle”

149 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.123. “Практические предложения по докладу тов. Путицева на антирелигиозном совещании при Агитпропе ЦК ВКП (б)”; “Практические предложения по вопросу о сектантстве /на основании материалов антирелигиозного совещания при ЦК и Антирелигиозной комиссии ЦК/”.

150 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.627 (Pp 94, 7/4-27).

151 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.627 (Pp 94, 7/4-27). This slogan “bringing (sectarian communes) towards the general co-operative line” (обще кооперативная сеть) represented the official policy towards sectarians during the years 1926–1927. For example, the Mennonites were now campaigned to settle according to “general co-operative line”. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 90, 25/6-27).

so that representatives of exploitative elements, such as “priests, millers and tobacco plantation owners” as one oppositionist Karl Radek termed them, would not be allowed to exploit poor peasants.<sup>152</sup>

The “Joint Opposition” could not use the public media but it did send its emissaries to ordinary party cells to persuade them to resist the party leadership. These gestures together with the attempts to form separate platforms against the leadership were used to justify the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinovev from their official posts and finally from the Party itself. When the 15th party congress convened from 2–19 December 1927 almost no-one from the opposition was allowed attend.

Expectations before the 15th congress were contradictory. On the one hand the “leftist” mood among communists called for more resolute action against religion. As an advocate of these opinions and as chairman of the CAP, Yaroslavsky had written a letter to Stalin asking him to mention the necessity of fighting against the “liquidating faction” in the antireligious battle. But on the other hand, Stalin’s fight against the “Joint Opposition” required the assistance of the right-wing and aggressive gestures against the civil peace of the NEP could have caused them to protest.<sup>153</sup>

Just before the 15th congress Yaroslavsky attempted to draw the party’s attention to this question by writing an article warning the congress not to weaken the antireligious struggle. According to him, there was a special faction inside the party which had interpreted the resolutions of the 13th congress as an order to “liquidate” all antireligious activity and he blamed the forces of the opposition for this deviation. Yaroslavsky declared that those who were now challenging the party leadership and “yelling” that the party had given in to the petty-bourgeoisie were actually supporting attempts to liquidate antireligious activity. He paid special attention to the sectarian movement and to the fact that in Eastern areas religious schools were prospering and that the Moslem clergy was increasing its activity. As a solution he proposed that the congress should form a special commission to resolve these questions.<sup>154</sup>

Despite a few dissonant voices in the congress the party unani-

152 АТ II, 54–55. “К чему стремится оппозиция”; Fitzpatrick 1991, 27–28.

153 “Как Вы относитесь к тому, чтобы на XV съезде сказать несколько слов в полит. отчетке ЦК о необходимости борьбы с ликвидаторскими настроениями в области антирел. пропаганды...” RTsKhIDNI 89/1/84. “Письма И.В.Сталину о включении в отчет Центрального Комитета на XV Съезде ВКП (б) вопросов антирелигиозной пропаганды. Фотокопия. (13.XI 1927)”.

154 YII, 218–221. “Не ослабляйте борьбы с влиянием религии. Предложение к XV съезду партии”.



mously condemned the opposition and its criticism. This congress was the highlight of the NEP policy and the climax of the short-lived Centre-Right coalition. The main speaker in the congress was Stalin, who delivered a speech on the general political situation. Although no difference of opinion<sup>155</sup> was allowed with regard to the opposition, on many matters open debate could take place.

Despite the wishes of the antireligious workers, Stalin paid only scant to the problem of the “liquidating faction” in the antireligious struggle. In his political speech to the congress, Stalin mentioned the deterioration of the antireligious fight only as a brief “minus” in his list of the defects in Soviet society.<sup>156</sup> Nevertheless, ordinary representatives to the congress were able to express their disquiet at the activity of religious organizations.

For example, a certain S.Z. Shchafieva from Bashkiria spoke of the increased activity of Moslem clergy in her local area and of the difficulties in the battle against religion. The clergy which exercised influence among men and uneducated women (на темных женщин) were organizing illegal meetings in mosques and houses. Although the local party section had a newspaper with a special section for women, the clergy continued to influence them.<sup>157</sup> Another speaker, A.G. Karaev, a delegate from Soviet Azerbaidzhan, also underlined the importance of this question and announced that although the communists had driven the priests out through the doors of the school they were trying to come back “down the chimney” with the help of the communists themselves.<sup>158</sup> Karaev also commented on Stalin’s lecture. The General Secretary had proposed a reduction in the production of vodka, but the production of the Koran and sharia-books was not to be limited. “...To publish the koran with our own hands, to print sharia-books in our state publishing houses – is this not worse than vodka?”<sup>159</sup>

One of the most revealing examples of connecting the national question with the religious policy of the Soviet state was the speech of

155 Merridale 1990, 43.

156 S15b, 66.

157 S15-I, 172. The one female representative of the party congress, A.A. Artyukhina (1889–1969), also underlined the importance of culture among women. S15-I, 203–206. One important reason for the interest the communist party paid women’s religiosity was probably the fact that women showed more religious fervour than men. Barbara Clements has noted that women played a significant role as mediators and defenders of religion both in the cities and in the countryside during the civil war. The normalcy of the NEP gave them more opportunities for religious activities. Clements 1989, 111.

158 S15-I, 566.

159 S15-I, 566–567. See also S15-II, 932–934.

N.G. Ivanov, a delegate from the northern Caucasus. He argued that these Eastern republics needed help to compensate for their under development in the cultural sphere. Ivanov stressed that political differentiation in these districts was quite weak due to the continued influence of religion and family through the agency of mullahs and rich landowners.<sup>160</sup>

This theme was repeated in the speech of the delegate M.M. Nataevich. He stressed that the activity of the Moslem clergy in the Eastern republics was alarming, creating its “non-party active” forces from believers and not only from kulaks, but also from middle and poor peasants. The clergy was attempting to activate this part of the population in order to defend religious interests, recruit followers from poor peasants and from demobilized Red Army soldiers. Like many others, Nataevich pointed out that the clergy had its own religious schools which were competing against the Soviet schools.<sup>161</sup>

The 15th congress can be seen as a sort of twilight of the NEP policy. The alliance of Right and Centre had denied the need for changing Soviet policy, but at the same time this criticism from the Joint Opposition had its impact. Stalin wanted to get rid of his former allies and very soon after the congress adopted the leftist criticism as a weapon against the right-wing. In this situation, moving towards a socialist society offered Stalin a rationalization for his own claim to power. This offensive, naturally, needed its enemies as well as its supporters and religious organizations constituted an ideal scapegoat. With the assistance of its General Secretary the ruling party started to realize that the clergy was acting illegally, “stirring up the peasantry against Soviet power”.<sup>162</sup>

.....  
160 S15-II, 1331.

161 S15-II, 1340-1341.

162 SSS IV, 466.

---

# V “The Storming of Heaven” – The impact of the Cultural Revolution and the years of the “Great Turn” (1928–1929)

208

## 1. THE MOTIVE AND SEARCH FOR ALLIES AND ENEMIES

In the history of Soviet Union, the period from 1928–1929 marked the beginning of an enormous transformation. A backward agrarian country rose on a trajectory that would eventually make it an industrialized superpower. This “second” Russian Revolution extended to every level of society and did not just signify a giant metamorphosis in the sphere of economics. These events also modified the cultural foundations of the whole nation.

The semi-official mutual tolerance between religious organizations and the ruling regime, which flourished during the high NEP, was nearing its end in 1928. The party’s need to maintain cordial relations with the peasantry personified in the slogan “face to the countryside” was replaced by a new policy that became known as “face to collectivization”. The relatively moderate stance in religious policy from 1923–1927 were now revised under the slogan of “The Storming of Heaven”. This antireligious activity “on an extended front” affected all denominations and sects. All religious organizations suffered from terror against their leaders and laity. The confiscations of church bells, the closure of churches, legislative measures against churches and sects, hostile propaganda and acts against Islam and Judaism, were all

signs of the ideological assault against obstacles to the Cultural Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

The forerunner of these incidents was the destruction of the “Joint Opposition”, completed at the 15th party congress. The triumph of the Centre and the Right was, however, short-lived and during the winter of 1928 the political crisis inside the ruling regime was ready to explode. The power struggle had finally reached its third phase. The methods employed in this political battle were different to those of earlier disputes inside the Bolshevik party. Due to tightened party discipline, Bukharin and his followers did not debate publicly but instead were obliged to conceal their differing opinions. Nevertheless, loyalty to the regime sealed the fate of the right-wing. In the name of party discipline, Bukharin and his followers were forced to accept the authority of the Central Committee and bow to the demands of its supreme leader, Stalin.

This crisis at the upper levels of the CPSU matured with other serious problems. The harvest of 1927 had been average but the peasantry had delivered less grain than expected.<sup>2</sup> Their reluctance to sell grain was interpreted as a sign of kulak sabotage against the socialist state but, more than that, it was also understood as a “casus belli” in the conflict between moderates and extremists inside the ruling regime. The main ideological argument was the peasant question. Stalin and his supporters drew attention to the “critical” grain shortage and favoured more drastic acts against the rich peasantry. The Right objected to these hard-line policies as much as they could but arguments for a more conciliatory policy proved futile. Finally, in April 1928, Stalin was able to persuade the Central Committee to accept coercive methods against the kulaks and well-to-do peasants in regard to grain collection.<sup>3</sup>

These “extraordinary methods” of compulsory grain collection during the winter and spring of 1928 destabilized the Russian countryside. The Central Committee tried at the last moment to soften these anti-peasant measures, but in vain. The GPU reported putting down 150 spontaneous peasant rebellions during the first half of 1928. The normalcy of the NEP period had been broken and the peasantry was in uproar.<sup>4</sup> In addition to these first signs of a more intensified

209

1 Conquest 1986, 20–24, 71–72, 83, 101, 112–113; Curtiss 1953, 196, 235–237; Slatter 1990, 274–275.

2 Davies 1980, 39.

3 SS 11, 47–48; “О работах апрельского объединённого пленума ЦК и ЦКК”. Avtorkhanov 1959, 11, 27; Lewin 1968, 217; Viola 1987, 25–26. See also Tucker 1973, 409

4 KPSS IV, 79; Deutscher 1987, 404–405, 426–427, 441; Davies 1980, 398–399. See also Lewin 1968, 229.



class-struggle, the Stalinist leadership heightened the political tension in the Soviet Union by stressing the imminent threat of war. This “Soviet war scare” of 1926–1927<sup>5</sup> was a fiction created by the Soviet propaganda machine. The “Left” opposition used this in its propaganda and claimed that foreign capitalists were planning to wage war against the Soviet Union and accused, among others, the Catholic Church and the Centrist party in Germany of actively planning an intervention against the USSR.<sup>6</sup>

Stalin took advantage of this situation by staging a show trial against technical experts in May–July 1928, the so-called Shakhty case.<sup>7</sup> This political trial was a sign of the more politically turbulent atmosphere to come. By organizing an ideological witch-hunt and creating a favourable atmosphere for his radical political initiatives, Stalin was able to start his “Revolution From Above” or the so-called “Cultural Revolution” (1928–1931).<sup>8</sup>

210

Moshe Lewin has attempted to explain Stalin’s motives in this context. He has suggested that

He [Stalin] contrived to create, throughout the country as a whole, among the activists, and within the Party in particular, a social and intellectual atmosphere in which any kind of resistance was impossible, and in which any attack on his political line was doomed to failure, not only because it could be put down by police action, but because such opposition was construed as a morally reprehensible act, which automatically attracted a charge of heresy, and identified the critic with the enemy and all his works. The methods reached their final apotheosis in the Stalin cult, that combination of police repression and semi-magical, quasi-religious orthodoxy which had come to fruition during the period of the ‘left turn’.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, as Robert Tucker has remarked in his monograph “Stalin in Power. The Revolution From Above 1928–1941, Stalin’s own revolution partly resulted from his battle for supreme power but also from his psychological ambition to prove himself as great a leader as Lenin.<sup>10</sup> In any event, Stalin could not execute his far-reaching goals

\*\*\*\*\*  
5 Tucker 1990, 74–76. See also Erlich 1960, 167–168.

6 AT IV, 20. “Наше международное положение и опасность войны”.

7 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.677 (Pp 15, 15/3–28). Stalin himself took responsibility for this case and supervised it. Avtorkhanov 1959, 28–30. See Stalin’s reports to the party on the Shakhty-case: SS 11, 35, 53–63. “О работах апрельского объединённого пленума ЦК и ЦКК”.

8 Gill 1990, 117; Tucker 1990, 74–77. See also Fitzpatrick 1984, 10–11; Deutscher 1987, 422;

9 Lewin 1968, 260.

10 Tucker 1990, 44–45, 70–72, 160.

without the assistance of helpful collaborators and careful planning. Stalin needed allies and he could not rely on the right wing of the party which had helped him in his battle against the left or the "Joint Opposition". He could, nonetheless, rely on the support of the younger generation, the Komsomols, who were frustrated during the years of the peaceful NEP policy.

Stalin's call for an ideological battle corresponded with the psychological needs of the younger communist generation.<sup>11</sup> During 1927 and 1928 the Stalinist leadership purged the Komsomol and moulded it into an obedient tool and "helper of the party". The countryside cells of the Komsomol, which constituted over 50% of the organization, were accused of fraternizing with class enemies, such as priests. As a result this purge, the Komsomol was ready to enter into a more intensified class struggle.<sup>12</sup> The younger communist generation provided Stalin with a new revolutionary army, a disciplined group of cadres, which would carry out his revolutionary goals without hesitation.<sup>13</sup>

211

The second major force of Stalin's revolution consisted of former leftists. Although the "Joint Opposition" was politically crushed, Stalin was aware of the militant atmosphere among his ex-opponents and wanted to utilize the radical spirit of the left wing for his own purposes. From the ranks of this older generation there emerged some prominent veterans of the antireligious struggle such as N.V. Krylenko and P.I. Stuchka.<sup>14</sup> This new army of activists, formed from the Komsomols, leftists and ordinary communists, was not shackled by old ideas. For Stalin they were more than suitable allies, being party-minded and obedient to the general supremacy of the party, but in addition, as Sheila Fitzpatrick has remarked:

...hostile to most existing authorities and institutions, which they suspected of bureaucratic and objectively counter-revolutionary tendencies.<sup>15</sup>

11 See, for example, SS 11, 76. "О работах апрельского объединённого пленума ЦК и ЦКК".

12 Carr 1978b, 163–165, 169, 176–182.

13 Baum 1987, 2–3, 18–25; Viola 1987, 24–27, 33–35. As Tucker has remarked, "Stalin's commitment to a second revolution made the official image of dangerously active external and internal enemies necessary for justifying the sacrifices...to this extent, his need for enemies was political, not psychological". Tucker 1990, 166.

14 Lewin 1968, 376–377; Tucker 1990, 101–104.

15 Fitzpatrick 1982, 130.

During the NEP the rank and file communists had been irritated by the massive unemployment and economic inequality. They had shared the common feeling that the Soviet state was under attack from the bourgeoisie. The ideological retreat that the NEP constituted was unacceptable to them. According to these communists, the Soviet state tolerated too many bourgeois<sup>16</sup> specialists, kulaks and priests.<sup>17</sup>

Stalin tried to justify the Cultural Revolution, as all other extraordinary measures during that time, with the threat of war. As a result of international and internal factors, Stalin stressed, the USSR needed to strengthen its cultural work so that the working class could lead the country and industry.<sup>18</sup> The slogan in this revolution was “belligerent class consciousness” on the cultural front and in the battle against illiteracy. In reality the Cultural Revolution signified purges made by young party activists to “clean” government offices and universities of non-proletarian social elements.<sup>19</sup> As Sheila Fitzpatrick has argued, one of the primary goals of this revolution was to create a proletarian intelligentsia by means of “class war”. “Stalin’s Revolution” found enemies like:

...the conciliators of peasantry, conciliators of the intelligentsia... NEPmen, kulaks, cafe-haunting literati, wreckers, expropriated capitalists and foreign spies were all on the same side in the political struggle...<sup>20</sup>

The major tool in this profound metamorphoses of Soviet society, the new Five Year Plan, was revealed in October 1928, although it was not formally adopted until April 1929. This highly ambitious plan for the rapid industrialization of the USSR demanded as one of its prerequisites cheap grain from the countryside. Moreover, the plan also needed a scapegoat; a fact which proved fatal for religious organizations and national minorities. The Bolshevik concept of class struggle<sup>21</sup> and the

16 The common stereotype of “the Soviet new bourgeois” in the communist propaganda combined “NEPmen” with Jews or religious activists. Although the above were seldom committed to political activities the communist suspected them. For the ruling regime they were possible leaders of the capitalist counter-revolution. Ball 1987, 110–111, 165–166; Fitzpatrick 1991, 19.

17 Fitzpatrick 1984, 19–23; Viola 1987, 23–24.

18 SS 11, 38. “О работах апрельского объединённого пленума ЦК и ЦКК”. See Yaroslavsky’s speech to the delegation of the foreign freethinkers’ movement. RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.22. “План доклада об антирелигиозной пропаганде на заседании Исполбюро Союза Воинствующих Безбожников с иностранной делегацией И.М.Ц. (Организация Свободамысл. Общества) 4.11.1927”.

19 Tucker 1990, 101.

20 Fitzpatrick 1984, 17.

21 Tumarkin 1985, 90.

logic of Stalin's own class war doctrine required somebody to be blamed for its defects and failures. As Robert Tucker has suggested, Stalin's need to relegate kulaks to the category of enemies was mostly political but he also had a psychological motivation. Stalin's self-estimated grandiosity and aggression required supposed enemies. He had a psychological craving to project his self-condemnation and self-hate onto other people.<sup>22</sup>

The role of enemy was to be given to one of the most hated class foes of socialism – the kulak. Every conflict in the countryside was interpreted as a class conflict between poor and wealthy peasants. The troublemaking kulak was described as a speculator and an impediment to the advance of socialism. This hated foe was not alone, he had allies, elements of the old society. In this category of enemies the ruling regime also included religious figures who in the eyes of communists were forming political groups under the “banner of religion”.<sup>23</sup>

213

## 2. THE IMPLEMENTATION

This activating of younger generation communists had profound consequences in the sphere of religious and nationality policy within the USSR. It was quite clear that the “second civil war” would affect the ROC as well as other religious organizations. As the programme of the Comintern declared, one of the special assignments of the Cultural Revolution would be the battle against the “opium of the peoples”, religion.<sup>24</sup>

In accordance with this Stalinist scheme, brigades of the Komsomol (“the closest assistant of the party”)<sup>25</sup> and other activists poured into the countryside at the beginning of 1928 in order to secure the flow of grain to the cities and factories. At first these coercive measures in the countryside were directed especially against rich peasants and also against the private sector. But this was not the exclusive purpose of this attack. Komsomols did not come to the countryside simply to bring class war but also to “culturalize” the “unculturalized masses” of the

22 Tucker 1990, 94–96; 164–166; SS 12, 90.

23 GARF f.5263, op.1, d.58(1) “Члену президиума ВЦИК тов. Смидович”; Davies 1980, 88, 94, 98–99; Fitzpatrick 1991, 18–24. This development was paralleled in other Soviet regions, e.g. the enemies of Soviet power and the allies of the “Polish fascism were bourgeois, kulaks, intelligentsia and priests”. *Pravda*, 6 December 1929, No. 286.

