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# Religious Dissent in the USSR in the 1960s

With some justification, the 1960s may be called the decade of dissent. This is true even with regard to the Soviet Union, where broad sectors of the population have resorted to increasingly vociferous expressions of dissatisfaction with present conditions. If, when the decade began, overt alienation from the system was a relatively unusual phenomenon, the past ten years have given rise to an increasing stream of dissent in the Soviet populace. Among the intelligentsia, almost every rank and profession has been involved in oral, written, and organizational protest. Considerable attention has been devoted to this development by Western scholarship and journalism, and rightly so, for the voices of dissent provide an immediate insight into the tensions and conflicts within the rapidly changing society. One area of dissent, however, has received rather less attention in the West. This paper will attempt to survey the religious portion of the Soviet population, in an endeavor to illustrate the degree to which religious dissatisfaction during the past decade has been consonant with the general current of dissent within Soviet society.

To practice religion at all, of course, implies a degree of disagreement with communism, for religion is specifically declared incompatible with the doctrine professed by the party. Since World War II, the Soviet government has allowed the practice of religion, within limits, and has appeared to accept the religious person as a loyal, conscientious, and law-abiding citizen provided that he does not engage in overt dissent. During the sixties, however, the range of permissible religious activity began to contract.

With the waning of the fifties, the Soviet regime initiated a broadly based, vigorous, and effective antireligious campaign.[1] The détente begun during World War II, whereby the churches received a limited degree of toleration in return for political services rendered to the state (primarily in foreign affairs), was ended, and the state unilaterally withdrew from the bargain. In the name of de-Stalinization, the religious policy of the later Stalin period was abandoned in favor of his earlier policy. Reverting to the adamant hostility to religion exhibited by Lenin and Marx, the Khrushchev regime demanded—

1. As yet there has been no exhaustive treatment of the antireligious campaign, but brief summaries may be found in Donald A. Lowrie and William C. Fletcher, "Khrushchev's Religious Policy, 1959–1964," in Richard H. Marshall, Jr., ed., *Aspects of Religion in the USSR, 1917–1967* (Chicago, 1971); Harry Willetts, "De-opiating the Masses," *Problems of Communism*, November–December 1964, pp. 32–41; and Robert Conquest, ed., *Religion in the USSR* (London, 1968), esp. pp. 47–64.

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and got—a revitalization of the antireligious commitment which had languished for two decades.

Immense energies were devoted to antireligious propaganda. Books and pamphlets proliferated; newspapers and journals, both national and local, featured atheist themes; and new periodicals were created specifically for the purpose. All other forms of mass media—radio, television, and cinema—were enlisted in the struggle. Efforts were made to introduce atheism into the curriculum at all levels of public education, and departments and "people's universities" of atheism multiplied. New rituals and holidays were devised to compete with religious customs. Large numbers of professional and amateur propagandists of atheism were dispatched throughout the country, conducting lectures, formal and informal conversations, and "individual work with believers" in the effort to counteract the influence of religion.

Many direct measures of force were employed against the religious population. These tactics ranged from such familiar annoyances as direct and indirect harassment (enlisting informers within congregations, surveillance of those present at worship services, permitting hooligans to disrupt services, etc.), increased taxation, and ordering churches to make repairs simultaneously with denial of necessary materials, to the more serious measures of prohibition of religious education and attendance of minors at church services, dismissal from employment or university, forcible separation of children from religious parents, interrogation, arrest, exile, imprisonment, and, in a few cases, death.

By 1964, when the Khrushchev period drew to a close, the effects of the campaign were profound, at least insofar as the institutional churches are concerned. The Russian Orthodox Church, which had maintained some sixteen thousand functioning churches during the fifties,[2] had lost, by some estimates, ten thousand churches,[3] and according to a Soviet source retained only seventy-five hundred.[4] The number of Russian Baptist churches had declined from about five thousand to between two and three thousand,[5] while the Baltic Lutherans and Lithuanian Catholics had lost approximately half of their

2. A. Veshchikov, "Milestones of a Great Journey," *Nauka i religiia* (hereafter cited as *NiR*), 1962, no. 11, translated in *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas* (hereafter cited as *RCDA*), Dec. 24, 1962, p. 2; cf. the interview with G. G. Karpov, *New York Times,* June 7, 1945; William C. Fletcher, "Statistics and Soviet Sociology of Religion," in Hans Mol, ed., *Sociology of Religion in the Western World* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, in preparation). It should be noted that at various times twenty to thirty thousand churches were claimed, and as late as 1961 the Moscow Patriarchate officially claimed to have twenty-two thousand churches (*Time,* May 5, 1961, p. 57).

3. See the Eshliman-Iakunin letter, translated in *RCDA,* May 15/31, 1966, p. 76.

4. *Spravochnik propagandista i agitatora* (Moscow, 1966), pp. 149–50, translated in *Research Materials,* October 1969, p. 1.

5. Ibid.; F. Fedorenko, *Sekty, ikh vera i dela* (Moscow, 1965), p. 166; cf. *Bratskii vestnik* (hereafter cited as *BV*), 1966, no. 6, p. 17.

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churches.[6] Jewish synagogues had declined from approximately four hundred at the beginning of the campaign to sixty or fewer,[7] and only a very small number of mosques—perhaps four hundred—remained to serve the religious needs of the rapidly growing Muslim populations.[8]

With the fall of Khrushchev, widespread closing of churches ceased, although in most other respects the campaign continued unabated. The result has been that for most of the decade the majority of the religious population was deprived of adequate facilities for worship, a disability which is keenly felt by the believers. There is little indication that adherence to religion among the population has declined in conformity with the reduction of religious institutions, and as a result the tensions within the religious community have become acute. The dissatisfaction of believers with the present situation has been given expression in the rise of religious dissent in the USSR.

The religious dissent of the sixties is a complex phenomenon. If its causes can generally be attributed to the regime's policies, its specific forms do not yield so easily to classification. The patterns of dissent are complex and often interrelated; the participants engage now in one, now in another kind of activity.

We shall here distinguish between passive and active dissenters, according to whether or not the participants seek to effect change in the policy of the government. The passive dissenters, who exhibit no discernible aspirations to change the system but seek merely to conduct religious activity regardless of whether it is legally permissible, and who are to be found throughout the religious population, will be examined before the active dissenters, primarily to be found among Baptists and Orthodox, who seek redress of grievances and, in general, a change in the system's treatment of religion.

Religious believers have devised a broad range of expedients which may be employed to evade the regime's restrictions. Most obvious is "internal emigration," whereby believers no longer seek to express their convictions openly, but maintain such inward devotions as they can.[9] Denominational differences become sublimated as believers visit other services when it is impossible to worship according to their preferences.[10] In view of the inade-

6. Alexander Veinbergs, "Lutheranism and Other Denominations in the Baltic Republics," in Marshall, *Aspects of Religion*; *ELTA Information Service* (New York), July 20, 1967, p. 8.