24 YII, 548. “Документы”.

25 KPSS IV, 162–168.



peasants and to eliminate illiteracy. In Bolshevik thinking, the phrase “uncultured masses” characterized the Soviet countryside. What proved fatal to the religious organizations, was the Bolshevik idea that culture represented striving for emancipation from the kingdom of darkness (*temnoe tsarstvo*) to the patrimony of enlightenment (*prosveshchenie*).<sup>26</sup>

Thus, during their raids the Komsomols were given a free hand to fight against the cultural backwardness of the countryside. These raids utilized the methods of persuasion as well as terror and brute force against the rich peasants. Many Komsomols saw religion as the stubborn mainstay of Russian backwardness and wanted to diminish its importance. On the other hand, the peasant population and their Orthodox priests saw this campaign against illiteracy as a brutal attack on their identity and an example of antireligious harassment. It was no surprise that these punitive raids aroused the resistance of the peasants.<sup>27</sup>

Stalin’s resorting to these rash methods presupposed at first their formal acceptance by the majority of the populace of the Soviet countryside. Moreover, he compared the crisis situation in the countryside to that of 1921 which had resulted in among other things the “campaign of confiscating church valuables”. At that time Lenin had connected the confiscation of church valuables in the name of starving people with the antireligious campaign. By doing so Lenin had won the sympathy of the majority in the Soviet countryside which had then, according to Stalin, accepted the large antireligious campaign against the church.<sup>28</sup>

During the Komsomol raids, plenipotentiaries attempted to organize the rest of the village against the rich by holding official meetings of the village assemblies (*Skhod*). The *Skhod* was supposed to be a “quasi-democratic framework for legitimizing the campaign”, as R.W. Davies has characterized it. It was believed that these assemblies would isolate the kulaks with the blessing of the middle and poor peasants. When this did not happen spontaneously, the plenipotentiaries manipulated their decisions. So during the years 1927–1929 “*Skhods*” were subordinated to the village soviets and kulaks were banished from the *Skhod* as a “harmful” social category of “*lishentsy*”.<sup>29</sup>

However, there was a great contradiction between reality and

26 Joravsky 1985, 93–94. See also KPSS IV, 102.

27 Fitzpatrick 1979, 158–162; Baum 1987, 44–45.

28 SS 11, 50. “О работах апрельского объединённого пленума ЦК и ЦКК”.

29 Davies 1980, 404; Conquest 1988, 87–90. See also Lewin 1968, 227; Danilov 1990, 298–299.

ideology. Middle peasants did not respond eagerly to calls for social discrimination against the kulaks but in many places defended them.<sup>30</sup> The answer to this problem was simple; according to Stalin, a kulak could persuade middle peasants to follow him because of his leading social role in the village. In contrast to the spirit of the NEP, Stalin declared that the peasantry was “the last remaining capitalist class”<sup>31</sup>. For Stalin, the disturbances during the grain collections were simply signs of the strength of these class enemies. Former exploitative classes would never give up without resistance and would attempt to reorganize themselves. As Robert Tucker has remarked, the concept that internal class war would grow more intense with the advance towards socialism is “widely regarded as one idea that was truly original with Stalin”.<sup>32</sup>

For Stalin, the only solution was a socialist offensive against the capitalist elements in the cities and countryside. Peaceful conciliation between classes could not exist as opposing classes were at war in the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> The logical conclusion of this thinking was that the church was to be blamed, together with the kulaks, for class war in the village. Understandably enough, priests became the first victims of this terror. They were among the first to be deported from the villages during the collectivization process, together with the kulaks. Moreover, the communist crusade against the peasantry was connected with a massive attack against religion.<sup>34</sup>

Another reason for coercive methods against priests and other leaders of religious organizations is offered by Moshe Lewin. He has suggested that Stalin wanted to “weaken any elements which might eventually rally an outraged peasantry”.<sup>35</sup> Stalin seemed to believe that

\*\*\*\*\*  
30 Davies 1980, 406–409; Conquest 1986, 94–96.

31 SS 12, 40. “О правом уклоне в ВКП(б)”. See also KPSS IV, 108.

32 SS 11, 171–172; “Пленум ЦК ВКП(б)”. Tucker 1990, 88.

33 SS 12, 90. Yaroslavsky had as early as November, 1927 presented the option of advancing towards socialism by means of industrialization, co-operative movements, centralization, communist enlightenment, and world revolution. See RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.22. “План доклада об антирелигиозной пропаганде на заседании Исполбюро Союза Воинствующих Безбожников с иностранной делегацией И.М.С. (Организация Свободомысл. Общества) 4.11.1927”.

34 Davies 1980, 93, 96, 412; Baum 1987, 4–46; Lewin 1984, 63; Conquest 1986, 202–204. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia described the activities of the clergy during the collectivization as partnership with the kulak: “...поп занял фронт на стороне кулачества, защищая его позиции не только словом, но и делом. Целый ряд кулацких антисоветских выступлений проходил под религиозной оболочкой.” BSEa 1934, 188. Or as I. Trifonov has remarked, “...kulaks appeared jointly with former whiteguardists, priests, sectarians and other counter-revolutionary forces...” Trifonov 1960, 204.

35 Lewin 1985, 107.

both the kulak and the priest along with other capitalist elements would in every case oppose the building of socialism and would be natural leaders of the countryside in a revolt against the communist regime. The followers of the kulaks, the “pod-kulak” (the henchmen of the kulaks) or “ideological kulaks” were identified as a dark, “uncultured” peasant mass under the influence of the priests.<sup>36</sup>

The logic of this thinking presumed that kulaks, priests, NEPmen and industrial specialists could manipulate the failures of the “extraordinary measures” to gain political capital for their own anti-Soviet objectives. But was this concept of the “bourgeois counter-attack” only a myth or should historians acknowledge the fact, as Sheila Fitzpatrick has done, that the ruling regime had actually uncovered evidence that NEPmen and kulaks were strengthening their influence?<sup>37</sup>

216

It is quite difficult to get to the bottom this question, but the fact remains that one of the fundamental cornerstones in Stalin’s Revolution was the concept of the “enemy threat” inside the Soviet Union. In line with this position, the General Secretary encouraged people to unmask hidden foes everywhere. In this process Stalin was assisted by the general mood inside the young communist movement, which had even during the NEP been preoccupied with the slogan “unmask the class enemy”.<sup>38</sup> At first Stalin was eager to stress that the leadership unanimously welcomed these initiatives of the younger generation. Accordingly, he urged the “soft” Bukharin to expose those enemies and he was sent to the 8th congress of the Komsomols on 6 May 1928 to give a lecture on this topic.<sup>39</sup>

During this time the struggle for power and politics was being fought behind closed doors. Bukharin was obliged by party discipline to act in accordance with the will of the General Secretary. So in his lecture he tried to combine an apology for the coercive methods favoured by Stalin with his own demands for more conciliatory policies towards peasants. Bukharin’s outward acceptance of Stalinist policy, with its concealed criticism, can be seen as the last attempt by him to prevent more damage in this sphere.

He began by identifying the class enemy of the Soviet regime and underlined that the kulak was fighting against the dictatorship of the working class and turning dissatisfied middle peasants against it. Bukharin also stressed that it was clear that it would be necessary to

-----  
36 Davies 1980, 400–401; Lewin 1968, 391. See also Trifonov 1960, 205.

37 Fitzpatrick 1991, 29.

38 Fitzpatrick 1991, 27.

39 Fisher 1959, 143.

strengthen work among the poor peasantry and strengthen their links to the middle peasants in order to isolate the kulak. Significantly enough, he stressed that this process would take a long time.<sup>40</sup>

Bukharin went on to tell the Komsomol conference that legally functioning ecclesiastical and sectarian organizations were the most naked and evil class enemies. However, it would be stupid to think that these organizations had remained unchanged since the revolution; now they were using “modern” and “progressive” forms of work and had great success even in areas populated by workers. One thing which made them dangerous were the educational methods they were using. Bukharin also remarked that these organizations were preaching against alcoholism and smoking, they were active in cultural work and used “good measures” to make political capital.<sup>41</sup>

Bukharin reminded the conference of the great success of the sectarian movement and claimed that sectarians had more members than the Komsomol movement. His remarks about the dangers posed by religious organizations might appear to amount to an open call for a more general attack against religion. But that was not the case. In fact he pleaded that these organizations not be treated all in the same manner as they consisted of different social strata and each had a different composition of cadres.<sup>42</sup>

Simply persecuting sectarians was wrong as these organizations attracted many honest workers. According to Bukharin, only counter-revolutionary organizations should be treated with severity, but others should be won over to the communists. Bukharin remarked that the communists should appeal to sectarians to join them, which would of course be a difficult task. Finally he urged that the communist regime should strengthen the antireligious battle and propaganda.<sup>43</sup>

Bukharin's appeal for a cautious religious policy against the class enemies did not satisfy the Stalinist group. The political fight inside the communist party came to a head at the end of 1928 and in January/February 1929 during the sessions of the Politburo and the Central Committee.<sup>44</sup> The Politburo and the Central Committee officially accepted the Five Year Plan, together with the official anathema for the leaders of the Right and demanded that Bukharin and Tomskey be relieved of their posts. This incident represented the political destruction of the Right and its leaders were compelled to recant unconditionally. After the collapse of the “right-deviation” there was

40 Bukharin 1990, 297–300. “Текущие задачи Комсомола 6 мая 1928 г”.

41 Bukharin 1990, 301–302. “Текущие задачи Комсомола 6 мая 1928 г”.

42 Bukharin 1990, 302–303. “Текущие задачи Комсомола 6 мая 1928 г”.

43 Bukharin 1990, 320–321. “Текущие задачи Комсомола 6 мая 1928 г”.

44 Avtorkhanov 1959, 46–47; Tucker 1973, 410–419.



no organized opposition inside the communist party. Stalin had concluded his victory over his rivals and despite the protests of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsy, Trotsky was sent into exile at the beginning of 1929 and other leaders such as Kamenev and Zinovev were in political isolation. Stalin had won the contest of supreme power; he was now the undisputed leader of the CPSU.<sup>45</sup>

During these heated confrontations party officials also discussed the religious policy line of the party. Yaroslavsky's speech to the Orgburo gathering of 10 December 1928 reflects the aggressive tone of the Cultural Revolution. The class enemy was working under the guise of religious organizations and using the backwardness of agriculture for its purposes. The Soviet government was justified in restricting the influence of religious organizations which used their religious message for counter-revolutionary purposes. Yaroslavsky concluded this speech by arguing that Soviet power should follow the example of the French Revolution and avoid adopting a passive attitude towards religion.<sup>46</sup>

218

As a result of this, in January 1929 the Politburo accepted the programme for strengthening antireligious work. The text of this secret programme repeated the above diagnosis of the heated class struggle in the Soviet Union. One of the most interesting remarks of the Politburo was the conclusion that religious organizations were taking advantage of the internal difficulties in constructing a socialist society. The second important point was that the Politburo's programme condemned the weak antireligious situation in the trade unions and in the Narkompros. By this time, blame for the weak state of antireligious work was one of the faults of "rightist" leaders. For example, the Moscow district, which was the stronghold of the "rightists", was criticized for being "too liberal" by, for example, letting believers build churches.<sup>47</sup>

The heightening of the general atmosphere could also be seen in the re-organization of Soviet religious policy which was undertaken on 8 April 1929. Different commissions such as the CAP and the "Liqui-

45 Lewin 1968, 318–325.

46 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.26. "Речь тов. Ярославского на заседании Оргбуро ЦК ВКП (б) 10-XII-28 по вопросу о мерах по усилению антирелигиозной работы". Later during the power struggle, Yaroslavsky accused Bukharin of ideological heresy in religious matters and blamed him for moderating the class struggle and the propaganda against religion. RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.753 (Pp 93, 15/8-29).

47 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.3, d.723 (Pp 61, 24/1-29); 89/4/122 "Постановление Политбюро ЦК ВКП (б). Проект."; 89/4/27 "Статья "Правильно организовать борьбу с религией" (из доклада на Сокольнической райпартконференции в Москве). Машинописный текст с правками неизвестного". See also GARF f.5407, op.1, d.17 (Начиная с листа 263). "Акционерному издательскому обществу Безбожник. II/VI/1928 г". See also Lewin 1985, 97–100; Peris 1991, 772.

dation Commission” of the APO, which had been working earlier in this field, were now unified under the authority of the VTsIK presidium under the name “Permanent (working) Commission for the Study of Religious Questions” (PCSRQ).<sup>48</sup> The first session of this commission showed that new winds were blowing in Soviet religious policy. Members of this commission demanded new instructions from the NKVD which would “answer the demands of our time”.<sup>49</sup>

### 3. "CULTURALISTS AND INTERVENTIONISTS"

As we have seen, one of the most significant factors concerning religion during that time was the image of the class enemy. While the communists attacked enemies within the party (i.e. the “right-deviation”) they also sketched a picture of the class enemy they had to confront. The primary enemies were, as we have seen above, the kulak, the NEP-man and the priest. Now priests were identified as kulaks together with peasants who had been involved in commercial activities. After the Bolshevik revolution being a clergyman had become a “profession” and during the civil war priests were allowed to receive an equal share of land if they did not received payments for their religious services. Later it was customary for priests to be given land as payment for their religious services. According to the new antireligious laws of 1929, a priest was defined as “one who has other income not deriving from work”.<sup>50</sup>

The image of the enemy was, nonetheless, quite difficult to define at a time when the inner-party witch hunt was intensifying. Significantly Yaroslavsky delivered a lecture to the 16th party conference on party purges and concerning the antireligious fight.<sup>51</sup> This speech is a good example of his “centrist” religious policy line. When he commenting on

48 See GARF1 f.1235, op.43, d.67, l. 313.

49 GARF1 f.5263, op.1, d.5 “Протокол №3. Заседания Постоянной комиссии при Президиуме ВЦИК по рассмотрению религиозных вопросов 31 декабря 1929 года”.

50 SZR, 641; Lewin 1968, 490; Danilov 1988, 77, 99.

51 Deutscher 1987, 18–19. See also: K16, 606. After the 15th congress Yaroslavsky had urged that the battle against religion not be weakened and in the March 1928 he published a lengthy article concerning the connections between the cultural revolution and antireligious activities. In this article he reasoned that this was due to the existence of primitive agriculture which had survived the fall of the autocracy. The solution to that problem was the implementation of the “socialist culture, which brings about the death for religion”. YII, 233. “Культурная революция и антирелигиозная пропаганда”.

the mistakes of local control committees he mentioned the use of icons in the houses of workers. He regarded the presence of icons in the house of a communist as a sign that this particular communist had not rejected religion. But at the same time he stressed that a communist must of necessity live with his family and could not demand that they also become atheists. Consequently, antireligious work utilizing force was not to be recommended.<sup>52</sup>

Yaroslavsky gave as an example an incident where a "half-worker and half-peasant" had written a letter to a priest asking him to baptize his child. This father had greeted the priest with a "communist greeting". Yaroslavsky considered the greeting of a priest in such a manner to be outrageous. He also described some other areas where the situation was even more confused. His list of errors included among other things alcoholism, being in company with non-party people, family-relations with kulaks and hooliganism. A important section of this list of "errors" condemned religion: attending religious ceremonies, observing religious feasts, receiving the priest with the cross into one's house, good relations with the priest, etc.<sup>53</sup>

In conclusion, he demanded the purge of those mistaken elements which had fraternized with "alien" elements.<sup>54</sup> Yaroslavsky's lecture shows how the battle between the "moderates" and the Stalinist activists was escalating in the party. Among the victims of the hardliners were senior party officials such as Rykov. Nevertheless, Rykov defended himself during the congress of the XIV All-Russian Soviets in May 1929, stating that the fight against the religious narcotics would be successful only with the support of the broad masses.<sup>55</sup> Later in this congress, Rykov explained that the fight against religion should be a popular fight and should be associated with cultural development. He warned that to use violent methods in this battle would cause only harm, because "decisive methods of battle" should be directed only against kulaks and NEPmen. In summing up his arguments, he stated that religion would be exterminated only by peaceful methods and he stressed that he did not believe that there

52 "Когда мы думаем, что религию можно изгнать насильственно, это неправильно, а на основе этого неправильного взгляда делаются совершенно неправильные выводы". K16, 597.

53 K16, 602. Later Yaroslavsky reported to the Central Control Committee that 4.9% of peasant communist were ostracized for religious reasons and only 4.2% from workers' cells. In Eastern regions the rate was more higher. VII, 294. "Партия очищается от негодного элемента". The Smolensk Archives give a vivid portrait of the purges; ordinary communists, the Komsomols and even members of the "Godless"-movement had taken part in religious activities. Fainsod 1958, 413.

54 K16, 606. See also K16, 660.

55 VSS XIV (Z1), 17. See also VSS XIV (Z1), 16-17.

existed a popular movement for more aggressive methods in antireligious work which should be supported, but communists should not hurry things too much. Rykov told his audience that it would have been possible to close all the churches in the Soviet Union but that this was not done because it was felt that it would not be effective in the battle against religion.<sup>56</sup>

Rykov was interrupted during his speech (something that rarely happened to those who were “in favour”) and a voice from the floor shouted that the masses had themselves carried out the decision to close down churches but that he had delayed making a decision and “procrastinated” for six months.<sup>57</sup> Rykov answered this accusation and regretted that some communists had a “peculiar relation” to the government, believing that the regime should decide these acts hastily and without due consideration.<sup>58</sup> Attacks against the Narkompros were another revealing example of the Cultural Revolution. Stalinist activists often regarded the Narkompros as a defender of the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. The educational policy of the Narkompros in particular aroused hostility on the part of the Komsomol. Although Marxist ideology was established as the cornerstone of the Soviet schooling system, this did not satisfy all communists. The Komsomols demanded that the Narkompros should institute a more ideological education. They objected to the fact that Lunacharsky’s Commissariat did not allow the teaching of atheism in schools but simply favoured non-religious (без-религиозный) education. During the spring of 1927 the League of the Godless launched a campaign against the non-religious teaching of the Narkompros. As a result of this prolonged debate, in 1929 the Narkompros fell into line behind the other Soviet institutions actively combating religion. In the atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution the Narkompros was obliged to cease “non-religious” education and begin atheist teaching in schools. Prior to this the Central Committee had ordered that pioneer organizations should fight against religious vestiges among school children.<sup>59</sup>

The reason for this conflict was not Lunacharsky’s flawed ideological pedigree, as might be thought from his past, but rather the fact that the majority of the children and their parents were religiously-minded and Lunacharsky wanted to avoid open confrontations with

\*\*\*\*\*  
56 VSS XIV (Z1), 12–14.

57 ...Голос с места: Массы выносят постановления о закрытии церквей, а вы по 6 месяцев маринуете, волокитничаете, не рассматриваете. VSS XIV (Z3), 14.

58 VSS XIV (Z3), 14. See also Fitzpatrick 1992, 119–120.

59 Curtiss 1953, 213–214; KPSS IV, 102. See also VIII, 558. “Примечания”; SSR, 388.



them. He genuinely believed that openly atheist teaching in the immediate wake of the October Revolution could have been counter-productive. The Narkompros had also acknowledged the principle of equal rights to education for all (even for the children of priests), which did not please the more ardent communists.<sup>60</sup>

These explanations could not pacify radical cultural activists. The accusations of one particular delegate from the Vladimir oblast in the XIV All-Russian Congress of the Soviets perhaps best illustrates the nature of their criticism. In his speech he described how higher party officials delayed and even obstructed the demands of the masses concerning the closing down of the churches and the confiscation of church bells. As one unknown communist declared from the floor:

And then they study [the demands to close down churches], study deeply and so deeply that they can not climb out from that depth – [they have been] hindering this for half a year. And when the workers can no longer stand this and start to close the churches themselves and take away the bells, then the VTsIK will punish us for violating instructions...<sup>61</sup>

The best evidence for this divergence between moderates and extremists inside the ruling regime was the II Congress of the Godless which convened in Moscow on 10 June 1929. The central issue of the congress was that the implementation of the antireligious work had given rise to two different opinions inside the movement. The “culturalists” centred around the Central Council of the League (Yaroslavsky) as well as around the Narkompros (Lunacharsky). In their opinion, religion was not simply a political force but also a social factor. According to the “culturalists”, these facts presupposed the policy of education and systematic propaganda in the antireligious struggle.<sup>62</sup>

60 Fitzpatrick 1979, 11–13, 22–25, 42; Fitzpatrick 1991, 20. See also VSS XIV (Z9), 24.

61 “...А тут изучают, глубоко изучают и так глубоко, что не могут вылезти из этой глубины, – но полгода держат дела. маринуют. И когда рабочие не выдерживают и начинают сами закрывать церкви и снимать колокола, то ВЦИК нас карает за нарушение инструкции”. VSS XIV (Z11), 26. See also VSS XIV (Z11), 27.

62 Peris 1991, 714–715.

63 УИИ, 430–435, 447–449. “Доклад на ИИ Всесоюзном съезде безбожников”; УИВ, 75–76. “О самокритике в СВБ. Доклад на заседании Исполбюро ЦС СВБ. 5 ноября 1929 г.” Later on 27 October, he insisted that careful thinking was needed in every case where a church was to be closed. УИВ, 70. “В наступление”. See also Kalinin 1960 II, 349–355. “Борьба с религией и социалистическое строительство. Речь на II Всесоюзном съезде союза воинствующих безбожников 14 июня 1929 г”. See also Fainsod 1958, 435.

In his lecture to the congress, Yaroslavsky warned his listeners against unprepared and brutal interventions in the antireligious work. Actions such as closing down churches or removing priests without the genuine support of the people could be catastrophic. The main target of his criticism were militant Komsomol leaders, whom he accused of sponsoring too hasty and brutal actions against religion. The Komsomols seemed to have adopted a different course to that of the party in this area.<sup>63</sup>

The Komsomols and especially the representatives of the “Godless” organization from Moscow answered this criticism by arguing that religion was a direct threat to and the enemy of socialism. These “interventionists”, as Daniel Peris has called them, were not so interested in the dimensions of religion itself but saw it only as a counter-revolutionary vestige which should be dealt with by administrative methods. Their main argument was that priests and religious leaders were deliberately undermining and sabotaging the transformation of Soviet society to socialism. In the tense atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution they did not limit their criticism to the religious organizations, but found scapegoats in the communist party too. The older generation of the party leadership especially came under pressure. The accusations against Lunacharsky’s too mild attitudes in the antireligious campaign are a typical example of this.<sup>64</sup>

Before the II congress of the “Godless” movement, a certain representative of the militant “interventionists” attacked Rykov and Lunacharsky for the “right-deviationism” of their antireligious propaganda. In his lecture Yaroslavsky defended both the above accused, commenting that Lunacharsky was ready to admit his errors and that Rykov had not been a specialist in the antireligious campaign. Moreover, Yaroslavsky pointed out to the accusers that Rykov had simply said that the religious “narcotic” must be liquidated from the “heads of peasants and workers” and that he himself did not see anything wrong in this opinion.<sup>65</sup>

These serious charges, which reflected the militant atmosphere during the Cultural Revolution, were not simply limited to the im-

64 VIII, 557–558. “Примечания”; Peris 1991, 715–716; Tucker 1990, 101. See also RTsKhIDNI f. 613, op. 3, d. 197, ll. 20–22.

65 VIII, 451–452. “Доклад на III Всесоюзном съезде безбожников”; Kolarz 1961, 295–266. For Yaroslavsky’s criticism of Tomsy, see VIII, 439–441; RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.122 “Проект – резолюции Политбюро ЦК ВКП /6/ по докладу об итогах II съезда союза Безбожников и работе антирелигиозной пропаганды”. See also RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.85, d.288 “Государство и профсоюзы (ответ тов. Томскому тезисы его к XIV съезду ВКП)” and Kuromiya 1990, 45–46.

plementation of antireligious activities. Militant communists also extended their class war to the domain of philosophy. Charges of too lenient a religious policy served as an ideological weapon in the debate between the two schools of Soviet philosophy. The opposing schools, Mechanistic Materialism and Dialectic Materialism, had been rivals among Soviet scholars throughout the 1920s. This philosophical schism was finally settled by Stalin on 27 December 1929. In his article on the agrarian question Stalin condemned both Mechanism and Deborinism and accused some Soviet philosophical theoreticians of not having kept pace with rapid developments in the Soviet Union. From that moment on, A.M. Deborin was officially ostracised by his opponents, who associated him with the heresy of "Rightist deviationism" and accused him of "not heeding Lenin's call for a campaign against religion".<sup>66</sup> This search for "heretic" scapegoats epitomized the Cultural Revolution<sup>67</sup>. Leading historians such as S.F. Platonov (1860–1933) and E.V. Tarle (1875–1955) were condemned for giving too favourable a picture of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. According to Robert Tucker, Stalin was now gradually promoting his concept of national Bolshevism.<sup>68</sup>

This conference resulted in neither the "interventionists" nor the "culturalists" gaining the upper hand. On the one hand, the most extreme activities of the "interventionists" were condemned, but on the other hand, the "culturalists" suffered a defeat when the conference of the "Godless" movement demanded more intensive methods in the antireligious battle.<sup>69</sup> But for a short time, the "interventionists" appeared to be victorious and in April 1929 the combined plenum of the Central Committee approved drastic measures against the moderates. Bukharin was expelled from his posts in *Pravda* and on the Comintern. During the same plenum of the Central Committee a law was adopted which hit different religious organizations hard, especially the sectarians who had managed well under the conditions of the NEP. This piece of legislation seemed to represent a total victory for the "interventionists". The law of 8 April 1929 crippled the activities of religious

\*\*\*\*\*  
66 Wetter 1963, 132–133; Tucker 1990, 148–151. See also VIII, 556. "Примечания"; VSS XIV (Z1), 16–17.

67 The charges of too conciliatory attitudes towards religion were sometimes connected to general political accusations. Stalin, e.g. had channels for gaining information about all important party figures and could use such information to discredit them. Stalin's archives contained a list of errors and misbehaviour. Along with the moral vices of drunkenness, addiction to drugs, embezzlement, debauchery, adultery. Information on religious behaviour was also included. Avtorkhanov 1959, 111.

68 Tucker 1990, 102–104. See also Fitzpatrick 1992, 119–125.

69 VIII, 558–559. "Примечания".

organizations. According to this legislation (§ 4), before undertaking any activities religious societies were obliged to register officially. Nevertheless, the most important consequence of this law was that it forbade religious organizations to undertake any social services (§ 17) and restricted religious activities to church buildings and services.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, on 22 May 1929 the Soviet Constitution was amended by the Congress of the XIV All-Russian Soviets of VTsIK. The existing right to conduct religious propaganda was abolished and the amended Constitution acknowledged only the “liberty of confession” for Soviet citizens. The Congress justified this change by pointing out that religious organizations had exploited the older constitution for “counter-revolutionary” purposes.<sup>71</sup>

These measures had serious consequences together with the implementation of a full-scale class war in the countryside during the autumn of 1929. Particularly hard hit were the wealthy and ordinary peasants who supported religious organizations. During the height of this new “civil war”, Stalin himself demanded more resolute actions against the class enemies, including priests.<sup>72</sup> So it was understandable that priests resisting the closure of their church were the first to be punished for counter-revolutionary activity. The slogan “the church is the kulaks’ agitprop” indicates in practice how party activists saw religious organizations during this stage of the Cultural Revolution. The church was the ideal place for counter-agitation and the anti-Soviet agitation which priests were alleged to be conducting. At the same time religion and people working in religious organizations were accused of all kinds of political crimes. They were found guilty of actively disrupting grain deliveries, of undermining Soviet cultural work, of creating illegal groupings in order to rebel against Soviet power, of “hiding kulaks and Nepmen under the banner of religion”, of enticing workers and poor peasants to join religious organizations, etc.<sup>73</sup> So, according to Soviet officials, the closing of this “agit-punkt” was the

70 SURb, 474–483; Alexeev, 1979, 29–30; Conquest 1986, 202–203.

71 GARF2 f.353, op.10, d.17 “Объяснительная записка к проекту постановления Всероссийского Съезда Советов о внесении изменений и дополнении в Конституцию РСФСР; SSR, 400 (“...свобода религиозных исповеданий и антирелигиозной пропаганды признается за всеми гражданами.”); VSS XIV (Z13), 45.

72 “...Достижение партии состоит в том, что нам удалось организовать этот **коренной перелом** в недрах самого крестьянства и повести за собой широкие массы бедноты и середняков, несмотря на неимоверные трудности, несмотря на отчаянное противодействие всех и всяких тёмных сил, от кулаков и попов до филистеров и правых оппортунистов”. SS 12, 125. “Год великого перелома”. See also Trifonov 1975, 298.

73 Fainsod 1958, 436. See also Fitzpatrick 1992, 129–132.



“natural” response to this threat. Together with the above measures, the implementation of new taxation rules laid a heavy burden on priests and religious organizations.<sup>74</sup>

The “Godless” movement was now eagerly mobilizing itself together with the Komsomols for collectivization. The Godless movement was given the mission of assisting the government to undermine the influence of religion among poor peasants. The official orders included also a warning not to fanaticize these peasants but to work carefully with them. This warning, however, was practically nullified by the remark that the poor peasants were often under the influence of priests, mullahs and rabbis.<sup>75</sup> The leadership of the Godless movement was now actively taking part in the collectivization in the countryside and advancing its antireligious propaganda without restriction. According to its propaganda, clerical and sectarian “circles” were also organizing to resist them and the Godless movement was now engaged in the final battle against religion in the Russian countryside.<sup>76</sup>

Not only the Orthodox church but also other religious organization suffered from these raids. For example, during the process of collectivization sectarian agricultural communes were disbanded and turned into state farms despite their resistance to the last.<sup>77</sup> In accordance with this policy, the most ambitious plan by the Evangelical Christians, the scheme to build the so-called City of the Sun, was

74 Conquest 1986, 202–205; Davies 1980, 228–229. “Interventionists” favoured punitive taxation, i.e., for the use of the churches. Yaroslavsky favoured this suggestion but it was later temporarily hindered by VTsIK. According to representative of VTsIK, P. Smidovich, this suggestion was against the “separation decree” and the proletarian state could not accept this kind of “church policy”. Later when pressure begun to grow this matter was subordinated to Sovnarkom and a special committee was formed to resolve this matter. RTsKhIDNI f. 63, op. 3, d. d. 197, ll. 14, 15–31.

75 GARF1 f.5407, op.1, d.41 “Проект – всем республиком. краевым. и областным советам СБВ. Об антирелигиозной работе среди батрачества и бедноты.”; “Всем республиканским. краевым. областным и губерньским советам СБВ. Об участии. ячеек СБВ в проведении праздника. “день урожая” 23. мая 1929”.

76 For example, see GARF1 f.5407, op.1, d.41. “Об участии организации СБВ в весенней производственно сельско-хозяйственной кампании. Сов. Секретно”; “Инструкция по организации и работе сельской ячейки союза воинствующих Безбожников”; “Совхозцентр и центральный совет союза воинствующих безбожников в СССР – всем совхозтрестам и совхозам”; “;всем центрам и союзам с/х кооперации”; “Проект. Резолюция совещания редакторов деревенских журналов и газет издающихся в Москве. состоявшегося 18 ноября 1929 года при деревенском отделе ВС СБВ. СССР”. See also KPSS IV, 321.

77 Wesson 1963, 74–76, 208.

rejected, although it had already received permission from the Agricultural Commissariat NKZem in 1927. The formal reason for rejecting this plan was, according to the CAP, the anti-Soviet and anti-militarist nature of these plans.<sup>78</sup>

Subsequently, the Soviet regime attacked the religion of the national minorities and justified this attack by the foreign threat. For example, the CAP had even drawn up special orders for the NKVD to carry out surveillance of religious organizations during a possible war. Moreover, religion and “national-chauvinism” were both seen as basic enemies of socialism. For example, on 6 December 1929 Pravda accused the Ukrainian “bourgeoisie, kulaks, bourgeois intelligentsia and clergy” of being associated with “Polish fascism”.<sup>79</sup>

Yaroslavsky had also participated in a campaign of “war-psychosis” and had demanded already in 1927 the collectivization and “perestroika of all economics” as a means of antireligious work.<sup>80</sup> In his article on 27 May 1928 Yaroslavsky demanded the total separation of school and church and remarked that in the Eastern areas of the state mullahs and Jewish religious teachers were controlling educational activities. The mullah was teaching the mother tongue and the Jewish religious teacher was promoting the “incomprehensible ancient hebrew”. In this article he accused both of these not only of breaking Soviet law which required the separation of school and church but also of seeking to make political capital.<sup>81</sup>

As an epilogue we may note that Stalin’s religious policy was based on an almost total lack of any ideological justification. He did not, for example, profess any particularly atheist conviction. Stalin presented very few antireligious arguments and there seems to be no basis for such an idea as “Stalin’s religious policy”. He was relatively indifferent to the ideological reasons for the antireligious struggle which, considering his own background, is somewhat surprising. When we compare two of his documents from this period, one written just before the “Cultural Revolution” and the second written in 1930, it is astonishing to note that both writings have a relatively conciliatory emphasis. In his interview with American communists Stalin stressed that it was not necessary to be an atheist to be a member of the party. He

78 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353 (PCAP 93, 12/11-27); YIII, 560.

79 RTsKhIDNI f.17, op.112, d.353. (PCAP 82, 29/1-27); GARF f.5407, op.1, d.17 (Начиная с листа 185). “Лицо врага”: “Информационные письма 7. Об антирелигиозной работе среди национальностей СССР”; Pravda, 6 December 1929, No. 286. See also Tucker 1990, 104–105.

80 YI, 128–129. “Религия – сила, враждебная рабочему движению”.

81 YI, 135–136. “Не пора ли целиком осуществить декрет об отделении школы от церкви”; Curtiss 1953, 213–214; Powell 1989, 32. See also SSR, 388.

added, however, that the party could not be neutral in relation to religion because the party stood for science and religion for its part was against science.<sup>82</sup>

Stalin's correspondence with Maksim Gorky gives a good picture of his flexibility in matters concerning religious ideology. Gorky had sent a letter to Stalin in which he criticized the antireligious practices in the Soviet Union and urged a more intelligent attitude in this work. Gorky pointed out that communists should be acquainted not only with the history of religion but with the history of the Christian church, religious history, and politics related to these matters. He even recommended that workers in the antireligious field should study the latest exegetical works such as the commentaries of the "Tübingen school", for example.<sup>83</sup>

228

In his response Stalin was ready to agree with Gorky and admitted that in the Soviet press there was great confusion in the field of antireligious propaganda. He exonerated himself in the eyes of Gorky by admitting that sometimes there happened "supernaturally" stupid things in this area<sup>84</sup> and admitted that this work required learning. Later Stalin passed Gorky's letter on to Yaroslavsky for him to answer Gorky in more detail. Accordingly Yaroslavsky wrote to Gorky and attempted to defend antireligious activity in Soviet Union. Despite many shortcomings in this area he drew Gorky's attention to the achievements in the struggle, such as the two million members in the "Bezbozhnik" movement.<sup>85</sup>

The above correspondence reveals how little the sole ruler of the Marxist state was interested in the ideological side of "the Storming of Heaven". The man who had ordered the Komsomols to obliterate the old agricultural society from the countryside, together with its religious roots, was in his letter to Gorky worried about excesses in antireligious work. One explanation for this illogical behaviour may be the interpretation put forward by Tucker. In his monograph Tucker describes how Stalin praised Ivan the Terrible as a great and wise ruler who had liquidated his internal foes and made only one mistake. Each time Ivan liquidated a family of feudal lords he would repent for a whole year and seek absolution for his sins instead of acting more decisively.<sup>86</sup> For Stalin there were no such obstacles as God, ideology, friends or relatives, and it seems he had no genuine ideological convictions at all.

82 SS 10, 131-133. "Беседа с первой американской рабочей делегацией".

83 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.172 "Письмо Горького Сталину 29.11.1929".

84 SS 12, 176. "Письмо А.М. Горькому".

85 RTsKhIDNI f.89, op.4, d.172 "Тов. А.М. Горькому. 24 января 1930г.".

86 Tucker 1990, 227.

He was able to get rid of his best friends or modify Bolshevik ideology when they proved to be obstacles in his path to supreme power. As a manifestation of this ideological “eclecticism” Stalin was hailed in the newspapers on 21 December 1929 as “Lenin’s first pupil” and the “Leader (Vozhd)”. He was now the sole master of his party – the party of unbelief.<sup>87</sup>

87 \*\*\*\*\*  
Avtorkhanov 1959, 157; Tucker 1990, 128–129.



---

## VI Conclusions

In summing up the development of the party's religious policy during the period 1917–1929 we see how there were two competing factors which influenced this matter. On the one hand, the ideological confrontation between Marxism and religion together with the historical background of the Bolshevik party made relations between the religious organizations and the Soviet rulers more tense. But on the other hand, the general political situation and sudden turns in the power struggle inside the ruling party were anyway more influential in this field. When confronting political reality the Bolsheviks were able to push their ideology and historical aversions aside. In general we may state that the religious policy of the Bolshevik party was orientated more by political reality than by ideology. The early decades of Soviet power could not only be portrayed not only as the era of merciless persecution of the ROC but, especially during the NEP, religious policy approach of the communist regime included “soft” techniques. Moreover, inside the ruling regime there was a substantial group of communist leaders who favoured a more gradual tempo on the path towards socialism and in the antireligious struggle.

Moreover, there are great similarities between Soviet nationality and religious policies in theory and practice. From the October revolution up till the high NEP the Bolsheviks preferred political manoeuvring to extraordinary measures against the “two vestiges of capitalism”. In order to preserve their own political power the Bolsheviks sought to avoid a head-on collision with the former state church, other religious organizations and nationalities. So instead of direct attacks, the general party line had turned away from its ideological presumptions. And where no historical antagonism existed, as was the case with the sectarians, the Bolsheviks could show more tact in their religious policy.

The explanation for this cautious Bolshevik attitude was obvious; after the October Revolution the new government soon realized that the ROC was deeply rooted in traditional Russian society. By their early legislative acts the Bolsheviks were able to build only some of the foundations of the secularized state. Although their ambition was to

drive religion to the margins of the society, the ROC remained an outstanding political force in Soviet Russia during the 1920s. This was especially apparent during the civil war when religious questions were only of secondary importance to the ruling regime. The Bolsheviks were fighting for their survival and the ROC could continue its basic functions as before, as long as it did not engage in activities directly hostile to the Soviet regime.