7. Zvi Gitelman, "The Jews," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1967, p. 93.

8. Paul Roth, "L'Islam nell'URSS," *Russia Cristiana*, no. 88 (June 1967), p. 21.

9. Cf. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Jan. 5, 1964; V. N. Vasilov, "Etnograficheskoe issledovanie religioznykh verovanii sel'skogo naseleniia," in A. I. Klibanov, ed., *Konkretnye issledovaniia sovremennykh religioznykh verovanii* (Moscow, 1967), p. 159.

10. V. F. Milovidov, "Staroobriadchestvo i sotsial'nyi progress," in Academy of Sciences of the USSR (hereafter cited as AN SSSR), *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma* (Moscow, semiannually since 1966), 2:221; Fedorenko, *Sekty*, p. 235.

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quate number of clerics available, women are pressed into service during the liturgy in the remaining churches.[11] Well before informally circulated protests became popular, the religious population had recourse to *samizdat* (private publication) to meet the critical need for literature (for example, the treatises on religion and science by Archbishop Luka and by A. A. Lamishnin in the fifties[12]). Tracts based on sermons were widely distributed,[13] and there were numerous discoveries of clandestine production and publication of religious literature.[14]

The most pressing problem for believers is the shortage of authorized churches. As a result, informal, unregistered, and illegal churches abound. According to a Soviet official, "Withdrawal of registered status frequently results in a mere increase in the number of unregistered but functioning religious societies and groups. Consequently, the copying of figures from one column into another cannot be passed off as an indication of the success of atheistic efforts."[15] Soviet researchers in Voronezh Oblast found that in 1962 there were "fifty-five Orthodox churches, eight registered and a number of unregistered sectarian congregations and groups."[16] There have been numerous reports of house churches which have grown up in place of the closed local church.[17] Dimitry Konstantinov tells of an American student who attended a house church, composed predominantly of youth, which was part of an organized network of small circles of Orthodox believers in Moscow.[18]

To compensate for the paucity of functioning churches, priests will conduct religious rites in the home, and believers participate in church services indirectly.[19] Christian ceremonies can be conducted by correspondence or by

11. *Komsomol'skaia pravda,* June 14, 1963.

12. V. Chertikhin, "What Are the Orthodox Preaching?" *NiR,* 1961, no. 11, pp. 28–33, translated in *Joint Publications Research Service,* Dec. 12, 1961, pp. 6–15; M. I. Shakhnovich, "Vestiges of Religious Mysticism and How to Remove Them," *Voprosy filosofii,* 1964, no. 2, translated in *RCDA,* May 31, 1964, pp. 77–78.

13. I. A. Kryvelev, *O dokazatel'stvakh bytiia bozhiia* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 32–33; *Izvestiia,* Feb. 18, 1961; *Literaturnaia gazeta,* Apr. 10, 28, 1962; *Pravda,* Aug. 18, 1963.

14. *Literatura i zhizn',* Feb. 21, Nov. 23, 1960; *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* Apr. 13, 1962; *Uchitel'skaia gazeta,* Feb. 16, 1963; *NiR,* 1964, no. 9, p. 90.

15. A. Valentinov, "Sovetskoe zakonodatel'stvo o kul'takh," *NiR,* 1961, no. 10, p. 92.

16. M. K. Tepliakov, "Materialy k issledovaniiu religioznosti naseleniia Voronezha i Voronezhskoi oblasti," in Klibanov, *Konkretnye issledovaniia,* p. 150.

17. *Gudok,* Feb. 23, 1964; *Krasnaia zvezda,* Feb. 14, 1965; *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* Nov. 4, 1965; N. P. Alekseev, "Metodika i rezul'taty izucheniia religioznosti sel'skogo naseleniia," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma,* 3:138; N. Rozenberg, "Lektorii na domu," *Agitator,* no. 23 (December 1966), p. 45.

18. Dimitry Konstantinov, *Religioznoe dvizhenie soprotivleniia v SSSR* (London, Canada: SBONR Publishing House, 1967), p. 46.

19. A. B. Chertkov, *From God to the People: Confessions of a Former Priest* (Moscow, 1962), as translated in *RCDA,* June 3, 1963, p. 94; Z. A. Iankova, "O nekotorykh metodakh konkretno-sotsial'nogo izucheniia religii," in Klibanov, *Konkretnye issledovaniia,* p. 113.

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sending the wedding ring or a bit of earth from a grave to the priest. In one *raion* 63 percent of the funerals were conducted "by correspondence" in 1966, while in another 89 percent were so conducted.[20]

Drastic means have been employed to counter the pressure of the antireligious campaign. In one case an entire community of sixty people attempted to cut themselves off from society completely and live a self-sufficient life.[21] To compensate for the sharp reduction in the number of open monasteries, monastics have formed communal enterprises which, like their predecessors of the prewar period, operate as fully developed cenobitic communities until they are discovered.[22] Individual believers have gone into total seclusion or have fled to the *taiga,* there to found cells and hermitages which, on occasion, have attained considerable renown among surrounding believers.[23] And numerous believers, clerical and lay alike, have entered the wandering life of fugitives, constantly moving about the country, administering to the needs of other believers as circumstances permit.[24]

The decade of antireligious pressure has resulted in a burgeoning of clandestine, underground organizations. Among the Orthodox, these movements have been available as a sort of last resort for believers throughout most of the Soviet period. Operating in conditions of extreme secrecy, these movements have until recently been mentioned very rarely in Soviet sources, and to Western scholarship they have been almost entirely invisible.[25]

Underground Orthodoxy emerged as an important factor in the religious life of the USSR in the late twenties,[26] and at times enjoyed immense

20. N. P. Andrianov et al., *Osobennosti sovremennogo religioznogo soznaniia* (Moscow, 1966), p. 213.

21. *NiR,* 1961, no. 7, p. 25.

22. *Izvestiia,* Jan. 24, 1960; cf. *Izvestiia,* Nov. 23, 1937.

23. *Sovetskaia Rossiia,* Sept. 27, 1962; *NiR,* 1963, no. 3, p. 26; M. Barykin, "Pustosvet na dvere zhizni," *NiR,* 1961, no. 9, p. 48; N. Lazarev, "Teni proshlogo," *NiR,* 1963, no. 8, pp. 88–89.