During the civil war period the principle of “isolating the church” was the main objective of Bolshevik religious policy. In line with this religious policy line and the idea that the civil war was only a “transition period”, we may note that during the first post-revolutionary years Bolshevik religious policy vacillated; there was hardly any co-ordination between different state and party organs in this matter. As a general practice the Soviet security organs, together with the NKYust’s “Liquidation Commission”, had the main responsibility in this area. Although these organs were staffed by ideological “hawks”, the Soviet regime, nonetheless, executed its early religious policy in accordance with the political pragmatism dictated mainly by Lenin.

231

The justifications for this “isolation policy” were almost identical with the explanations of the early Soviet nationality policy. After the revolution the Bolsheviks were utilizing national feelings as a means to establish their power in Eastern areas of the state and even to spread the Soviet system in the East. Accordingly, Jews and Moslems in the Soviet East were given the possibility of encouraging their religious life by local communists.

The practical implementation of religious policy during the civil war was, as mentioned above, concentrated officially in Soviet judicial and security organs. The Fifth (later Eighth) Division of the People’s Commissariat of Justice had the responsibility for implementing the “separation of church and state”. Moreover, from the beginning of Soviet rule the Cheka and NKVD were keen on supervising religious organizations and keeping an eye on their political activities. In the civil war conditions the main duty of these organs was to ensure that religious organizations were not assisting the White armies.

However, on religious policy questions the Bolshevik party itself was divided into two basic factions. Points of disagreement lay mainly in the tactics to be employed in religious policy; no-one in the ruling party denied the importance of the class struggle and the fight against religion. The main argument of the “doves” was that brutal actions against believers and especially against peasants could endanger the revolution. Some members of the party, such as Bonch-Bruевич and L.B. Kamenev, had influential positions inside the Soviet regime and

could actually establish more tactful relations with religious organizations.

The “hawks” were located in the Komsomol and to some extent in the NKYust. These organs were filled with more ideologically-minded communists. Nonetheless, during the civil war the religious policy of the ruling party constituted a compromise between these two factions. Terror and violent actions were officially directed only against politically hostile clergymen, but on a local level Bolshevik terror tended to be “pre-emptive” in nature. In accordance with the “isolation policy” the Bolsheviks even attempted to encourage “neutral” priests. Only during the most heated battles of the civil war did the Soviet regime decide to move against the monasteries.

After adopting the NEP policy in 1921, the Soviet leadership had more time to concentrate on its internal “enemies”, such as the remnants of the political opposition: the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks (both of which had been nearly obliterated as functioning parties) as well as the ROC. As a result of this political situation, the “religious NEP” was delayed almost two years. During this early NEP period (1921–1923) L.D. Trotsky was mainly in charge of implementing Soviet religious policy and under his leadership the regime turned from the “isolation policy” to the principle of “divide and rule”. During the deep political and economical crisis of 1921–1922 Trotsky and Lenin wanted to deal a death blow to the ROC, which seemed to be the last bastion of the political opposition. Also the desperate lack of hard currency constituted a formidable reason for confiscating churches. As a natural outcome of this changed approach the ruling regime attempted to destroy the ROC and undermine other religions by creating schisms within religious organizations. This plan, devised by Trotsky, greatly damaged them and especially the ROC and from that time on the ruling regime realized the advantage of “meddling” as a tactic in its religious policy.

During the short interval of 1921–1922 the organizational structure of the religious policy organs was radically changed. The Soviet organs dedicated to education and enlightenment were unable to produce the New Socialist Man without religion. The Narkompros and Glavpolitprosvet were unable to gain any authority in religious policy. The party took over religious policy affairs and the so-called Agitprop’s (APO) Antireligious Commission was put in charge of carrying out religious policy initiatives. Originally it was led by Trotsky and worked under his authority and the authority of the inner circle of the Politburo. The basis of Trotsky’s authority was Lenin’s political support for him. As long as Lenin was at the helm Trotsky could execute his own policy in this



field, but as soon as Lenin became ill his position was undermined.

Moreover, it seems most likely that only a small inner circle of the ruling regime (Trotsky's commission and the inner circle of the Politburo: Lenin, Stalin and Molotov) was in charge of the "confiscation conflict" of 1921–1922. This operation had two political objectives: firstly, the confiscation of valuables from churches was done in order to finance Soviet power; secondly, Trotsky's plan had the hidden goal of undermining the authority of the ROC. In order to weaken resistance among believers he introduced a method of fomenting schisms inside all religious organizations in Russia. Trotsky's ultimate political objective seemed to be the total destruction of the ROC and other religious organizations.

Trotsky could easily foment a schism within the ROC; social tensions between "white" and "black" clergy could easily be exploited by the communist regime. Moreover, as a result of the "confiscation conflict" the ROC was forced to change its policy from hostile neutrality to one of loyalty. The case of Patriarch Tikhon reveals how effectively the ruling regime was able to exploit the antagonism between the ROC and the Renovationists.

As already stated, Lenin's illness complicated the situation within the Soviet leadership. As soon as Lenin became ill Trotsky's position was at risk and the triumvirate had a free hand to alter the direction of Soviet religious policy. One of the main reasons was the triumvirate's desire to discredit Trotsky during the hidden power struggle. In order to do so the triumvirate and especially Zinoviev introduced slogans which contradicted Trotsky's more aggressive policy by appeasing the peasants and the neutral intelligentsia. Moreover, some members of the ruling regime, for example from the NKID, had appealed to Stalin to pacify the "hawks" in the Soviet leadership. The decline of Trotsky and the rise of Stalin was one of the salient features of 1923. Stalin's position was further secured when he was appointed General Secretary of the party and was given the task of harmonizing different party organs. Consequently, it was a simple enough task for him to wrest control over the party's antireligious work away from Trotsky. At the same time the triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin halted the antireligious campaigns of the early NEP.

The 12th congress was a turning point in Soviet religious policy. Trotsky and his committee had prepared the resolution of the congress concerning religious organizations. But Zinoviev and the other triumvirate members nullified Trotsky's more aggressive resolution with their conciliatory speeches. In order to appease the peasants and discredit Trotsky's antireligious campaigns during the early NEP, the



triumvirate adopted a more conciliatory attitude towards religion. This also meant that the party was obliged to turn away from the antireligious methods of the early NEP to peaceful techniques such as propaganda and agitation of high NEP. The 12th congress was from this point of view the beginning of the new religious policy, representing the start of organized antireligious propaganda in place of administrative measures.

As earlier, the Soviet religious policy and the nationality policy were linked together; the 12th congress represented also the official start of the so-called “korenizatsiya-policy”. The birth of this policy was a kind of compromise between the hardliners in Moscow and local national communists. After the civil war Moscow was more and more reluctant to utilize nationality or religion in its internal policy. On the other hand, independently-minded local communists were equally disinclined to follow Moscow’s line. The result was a compromise between these two lines. On one hand, the heresy of “Sultan-Galievism” was condemned by Stalin. But on the other hand, the 12th congress gave a free hand to national communists to execute the “korenizatsiya policy” advocated by Sultan-Galiev. As a result, local Moslem and Jewish populations in the East were able to promote their autonomy within the ethnic and religious policy spheres. Moderate leaders like Kalinin even attempted to solve the Jewish question by searching for locations for a Jewish homeland. Furthermore, it was important for Soviet power to execute a conciliatory policy in the East because at the same time the NKID was attempting to utilize liberal clergy and liberation movements there in order to spread communism among Moslems in general.

Another outcome of the high NEP was that it split the ruling party even more clearly into two camps. The political battle between moderates and hardliners was intensified during the high NEP and was apparent at every level of party life. For example, the split was articulated by two different philosophical schools: Mechanism and Deborinism. The peasant question was especially problematic and could be reduced to the simple question: by what sort of methods should socialism be built?

Subsequently, the struggle for power between different leaders, the conflict between “left” and “right”, also had an impact on Soviet religious policy during that time. To sum up, we may find certain loose groups such as the “pro-sectarians” who wanted to promote Russian socialist agriculture by means of sectarian communes and working methods. There even existed a small group of “sectarian-communists” such as I.M. Tregubov and others who openly sponsored co-operation between the party and sectarians. Inside the highest leadership of the

party Bonch-Bruevich and Lunacharsky, and to some extent Kalinin, supported this model simply as a tactic for enticing peasants to work under socialism.

Associated with this group were so-called "rightists" such as Rykov, Tomsy and Bukharin who wanted a more gradual pace towards socialism and sponsored conciliatory methods in their religious policy. In time socialism would win, it was thought, and so religion would inevitably "wither away". It must be noted that demands for a more conciliatory religious policy were often related to internal or international events. Moreover, we may mention the Soviet Foreign Office, the NKID, which promoted conciliatory policies towards religious organizations because of possible international protests.

The "hawks" for their part were not a monolithic group but were also divided into certain camps. The press discussion before the 13th congress had already revealed preferences; on the one hand there were I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov who favoured a "Mechanistic" interpretation of Soviet religious policy and believed that enlightenment would finally undermine the "sociological roots" of religion. However, the majority of the ideologically-motivated communists preferred a more drastic attitude towards religion. According to these "ultimate hawks" religion was something like "booze, cocaine and syphilis" and the party should get rid of it as soon as possible.

In summarizing the organizational view of Soviet religious policy at the height of the NEP, we see how the party's religious policy was concentrated in special supervisory and governing organs (the CAP and the secret police). The Fifth Division of the NKYust was abolished and APO's role diminished to zero. As before, the real decisions were made in small circles of the party: during Lenin's time, in the Sovnarkom, the Politburo, APO and in Trotsky's antireligious commission. Important decisions were always taken in the Politburo, and during the high NEP, in the CAP. There was real open debate inside the party before and during the 12th and the 13th congresses, but in practice religious policy decisions were taken in closed party circles.

The new method which the ruling party had developed during the "confiscation conflict" was that of creating a "loyal wing" inside a particular religious organization. This method suited better the "peaceful" NEP period and often active "meddling" by the representatives of the ruling regime produced more effective results than plain terror would have. This method revealed, however, the inconsistency of the religious policy objectives of the NEP period. Firstly the secret police and the CAP functioned as religious policy organs with the "normal" duties of granting permits, etc. But along with this "normal" governing

duty, they had the task of meddling and directing, especially after the “confiscation conflict”. Finally, these Soviet religious policy organs served as “liquidation centres” which attempted to undermine religious belief among the Soviet people.

The main objective of the high NEP religious policy was to create loyal churches with pro-Soviet attitudes; in practice this signified only promoting an internal schism in the ROC. The Renovationist church had only tactical value to the ruling regime. It was at the beginning planned as a temporary measure, but when the “loyal” Renovationists attempted to secure their position the government abandoned it. The declaration of Metropolitan Sergei in 1927 was the climax of this successful policy; after 1917 the ROC had gradually transferred from “hostility” to neutrality and from “benevolent neutrality” to the unconditional loyalty of Sergei.

236

To sum up, the years of the “high NEP” represented a brief breathing-space for all religious organizations and especially for the sectarian movement it was a period of great success. The ruling regime also sought reconciliation with the Catholics when “doves” in the party were looking for an improvement in relations with the Vatican. In any event, both the Soviet regime and the Vatican were more interested in double dealing than in any improvement in their relations. Nonetheless, we may state that there seemed to be a genuine possibility for a more peaceful development in the party’s religious policy at that time. In addition, the liberal implementation of the nationality policy during the years 1924–1927 demonstrates that the party was temporarily seeking civil peace. This breathing-space was in any event of quite short duration. The open protest of M.M. Kostelovskaya and the religious policy debate in 1926 clearly bear witness to this. At the same time, the high-NEP reached its peak at the 15th Party Congress in 1927.

Stalin finally won the struggle for the supreme leadership in 1929 and established his own personality cult on top of that of Lenin. By utilizing the fervour of the younger generation in the party, Stalin was able to turn the struggle for power in his favour. The Komsomols were eagerly contemplating the desirability of a new civil war and the Stalinist leadership was able to utilize this pent-up frustration. The list of supposed enemies in this “civil war” also included religious organizations. Subsequently, the moderate wing of the ruling regime was silenced and by 1929 Stalin’s Cultural Revolution was complete.

The party’s antireligious battle was greatly intensified during the Cultural Revolution. The Bolshevik party turned more to the policy of a direct attack on all “class enemies” and religious organizations were first in line. Although the moderate “culturalists” attempted to stress the

importance of peaceful antireligious policies the atmosphere of the time favoured the hardline “interventionists” who backed more resolute measures against religion. They saw the “culturalists” as betraying the Bolshevik revolution by their aspiration to proceed more slowly in this matter. It was also a battle between the generations; even Yaroslavsky was counted as a “bourgeoisie” by the young ideologically-minded “interventionists” who sought to destroy religious organizations all at once.

On an organizational level some of the earlier commissions were liquidated and in 1929 their responsibilities were transferred to the new “Cult Commission” under the authority of the VTsIK Presidium. It was apparent that this new Stalinist organ could be controlled better than the CAP which had for example in 1927 voted for its line towards Moslems. This change of responsibilities emphasized even more the transition of power from the party to the Stalinist administration. So on the eve of the Stalinist era the “party of unbelief” was superseded by its leader in religious policy affairs.

When summing up the earlier academic discussion and the results of this study we may also see the contradiction in results between studies based on public and so-called “samizdat” sources. Due to the lack of original sources there have been two different traditions in this field; on the one hand there are authors such as Curtiss and Carr who show “understanding” towards Soviet explanations and argue seriously using Soviet propaganda. This tradition has led sometimes to too “positive” evaluations of the real motives and purposes of the Soviet ruling regime. On the other hand there are other studies (i.e., Solzhenitsyn, Nezhnyi) which are more critical in their evaluations. According to these authors the Soviet leadership did not differ from ordinary gangsters and Soviet religious policy was nothing but constant purges and terror against all religions. Now with new information from the archives we can evaluate the decision-making process of the Bolshevik party with more precision and specific details than before. In most cases archive sources have verified the results of earlier studies but sometimes the facts have contradicted received wisdom in this field.

The picture from the early decades is anyway complex; we may even state that Bolshevik religious policy was a synthesis of these two opposite opinions. During the early decades the ruling regime was not a unanimous and monolithic band of atheists. However, the representatives of Soviet power clearly realized that they were in the middle of a class war and on the march to an atheist society. Because of this communists could at the same time grant permission for the printing of Bibles and then plan how to interfere in and infiltrate



religious organizations and persecute religious leaders in order to gain control over their organizations, divide them and finally destroy them. This ambiguity also explains the emergence of these two different traditions; both “schools” can justify their views by an abundance of arguments.

---

# VII Sources and bibliography

## 1. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Russian Centre of Conservation / Study of Records for Modern History (RTsKhIDNI) РЦХИДНИ. Российский центр хранения и изучения документов новейшей истории.

Fond 17	The CPSU Central Committee
Fond 89	Em. I. Yaroslavsky
Fond 150	I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov
Fond 613	Comintern

239

State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF1) ГАРФ.  
Государственный архив Российской Федерации.

Fond 393	NKVD
Fond 3431	Sobor of 1917-1918 (ROC)
Fond 5263	The Commission of Cults (VTsIK)
Fond 5407	"Godless" movement
Fond 5446с, е	A.I. Rykov
Fond 6980	Constitution Committee 1918
Fond 7541	Society for Organizing Land for Soviet Jews (OZET, OZEM)

State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF2) ГАРФ.  
Государственный архив Российской Федерации.

Fond 353	NKYust
----------	--------

Archive of State Museum concerning History of Religion (AGMIR)  
АГМИР. Архив государственный музей истории религии.

Fond 2	Ministry of Culture (RSFSR)
--------	-----------------------------

References to the individual opis and delo of each fond may be found in the notes. The Soviet government officially abolished the old calendar

used in pre-Revolutionary Russia when 1 February 1918 became 14 February 1918. In the transliteration of Russian names the system of the British Standards Institution (BSI) will be followed.<sup>1</sup>

The names of original documents will generally be referred to in the Cyrillic alphabet. If this is not possible, the location of the original documents is shown by indicating the leaves of a particular file. The name of the party or state organ in question and date of the document is also given in parentheses, where possible. For example, f.393, op.27, d.1387, ll.17–24 or f.17, op.3, d.349 (Pp 1, 3/5-22) – Politburo protocol of 3 May 1922.

## 2. PRINTED SOURCES

240

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| AK                       | Азбука Коммунизма. Популярное объяснение программы Российской Коммунистической Партии Большевиков. Н. Бухарин, Е. Преображенский. Государственное издательство. 1920. Петербург.             |
| AT I-IV                  | Архив Троцкого. Коммунистическая оппозиция в СССР. 1923-1927. Том I-IV. Редактор-составитель Ю.Фельштинский. Издательский центр 'Терра'. Copyright 1988 by Chalidze Publications. Ярославль. |
| Bakunin, Mikhail<br>1906 | Бог и государство. "Издание Равенство". (Тверская) Москва.   |
| BB I                     | В.Д. Бонч-Бруевич. Том I. О религии, религиозном сектантстве и церкви. Избранные сочинения. Издательство Академии Наук СССР. Отв. редактор. Н.А. Смирнов. 1959. Москва.                      |
| BDOFA                    | British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print. General Editors: Kenneth Bourne and D.Cameron Watt. Part II. Series A. The Soviet       |

1 Diacritical marks will be omitted and soft and hard signs will not be transliterated in names of places. The endings -ый/ий are rendered as -y. For example, see Terence Wade, *A Comprehensive Russian Grammar*. Blackwell Publishers. Oxford. 1992.

- Union, 1917–1939. Editor: Dominic Lieven. Vol. 8, Soviet Union. March 1925–December 1926/ Vol. 9, January 1927–April 1930. 1986. University Publications of America.
- BKh Биографическая хроника. Владимир Ильич Ленин. Декабрь 1921–январь 1924. Институт Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС. Издательство политической литературы. Москва.. 1982.
- BSEa Большая Советская Энциклопедия Том LX. Главный редактор: О.Ю. Шмидт. Государственное словарно-энциклопедическое издательство “Советская Энциклопедия”. Огиз. 1934. Москва.
- BSEb Большая Советская Энциклопедия. Том 29. Главный редактор: Б.А. Введенский. Второе издание. Государственное научное-издательство. “Советская Энциклопедия”. 1954. Москва. **241**
- BSEc Большая Советская Энциклопедия. Том 32. Главный редактор: Б.А Введенский. второе издание. Государственное научное издательство “Большая Советская Энциклопедия”. 1955. Москва.
- Bukharin, N. & Pozner, V. sa. Просвещение как орудие классовой борьбы.
- Bukharin, Nikolai Ivanovich 1918a Церковь и школа в советской Республике. Издательство Всероссийского Центрального Исполнительного Комитета Советов. Р.С.К. и. К депутатов. Москва
- 1918b Программа Коммунистов (большевиков). Издательство “Коммунист”. Москва.
- 1989 Проблемы теории и практика социализма. Институт Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС. Издательство политической литературы. Москва.
- 1990 “Путь к социализму”. Избранные произведения. Новосибирск “Наука” Сибирское отделение.