24. O. Shestinsky, "Pauki na mal'vakh," *NiR,* 1960, no. 3, p. 53; A. Dubkovka, "Kto iz detei verit v boga?" *NiR,* 1963, no. 2, p. 75; cf. Nikita Struve, *Christians in Contemporary Russia* (London, 1967), pp. 303–10.

25. No single, convenient source for data on underground Orthodoxy is available as yet. Fairly extensive treatment may be found in L. N. Mitrokhin, "Reaktsionnaia ideologiia 'istinno-pravoslavnoi tserkvi' na Tambovshchine," in AN SSSR, *Sovremennogo sektantstvo,* vol. 9 of the series *Voprosy istorii religii i ateizma* (Moscow, 1961), pp. 144–60; Z. A. Nikolskaia, "K kharakteristike techeniia tak nazyvaemykh istinno-pravoslavnykh khristian," ibid., pp. 161–88; and, with regard to the subgroupings within the movement, by consulting the index of Fedorenko, *Sekty.*

26. Detailed treatment of this period may be found in the unpublished typescript of documents originating in the USSR and smuggled to the West shortly after 1930, *Delo Mitropolita Sergiia,* and in Archimandrite Ioann (Snychev), "Tserkovnye raskoly v russkoi tserkvi 20-kh i 30-kh godov XX stoletiia—grigorianskii, iaroslavskii, iosiflianskii, viktorianskii i drugie: Ikh osobennost' i istoriia" (unpubl. magister's diss., Moscow Theological Academy, Zagorsk, 1965). The latter, based on the private archive of the late Bishop of Kuibyshev, was reviewed in *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii,* 1966, no. 8, pp. 7–10, and was generously made available to this author by the Moscow Patriarchate.

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influence.[27] By the advent of the sixties, the various factions in underground Orthodoxy had coalesced into a single movement, the True Orthodox Christians. This group modified its approach to Orthodoxy sufficiently to allow the priesthood to be dispensed with; laymen conducted the worship services and even administered certain of the sacraments (baptism, the Eucharist, etc.). During times of lessened governmental pressure the movement could organize on a regional or broader basis, while in times of stress each local group could function independently, sometimes even despite the arrest of a large proportion of its members.

The antireligious campaign of the sixties has subjected the True Orthodox Christians to continuous, severe attack, while at the same time creating conditions among the religious population at large which tend to attract converts to the clandestine practice of religion. The movement seems able to survive; throughout the past decade there have been numerous reports of its continuing activity.[28] In some areas, it would appear that the movement no longer functions in an organized manner,[29] while elsewhere the True Orthodox Christians form approximately 10 percent of all known sectarians.[30] In one illustrative case, the movement was discovered in Temirtau (near Karaganda) in 1960: "God had made dozens of people who had built their mud houses on the banks of the Temirtau reservoir to separate themselves with walls of icons from the outer world. A few kilometers away from these mud houses, nightly fires were burning in the first furnaces of the Kazakhstanskaia Magnitka plant, but here, crowded in tight groups, people were praying by the flickering light of small candles."[31] The movement was closed down and its leaders imprisoned; however, in 1968 it was again reported that the True Orthodox Christians had been disbanded in Temirtau.[32]

Not surprisingly, contemporary True Orthodox Christians display a large measure of social alienation, often with political overtones: "The sectarians pass counterrevolutionary, monarchical literature from hand to hand, they spread absurd rumors and lies about the imminent demise of the Soviet

27. A. I. Klibanov, "Sovremennoe sektantstvo v Lipetskoi oblasti," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy istorii religii i ateizma,* 10:166–67.

28. For example, A. S. Onishchenko, "Tendentsii izmeneniia sovremennogo religioznogo soznaniia," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma,* 2:98; I. A. Aleksandrovich et al., "Sektantstvo v voronezhskoi oblasti i rabota po ego preodoleniiu," in AN SSSR, *Ezhegodnik muzeia istorii religii i ateizma* (Moscow, annually since 1957), 5:66, 74; P. Vdovichenko, "Reaktsionnaia sushchnost' religioznogo sektantstva," *Kommunist Belorussia,* 1964, no. 11, pp. 56–62; M. Semenov, "Eto proizoshlo v Mud'iuge," *NiR,* 1966, no. 2, p. 29; cf. the sources listed in Nadezhda Teodorovich, "The Catacomb Church in the USSR," *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR,* April 1965, p. 12.

29. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* Apr. 28, 1968.

30. M. K. Tepliakov, "Pobeda ateizma v razlichnykh sotsial'nykh sloiakh sovetskogo obshchestva," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma,* 4:156.

31. *Komsomol'skaia pravda,* May 22, 1964.

32. *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* Feb. 27, 1968.

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government, about the end of the world, 'miracles' and 'transformations.' "[33] One atheist reported an illustrative response elicited during his conduct of "individual work" with a True Orthodox Christian concerning the question of fulfilling his military obligation: " 'I am obliged to serve and be faithful to the Motherland,' he pondered aloud. 'But where is my Motherland? Where is my happy childhood? I had none. Whom will I defend? Those who oppress us believers?' "[34]

Several variants have appeared within the movement in response to the increased pressure of the antireligious campaign. The Silence movement, whose members would take a vow never to speak again, was one of the early, and less successful, of these. However suited such methods might seem for avoiding incrimination of oneself and others, a combination of individual persuasion, occasional material aid, and deprivation of parental rights quickly dispersed this group.[35]

Much more successful are the True Orthodox Christian Wanderers.[36] Taking a leaf out of the book of the Old Believers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, members would renounce all affiliation with society, ritually destroy their documents and passports, and enter a clandestine life, either in hiding or in vagrancy. Because of the extreme secrecy necessary to live such a life successfully in a controlled society, this movement was ideally suited to the innovation of clandestine methods, and, according to Soviet writers, quickly succeeded in forming a virtually nationwide network of local and regional branches, with all the paraphernalia of underground activity (cells, cyphers, pseudonyms, false identification, a covert postal system, etc.). Of particular importance was the movement's success in establishing a system of religious schools, both on elementary (seminary) and advanced (academy) levels. The more intellectually inclined devoted their entire energies to philosophical and theological research, working out hypotheses, apologies, and treatises on the basis of contemporary secular, atheistic, and religious materials supplied them by benefactors who had not renounced contact with the world.

33. A. Vasin, "Nachalo polozheno," *NiR,* 1968, no. 7, p. 17.

34. Ibid., p. 20.

35. Data on the Silence movement may be found in Nikolskaia, "K kharakteristike techeniia," pp. 173–77. Incidentally, it would appear that it was the problem presented by these *Molchal'niki* which first induced the state to devise deprivation of parental rights to deal with recalcitrant believers. This measure proved so effective that it was quickly applied to other groups as well, and it has been employed continually throughout the sixties; see the appeal of two Baptist children, *Posev,* 1969, no. 11, p. 12.