	DMV	"Дело" Митрополита Вениамина (Петроград, 1922 г.). Оформление . В.М. Мельников. Студия "ТРИТЭ" – Российской Архив. 1991. Москва.
	DSV	Декреты Советской Власти. Том I–III. Издательство политической литературы. Москва. 1957–1964.
	DO	Деятели Октября о религии и церкви. (Статьи. Речи. Беседы. Воспоминания.) Издательство "Мысль". 1968. Москва.
	DOBFPP	Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1937. Edited by W.N. Medlicott, Douglas Dakin, M.E. Lambert. First Series. Volume XX. London. Her Majesty's Stationery Office. University Press. 1976. Oxford.
242	ES	Энциклопедический словарь. Том XXXVIII. Начатый проф. И.Е.Андреевским. 1903. С-Петербург.
	Galiev, Sultan 1960 (1921)	"Les Méthodes de Propagande Anti-Regiose Parmi les Musulmans (Z'izn' Nacional'nostej, 14.12, 23.12 1921)". Les Mouvements Nationaux chez les Musulmans De Russie. Le "Sultangalievisme" Au Tatarstan. Société et Idéologies. Deuxième Série. Documents et Témoignages. Alexandre Benningsen et Chantal Quelquejay. Paris.
	Giduljanov, P. V. 1971	Отделение церкви от государства в С.С.С.Р. Originally printed in Moscow in 1926 and followed by a supplement in 1928. Gregg International Publishers Limited. Richmond, Surrey.
	Got'e, Iurii Vladimirovich 1988	Times of Troubles. The Diary of Iurii Vladimirovich Got'e. Moscow, July 8, 1917 to July 23, 1922. Translated, Edited and Introduced by Terence Emmons. I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. London.
	Hindus, Maurice 1933	The Great Offensive. Victor Gollancz Ltd. London.

- IPSS Избранные произведения  
Скворцов-Степанова И.И. Том II.  
Государственное социально-экономическое  
издательство. 1931. Москва.
- IzvTsK KPSS  
1990 Известия ЦК КПСС. Издавались в 1919–  
1929 гг. Возобновлены в 1989 г. Том. 4. (303).  
Издание центрального комитета КПСС.  
Москва.
- Kalinin, Mihail Ivanovich  
1958 Вопросы Советского Строительства. Статьи  
и Речи (1919–1946). Государственное  
издательство политической литературы.  
Москва. 1958.
- 1960II М.И. Калинин. Избранные произведения в  
четырех томах. Том..2 1926–1932.  
Государственное Издательство  
политической лиетратуры. Москва.
- 1968 Деятели Октября о религии и церкви  
(Статьи. Речи. Беседы. Воспоминания).  
Издательство “Мысль”. Москва.
- Kollontai, A. M.  
1974 Из моей жизни и работы. Сост. Дажина,  
И.М. Сухамеджанова, М.М. Цивлина Р. Я.  
(Годы и люди). Москва.
- Krasikov, P. A.  
1920 Революция и церковь. Антирелигиозная  
библиотека. Издание народного  
комиссариата юстиции. Москва.
- Krupskaya, Nadezhda Konstantinovna  
1960 О Ленине. Сборник статей.Москва.  
1972 Воспоминания о Ленине. Изд. 2. Москва.  
K8 Восьмая Конференция РКП/б/. Декабрь  
1919 года. Протоколы. Протоколы и  
стенографические отчеты съездов и  
конференций Коммунистической Партии  
Советского Союза. Стенографический  
отчет. Государственное издательство  
политической литературы. Института  
Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС.  
Москва. 1961.
- K14 Четырнадцатая Конференция Российской

- Коммунистической Партии (Большевиков).  
 Стенографический отчет. 1925  
 Государственное издательство. Москва.
- K16 Шестнадцатая Конференция ВКП/б/.  
 Апрель 1929 года. Протоколы и  
 Стенографические отчеты съездов и  
 конференций Коммунистической Партии  
 Советского Союза. Стенографический  
 отчет. Государственное издательство  
 политической литературы. Института  
 Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС.  
 Москва.
- KPSS Коммунистическая Партия Советского  
 Союза в резолюциях и решениях съездов,  
 конференций и пленумов ЦК (1898–1970).  
 Том I–IV. Изд. восьмое, дополненное и  
 исправленное. Москва. 1970.
- LS Ленинский Сборник. Том XXXVII. Москва.
- Lukin, N. M. (N. Antonov)  
 1918 Церковь и государство. Издательство  
 “Коммунист”. Москва.
- McCauley, Martin  
 1984 Octobrists to Bolsheviks. Imperial Russia 1905–  
 1917. Edited by Martin McCauley, assisted by  
 Peter Waldron. Edward Arnold Ltd. London.
- Meiner, N.  
 1922 “Служба в комиссариате юстиций и  
 народном суде”. Gessen: Архив Русской  
 Революции. Издаваемый В. Гессеномь.  
 Берлин.
- MEW Karl Marx – Friedrich Engels. Band 1, 3, 4.  
 Dietz Verlag. 1971–72. Berlin.
- NR Неизвестная Россия. XX Век. Том I.  
 Историческое наследие. 1992. Московское  
 городское объединение архивов. Москва.
- ORTs О религии и церкви. Сборник высказываний  
 классиков Марксизма-Ленинизма,  
 документов КПСС и Советского  
 государства. Сост. А.М. Залесский, Т. Г.  
 Купченя. “Беларус”. 1983. Минск.
- Pasmanik, D. S.  
 1923 Русская революция и еврейство.

- Издательство франко-русская печать.  
Париж.
- Plekhanov, G. V.  
1956 Избранные философские произведения. В  
пяти томах. Том. I. Государственное  
издательство политической литературы.  
Москва.
- Popov, N. N.  
1924 Национальная политика Советской Власти.  
Курс лекций, читанных на курсах  
секретарей укомов при ЦК РКП (б).  
Издательство "Красная новь".  
Главполитпросвет. Москва.
- PSS Полное Собрание Сочинений В.И. Ленин.  
Том 1–55. Изд. 5. Москва. 1960–1965.
- RdO Rapport de l'OGPU. Rapport du chef de la 6  
section du Département spécial de l'OGPU au  
vice-président de l'OGPU, le cam. Menzhinskij,  
sur le travail effectué parmi les cléricaux et les  
sectes l'an dernier, en 1923. – Le schisme  
rénovateur: un mouvement pro-communiste dans  
l'Église russe. Revue d'études comparatives  
Est-Ouest. 3–4 (septembre-décembre) 1993.  
Paris.
- RP Русское Прошлое. Книга 4.  
Историко-документальный альманах.  
Издательство "Logos". 1993.  
Санкт-Петербург.
- S8 Съезд Российской Коммунистической  
партии (большевиков). Москва, 18–23.  
Марта 1919 года. Стенографический отчет.  
Книгоиздательство Коммунист. Москва.  
1919.
- S11 Одиннадцатый съезд Российской  
Коммунистической Партии (большевиков).  
Стенографический отчет. 27 марта – 2  
апреля 1922 г. Издательское отделение  
Ц.К.П.К.М. Москва. 1922.
- S12 Двенадцатый съезд РКП(б). 17–25 апреля  
1923 года. Протоколы и Стенографические  
отчеты съездов и конференций  
Коммунистической Партии Советского



- Союза. Стенографический отчет. Государственное издательство политической литературы. Института Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС. Москва. 1968.
- S13 Тринадцатый съезд РКП(б). Протоколы и Стенографические отчеты съездов и конференций Коммунистической Партии Советского Союза. Стенографический отчет. Государственное издательство политической литературы. Института Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС. Москва. 1963.
- S14 XIV Съезд Всесоюзной Коммунистической Партии (б). 18–31. декабря 1925 г. Стенографический отчет. Государственное издательство. Москва. 1926.
- S15-I Пятнадцатый Съезд ВКП (б). Том I. Декабрь 1927 года. Протоколы и Стенографические отчеты съездов и конференций Коммунистической Партии Советского Союза. Стенографический отчет. Государственное издательство политической литературы. Института Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС. Москва.. 1961.
- S15-II Пятнадцатый Съезд ВКП (б). Том II. Декабрь 1927 года. Протоколы и Стенографические отчеты съездов и конференций Коммунистической Партии Советского Союза. Стенографический отчет. Государственное издательство политической литературы. Института Марксизма-Ленинизма при ЦК КПСС. Москва. 1962.
- S15b XV Съезд Всесоюзной Коммунистической партии (б). Стенографический отчет. Государственное Издательство. Москва. 1928.
- SS Сталин. И.В.Сочинения. Государственное издательство политической литературы. Том 1–13. Москва.

SSLKSM VII	Съезд Всесоюзного Ленинского Коммунистического Союза Молодежи. 11–22 марта 1926 года. Стенографический отчет. Молодая гвардия. Москва, Ленинград..
SSR	Съезды Советов РСФСР в постановлениях и резолюциях. Сборник документов с вводными статьями и предисловием составителей под общей редакцией академика А.Я.Вышинского. Издательство "Ведомостей Верховного Совета РСФСР. 1939. Москва.
SSS II	Второй Съезд Советов Союза ССР. Издание ЦИК. СССР. . 1924. Москва-Кремль.
SSS III	Третий Съезд Советов Союза ССР. Издание ЦИК СССР. 1925. Москва-Кремль.
SSS IV	четвёртый Съезд Советов Союза ССР. Издание ЦИК СССР. 1927. Москва-Кремль.
Stalin I. V. 1939	Марксизм и национальный вопрос. Москва
ST XXI	Сочинения. Л. Троцкий. Том XXI. Государственное Издательство. Москва. 1927.
ST III	Сочинения. Л. Троцкий. Том II. Книга 1. Государственное Издательство. Москва. 1927.Stuchka, P. I.
1923	Учение о государстве и о конституции Р.С.Ф.С.Р. Третье пересмотренное издание. Издательство "Красная новь". Главполитпросвет. Москва.
SURa	Собрание Узаконений и Распоряжений Рабоче-крестьянского Правительства Р.С.Ф.С.Р, издаваемое народным комиссариатом юстиции. 31 августа 1918 г. N:62. Отдел первый. Москва.
SURb	Собрание Узаконений и Распоряжений Рабоче-крестьянского Правительства Р.С.Ф.С.Р, издаваемое народным комиссариатом юстиции. 18 Мая 1929 г. N:35. Отдел первый. Москва.
SU	Собрание Узаконений и Распоряжений Рабоче-крестьянского Правительства. I

- 1917-18: Отдел 1-90, 93-99. Указатель II  
 1919: 1-69. Указатель. III 1920 1-100.  
 Указатель. Москва.
- SZR Собрание законов и распоряжений  
 Рабоче-крестьянского Правительства Союза  
 Советских Социалистических Республик.  
 Издаваемое Делами Совета Народных  
 Комиссаров СССР и СТО. 1929. Отдел  
 опубликования законов. Делами Совета  
 Народных Комиссаров. Москва.
- Trotsky, Lev Davidovich
- 1947 Stalin. An Apraisal of the Man and his Influence.  
 Edited and Translated from the Russian by  
 Charles Malamuth. Hollis and Carter Ltd.  
 London.
- 1972 The Young Lenin. Newton Abbas, Devon.
- 1990 (1930) Моя жизнь. Том 1–2. (Опыт  
 автобиографии). Издательство “Книга”.  
 Берлин.
- 1991 (1923) Литература и революция. Издательство  
 “Политиздат”. Москва.
- TRRR The Russian Revolution and Religion. A  
 Collection of Documents Concerning The  
 Suppression of Religion by the Communists  
 1917–1925. With Introduction Essay,  
 Appendices and Selective Bibliography.  
 Translated and Edited by Boleslaw Szczesniak.  
 University of Notre Dame Press. Notre Dame,  
 Indiana.
- TTP The Trotsky Papers I–II 1917–1922. Edited and  
 annotated by Jan Meijer. The Hague. 1965, 1971.
- Valentinov, Nikolai (N. Volsky)
- 1991a Новая Экономическая Политика и кризис  
 партии после смерти Ленина. Годы работы  
 в ВСНХ во время НЭП. Воспоминания.  
 “Современник”. Серия мемуаров “Память”.  
 Издательство Ленинградского  
 Университета. Москва.
- 1991b Малоизвестный Ленин. “Мансарда”.  
 “СМАРТ”. Санкт-Петербург.
- VSS VII 7-й Всероссийский Съезд Советов

- Крестьянских, Красноармейских и Казачьих депутатов. (5–9 декабря 1919 года). Стенографический отчет. Государственное издательство. Москва.
- VSS VIII Восьмой Всероссийский Съезд Советов Крестьянских, Красноармейских и Казачьих депутатов. (22–29 декабря 1920 года). Государственное издательство. 1921. Москва.
- VSS XI XI Всероссийский Съезд Советов. Стенографический отчет. Издание ВЦИК. 1924 Москва-Кремль.
- VSS XII XII Всероссийский Съезд Советов. Стенографический отчет. Издание ВЦИК. 1925 Москва-Кремль.
- VSS XIII XIII Всероссийский Съезд Советов. Стенографический отчет. Издание ВЦИК. 1927 Москва-Кремль.
- VSS XIV XIV Всероссийский Съезд Советов. Стенографический отчет. Издание ВЦИК. 1929 Москва-Кремль.
- Z1 -заседание первое
- Z2 -заседание второе
- Z3 -заседание третье
- Z9 -заседание девятое
- Z11 -заседание одиннадцатое
- Z13 -заседание тринадцатое
- Zinovev, Grigory Evseovich
- 1919 Беспартийный или коммунист. Речь т. г. Зиновьева на собрании в театре Речкина за Московской Заставой. Государственное Издательство. Москва. 1919.
- 1925a Новый великий почин. Крымгосиздат.
- 1925b -Рабкоровское и селькоровское движение. Как большевики строят государство рабочих и крестьян. Государственное издательство. Москва.
- 1925c Наука и революция. Речь, произнесенная 9-го сентября 1925 года на торжественном заседании Ленинградского губернского Исполнительного комитета Советов Рабочих, Крестьянских и Красноармейских



депутатов по случаю двухсотлетия  
Академии Наук СССР. Государственное  
издательство. Ленинград.

250	1926	Ленинизм. Введение в изучение ленинизма. Государственное Издательство. Ленинград.
	YI	Ярославский, Ем. Против религии и Церкви. Том I. Октябрьская Революция. Революция и церковь. Огиз. Государственное антирелигиозное издательство. 1932. Москва.
	YII	Ярославский, Ем. Против религии и Церкви. том II. Ленин, коммунизм и религия. Огиз. Государственное антирелигиозное издательство. 1933. Москва.
	YIII	Ярославский, Ем. Против религии и Церкви. Том III. Пролетарская революция в борьбе с религией. Огиз. Государственное антирелигиозное издательство. 1935. Москва.
	YIV	Ярославский.Ем. Против религии и церкви. Том IV. Борьба за преодоление религии. Огиз. Государственное антирелигиозное издательство. 1935. Москва.

### 3. NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Iskra	1902–1903
International Relations	1992
Izvestiya	1917–1929
Izvestiya Tsentralnogo Komiteta	1990
Journal of the Study Group on the Russian Revolution	1992
Nationality Papers	1991–1992
Nordic Journal of Soviet and East European Studies	1984, 1986
Religion in Communist Lands	1979
Religion in the USSR	1960
Revolutionary Russia	1987–1992
Petrogradskaya Pravda	1922
Pravda	1917–1929

Revolyutsiya i Tserkov	1919 No. 1, 1920 No. 9–12, 1921 No. 1, 3–5.
Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest	1993
Russkaya Mysl	1994
Slavic Review	1991–1993
Soviet Studies	1991–1992
Studies in Soviet Thought	1988–1991
Survey	1984
The American Journal of Comparative Law	1987
The Russian Review	1992–1993
Trud	1923
Voprosy Istorii	1993

## 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Agursky, Mikhail*

- 1984 Stalin's Ecclesiastical Background. – Survey. A Journal of East & West Studies. Winter 1984. Vol. 28. No. 4 (123). The Eastern Press. London.
- 1986 The Prospects of National Communism. - The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future. Edited by Robert Conquest. Hoover Press Publication; 325. Stanford University. Stanford, California.
- 1987 The Third Rome. National Bolshevism in the USSR. Westview Press. Boulder, Colorado.

### *Aiken, Henry D.*

- 1956 The Age of Ideology. The 19th Century Philosophers. Selected with introduction and interpretative commentary by Henry D. Aiken. A Mentor Book. New York.

### *Alekseev, Valery Arkadevich*

- 1991 Иллюзии и догмы. (Illusions and dogmas) Издательство политической литературы. Москва.

### *Alexeev, Wassilij*

- 1979 Religion in Communist Lands. Vol. 7. No. 1. Spring 1979. Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism, Keston, Kent.

### *Althusser, Louis*

- 1972 Politics and History: Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx. NBL. London.

### *Altrichter, Helmuth*

- 1991 Insoluble Conflicts: Village Life between Revolution and Collectivization. – Russian in the Era of NEP. Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture. Edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch and Richard Stites.

Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and Indianapolis.

*Altstadt, Audrey L.*

- 1992 A Book Review (Nahlyo Bohdan & Victor Swoboda. Soviet Disunity: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR. The Free Press. New York 1989). - The Russian Review. An American Quarterly Devoted to Russia Past and Present. October 1992 Vol. 51. No. 4. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge, Massachussets.

*Anderson, John*

- 1991 The Council for Religious Affairs and the Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy. - Soviet Studies. A Journal on the USSR and Eastern Europe. Vol. 43. No. 4. Glasgow University Press. Glasgow.

*Anderson, Paul B.*

- 1944 People, Church and State in Modern Russia. Macmillan. New York.

*Anderson, Thornton*

- 1967 Russian Political Thought: an Introduction. Cornell University Press. Ithaca. New York.

252

*Armstrong, Benjamin Leighton*

- 1967 The Attitude of the Soviet state to Religion, 1959-1966 as expressed in Official Russian Periodicals. Diss. Ann Arbor, Michigan.

*Armstrong, John A.*

- 1992 The Autonomy of Ethnic Identity: Historic Cleavages and Nationality Relations in The USSR. - Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities: History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR. Edited by Alexander J. Motyl. Studies of the Harriman Institute. Columbia University Press. New York.

*Aron, Paul*

- 1963 M.N. Pokrovskii and the Impact of the First Five Year Plan on Soviet Historiography. - Essays in Russian and Soviet History. In Honour of Geroid Tanquary Robinson. Edited by John Shelton Curtiss. Studien zur Geschichte Osteuropas: 1. E. J. Brill. Leiden.

*Ascher, Abraham*

- 1988 The Revolution of 1905. Russia in Disarray 1. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California.

*Avdiev, I. Ya.*

- 1991 Предисловие. - "Дело" Митрополита Вениамина (Петроград. 1922 г.). (Preface. The Case of Metropolitan Veniamin (Petrograd 1922)) Оформление . В.М. Мельников. Студия "ТРИТЭ" - Российский Архив. Москва.

*Avtorkhanov, Abdulrahman*

- 1959 Stalin and The Soviet Communist Party: A Study in the Technology of Power. Institute for the Study of the USSR, Series 1; 41. Munich.