36. The most detailed information concerning the Wanderers grew out of the trial of leaders of the movement apprehended in Alma-Ata in 1963; see *Kazakhstanskaia pravda,* Dec. 8, 1963, Feb. 8, 9, 1964, and the report of Alla Trubnikova, "Tainik v taburetke," *Oktiabr',* 1964, no. 9, pp. 161–77. Considerable insight into the dynamics of the movement may be gained from the fictional, but in many respects credible, treatment of Lev. Ovalov, "Pomni obo mne," serialized in *NiR,* 1966, nos. 1–6.

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These works were then reproduced and distributed throughout the movement:

> With the help of idealist philosophers of all periods they try to refute materialism, to prove the finitude of the world and man, and the eternity and indestructibility of religion, considering it "essential to give into the hands of believers the support of an intelligent basis from scientific proofs," convincing their illiterate followers that, allegedly, "science does not separate one from God, but draws one closer to him, inasmuch as the mysteries which surround us at every step demand on the part of science itself unconditional recognition of the supernatural power which has created all of [science's] wise intelligence."
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> "The very deepest questions of the human soul—What is matter and whence? Where did the first movement in matter come from? What is the goal of the creation of the world? Where did life on earth come from and what is it? What is the goal of man's life on earth and in general that of all creatures?—remain inexplicable to the present time. We firmly believe that all these questions receive a correct answer only in religion. Only in faith in God can man correctly understand the goal of his commission. Only faith in God is able to solve all the enigmas, to enable him to rise above the level of the animal, to enable the achievement of wise, lofty and noble goals."[37]

This pattern of underground activity, organized or spontaneous, prevails in non-Orthodox denominations as well. Among the Catholics of Byzantine Rite (Greek Catholics, or Uniats), who have been completely suppressed since 1946–50, clandestine activity intensified with the emancipation of the prisoners in the mid-fifties.[38] In the sixties there was considerable evidence of widespread, illegal Uniat activity in the western regions of the USSR, including such phenomena as the organized *Pokutniki* (Penitents) movement and cults growing up at natural shrines and in response to various miracles.[39] There were occasional complaints in the Soviet press concerning illegal monastic groups,[40] and as recently as in the winter of 1968–69, according to the *samizdat* journal *Chronicle of Current Events,* two Uniat priests and a secret bishop were arrested.[41]

This pattern of illegal religious activity is to be found throughout the Christian denominations in the USSR. The Baptists will be discussed below.

37. Fedorenko, *Sekty,* p. 108.

38. *Sovetskaia kultura,* Sept. 5, 1959; L. Smirnov, "Iavlenie bogomateri—s pomoshch'u nozhits i kleia," *NiR,* 1965, no. 1, p. 95; A. Shysh, "The End and the Means," *Liudyna i svit,* 1967, no. 4, pp. 46–48, translated in *Digest of the Soviet Ukrainian Press,* 1967, no. 7, p. 23.

39. Ibid., p. 24; *Molod' Ukrainy,* Nov. 12, 1965; O. Chaikovskaia, "Pochemu ushel topol'," *NiR,* 1966, no. 6, pp. 5–6.

40. Teodorovich, "The Catacomb Church," p. 13.

41. *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii,* Apr. 30, 1969.

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The Seventh Day Adventists and the Mennonites are technically prohibited by law from independent religious activity, although, depending on the vagaries of local administrators, their meetings in some areas might be classified as semilegal rather than illegal. Both benefit from a more or less harmonious relationship with the legally permitted Baptists. Pentecostals continue vigorous activity despite intensive efforts by the state to suppress such illegal worship, while the Jehovah's Witnesses, a perennial bête noire of the regime because of real or fancied connections abroad, appear quite able to survive the unrelenting pressure of the regime. Old Believers are occasionally attacked for illegal activity, as are a plethora of Orthodox, semi-Orthodox, and non-Orthodox ecstatic (and sometimes bizarre) movements—Fedorovtsy, Ioannity, Imiaslavtsy, Murashkovtsy, and so forth. In addition, the traditional Russian inventive genius in religion—one Soviet scholar lists over four hundred Christian sects, and his data are by no means complete[42]—has not succumbed to the decade of antireligious pressure, and these sects continue their accustomed activity despite the laws of the state and the wishes of the regime.

The situation of the Jewish believers in the USSR is more complex, and, because their difficulties over the past decade have received somewhat more attention in the West, this paper will not discuss them in detail. It should be noted that unlike certain of the other denominations, Jews, while suffering the same antireligious pressures as other believers, also suffer from restrictions applied to cultural policies and from ethnic discrimination. Obviously, the remaining sixty synagogues are quite incapable of ministering to the estimated three million Jews in the USSR, five hundred thousand of whom might consider themselves religious, and it would be strange if illegal worship were not practiced in the Jewish community. To date, however, there has been very little concrete evidence available concerning such activities, perhaps partly because of the intimate identification of religious aspirations with the cultural and national aspects of Jewry.

Muslims in the USSR are likewise subject to intense religious disabilities. The high birthrate among the Muslim population has contributed to the fact that the Great Russians are on the verge of becoming a minority nationality in the USSR. Moreover, Muslims have held firmly to their faith; "research on the degree of religiousness of the population has demonstrated that the percentage of believers in the republics of the Soviet East is significantly higher than in the other union republics."[43] The Islamic religion has remained strong despite the application of pressures which are no less stringent than

42. See Fedorenko, *Sekty*, passim.

43. M. V. Vagabov, "Bol'she vnimaniia sovetskomu islamovedeniiu," *Voprosy filosofii*, 1966, no. 12, p. 173; cf. I. A. Makatov, "Kul't sviatykh v islame," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, 3:164; Geoffrey Wheeler, "The Muslims of Central Asia," *Problems of Communism*, September-October 1967, p. 78.

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those applied against other religions. Nine-tenths of the mosques have been closed, all the religious schools have been liquidated, and only one theological seminary continues to operate on a minuscule scale. A broad range of restrictions are enforced. For example, "in a special circular to believers, the head of the Muslims of the Northern Caucasus and Dagestan, referring to the regulation of the Spiritual Directorate, emphasized that 'the Directorate has charged the clergy of every mosque to prohibit school children from attending divine service.' "[44]

Despite these disabilities, the Muslim religion continues to be vigorous, exerting a strong influence in the population. At an atheistic conference in 1969 it was demonstrated that "the preservation of survivals of Islam in the consciousness of the believers is facilitated by the preaching activity of the Muslim clergy. Major theologians, members of the Spiritual Directorate, professional clergy, and Imams of the great mosques speak out in sermons. Furthermore, beyond the premises of the mosques a large number of unofficial clergy are active. By no means are all of them illiterate old people, as they occasionally claim; on the contrary, many of them are eminently authoritative experts on Islam, enjoying definite influence among the Muslims."[45] Illicit practices abound among the Muslim populations.[46] Illegal mullahs are frequently encountered, clandestine schools operate, and the rituals and customs of the faith are widely practiced.[47]

With the virtual elimination of effective, organized authority in Soviet Islam, the Muslim population seems to be drifting further and further away from the old norms of behavior. Many of the "survivals of Islam" have degenerated to such a degree that they approach outright superstition. Magical practices (use of amulets, incantations, fortune-telling, etc.) are rampant.[48] The traditional treatment of women, which to Soviet observers seems barbaric, is still widespread.[49] Veneration of sacred heroes has grown to immense proportions: "With the cult of the sacred there is also veneration of holy mountains, springs and stones, whose sources lie in the distant past. At the holy places believers slaughter cattle, and distribute meat and other produce,

44. M. Khalmukhamedov, "O chem govoriat musul'manskie propovedniki," *NiR*, 1969, no. 6, p. 58.

45. *NiR*, 1969, no. 5, p. 35.

46. See Geoffrey Wheeler, "National and Religious Consciousness in Soviet Islam," in Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher, eds., *Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power* (New York, 1969), pp. 187–98; Conquest, *Religion in the USSR*, pp. 76–80.

47. *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Oct. 6, 1964; A. Avksentiev, "Aksakaly reshaiut," *NiR*, 1967, no. 2, p. 55; L. I. Klimovich, "Bor'ba ortodoksov i modernistov v islame," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, 2:67.

48. G. Karaev, "Islam i doislamskie kul'ty," *NiR*, 1967, no. 6, p. 74.

49. B. Palvanova, "Ob ateisticheskoi rabote sredi turkmenok," in AN SSSR, *Voprosy nauchnogo ateizma*, 3:241–42.

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as well as articles and money, to those present (especially the clergy). Sacrifices are accompanied by prayers."[50] Among the Sufi (a more mystical branch of Islam) a number of illegal, organized sects have arisen.[51]

Given the present impossibility of exercising any institutional control to ensure orthodox practice of the faith, it seems clear that religion will continue vigorous among the people, while at the same time superstitious traditions may become intertwined with Islam.

Thus the decade of the sixties has been marked by widespread dissatisfaction among the religious population, which has expressed its discontent concretely in passive dissent, the illegal conduct of religious activities. It should be noted, however, that this recent turmoil is not a new development, but rather represents an escalation of illegal and clandestine religious worship which has been practiced throughout the past half-century. Even in the best of times, the religious population has shown itself unwilling to abide by the restrictions imposed from above, and during the past decade religious people in the USSR have moved even further from that docility which would most please the regime.

The situation has been immensely compounded, however, by the rise of active dissent, which seeks to effect a change in the conditions resulting from the regime's religious policies. Protest movements have appeared which have endeavored to persuade church and state alike that prevailing practices are improper and must be altered.

The most spectacular of these protest movements arose among the Russian Baptists.[52] In 1960 the leadership of the legalized Baptist denomination issued an order prohibiting activities designed to attract converts, which quite obviously was inspired by the regime as a part of its rising antireligious campaign. For the believers, who had been increasingly restive under the restrictions imposed on them, this instruction served as a catalyst, and in 1961 an Action Group (*Initsiativnaia gruppa*) was formed to champion the cause of reform, seeking to induce the church to refrain from improper submission to secular authorities, and to persuade the state to abide by its own constitution and laws in its policies toward the Baptists. The *Initsiativniki* movement very quickly reached astonishing proportions, claiming to represent twice as many congrega-

50. Makatov, "Kul't sviatykh v islame," p. 164; cf. Karaev, "Islam i doislamskie kul'ty," pp. 44–45.

51. O. Petrash, "Sufizm, chemu on uchit?" *NiR,* 1969, no. 2, p. 69.

52. The Baptist protest has been examined by Michael Bourdeaux, *Religious Ferment in Russia* (London, 1968). Briefer treatments of the movement may be found in William C. Fletcher, "Protestant Influences on the Outlook of the Soviet Citizen Today," in William C. Fletcher and Anthony J. Strover, eds., *Religion and the Search for New Ideals in the USSR* (New York, 1967), pp. 62–82; Michael Bourdeaux and Peter Reddaway, "Church and State and Schism: The Recent History of the Soviet Baptists," in Hayward and Fletcher, *Religion and the Soviet State,* pp. 105–41; and Michael Bourdeaux, "Reform and Schism," *Problems of Communism,* September-October 1967, pp. 108–18.

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tions as those which were represented by, and had officially been allowed to register within, the legalized Baptist Church. Adherents of the movement were to be found throughout the Soviet Union, representing a broad stream of dissatisfaction more or less united under the *Initsiativniki* leadership.

The *Initsiativniki* were exceedingly energetic in pressing their demands, and a considerable number of appeals, treatises, and position papers were issued, many of them reaching the West. The state was quick to realize the potential danger of this movement, and late in 1962 it was announced that the original leader, A. Prokofiev, had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment, to be followed by five years of exile. Able leadership was available to the movement in G. Kriuchkov, G. Vins, and (later) A. Shalashov and I. Bondarenko, and the movement continued to escalate its challenge to the Baptist leadership recognized by the state. Negotiations between the two groups proved fruitless, and in 1962 the *Initsiativniki* leaders declared their legalized counterparts excommunicate.

That the strength of the movement was considerable is demonstrated by the fact that the legalized Baptists were allowed to hold a national convention in October 1963, the first since 1944. Certain concessions were made to the demands of the *Initsiativniki,* and considerable efforts were made to persuade the rank and file to rejoin the legalized church. Concurrently, large numbers of the recalcitrant *Initsiativniki* were arrested, and in 1964 a "Committee of Relatives of Prisoners" was formed to gather documentation on those arrested throughout the country and to seek amelioration of the conditions under which they were being held.

Hitherto the struggle had been waged quietly; only occasional, obscure references to the dissident movement appeared in the provincial press. Such documents as had been sent abroad received little attention in the West. In 1966, however, the tensions were radically escalated. The state began a vigorous, explicit press campaign against the *Initsiativniki,* while the latter dramatically increased their activity, with mass baptisms in public places, energetic religious education of minors, and such demonstrations as a "sing-in" on a Kiev train and a massive "sit-in" in Moscow. The national convention of the legalized Baptists in October made further concessions to the *Initsiativniki* demands, but these were far from satisfactory to the dissident leadership, who had by now formed themselves into a competing Baptist Church. The state announced new criminal legislation which seemed in many respects designed with the *Initsiativniki* explicitly in mind, and, after a stern warning by V. Kuroedov, chief spokesman for state religious policy, in *Izvestiia* on August 30, large-scale arrests began. Significantly, Kriuchkov, Vins, and the other *Initsiativniki* leaders, whose work had not yet been impeded, now were incarcerated for terms of from two to five years.