*Ball, Alan M.*

- 1987 Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921-1929. University of California Press. Berkeley, California.

*Barghoorn, Frederick C.*

- 1976 The Russian Nationalism. Greenwood Press. Westport, Connecticut.

*Baron, Samuel H.*

- 1963 Plekhanov. The Father of Russian Marxism. Stanford, California.

*Baum, Ann Todd*

- 1987 Komsomol Participation in the Soviet First Five Year Plan. Macmillan. Basingstoke.

*Beeson, Trevor*

- 1974 Discretion and Valour. Religious Conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe. With a foreword by Sir John Lawrence. Collins. Glasgow.

*Beilharz, Peter*

- 1987 Trotsky, Trotskyism and the Transition to Socialism. Croom Helm. London.

*Bennigsen, Alexandre A. & Quelquejay, Chantal*

- 1967 Islam in the Soviet Union: with a foreword by Geoffrey E. Wheeler. Translated from the French by Geoffrey E. Wheeler and Hubert Evans. Pall Mall Press. London.

*Bennigsen, Alexander A.*

- 1971 Islamic or Local Consciousness among Soviet Nationalities? – Soviet Nationality Problems. Based on papers from a research seminar on Soviet nationality problems, given at Columbia University in 1968–69 school year. Edited by Edward Allworth. Columbia University Press. New York.

*Bercken, Peter van den William*

- 1989 Ideology and Atheism in the Soviet Union. Translated from the Dutch by H.Th. Wake. Religion and Society; 28. Mouton de Gruyter. Berlin.

*Besançon, Alain*

- 1981 The Intellectual Origins of Leninism. Blackwell. Oxford.

*Billington, James H.*

- 1970 The Icon and Axe. An Interpretative History of Russian Culture. Vintage Book. New York.

*Blane, Andrew Q.*

- 1971 The Protestant Sectarians. – Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union 1917–1967. Edited by Richard H. Marshall Jr. Associate Editors, Thomas E. Bird and Andrew Q. Blane. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.
- 1975 Protestant Sects in The Late Imperial Russia. – The Religious World of Russian Culture. Russia and Orthodoxy: Vol. II. Essays in honour of Georges Florovsky. Edited by Andrew Blane. Mouton. The Hague.

*Bociurkiw, Bohdan R.*

- 1969 Church-State Relations in the USSR. – Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power. Edited by Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher. Published for the Centre de Recherches et d'Etude des Institutions Religieuses by Pall Mall Press. London.
- 1990 Nationalities and Soviet Religious Policies. – The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society. Edited by Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger. The John M. Olin Critical Issues Series. Boulder, Co. Westview Press. San Francisco.
- 1991 The Rise of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, 1919–22. – Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine. Edited by Geoffrey A. Hosking. Macmillan in association with the SSEES, University of London. Studies in Russia and East Europe. London.

*Bochenski, J. M.*

- 1975 Marxism-Leninism and Religion. – Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R.



and Eastern Europe. Edited by Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and John W. Strong. Assisted by Jean K. Laux. Carleton University. Macmillan. London.

*Boiter, Albert*

- 1987 Law and Religion in the Soviet Union. – The American Journal of Comparative Law. A Quarterly. 1/1987. Vol. 35. American Association for the Comparative Study of Law, Inc. Berkeley, California.

*Borys, Jurij*

- 1980 The Sovietization of Ukraine 1917–1923. The Communist Doctrine and Practise of National Self-Determination. Revised Edition. The Canadian Library in Ukrainian Studies. The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Edmonton.

*Bourdeaux, Michael*

- 1965 Opium of the People. The Christian Religion in the U.S.S.R. Faber & Faber. London.

*Broido, Vera*

- 1986 Lenin and Mensheviks: The Persecution of Socialist under Bolshevism. Aldershot. Gower, Temple Smith.

*Brooks, Jeffrey*

- 1985 When Russian Learned to Read. Literacy and Popular Literature 1861–1917. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.

*Brovkin, Vladimir N.*

- 1987 The Mensheviks After October: Socialist Opposition and the Rise of the Bolshevik Dictatorship. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, New York.

*Brown, Archie*

- 1989 Power and Policy in The Time of Leadership Transition, 1982–1988. – Political Leadership in The Soviet Union. Edited by Archie Brown. Macmillan. Oxford.

*Bryner, Erich*

- 1985 Religionskritik und Religionspolitik bei Lenin. – Religionskritik und Religionskritik bei Marx, Lenin, Mao. Hrsg. von Hans-Jürgen Braun, Erich Bryner, Norbert Meinenberger. Zürich.

*Brzezinski, Zbigniew*

- 1971 Political Implications of Soviet Nationality Problems. – Soviet Nationality Problems. Edited by Edward Allworth. Columbia University Press. New York.

*Carr, Edward Hallett*

- 1958 Socialism in One Country. Vol. 1. – A History of Soviet Russia. Macmillan. London.  
1969 1917: Before and After. Macmillan. London.  
1978a Socialism in One Country 1924–1926. 6. Vol. 2. – A History of Soviet Russia. Macmillan. London.  
1978b Foundations of A Planned Economy. 11. Vol. 2. – A History of Soviet Union. Macmillan. London.  
1985 The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923. – A History of Soviet Russia. Vol. I–III. Norton & Company. New York.

*Carrère D'Encausse, Hélène*

- 1978 Decline of an Empire. The Soviet Socialist Republics in Revolt. Translated by Martin Sokolinsky and Henry A. La Farge. Newsweek Books. New York.  
1982 Lenin. Revolution and Power. A History of the Soviet Union 1917–1953.

Vol. 1. Translated by Valence Ionescu. Butler & Tanner. Frome and London.

*Carter, Stephen K.*

1990 Russian Nationalism. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Pinter Publishers in Association with John Spiers. London.

*Chase, William J.*

1990 Workers, Society and the Soviet state. Labour and Life in Moscow. Urbana, Chicago.

*Chavetz, Glenn R.*

1992 Soviet Ideological Revision and the Collapse of Communism. – International Relations. Vol. XI. No. 2. August 1992. David Davis Memorial Institute of International Studies. London.

*Clark, Ronald W.*

1988 Lenin. The Man Behind the Mask. Faber & Faber. London.

*Clements, Barbara Evans*

1980 Bolshevik Feminist: the Life of Alexandra Kollontai. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

1989 The Effects of the Civil War on Women and Family Relations. – Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War: Explorations in Social History. Edited by Diane P. Koenker, William G. Rosenberg and Ronald Grigor Suny. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

255

*Colletti, Lucio*

1972 From Rousseau to Lenin. Studies in Ideology and Society. Translated From Italian by John Merrington and Judith White. London.

*Conquest, Robert*

1968 Religion in the USSR. Soviet Studies Series. The Bodley Head. London.

1986 The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine. Arrow Books. London.

*Copleston, Fredrick F.*

1986 Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev. Search Press. Kent.

1988 Russian Religious Philosophy: Selected Aspects. University of Notre Dame. Search Press. Tunbridge Wells.

*Crawford, Young M.*

1992 National and Colonial Questions and Marxism: A View from the South. – Thinking Theoretically About Soviet Nationalities: History and Comparison in the Study of the USSR. Edited by Alexander J. Motyl. Columbia University Press. New York.

*Cunningham, James W.*

1981 A Vanquished Hope: the Movement for Church Renewal in Russia, 1905–1906. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. Crestwood, New York.

*Curtiss, John Shelton*

1953 The Russian Church and the Soviet State 1917–1950. Little Brown. Boston.

*Dailey, Erica*

1992 Editorial Preface. – Nationality Papers. (Special Issue). A Semi-Annual Publication of the Association for Study of the Nationalities of the USSR and Eastern Europe. Edited by Erica Dailey and Henry R. Huttenbach. Spring 1992. Vol. XX. No. 1. New York.

*Danilov, Victor Petrovich*

- 1988 Rural Russia under the New Regime. Translated and introduced by Orlando Figes. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.
- 1990 The Commune in the Life of The Soviet Countryside Before Collectivization. - Land Commune and Peasant Community in Russia: Communal Forms in Imperial and Early Soviet Society. Edited by Roger Bartlett. Studies in Russia and Eastern Europe. Macmillan in association with the SSEES, University of London. London.

*Davies, R. W.*

- 1980 The Socialist Offensive. The Collectivization of Soviet Agriculture, 1929–1930. Vol. 1. – The Industrialization of Soviet Russia. The Macmillan Press. London and Basingstoke.

*Delaney, Joan*

- 1971 The Origins of Soviet Antireligious Organizations. – Aspects of Religion in The Soviet Union 1917–1967. Edited by Richard H. Marshall Jr. Associate Editors, Thomas E. Bird and Andrew Q. Blane. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

*Deutscher, Isaac*

- 1967 Stalin: A Political Biography. Second Edition. Oxford University Press. London.
- 1970 The Prophet Armed: Trotsky, 1879–1921. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- 1987 The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky, 1921–1929. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

*Dickey, Laurence*

- 1987 Hegel: Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit 1770–1807. Cambridge University Press. New York.

*Dunlop, John*

- 1992 Language, Culture, Religion and Culture Awareness. – The Soviet Nationality Reader. Edited by Rachel Denber. Westview Press. London.

*Dunn, Dennis J.*

- 1977 The Catholic Church and the Soviet Government, 1939–1949. East European Quarterly, Boulder. East European Monograph No. XXX. Keston Book, No. 10. Distributed by Columbia University Press. New York.
- 1987 Nationalism and Religion in Eastern Europe. – Religion & Nationalism in Eastern Europe & the Soviet Union. Edited by Dennis J. Dunn. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Colorado.

*Dziak, John J.*

- 1988 Chekisty. A History of the KGB. Lexington Books. Lexington, Massachusetts.

*Ertlich, Alexander*

- 1960 The Soviet Industrialization Debate, 1924–1928. Harvard University Press. Russian Research Centre Studies 41. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

*Evtuhov, Catherine*

- 1991 The Church in the Russian Revolution: Arguments for and Against Restoring the Patriarchate at the Church Council of 1917–1918. – Slavic Review. American Quarterly of Soviet and East European Studies. Vol. 50. No. 3. Fall 1991. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California.

*Fainsod, Merle*

- 1958 Smolensk under Soviet Rule. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

1970        How Russia is Ruled. Russian Research Centre Studies 11. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

*Farnsworth, Beatrice*

1980        Aleksandra Kollontai. Socialism, Feminism, and the Bolshevik Revolution. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California.

*Fate'v, P. S.*

1988        Предисловие. - О Емельяне Ярославском. Воспоминания, очерки, статьи. ("Preface". From Emelyan Yaroslavsky. Memoirs, Essays, Articles). Издательство политической литературы. Москва.

*Ferro, Marc*

1980        The Bolshevik Revolution: A Social History of the Bolshevik Revolution. London.

1986        A Note on Cinema and Legimization of Power in The USSR. – Nordic Journal of Soviet and East European Studies. Vol. 3. No. 2. Uppsala.

*Figes, Orlando*

1989        Peasant Russia, Civil War. The Volga Countryside in Revolution, 1917–1921. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Fischer, Louis*

1967        Lenin. Aldus/Bonniers. Stockholm.

*Fisher, Ralph Talcott Jr.*

1959        Pattern for Soviet Youth. A Study of the Congresses of the Komsomol, 1918–1954. Columbia University Press. New York.

*Fitzpatrick, Sheila*

1970        The Commissariat of Enlightenment. Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky October 1917–1921. Cambridge University Press. London.

1979        Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934. Studies of the Russian Institute Columbia University. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

1982        The Russian Revolution. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

1984        Cultural Revolution as Class War. – Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931. Edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana.

1991        The Problem of Class Identity in NEP Society. – Russian in The Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture. Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies. Edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch and Richard Stites. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana.

1992        The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia. Cornell University Press. Ithaca and London.

*Fletcher, William C.*

1971        The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917–1970. Oxford University Press. London.

*Fouilloux, Étienne*

1992        Erschütterungen (1912–1939). Die Bedrohten Ostkirchen. Dritter Teil. – Die Geschichte Des Christentums. Erster Und Zweiter Weltkrieg. Demokratie und Totalitäre Systeme (1914–1958). Herausgegeben von Jean-Marie Mayer. Deutsche Ausgabe bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Kurt Meier. Herder. Freiburg.



*Freeze, Gregory L.*

- 1983 The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.

*Gagarin S. J.*

- 1970 (1872) The Russian Clergy. Translated from French by Ch. Du Gard Makepeace. Reprinted from the edition of 1872, London. Ams Press. New York.

*Garrard, John*

- 1991 Manifesto of Pamjat. – Nationality Papers. (Special Issue). A Semi-Annual Publication of the Association for the Study of the Nationalities of the USSR and Eastern Europe. Fall 1991. Vol. XIX. No. 2. New York.

*Geldern, James von*

- 1993 Bolshevik Festivals, 1917–1920. University of California Press. Berkeley, California.

*Geller, Mikhail*

- 1985 Машина и Винтики. История Формирования Советского Человека. (The Cog and the Wheel. The History of Forming a Soviet Man). Overseas Publication Interchange Ltd. London.

*Geller, Mikhail & Nekrich, Aleksandr*

- 1982 Утопия и власти. История Советского Союза с 1917 года до наших дней. (Utopia and Power. The History of the Soviet Union From 1917 to Our Days) Том. I. Overseas Publication Interchange Ltd. Frankfurt am Main.

*Getzler, Israel*

- 1983 Kronstadt 1917–1921: The Fate of a Soviet Democracy. Soviet and European Studies. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- 1992 Martov's Lenin. – Revolutionary Russia. Journal on the Study Group on the Russian Revolution. Vol. 5. June 1992. No. 1. London.

*Gill, Graeme*

- 1990 The Origins of the Stalinist Political System. Soviet and East European Studies 74. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Gitelman, Zvi*

- 1971 The Communist Party and Soviet Jewry: The Early Days. – Aspects of Religion in The Soviet Union 1917–1967. Edited by Richard H. Marshall, Jr. Associate Editors, Thomas E. Bird and Andrew Q. Blane. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.
- 1988 A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the present. Schocken Books, New York.
- 1992 Judaism and Jewishness in the USSR: Ethnicity and Religion. – Nationality Papers. (Special Issue). A Semi-Annual Publication of the Association for Study of the Nationalities of the USSR and Eastern Europe. Ed. by Erica Dailey and Henry R. Huttenbach. Spring 1992. Vol. XX. No. 1. New York.

*Gleason, Gregory*

- 1993 Nationalism and Its Discontents. – The Russian Review. An American Quarterly Devoted to Russia Past and Present. Vol. 52. Number 1. January 1993. Stanford University. California.

*Gloveli, Georgii D.*

- 1991 "Socialism of Science" Versus "Socialism of Feelings": Bogdanov and Lunacharsky. – Studies in Soviet Thought. A Review. Published by the Institute of East-European Studies at the University of Fribourg

(Switzerland), the Centre for East Europe, Russia and Asia at Boston College, and the Seminar For Political Theory and Philosophy at the University of Munich. Vol. 42. No. 1. July 1991. D. Reidel. Dordrecht.

*Goldelman, Salomon*

- 1960 The Jews in the USSR. – Religion in The USSR. Institute For the Study of the USSR. Series 1. No. 59. Edited by Boris Iwanov, Translated by James Larkin. Munich.

*Gooding, John*

- 1992 Lenin in Soviet Politics 1985–1991. – Soviet Studies. A Journal on the USSR and Eastern Europe. Vol. 44. No. 3, 1992. Glasgow University Press. Glasgow.

*Gorman, Robert A.*

- 1982 Neo-Marxism. The Meaning of the Modern Radicalism. Contributions in Political Science No. 77. Greenwood Press. Westport, Connecticut.

*Gousseff, Catherine*

- 1993 Le schisme rénovateur: un mouvement pro-communiste dans l'Église russe. – Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest. 3-4 (septembre-décembre). Paris.

*Hagen, Mark von*

- 1990 Soldiers in the Proletarian Dictatorship: the Red Army and the Soviet Socialist State, 1917-1930. Studies in the Harriman Institute. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, New York.

*Hecker, Julius F.*

- 1933 Moscow Dialogues. Discussions on Red Philosophy. With a Foreword by John MacMurray. Chapman and Hall Ltd. London.

*Heidegger, Martin*

- 1988 Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit. Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana.

*Holmes, Larry E.*

- 1993 Fear No Evil: Schools and Religion in Soviet Russia, 1917–1941. – Religious Policy in the Soviet Union. Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Hook, Sidney*

- 1958 From Hegel to Marx. The Intellectual Development of Karl Marx. New York.

*Iivonen, Jyrki*

- 1990 Independence or Incorporation? The Idea of Poland's National Self-determination and Independence within the Russian and Soviet Socialism from the 1870s to the 1920s. Diss. The Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Helsinki.
- 1992 Neuvostovallan viimeiset vuodet (The Last Years of The Soviet Power). Ulkopoliittisen Instituutin julkaisuja. No. 1. Gaudeamus. Jyväskylä.

*Ingram, David B.*

- 1988 Right and Privileges: Marx and the Jewish Question. – Studies in Soviet Thought. A Review. Published by the Institute of East-European Studies at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), the Centre for East Europe, Russia and Asia at Boston College, and The Seminar for Political Theory and Philosophy at the University of Munich. Vol. 33. D. Reidel. Dordrecht.

*Jansen, Marc*

- 1982 *A Show Trial Under Lenin: The Trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries, Moscow 1922.* Translated by Jean Sauders. *Studies in Social History*; 7. Nijhoff. The Hague.

*Joravsky, David*

- 1985 *Cultural Revolution and Fortress Mentality. – Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution.* A Special Study of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, the Wilson Centre No. 5. Edited by Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez and Richard Stites. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

*Keep, John L. H.*

- 1976 *The Russian Revolution: A Study in Mass Mobilization. Revolution in Modern World.* Weidenfeld & Nicolson. London.

*Kelly, Aileen*

- 1987 *Mikhail Bakunin: A Study in the Psychology and Politics of Utopianism.* Yale University Press. New Haven.

*Kemp-Welch, A*

- 1990 *Stalin and the Literary Intelligentsia, 1928–39.* Macmillan. London.

*Kenez, Peter*

- 1985 *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization 1917–1929.* Cambridge University Press. New York.

*Klier, John D.*

- 1991 *Pamjat and the Jewish Menace: Remembrance of Things Past. – Nationality Papers. (Special Issue). A Semi-Annual Publication of the Association for Study of the Nationalities of the USSR and Eastern Europe. Fall 1991. Vol. XIX, No. 2.* New York.

*Kline, George Louis*

- 1968 *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia. The Weil Lectures.* Chicago University Press. Chicago.

*Klippenstein, Lawrence*

- 1992 *Conscientious Objectors in Eastern Europe. The Quest for Free Choice and Alternative Service. – Protestantism and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia. Christianity under Stress. Vol. III. Ed. by Petra Ramet.* Duke University Press. Durham and London.

*Knei-Paz, Baruch*

- 1979 *The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky.* Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Knight, Amy W.*

- 1988 *The KGB: Police and Politics in the Soviet Union.* Unwin Hyman. Boston.

*Kolakowski, Leszek*

- 1978 *Main Currents of Marxism: Its Rise, Growth and Dissolution. "The Golden Age Vol. II".* Translated From Polish by P.S. Falla. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Kolarz, Walter*

- 1961 *Religion in the Soviet Union.* Macmillan. London.