The arrests which commenced late in 1966 may have marked a transitional point in the history of the *Initsiativniki,* for it was plain that hopes for im-

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mediate redress were destined to be frustrated. The Soviet press continued its propaganda campaign against the movement, and arrests of the members continued.[53] The *Initsiativniki,* despite the fact that the regime had decapitated the movement, continued vigorous activity, with much emphasis on evangelism and religious education of children. Clandestine literature continued to circulate; letters, tracts, protests, and regularly appearing journals passed from hand to hand throughout the movement.[54] Appeals were sent to the West—addressed to the UN, the World Council of Churches, the Baptist World Alliance, the Red Cross, and so forth, as well as to "all Christians"—in increasing numbers.[55] A noticeable difference is evident in these appeals, composed primarily by wives and relatives of imprisoned Baptists, when they are compared with the earlier literature of the movement produced by Prokofiev, Kriuchkov, Vins, et al. These recent letters are, with very few exceptions, devoted to itemizing, sometimes vividly, the injustices suffered; no longer is there a sober, unemotional, rational attempt to persuade state and church alike of their errors, and to suggest an alternative pattern of possible church-state relations, as in the earlier literature of the movement.

It would appear that the *Initsiativniki* affair is by no means over.[56] Many of those sentenced in 1966, including Vins and Bondarenko, were released in 1969, and there were fruitless attempts to reach a negotiated settlement. The triennial convention of the legalized Baptists, which had been delayed three months to allow for these negotiations, devoted much attention to the schism. The *Initsiativniki* themselves were allowed to hold an unprecedented conference in December. However, the state had not abandoned its hostility to the movement. On October 18 Kuroedov again returned to the pages of *Izvestiia* with a stern warning against the *Initsiativniki,* and in December the leading antireligious journal published an uncompromising attack, using the study of Michael Bourdeaux as its focus.[57] Immediately after the *Initsiativniki* conference, arrests of the leaders began again, and in the early months of 1970 a number of them were remanded to prison and exile.

53. Detailed lists of imprisoned Baptists were compiled in 1966 and late in 1968 by the Committee of Relatives of Prisoners, and were attached to appeals sent to the West. Each list contained over two hundred entries. See Rosemary Harris and Xenia Howard-Johnston, *Christian Appeals from Russia* (London, 1969), pp. 92–143.

54. In addition to *Bratskii listok* and *Vestnik spaseniia,* copies of which have reached the West, the movement also issues *Evangel'skii prizyv.* See I. Braznik, "Novoiavlennye apostoly baptizma v spekulatsiiakh antisovetchikov," *NiR,* 1969, no. 12, p. 55.

55. Examples of these appeals may be found in translation in Harris and Howard-Johnston, *Christian Appeals*; *Problems of Communism,* July–August 1968, pp. 96–102; *RCDA,* Feb. 15/29, 1968, pp. 21–41, May-June 1969, pp. 86–92, July-August 1969, pp. 127–33, November 1969, pp. 197–200; cf. London *Times,* Nov. 6, 1969 (this document had 1,453 signatures).

56. For recent events see *BV,* 1970, no. 2; *Baptist Times* (London), May 14, 29, Oct. 1, 1970.

57. Braznik, "Novoiavlennye apostoly baptizma," p. 57.

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It would not appear that the state is contemplating a renunciation of the use of force against the movement.

Voices of dissent arose in Orthodoxy somewhat later, and in certain respects they repeated the efforts of the *Initsiativniki*.[58] Late in 1965 two Moscow priests, N. Eshliman and G. Iakunin, composed two open letters protesting against the prevailing state of affairs. In a letter to the government they presented a well-documented and persuasive case that in the implementation of its policies the regime is not abiding by its own laws, statutes, and Leninist principles; in one to the patriarch, they accused the officials of the church of failing to insist on their rights, to the extreme detriment of the church's ability to minister to the people. The spiritual father of this protest was the eminent and respected Archbishop Ermogen (in retirement), who himself contributed to the subsequent literature of protest with carefully reasoned treatises on church-state relations, canonical implications, and so forth.

These protests quickly found answering voices within the church. The Moscow priest V. Shpiller, not an adherent of the movement, wrote a carefully reasoned, penetrating analysis of the psychological and generational aspects of prevailing theories of church-state relations. Parishioners of the Kirov diocese wrote a number of appeals for redress of grievances within their churches, appeals which were inspired by the layman B. Talantov. An able and experienced church writer, A. Levitin (pseudonym Krasnov), became an ardent supporter of the protest, and, indeed, his numerous articles on the subject of religious justice made a signal contribution to the spread of the protest.

The obvious question arises of how much cross-fertilization there was between the Orthodox protest and the *Initsiativniki* movement. Bourdeaux suggests that the former may have arisen in direct imitation of the Baptist experience, noting that the Eshliman-Iakunin letters appeared only eight months after one of the major documents of the *Initsiativniki*.[59] However, the fact that the *Initsiativniki* had been issuing similar documents continuously for the preceding three years (and continued to do so) casts doubt on this hypothesis. The Baptist movement was mentioned in passing by Archbishop

58. See Michael Bourdeaux, *Patriarch and Prophets* (London, 1970); Nikita Struve, "Dissent in the Russian Orthodox Church," in Hayward and Fletcher, *Religion and the Soviet State*, pp. 143–57; Peter Reddaway, "Freedom of Worship and the Law," *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1968, pp. 21–29; Michael Bourdeaux, "Dissent in the Russian Orthodox Church," *Russian Review*, 28, no. 4 (October 1969): 417–27. Unlike the Baptist *Initsiativniki*, the Orthodox protest has not as yet been subjected to extensive attack in the Soviet press. Eshliman and Iakunin were mentioned in passing by V. Kuroedov, "Leninskie printsipy svobody sovesti v SSSR," *NiR*, 1968, no. 6, p. 10, and P. Kurochkin, "Evoliutsiia sovremennogo russkogo pravoslaviia. III: politicheskaia orientatsiia," *NiR*, 1969, no. 4, p. 52, while Levitin was attacked by G. Vasiliev, "Bogoslov-podstrekatel'," *NiR*, 1966, no. 10, p. 25, and by N. Semenkin, "Ot anafemy—k priznaniiu?" *NiR*, 1969, no. 8, pp. 34–35.

59. Bourdeaux, "Reform and Schism," p. 116.

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Ermogen in 1966 and again by Talantov in 1968,[60] and hence the Orthodox certainly became aware of their Baptist counterparts. However, in view of the rising waves of dissent in the intelligentsia at that time, it would appear more likely, on the basis of the evidence currently at hand, that the Orthodox protest was inspired by a number of considerations, of which the Baptist experience may or may not have been one.

Despite the similarity of their arguments and approach to church-state relations, there was a significant difference between the Orthodox and the Baptist protest movements. The Orthodox did not form any sort of organized, structured movement like that of the *Initsiativniki.* In general the Orthodox seem much less prone to organized, patterned activity than their Protestant counterparts. The Orthodox dissent spread informally, by striking a responsive chord where there was sufficient dissatisfaction to warrant risking measures of protest.[61] As a result, the literature of the Orthodox protest displays less coordination and harmony than that of the Baptists, largely concentrating on immediate problems at hand (with certain important exceptions).

In 1969 the regime apparently decided to attempt to terminate the Orthodox protest, which hitherto had not been subjected to concerted repression. On June 12 Talantov was arrested, and in September so was Levitin.[62] Obviously the state was no longer willing to ignore the Orthodox protest, and there is no indication that future eruptions will be treated more gently.

It would appear that these movements of active protest have no counterparts in the other religions of the USSR. Lithuanian Catholics have addressed complaints and protests to the central authorities, but as yet there is insufficient evidence to consider these outbursts a nascent movement of protest (the signators were arrested).[63] The protests from within the Jewish community have studiously avoided the problem of religious discrimination, perhaps out of a realistic consideration that such a dimension would only complicate the problem (although in their recent appeal for permission to go to Israel a group of Georgians specifically referred to themselves as *believing* Jews[64]). Similarly, religion has been inconspicuous in the Crimean Tatar affair, and it seems likely that any protests from within the Muslim population will be expressed in national and cultural, rather than in religious, terms.

Even though all the evidence of active religious dissent seems compatible

60. *Vestnik Russkogo studencheskogo khristianskogo dvizheniia,* 1967, no. 4, p. 75; *Problems of Communism,* July-August 1968, p. 112.

61. Cf. the protests from Gorky, *Russkaia mysl',* June 19, 1969.

62. A. E. Levitin, "Drama v Viatke," *Posev,* 1969, no. 10, pp. 6–7 (Talantov was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in September). On Levitin's arrest see the *New York Times,* Sept. 16, 1969.

63. *ELTA Information Service* (New York), 1969, no. 6, p. 4; 1969, no. 9, pp. 7–8; 1969, no. 10, p. 1.

64. *Washington Post,* Nov. 11, 1969; cf. the appeal circulated by the Institute of Jewish Affairs (London) in May 1970.

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with the rise of other sorts of dissent, which has been a prominent aspect of the country's history during the sixties, it would be mistaken to suppose that this is a new phenomenon, unprecedented in the history of church-state relations in the USSR. The recent manifestations are an outgrowth of developments occurring time and again since 1917. The *Initsiativniki* movement is in many respects a logical development of the increasing vigor of independent Baptist activity during the preceding decade.[65] Nor is the fact that this movement has shown the greatest organizational cohesion of all the recent dissenting movements unprecedented, for as early as the twenties the Baptists demonstrated their capacity for forming widespread illegal or semilegal organizations, such as the *Baptomol* and *Christomol* youth organizations.[66] In many respects the Eshliman-Iakunin letters were foreshadowed by the "Solovki Letter" of 1926, or the "Letter to Smidovich" of 1930.[67] Nor are the appeals for redress of grievances such as those by the Orthodox in Gorky or Kirov, or those of the Lithuanian Catholics, an innovation, for the religious population has been quick to issue such appeals whenever there is the slightest reason to hope for redress—for example, the agitation for opening churches after the promulgation of the Stalin Constitution in 1936 and during World War II, or the complaints during the "100 Days" antireligious campaign in 1954.[68]

The chief reason for any differences between the recent protests and earlier expressions of discontent is doubtless to be found in the changed society in which these protests have arisen. To a large extent the participants represent a post-terror generation. The release of prisoners during the mid-fifties led to widespread realization that one can survive *katorga,* and the circulation of Solzhenitsyn's and Marchenko's works on prison life has rendered the camps a known, if unpleasant, quantity, rather than an unknown horror. The fact that the post-Stalin regime has refrained, by and large, from employing the severest methods (execution, disappearance without trace, and so forth) has rendered the terror inoperative for many Soviet citizens, who are prepared to risk a spell in the camps if necessary.

The increasing sophistication of Soviet society is of great importance in accounting for the escalation of dissent. It has become all but impossible to isolate Soviet society from the outside world or to compartmentalize the country from within, and the result has been an enormous increase in the

65. *BV,* 1963, no. 6, pp. 21, 37; Fedorenko, *Sekty,* p. 171; Aleksandrovich, "Sektantstvo v voronezhskoi oblasti," pp. 65–69; L. A. Serdobolskaia, "Reaktsionnaia sushchnost' ideologii sovremennogo baptizma," in *Ezhegodnik muzeia istorii religii i ateizma,* 7:117–20.

66. Cf. Fedorenko, *Sekty,* p. 159.

67. Mikhail Polsky, *Novye mucheniki rossiiskie* (Jordanville, N.Y., 1949), 1:169–77; Paul B. Anderson, *People, Church and State in Modern Russia* (New York, 1944), pp. 106–10.

68. William C. Fletcher, *A Study in Survival: The Church in Russia, 1927–1943* (New York, 1965), pp. 67, 114; Stanley G. Evans, *The Russian Church To-Day* (London, 1955), p. 8; Alec Horsely, *Russian Journey, 1954* (New York, 1954), p. 15.

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ability of the people to communicate—as witness the burgeoning of *samizdat*. It seems as though a race is taking place between the increasing skills of the dissenters in learning to operate in a controlled society and the increasing subtlety and technological competence of the secret police in combating their activities. So far it seems that the interest of the West, which (concerning the secular protest) is radically greater than it was in previous decades and which has been of some effect in the spread of ideas among the intelligentsia (for example, through the BBC), has not had any great effect in inhibiting the attempts of the state to silence the protesters.