*Kolstø, Pål*

- 1984 *The Concept of "Patriotic Internationalism" A Contribution to the*

Understanding of Soviet Ideology. - Nordic Journal of Soviet and East European Studies. Vol. 1. No. 4. Uppsala.

*Korey, William*

- 1963 Zinoviev of the German Revolution of October 1923. A Case Study of Bolshevik Attitude to Revolutions Abroad. - Essays in Russian and Soviet History. In Honour of Geroid Tanquary Robinson. Studien zur Geschichte Ost-Europas; 8. Edited by John Shelton Curtiss. E.J. Brill. Leiden.

*Krawchenko, Bohdan*

- 1987 Social Change and National Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine. Macmillan in Association with St. Anthony's College, Oxford. Basingstoke and London.

*Kuromiya, Hiroaki*

- 1990 Stalin's Industrial Revolution. Politics and Workers, 1928-1932. Soviet and East European Studies; 60. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Lane, Christel*

- 1978 Christian Religion in the Soviet Union: A Sociological Study. Allen & Unwin. London.
- 1981 The Rites of Rulers: Ritual in Industrial Society - The Soviet Case. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

261

*Lapidus, Gail Warshovsky*

- 1978 Educational Strategies and Cultural Revolution: The Policies of Soviet Development. - Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931. A Midland Book; 337. Edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana.

*Leggett, George*

- 1986 The Cheka: Lenin's Political Police. The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage (December 1917-to February 1922). Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Lewin, Moshe*

- 1968 Russian Peasants and Soviet Power: A Study of Collectivization. Translated by Irene Nove with the assistance of John Biggart. With a Preface by Alec Nove. Northwestern University Press. George Allen and Unwin Ltd. London.
- 1984 Society, State and Ideology during the First Five-Year Plan. - Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931. Edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick. Indiana University Press. Bloomington and London.
- 1985 The Making of the Soviet System. Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia. Pantheon Books. New York.

*Levin, Nora*

- 1988 The Jews in the Soviet Union since 1917. Paradox of Survival. Vol. I. I.B. Tauris. London.

*Levitin, Anatoly & Shavrov, Vadim*

- 1978 Очерки по истории русской церковной смуты (Essays on the History of Russian Ecclesiastical Disturbances). В 3 томах. Institut Glaube in der 2. Welt. CH-8700 Küsnacht. Schweiz.

*Loginov, V. T.*

- 1985 В.И. Ленин о "Вехах" и современная идеологическая борьба. (V.I. Lenin on "Vekhi" and Modern Ideological Struggle) - Интеллигенция и революция. XX Век. Отв. ред. К.В. Гусев. издательство "Наука". Москва.



*Luchterhand, Otto*

- 1993 The Council for Religious Affairs. – Religious Policy in the Soviet Union. Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Mah, Harold*

- 1987 The End of Philosophy, The Origin of "Ideology": Karl Marx and the Crisis of The Young Hegelians. University of California Press. Berkeley, Los Angeles.

*Mailleux, Paul SJ*

- 1971 Catholics in The Soviet Union. – Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union 1917–1967. Edited by Richard H. Marshall, Jr. Associate Editors, Thomas E. Bird and Andrew Q. Blane. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

*Maureen, Henry*

- 1979 The Intoxication of Power: An Analysis of Civil Religion in Relation to Ideology. Sovietica Vol. 43. D. Reidel. Dortrecht.

*Mayer, Alfred G.*

- 1988 Political Ideologies in the Soviet Union. – Ideology and Soviet Politics. Edited by Stephen White and Alex Pravda. Studies in Russian and East Europe. Macmillan in association with SSEES, University of London. Basingstoke, Hampshire.

*McKenzie, Kermit*

- 1964 Comintern and World Revolution 1928–1943. The Shaping of Doctrine. Columbia University Press. New York.

*McKown, Delos B.*

- 1975 The Classical Marxist Critiques of Religion: Marx, Engels, Lenin, Kautsky. Martinus Nijhoff. The Hague.

*McLellan, David*

- 1969 The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx. Macmillan. Edinburgh.  
1987a Marxism and Religion. A Description and Assessment of the Marxist Critique of Christianity. Macmillan. Basingstoke, Hampshire and London.  
1987b Marxism after Marx: An Introduction. Macmillan. London.

*McManners, John*

- 1972 Church and State in France, 1870–1914. S.P.C.K. for the Church Historical Society. Church History Outlines; 6. London.

*McNeal, Robert H.*

- 1973 Bride of the Revolution: Krupskaya and Lenin. Gollancz. London.

*Medvedev, Roy*

- 1989 Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism. Edited and Translated by George Shriver. Revised and Expanded Version. Oxford University Press. Cambridge.

*Merridale, Catherine*

- 1990 Moscow Politics and the Rise of Stalin: The Communist Party in the Capital, 1925–1932. Studies in Soviet History and Society. Macmillan. London.

*Miller, Jacob*

- 1970 Soviet Theory of the Jews. – The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917. Published for the Institute of Jewish Affairs. Edited by Lionel Kochan. Oxford.

*Miller, Richard W.*

- 1984      *Morality, Power and History*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.

*MLFP*

- 1973      *Marxilais-Leniniläisen filosofian perusteet*. (The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy). Edistys. Moskova.

*Nahalyo, Bohdan & Swoboda, Victor*

- 1990      *Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR*. Hamish Hamilton. London.

*Nielsen, Kai*

- 1989      *Marxism and the Moral Point of View: Morality, Ideology and Historical Materialism*. Westview Press. Boulder, Colorado.

*Nikitin, Nikolai Petrovitch*

- 1979      *Борьба КПСС за ликвидацию фактического неравенства народов СССР* (The Struggle of the CPSU For Liquidation of the Factual Inequality of People in the USSR). На примере автономных республик Поволжья и Приуралья (1917–1937. гг.). Москва.

*Olcott, Martha B.*

- 1990      *The Soviet Multinational State: Readings and Documents*. Edited by Martha B. Olcott with Lubomir Hajda and Anthony Olcott. M.E. Sharpe, Inc. Armonk. New York.

*Pease, Neal*

- 1991      *Poland and the Holy See, 1918–1939*. - *Slavic Review*. American Quarterly of Soviet and East European Studies. Vol. 50. No. 3. Fall 1991. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California.

*Peris, Daniel*

- 1991      *The 1929 Congress of the Godless*. – *Soviet Studies*. A Journal on the USSR and Eastern Europe. Vol. 43. No. 4. Glasgow.

*Pethybridge, Roger*

- 1974      *The Social Prelude to Stalinism*. Macmillan. London.  
1990      *One Step Backwards, Two Steps Forward: Soviet Society and Politics in the New Economic Policy*. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Pinkus, Benjamin*

- 1986      *The Soviet Government and the Jews. A Documented Study*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.  
1988      *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of National Minority*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Pipes, Richard*

- 1979      *Russia under the Old Regime*. Penguin Books. Harmondsworth.  
1980      *The Formation of the Soviet Union. The History of a National Minority*. Cambridge.

*Polonsky, Vyatsheslav*

- 1960      *Русский революционный плакат* (Russian Revolutionary Poster). Государственное издательство. Москва.

*Polvinen, Tuomo*

- 1990      *Lenin ja kansallisuuskysymys* (Lenin and the Nationality Question). - *Lenin ja Suomi*. Osa III. Toimituskunta: Jaakko Numminen, Osmo Apunen, Christina von Gerich-Porkkala, Sune Jungar, Toivo J. Paloposki. Opetusministeriö. Valtion painatuskeskus. Helsinki.

*Pospelovsky, Dmitry V.*

- 1984 The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime 1917–1982. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. Crestwood, New York.
- 1987 A History of Marxist-Leninist Atheism and Soviet Antireligious Policies. Vol. 1. – A History of Soviet Atheism in Theory and Practise, and the Believer. Macmillan. London.
- 1988 Soviet Antireligious Campaigns and Persecutions. Vol. 2. – A History of Soviet Atheism in Theory and Practise, and the Believer. Macmillan. London.
- 1991 The Survival of the Russian Orthodox Church in Her Millennial Century: Faith as Martyria in an Atheistic State. – Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine. Edited by Geoffrey A. Hosking. Macmillan in association with the SSEES, University of London. Macmillan. London.

*Powell, David E.*

- 1989 Religion and Youth in the Soviet Union. – Politics and the Soviet System: Essays in Honour of Frederick C. Barghoorn. Edited by Thomas F. Remington. Macmillan Press. Basingstoke.

*Pravda, Alex*

- 1988 Ideology and the Policy Process. – Ideology and Soviet Politics. Edited by Stephen White and Alex Pravda. Studies in Russian and East Europe. Macmillan Press in Association with SSEES, University of London. London.

*Putnam, George F.*

- 1977 Russian Alternatives to Marxism. Christian Socialism and Idealistic Liberalism at Twentieth-Century Russia. The University of Tennessee Press. Knoxville.

*Rakowska-Harmstone, Teresa*

- 1986 Minority Nationalism Today: An Overview. – The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future. Edited by Robert Conquest. Hoover Institution Press; 325. Stanford, California.

*Ramet, Pedro*

- 1987 Cross and Commissar: The Politics of Religion in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana.
- 1989 The Interplay of Religious and Nationalities Policy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. – Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics. Edited by Pedro Ramet. Duke Press Policy Studies. Revised and expanded edition. Duke University Press. Durham and London.

*Read, Christopher*

- 1990 Culture and Power in Revolutionary Russia: The Intelligentsia and the Transition from Tsarism to Communism. Macmillan. Basingstoke, Hampshire and London.

*Regelson, Lev*

- 1977 Трагедия Русской Церкви 1917-1945 (The Tragedy of the Russian Church 1917-1945). YMCA Press. Paris.

*Riasanovsky, Nicholas Valentine*

- 1965 Russia and the West in the Teaching of the Slavophiles: A Study of Romantic Ideology. Peter Smith. Gloucester, Massachusetts.

*Rigby, Thomas Henry Richard*

- 1979 Lenin's Government: Sovnarkom 1917–1922. Soviet and East European Studies. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- 1989        The Soviet Political Executive, 1917–1986. - Political Leadership in the Soviet Union. Edited by Archie Brown. Macmillan. Basingstoke, Hampshire, London.

*Rosenfeldt, Niels Erik*

- 1978        Knowledge and Power: The Role of Stalin's Secret Chancellery in the Soviet System of Government. Studier/Københavns Universitets Slaviske Institute. Rosenkilde and Bagger. Copenhagen.

*Rothenberg, Joshua*

- 1971        The Legal Status of Religion in the Soviet Union. – Aspects of Religion in the Soviet Union 1917–1967. Edited by Richard H. Marshall, Jr. Associate Editors, Thomas E. Bird and Andrew Q. Blane. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

*Rupnik, Jacques*

- 1988        The Other Europe. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. London.

*Sabine, George H.*

- 1966        A History of Political Theory. Harrap Co. London.

*Sakwa, Richard*

- 1989        Soviet Politics: An Introduction. Routledge. London.  
1992        Bolshevism of the Left and Right. – The Russian Review. An American Quarterly Devoted to Russia Past and Present. Vol. 51/ No. 3. July 1992. Stanford University, California.

265

*Sapiets, Marite*

- 1989        Anti-Religious Propaganda and Education. – Candle in the Wind: Religion in the Soviet Union. Edited by Eugene B. Shirley, Jr. and Michael Rowe. Foreword by Richard Schifter. Ethics and Public Policy Center. Washington D.C.

*Sawatsky, Walter*

- 1992        Protestantism in the USSR. – Protestantism and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia. Christianity under Stress. Vol. III. Ed. by Petra Ramet. Duke University Press. Durham and London.

*Schapiro, Leonard*

- 1965        The Origin Of the Communist Autocracy. Political Opposition in the Soviet State: First Phase, 1917–1922. Frederick A. Praeger. New York.  
1970        The Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Second, Revised edition. Methuen. London.

*Service, Robert*

- 1979        The Bolshevik Party in Revolution: A Study in Organizational Change, 1917–1923. Barnes Noble Books. New York.  
1985        The Strength of Contradiction. Lenin: A Political Life. Vol. 1. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

*Seton-Watson, Hugh*

- 1967        The Russian Empire 1801-1917. Oxford History of Modern Europe. Clarendon Press, Oxford.

*Sheinman, M. M.*

- 1988        Пропагандист атеизма. – О Емельяне Ярославском. Воспоминания, очерки, статьи. ("The Propagandist of Atheism". On Emelyan Yaroslavsky. Memoirs, Essays, Articles). Издательство политической литературы. Москва.



*Siegelbaum, Lewis H.*

- 1992 Soviet State and Society Between Revolutions, 1918–1929. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Simon, Gerhard*

- 1974 Church, State and Opposition in the USSR. Hurst. London.  
1991 Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union. From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society. Translated by Karen Forster and Oswald Forster (Nationalismus und Nationalitätenpolitik in der Sowjetunion. Von der totalitären Diktatur zur nach stalinschen Gesellschaft. Baden-Baden. 1986). Westview Press. San Francisco.

*Sinyavsky, Andrei*

- 1990 Soviet Civilization: A Cultural History by Andrei Sinyavsky. Translated from Russian by Joanne Turnbull with assistance of Nikolai Formozov. Arcade Publishing, Inc. New York.

*Slatter, John*

- 1990 Communes with Communists: The sel'sovety in the 1920s. – Land Commune and Peasant Community in Russia: Communal Forms in Imperial and Early Soviet Society. Edited by Roger Bartlett. Studies in Russia and East Europe. Macmillan in association with the SSEES, University of London. London.

*Smolitsch, Igor*

- 1964 Geschichte der Russischen Kirche 1700–1917. Erster Band. E.J. Brill. Leiden.

*Solchanyk, Roman & Hvat, Ivan*

- 1990 The Catholic Church in the Soviet Union. – Catholicism and Politics in Communist Societies. Edited by Pedro Ramet. Christianity under Stress Vol. II. Duke University Press. Durham and London.

*Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr*

- 1974 Vankileirien saaristo (The Gulag Archipelago) 1918–1956: Taiteellinen tutkimuksen kokeilu. Suomentanut Esa Adrian. Wahlström & Widstrand. Tukholma.

*Spring, Derek*

- 1987 Soviet Historians in Crisis. – Revolutionary Russia. Vol. 1. No. 1. London.

*Stehle, Hansjakob*

- 1990 Papal Eastern Diplomacy and the Vatican Apparatus. – Catholicism and Politics in Communist Societies. Edited by Pedro Ramet. Christianity under Stress Vol. II. Duke University Press. Durham and London.

*Stites, Richard*

- 1989 Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in Russian Revolution. Oxford University Press. New York.  
1990 Festival and Revolution: the Role of Public Spectacle in Russia, 1917–1918. – Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism. Selected Papers from the Third World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies. Slavica Publishers Inc. Columbia, Ohio.  
1991 Bolshevik Ritual Building in the 1920s. – Russian in the Era of NEP: Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture. Indiana-Michigan Series in Russian and East European Studies. Edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Alexander Rabinowitch and Richard Stites. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, Indiana.

*Struve, Nikita*

- 1967 Christians in Contemporary Russia. Translated by Lancelot Sheppard and A. Manson. Harvill Press. London.

*Subtelny, Orest*

- 1990 Ukraine: A History. University of Toronto Press. Toronto.

*Swingewood, Alan*

- 1975 Marx and Modern Social Theory. Macmillan. London and Basingstoke.

*Sypnowich, Christine*

- 1987 The "Withering Away" Of Law. – Studies In Soviet Thought. A Review. Published by The Institute of East-European Studies at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), The Centre for East Europe, Russia and Asia at Boston College, and The Seminar For Political Theory and Philosophy at the University of Munich. Vol. 33. D. Reidel. Dordrecht.

*Szamuely, Tibor*

- 1974 The Russian Tradition. Edited with an Introduction by Robert Conquest. Secker & Warburg. London.

*Taylor, Charles*

- 1975 Hegel. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

267

*Teodorovich, Nadezhda*

- 1960 The Roman Catholics. - Religion in the USSR. Institute for the Study of The USSR. Series 1. No. 59. July 1960. Edited by Boris Iwanov, Translated and edited by James Larkin. Munich.

*Thaden, Edward C.*

- 1984 Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710–1870. With the Collaboration of Marianna Forster Thaden. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.

*Thiemann, Ronald F.*

- 1984 Critique of Religion. – Christians and the Many Faces of Marxism. Edited by Stumme Wayne. Minneapolis.

*Thrower, James*

- 1983 Marxist-Leninist "Scientific Atheism" and the Study of Religion and Atheism in the USSR. London.

*Tirado, Isabel, A*

- 1993 The Komsomol and Young Peasants: The Dilemma of Rural Expansion, 1921–1925. – Slavic Review. American Quarterly of Soviet and East European Studies. Vol. 52. No. 3. Fall 1993. Stanford University Press. Stanford, California.

*Trifonov, Ivan Yakolevich*

- 1960 Очерки истории классовой борьбы в СССР в годы НЭПА (1921–1937). (Essays in the History of the Class Struggle in the USSR during the years of NEP) Москва.
- 1975 Ликвидация эксплуататорских классов в СССР (Liquidation of Exploiting Classes in the USSR). Москва.

*Trukan, G.A.*

- 1994 Путь к тоталитаризму 1917–1929 г.г. (The Way to Totalitarianism, 1917–1929) Российская Академия Наук. Институт Российской Истории. "Наука". Москва.

*Tucker, Robert C.*

- 1973 Stalin as a Revolutionary 1879–1929: A Study in History and Personality. W.W. Norton. New York.  
 1990 Stalin in Power: The Revolution from above 1928–1941. W.W. Norton. New York.

*Tumarkin, Nina*

- 1983 Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.  
 1985 The Myth of Lenin during the Civil War Years. – Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution. A Special Study of Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, the Wilson Centre; 5. Edited by Abbott Gleason, Peter Kenez, and Richard Stites. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

*Ulam, Adam Bruno*

- 1968 The Bolsheviks: The Intellectual and Political History of the Triumph of Communism in Russia. Macmillan. New York.

*Unger, Aryeh L.*

- 1981 Constitutional Development in the USSR: A Guide to the Soviet Constitutions. Methuen. London.

*Valliere, Paul*

- 1992 The Social and Political role of the Orthodox Church in Post-Communist Russia. – Nationality Papers. (Special Issue). A Semi-Annual Publication of the Association for Study of the Nationalities of the USSR and Eastern Europe. Edited by Erica Dailey and Henry R. Huttenbach. Spring 1992. Vol. XX. No. 1. New York.

*Vasilieva, O. Yu.*

- 1993 Русская православная церковь и Советская власть в 1917–1927 годах (Russian Orthodox Church and Soviet power during 1917–1927). – Вопросы Истории. Vol. 8. Moscow.

*Venturi, Franco*

- 1983 Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia. Translated from Italian by Francis Haskell with an Introduction by Isaiah Berlin. University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

*Vihavainen, Timo*

- 1990 Venäjän vallankumous Ranskan vallankumouksen kuvastimessa. (The Russian Revolution reflected by the Great Revolution of France). – Ranskan Suuri vallankumous 200 vuotta. Näkökulma valistukseen ja vallankumoukseen. Toimittanut Sisko Hakala & Jorma Tiainen. Yleisen historian tutkimuksia 9. Jyväskylän yliopisto, historian laitos. Jyväskylä.

*Viola, Lynne*

- 1987 The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization. Oxford University Press. New York.

*Waldron, Peter*

- 1989 Religious Toleration in Late Imperial Russia. – Civil Rights in Imperial Russia. Edited by Olga Crisp and Linda Edmondson. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Walicki, Andrzej*

- 1980 A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism. Translated from the Polish by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

*Waller, Michael*

- 1988      What is to Count as Ideologies in the Soviet Union. – Ideology and Soviet Politics. Edited by Stephen White and Alex Pravda. Studies in Russian and East Europe. Macmillan in Association with SSEES, University of London. Basingstoke, Hampshire.

*Walters, Philip*

- 1991      The Renovationist Coup: Personalities and Programmes. – Church, Nation and State in Russia and Ukraine. Edited by Geoffrey A. Hosking. Macmillan in Association with the SSEES, University of London. Macmillan. London.
- 1993      A Survey of Soviet Religious Policy. – Religious Policy in the Soviet Union. Edited by Sabrina Petra Ramet. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.

*Wandycz, Piotr S.*

- 1969      Soviet-Polish Relations 1917-1921. Russian Research Centre Studies; 59. Harvard University Press. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

*Weber, Gerda & Hermann*

- 1980      Lenin. Life and Works. Edited and translated by Martin McCauley. Macmillan Chronology Series. London.

*Wesson, Robert G.*

- 1963      Soviet Communes. Rutgers University Press. New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- 1972      Lenin's Legacy: The Story of the CPSU. Stanford University. Stanford, California.

*Wetter, Gustav A.*

- 1963      Dialectical Materialism: A Historical and Systematic Survey of Philosophy in the Soviet Union. Translated from the German by Peter Heath. Frederick A. Praeger. New York.

*Williams, Robert C.*

- 1986      The Other Bolsheviks: Lenin and His Critics, 1904–1914. Indiana University Press. Bloomington.

*Winter, Eduard*

- 1972      Die Sowjetunion und der Vatikan. Teil 3 Der Trilogie Russland und das Papsttum. Akademie Verlag. Berlin.

*Wolfe, Bertram D.*

- 1967      The Bridge and the Abyss: The Troubled Friendship of Maxim Gorky and V.I. Lenin. Hoover Institution Publication. Stanford, California.

*Wood, Allen W.*

- 1990      Hegel's Ethical Thought. Cambridge University Press. New York.

*Young, Glennys Jeanne*

- 1989      Rural Religion and Soviet Power, 1921–1932. Diss. University of California. Berkeley, California.

*Zernov, Nicolas*

- 1963      Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century. London.



---

# VIII Index

## 1. INDEX OF NAMES

270

- Agafangel, Metropolitan of Yaroslavl  
(Aleksandr Lavrentovich Preobrazhensky,  
1854-1928) 188
- Agursky, Mikhail 25, 166, 133
- Alekseev, V. A. 26 n, 91, 94
- Alexander II, Czar (1855-1881) 42
- Altstad, Audrey 89
- Anderson, John 29, 101
- Anderson, Paul B. 73
- Antony, Bishop (A. A. Granovsky,  
1860-1927) 115, 119
- Antony, Metropolitan of Kiev (Aleksei  
Khrapovitsky, 1863-1936) 106, 108, 137
- Armstrong, John A. 21
- Artyokhina, A. A. (1889-1969) 206
- Avdiev, I. Ya. 109
- Avenarius, Richard (1843-1896) 54
- Ball, Alan 136
- Bakunin, M. A. (1814-1876) 39, 41
- Barghoorn, Frederick F. 140
- Basilevich, G. D. (1889-1938) 110, 113
- Bauer, Otto (1881-1938) 57-57, 72
- Beeson, Trevor 26, 73
- Belinsky, Vissarion (1811-1848) 40, 41,  
153
- Bennigsen, Alexander 28
- Berdyaev, N. A. (1874-1948) 53, 116
- Bergavinov, S. A. 176, 177
- Besançon, Alain 31
- Blane, Andrew Q. 39
- Bociurkiw, Bohdan R. 20
- Bogdanov, A. A. (Malinovsky,  
1873-1928) 54-55
- Bonch-Bruevich, V. D. (1873-1955) 49,  
66, 70, 76, 77, 85, 94, 170, 231, 235
- Bourdeaux, Michael 26
- Borys, Jurij 140
- Brezhnev, L. I. (1906-1982) 25
- Brovkin, Vladimir N. 75
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew 19
- Budkiewicz, Constantin, Catholic Father  
(? -1923) 123, 130, 131
- Bukharin N. I. (1888-1938) 23, 165, 167,  
200, 209, 216, 217, 218, 224, 235
- Bulgakov, S. N. (1871-1944) 53, 116
- Carr, Edward Hallett 27, 71, 137, 237
- Carrere D'Encausse, Helene 20, 28, 140,  
168
- Chaadaev, P. J. (1793-1856) 48
- Chernyshevsky, N. G. (1822-1889) 42
- Chicherin, G. V. (1872-1936) 66, 130,  
149, 186, 190, 193, 194
- Cieplak, Jan Catholic Archbishop  
(1857-1926) 122-123, 129
- Clark, Ronald W. 28
- Clements, Barbara Evans 71, 206
- Copleston, Frederick F. 28
- Curtiss, John S. 26, 72, 74, 102, 118,  
133, 134, 158, 237
- Curzon, G. N. (1859-1925) 131
- Davies, R. W. 214
- Deborin, A. M. (1881-1963) 166, 224
- Delaney, Joan 101, 107, 159
- Deribas, T. D. (1883-1939) 127
- Deutscher, Isaac 29, 101, 103, 123-124,  
163, 164
- D'Herbigny, Michel, Nuncio (1880-1957)  
194
- Dimanshtein, S. M. (1886-1939) 190
- Dostoevsky, F. M. (1821-1881) 153
- Dubovsky, V. 171
- Dunn, Dennis J. 19, 29, 120, 123, 194
- Dzerzhinsky, F. E. (1877-1926) 22
- Elizarov, M. T. (1862-1919) 76
- Engels, Friedrich (1820-1895) 36, 52, 55
- Enukidze, A. S. (1877-1937) 108, 189
- Fainsod, Merle 28, 96
- Fedorov, Leonid Ivanovich, Uniate  
Exarch (1879-1935) 85
- Feuerbach, L. (1804-1872) 36
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila 211, 212, 216

Flerovsky, I. P. (1888-1959) 101, 127  
Frank, S. L. 53

Galkin, M. V. (Gorev) 8, 65, 72, 95, 101, 110, 113,  
Gapon, Georgy Apollonovich  
(1870-1906) 50-51  
Geller, Mikhail 20, 112, 134  
Gershenzon, M. O. 53  
Gibson, Hugh, Ambassador 123  
Gill, Graeme 30, 31  
Gitelman, Zvi 28, 92, 120  
Gooding, John 22  
Gorbachev, M. S. 22  
Gorky, Maxim (Aleksei Maximovich  
Peshkov, 1868-1936) 50, 54-55, 103-  
104, 154, 228  
Got'e, I. V. (1873-1943) 74  
Grigory, Metropolitan of Leningrad  
(Chukov, Nikolai, 1870-1955) 188

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich  
(1770-1831) 35, 54  
Herzen, A. I. (1812-1870) 41, 42  
Hindus, Maurice 124  
Hodgson, Leonard, Ambassador 105, 187  
Hoover, Herbert 103  
Häggglund, S. 138

Ingram, David B. 61  
Ivan the Terrible, Czar 228  
Ivanov, N. G. 207  
Izgoev, A. S. 53

Kagarlitsky, B. 264  
Kalinin, M. I. (1875-1946) 23, 105, 108,  
112, 113, 115, 138, 157, 168, 169, 173,  
174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 183, 190,  
191, 193, 196, 199, 234  
Kamenev, L. B. (Rosenfeld, 1883-1936)  
23, 66-82, 95, 104, 110, 112-117, 123,  
138, 150, 162, 183, 195, 199, 200, 231  
Kaplan, F. E. (Roidman, 1890-1918) 79  
Karaev, A. G. 206  
Kerensky, A. F. (1881-1970) 60  
Kistyakovsky, B. A. 53  
Kline, George 43, 54  
Knorin, V. G. (1890-1939) 201  
Kochurov, Ioann, Arch-priest 70  
Kolarz, Walter 159  
Kollontai, A. M. (1872-1952) 70-71  
Kossior, S. V. (1889-1939) 190  
Kostelovskaya, M. M. (1878-1964) 159,  
197, 200-203, 236  
Kranitsky, V. D. 84, 118, 187

Krasikov, P. A. (1870-1939) 64, 81, 82,  
101, 107, 110, 113, 121-112, 129, 193,  
194  
Krasnoshchekov, A. M. (1880-1937) 110  
Krawchenko, Bohdan 89  
Krupskaya, N. K. (1869-1939) 51, 66,  
163, 176  
Krylenko, N. V. (1885-1938) 64, 129,  
211  
Kuibyshev, V. V. (1888-1935) 190  
Kursky, D. I. (1874-1932) 64, 105, 108  
Kuznetsov, N. D. 76, 85, 87

Lane, Christel 31, 32  
Larin, Yu. (1882-1932) 165, 190  
Latsis, M. Ya. (Sudrabs, Ya. F.,  
1888-1938) 190  
Lebedev, P. P. (1872-1933) 110  
Lemercier-Quelquejay, Chantal 28  
Lenin, Vladimir Ilich (Ulyanov,  
1870-1924) 21, 24, 33, 42, 43, 45, 46-  
100, 123-128, 129-135, 136-137, 149,  
153, 154, 157-158, 159, 160-163, 164,  
168, 232  
Levitin, Anatoly 179  
Levman, S. 154  
Lewin, Moshe 153, 210, 215  
Litvinov, M. M. (1876-1951) 122  
Lloyd George, D. N. 94  
Luchterhand, Otto 64  
Lukin, N. M. (Antonov N.) 76, 85  
Lunacharsky, A. V. (1875-1933) 54, 67,  
72, 75, 87, 144, 154, 157, 221, 222, 235

Mach, Ernst (1838-1916) 54  
Meiner, N. 65  
Martov, L. (Yu. O Tsederbaum,  
1873-1923) 161  
Marx, Karl (1818-1883) 36, 52, 55, 61  
Mayer, Alfred G. 32  
McKown, Delos B. 27  
McLellan, David 43  
Medvedev, A. V. (1884-1940) 113  
Medvedev, R. 26 n  
Menzhinsky, V. R. (1874-1934) 117,  
127, 129  
Minin, S. 172  
Molotov V. M. (Skryabin, 1890-1986)  
110, 113, 233  
Moor, Dimitry 155  
Morozov, S. T. (1862-1905) 50, 53  
Myllyniemi, Varpu 33

Nataevich, M. M. 207  
Nazaretyan A. M. (1889-1938) 186

- Nekrich, Aleksandr 134  
 Nezhnyi, Aleksandr 81, 237  
 Nielsen, Kai 32
- Osinsky, N. (Obolensky V. V., 1887-1938) 93-94
- Pacelli, Nuncio 194  
 Peris, Daniel 22, 223  
 Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsky (Polyansky, Petr Fedorovich, 1863-1936) 188  
 Peter the Great, Czar 37, 40  
 Peters, Ya. K. (1886-1942) 139  
 Pethybridge, Roger 111  
 Petrovsky, G. I. (1877-1958) 190  
 Pipes, Richard 27, 40  
 Pisarev, D. I. (1840-1868) 43  
 Platonov, S. F. (1860-1933) 224  
 Plekhanov, Georgy Valentinovich (1856-1918) 42-43, 46, 55  
 Pokrovsky, M. N. (1868-1932) 31  
 Popov, N. N. (1890-1938) 139, 183, 190  
 Pospelovsky, Dmitry V. 26, 27, 118, 166-167, 187  
 Pravda, Alex 32  
 Preobrazhensky E. A. (1886-1937) 86, 165, 167  
 Putnam, George F. 51
- Radek, Karl (Sobelson, 1885-1939) 92, 131  
 Rakhmetov 43  
 Rakovsky, Kh. G. (1873-1941) 140  
 Ramet, Pedro 25, 28, 149  
 Read, Christopher 68  
 Reisner, M. A. (1868-1928) 72  
 Renner, Karl (1870-1950) 56  
 de Ropp, Eduard, Catholic Archbishop 92  
 Rosenfeldt, Niels Erik 23  
 Rowe, Michael 26  
 Rykov, A. I. (1881-1938) 23, 112, 118-119, 130, 135, 165, 177, 178, 187, 188, 189, 218, 220, 221, 223, 235
- Sabine, G. H. 32  
 Sabler V. K. (1847-1929) 188  
 Samarin, A. D. (1866-1932) 76, 85  
 Samoilova-Zemlyachka, R. S. (1876-1947) 110, 113  
 Samsonov, T. P. (1888-1956) 81  
 Saprionov, T. V. (1887-1939) 110, 113  
 Sergei, Patriarch (Stragorodsky, Ivan Nikolaevich, 1867-1944) 188-189, 236  
 Sergei of Radonezh, Russian Saint Service, Robert 28  
 Shavrov, Vadim 179  
 Shchavieva, S. Z. 206  
 Shirley, Eugene B. 26  
 Shpitsberg, I. A. (1881-1933) 64, 85, 87  
 Siegelbaum, Lewis H. 134  
 Silvester, Archbishop of Omsk and Pavlovsk 84  
 Simon, Gerhard 28, 58, 146  
 Sinyavsky, Andrei 32, 163  
 Skvortsov-Stepanov, I. I. (1870-1928) 70-71, 81, 101, 102, 127, 134, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 175, 235  
 Smidovich, P. G. (1874-1935) 127, 226  
 Solovev, V. M. (1853-1900) 39, 54  
 Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr 109, 111, 118, 237  
 Stalin, Iosif Vissarionovich (Dzhughashvili, 1879-1953) 22, 25, 27, 33, 43, 44-45, 57-59, 89, 105, 110, 113, 123-128, 130, 138, 140, 146-150, 156, 162, 163, 195, 200, 205, 206, 207, 209-224, 227-229  
 Stites, Richard 154  
 Strauss, D. F. (1808-1874) 36  
 Struve, P. B. (1879-1953) 53, 116  
 Stuchka, P. I. (1865-1932) 72, 145, 210  
 Sultan-Galiev, M. H. (1892-1940) 146-150, 192  
 Susiluoto, Ilmari 55  
 Swingewood, Alan 30  
 Szamuely, Tibor 28
- Tarle, E. V. (1875-1955) 224  
 Thorez, Maurice 195  
 Tikhon, Patriarch (Belavin, Vasily Ivanovich, 1865-1925) 70, 80, 88, 105, 106, 108, 114-118, 129-135, 138, 186-187, 188  
 Tkachev, P. (1844-1885) 41  
 Tolstoi, L. N. (1828-1910) 39  
 Tomsky, M. P. (1880-1936) 123, 165, 199, 217, 218, 235  
 de Tracy, Destutt, A. L. C. (1754-1836) 30  
 Tregubov, I. M. 94, 101-102, 117, 172, 173, 182, 234  
 Trifonov, I. 81, 215  
 Trotsky, Lev Davidovich (Bronstein, 1879-1940) 20, 27, 33, 43, 44, 45, 51, 68, 101, 104, 107, 108, 110, 112-120, 123-128, 129-135, 136-140, 142-149, 151-154, 159, 165, 174, 180, 195, 200, 205, 232, 233, 234  
 Tuchkov, Evgeny Aleksandrovich

(1892-1957) 66, 84, 115, 117, 127, 129,  
130, 134, 135, 186, 202  
Tucker, Robert 28, 45, 161, 210, 211,  
213, 224, 228  
Tumarkin, Nina 162, 163

Ulyanov, Aleksandr Ilich (1866-1887) 44  
Ulyanov, Ilya Nikolaevich (1831-1886)  
43  
Unshlikht, I. S. (1879-1938) 104, 110,  
113  
Ustryalov, Nikolai (1890-1938) 116

Vakhitov, Nur, Mullah (1885-1918) 90,  
149  
Valentinov, Nikolai (Volsky N.) 162  
Vasilieva, O. Yu. 127  
Veniamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd  
(Kazansky) 109, 118-119  
Vinokurov, A. N. (1869-1944) 107, 113  
Volkov, A. 117  
Vorovsky, V. V. (1871-1923) 122  
Vvedensky, A. I. (1888-?) 118-119, 179

Waller, Michael 30  
Walters, Philip 64, 84, 110  
Wetter, Gustav 27  
Williams, Robert. C. 44  
Wilson, Woodrow 94

Yakovlev, Ya. A. (1896-1938) 113  
Yaroslavsky, Emelyan Israelevich  
(Gubelman, Minei Israelevich,  
1878-1943) 23, 100, 125, 130, 131, 132-  
136, 137, 149, 172, 181, 182, 195, 196,  
197, 198, 203, 205, 215, 218, 219, 220,  
222, 223, 226, 227, 228, 237

Zhidelev 189  
Zernov, Nicolas 194  
Zinovev, Grigory Evsevich  
(Radomyslsky, 1883-1936) 22, 123, 126,  
128, 140-150, 154, 162, 163, 165, 173,  
174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 183,  
195, 199, 200, 201, 205, 233  
Zubатов, S. V. (1864-1917) 50



## 2. INDEX OF SUBJECTS

APO, Agitation and Propaganda Section  
67, 101, 125, 127, 128, 138  
ARA, American Relief Association 103,  
105  
Austro-Marxists 56-58  
breathing-space 75-79  
Bund 57  
Christian Socialist Party 26  
Commonwealth of Independent States 19,  
20  
Conference of Genoa 106-107, 116, 121  
"confiscation-conflict" 103-116  
Cultural Revolution 24, 25, 209-210, 212,  
213  
"culturalists" 219, 222, 224  
Dukhobors 39  
"god-builders" 23, 54-55  
heder 44, 120  
Hegelianism 35  
I party programme, (1903) 47-48, 59  
II party programme, (1919) 82-83  
"interventionists" 219, 223-224  
"isolation-policy" 79-88  
Karlovci Sobor 106, 107, 111, 131  
Kolokol 41  
"korenizatsya-policy" 25, 146, 149, 150

Left-Hegelianism 35-36, 41, 46  
"Liquidation Commission" 63-64, 65,  
85, 219, 213  
Marxism-Leninism 21  
Moslem Communists 89-90, 150  
"N. Osinsky's memorandum" 93-94  
narodnovoltsy 42  
Narodnya Volya 42  
Old Believers 37-39, 50, 53  
Orgkomsekt 101, 127, 183  
OZET 190  
Pomgol 103-104, 105, 107, 110, 113, 115  
"separation decree 1918" 71-73  
Sharia 90, 149, 150, 193, 206  
Skhod 214  
Slavophiles 40  
Smena-Vekh 115, 116  
Soviet Union, USSR 19, 27  
Stundists 39  
The Erfurt programme, (1891) 52  
"The Living Church" 117, 133, 135,  
186-189  
Vekhi 53  
Zemlya i Volya 42  
Zubatovian Movement 50