Of particular importance in assessing the religious dissent of the sixties is the question of the degree to which the dissenters are alienated from society. Among those participating in the various forms of passive dissent, some subjective social alienation seems inevitable, for even the "internal émigré," who remains within society and conceals his religious predilections, can only feel himself cut off from his society in the religious areas of his life. Social alienation becomes progressively stronger, perhaps in proportion to the risks entailed in the religious activities which are undertaken, reaching an extreme in the Wanderers, who consciously attempt to sever all contact whatsoever with society. However, social alienation would not seem to predominate among the active dissenters, for to change the status quo they necessarily must maintain their identification with society, and they have been careful in their protests to emphasize that they are and wish to remain loyal citizens of the USSR.[69]

The extent to which the dissenters are objectively alienated from society is more difficult to assess, for the attitudes of the surrounding population toward them seldom receive credible representation in Soviet literature. Where forms of passive dissent are generally known (for example, illicit baptism of infants by grandparents), it is possible that a good deal of sympathy may obtain in the population at large; indeed, in the villages even the more extreme forms of underground Orthodoxy have at times elicited support among the people.[70] But the passive dissenters who practice their faith in secret probably are cut off from society, if only by the latter's ignorance of their existence. In contrast the active dissenters seek as large a platform for their views as possible. It is difficult to estimate their success in publicizing their case; certainly the regime can use vast resources for atheist propaganda designed to arouse public hostility against them. There have been some indications that the Orthodox protesters have been able to make common cause with the dissenters among the intelligentsia,[71] but the interrelationship between the

69. It should be noted that continued frustration can lead to social alienation, as illustrated in the case of the thirty-two Siberian Christians who early in 1963 sought to leave the USSR entirely (*Newsweek*, Jan. 14, 1963, p. 32, Jan. 28, 1963, pp. 45–46).

70. See Nikolskaia, "K kharakteristike techeniia," p. 174.

71. *Problems of Communism*, July-August 1968, pp. 60, 67, 69; July-October 1969, p. 105; *New York Times*, Aug. 21, 1969; *RCDA*, November 1969, pp. 201–2; *Novoe*

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intellectual and the religious protester, and their impact on the public at large, are complex subjects beyond the scope of this paper.

Present indications would suggest that the trend of state policy regarding religious dissent is becoming more severe, just as it is with regard to the intelligentsia. The recent actions against the *Initsiativniki,* the arrests of Orthodox and Lithuanian Catholic dissenters, and the fact that the decade-long antireligious campaign shows no sign of abating, all would seem to indicate that the state is by no means willing to satisfy the desires of the religious dissenters. In such conditions, the religious portion of the population will have no option but to continue to engage in passive dissent if they are to continue their religious activities at all.

As to the prognosis for the active dissenters, it seems premature to judge the effect of the recent increase in pressure. As has been noted, the arrest of the *Initsiativniki* leadership, while by no means terminating the protest, did have a marked effect in modifying the movement's approach. For the past three years the literature has concentrated on delineating and protesting against specific injustices. While such appeals can elicit sympathy among certain elements in the population, the dimension of intelligent, calm appraisal and philosophical development of the movement's position, which might serve to arouse sympathy in large segments of the surrounding society, has been lacking. After the arrest of Levitin and Talantov, men of considerable intellectual prowess, it remains to be seen whether the Orthodox protesters can find in their ranks others of sufficient talent to replace them.

One inevitable result of severe repression is the politicization of religious discontent. Time and again, state severity has caused the transformation of religious dissatisfaction into political hostility against the regime. It seems inevitable that this trend will continue in the religious protest movements.

Until mid-1966 the *Initsiativniki* seemed to take the slogan of "socialist legality" seriously, and in their appeals to the government and to the church alike there was a genuine hope or even expectation that current injustices would be corrected. This attitude was even more pronounced among the Orthodox protesters. In effect, both groups were arguing that the time of lawlessness, when in order to survive the church had to adopt a subservient position, was over, and now the church could and must insist on its legal rights. Archbishop Ermogen, for example, drew a striking contrast between his tenure in Tashkent, when his refusal to yield was absolute and no churches at all were closed, with the results of other, more flexible approaches.[72] There surely was a degree of overoptimism in this approach to church-state relations, however, for subsequent events have convincingly demonstrated that arbitrari-

*Russkoe Slovo,* Oct. 9 and 19, 1969; A. E. Levitin, "Svet v okontse," *Vestnik RSKhD,* 1969, no. 3 (93), pp. 97–106.

72. *Problems of Communism,* July-August 1968, p. 113; cf. *Vestnik RSKhD,* 1967, no. 4, p. 74.

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ness is not a thing of the past (indeed, Ermogen's experience in Tashkent was by no means conclusive, for he left the diocese in 1960,[73] well before the campaign of closing churches had reached its peak).

The recent literature of the active dissent suggests that the earlier optimism has been laid to rest. Instead of expressing any serious expectation of amelioration, the recent documents are permeated with resignation, if not despair, and participants in the movements now act not so much in hope of changing the situation but in a defiant resolution to live according to their convictions regardless of the consequences, fully willing to be arrested if necessary. In this regard, the religious dissenters have experienced an evolution similar to that of the intelligentsia, which seems to have given up hope that the system can be reformed.[74] The active dissent is also converging with the more widespread passive dissent, whose more extreme manifestations make no pretense at abiding by the regime's rules and ignore the legalized churches completely. The *Initsiativniki* began as, and the Orthodox protest remains, a sort of a Wesleyan movement, seeking to reform the church from within, but there is less and less evidence of hope that their desires will be met.

The present situation is much too unstable to allow prediction of coming developments in the field of religious protest. The death of Patriarch Alexi is a grave portent, for the problem of finding a successor could conceivably give rise to massive dissatisfaction within the Orthodox Church. The *Initsiativniki* movement has evolved, to all intents and purposes, into a separate, illegal denomination (similar in this regard to the Pentecostals or other illicit movements), which shows little indication of succumbing to the pressure of the regime. The many illegal religions, from underground movements among the Orthodox and Uniats to the Protestant and indigenous religions and the illegal but flourishing activities of the Muslims, are under great pressure, but have by no means been eradicated by the adamant hostility of the state. Perhaps most important, the regime shows no sign of terminating the antireligious campaign, just as in its other policies there seems little indication of relaxation of controls. As long as these conditions prevail, the religious population will remain restive and discontented, and expressions of dissatisfaction and disaffection can only be expected to continue.

73. *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii,* 1960, no. 10, p. 4.

74. Of particular interest is the appearance of the All-Russian Social-Christian Union for the Liberation of the People, which came to light in 1968 and had branches in several cities. This group, *inter alia,* had worked out a political structure to replace the present regime which, in theory, would involve the cooperation of an established Orthodox Church in ruling the country, basing their formulations on study of Berdiaev and so forth (*New York Times,* Apr. 18, 1968). As yet there is no indication of direct connection between this organization, which is illustrative of increasing political alienation among the intelligentsia, and the religious protest, whether of the Eshliman-Iakunin genre or the more exotic movements of the Orthodox underground.

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