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The Paradoxical Relationship: Evangelical Christian Church-state Relations in the Soviet Union

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THE PARADOXICAL RELATIONSHIP: EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Throughout the history of the Soviet state, its leaders have dealt with the question of Christian evangelical religion in varying manners utilizing anti-religious propaganda, legislation, and interpretation of this legislation. Dealing with religion in terms of balancing ideology versus practicality has always been a complex question for these leaders. Since the Stalin era, the State has utilized a system of registration to control the church. This registration produced a paradoxical leadership role for those in charge of the registered churches.

In the past thirty years, these recognized leaders of registered groups have been a liaison between church and state, a factor in the emergence of significant dissent groups, and a player in Soviet foreign policy. Examining these representatives' origins, evolution, and role is crucial to understanding the paradoxical nature of Soviet evangelical church/state relations. To accomplish this examination, one must specifically define the role of these leaders, examine the early history of representative evangelical groups, and show how the leadership position originated and evolved in Soviet church/state history.

On the state level, the officially recognized leaders head registered evangelical Christian religious groups. For the purposes of this paper, evangelical Christian groups shall be defined as those Christian

religions which actively propagate their faith. Traditionally this excludes non-Protestant faiths. Although these evangelical Christians numerically comprise a minority among religious groups in the Soviet Union, the evolution of their groups and relationship to the state has made a significant impact on Soviet religious policy. Their registration and leadership situation is also comparable to the present situation of the Orthodox church, a major religious voice in the Soviet Union.[1]

One such group is the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists. This particular council is the largest and most significant of the evangelical Christian religious groups. Its has a Plenum of 25 members who meet once a year. However, the key leadership resides in the nine-man Presidium, headed by the President and General Secretary. Every three years, the All-Union congregations send delegates to the All-Union Congress. On the average, there is one delegate for every 500 congregation members. Although this body is the official decision-making body, in reality, the Presidium holds the power.[2]

On the local level, Council representation takes the form of Senior Presbyters. These men visit congregations under their jurisdiction and meet with presbyters and congregation members, thus providing an official link to the state. Although originally state-appointed, a 1966 Statute

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[1]Paul A. Lucey, "Religion," in The Soviet Union Today, ed. James Cracraft (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 293-298.

[2]Simon Gerhard, Church, State and Opposition in the U.S.S.R. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 143.

required these Senior Presbyters to be re-elected or confirmed in their appointment by the churches they represented.[3]

The paradoxical position of leadership is seen in its controversial role. From the church's viewpoint, it represents the church to the state in a system where there is theoretically separation between church and state. In order to maintain a healthy relationship that will allow the church to exist, they must agree with the state's position on most issues. If the church has this representation, it is at least allowed some existence and sometimes given concessions.[4]

The state views this arrangement as a way to maintain control over undesirable groups within its system. By having these official figures who link church and state, the state can usurp control while still granting the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of conscience. The state also uses this role to infiltrate the religious structure with state officials who are not believers. However, all religious leaders cannot be considered state pawns. Many are true believers who see their role as crucial in the preservation of the evangelical church within the USSR.[5]

Perceptions of the state representatives by church members differ because of the leaders' sensitive positions. Some see them as playing

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[3]Michael Bourdeaux, "Church State and Schism," in Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power, eds. Hayward, Max and William C. Fletcher (New York: Praeger Publishers for the Centre de Recherches et d'etude des Institutions Religieuses, 1969), pp. 138-139; and Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, p. 144.

[4]The National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, The Struggle for Religious Survival in the Soviet Union (New York: 76, 1985-86), p. 46.

[5]Ibid.

a necessary role to maintain church/state relations. Others, especially those in dissent groups, view them as agents or puppets of the state put there to control and harm the effectiveness of the church. Both of these positions can be supported depending on the interpretation of the paradoxical figure's actions. However, whatever the figure does will be viewed with suspicion from one side or the other. The motivations, given the nature of the Soviet system, will perhaps always remain a mystery, thus further clouding interpretation of the position.[6]

Perhaps the best example of this paradoxical relationship was voiced by a group of Orthodox dissenters struggling with the paradoxes of their own religious existence. That the dissenters were Orthodox rather than evangelical does not weaken their thoughts on this subject because the relationship of the Orthodox church leaders to the state is basically the same as the evangelicals'. These people were not believers who had completely left the church; rather, they were observers within their own officially approved church structure. In a seventeen-page document written about 1970, these church members observed: "Our church leads a difficult life; its membership is being drastically reduced by the authorities; we are betrayed by brethren who consider themselves Orthodox."[7] The reference to betrayal by brethren obviously refers to those who are the state approved officials. The

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[6]"Baptists and the KGB," Christian Century, February 20, 1985, p. 178; and Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, "The Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy," Problems of Communism 22(May-June 1973): 49.

[7]Michael Bourdeaux, "Russia and the Church Today; A New Document from the Soviet Union," Eastern Churches Review 4(Spring 1972): 58.

church members clearly indicated the position of the paradoxical official and expressed frustration with this position.

> Those priests who still have a conscience necessarily lead a double life. On the one hand, this father (batiuska) pursues the 'loyal' policy of the Patriarchate with regard to the state, keeping church services to a minimum. On the other hand, exposing himself to all kinds of hazards (if he is really genuine) he transgresses this line: he carries out secret (unregistered) baptisms, he tries to attract people into the Church (which he cannot do openly), he gives people the Gospels and various spiritual books to read. Thus true religious life practically always bears a 'catacomb' character.[8]

By this definition, the nature and role of this truly paradoxical position emerges. By examining the evolution of the groups these official leaders represent, the church/state role can be more clearly understood. From their beginning, these non-Orthodox Christians held a unique position in Russian society. Although there are numerous such groups in the Soviet Union, discussing the more important groups can represent the total evangelical community.

The largest evangelical denomination represented by a registered leader is the Evangelical Christians and Baptists. This group actually started as two movements. In southern Russia, the movement known as the Union of Baptists began to form during the 1860's, especially in the regions of Transcaucasia and Ukrainia. The first small nucleus centered around Nikita Voronin, who formed the first Russian Baptist church in 1868. Two strong evangelists, V. G. Pavloff and V. V. Ivanoff-Klishnikoff, greatly influenced early expansion of the movement. During this same period, a religious movement began in Ukrainia called Stundist which by the 1870's shared many of the same beliefs as the Union

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[8]Ibid., p. 60.

of Baptists. In 1884, these two groups merged to form the Russian Baptist Union.[9]

In northern Russia, the Baptist movement originated in rather aristocratic circles. Lord Radstock from England visited St. Petersburg by invitation. In 1874, he arrived and preached in aristocratic homes. He converted some of these people, who in turn began to promote the movement, not only among their peers, but also among their peasants and working acquaintances. The leaders of the northern movement invited representatives from the newly formed Russian Baptist Union in the south to discuss uniting the two groups. Although the northern leaders were very interested in unification, the differences were too great and they remained separate.[10]

This conference drew the state's unfavorable attention to evangelical movements and two northern leaders, Count M.M. Korff and Colonel Pashkoff, were exiled. However, the evangelical movement continued, and in 1908 the leadership of Ivan S. Prokhanoff led to the founding of the "Union of Evangelical Christians."[11]

Another early evangelical group, the Mennonites, were originally a part of the Anabaptist movement. They received their name from Menno Simms in a resettled community in Munster, Germany. The first Mennonites ventured into Russia under Catherine II's Manifesto of 1763 which provided colonization to the Germans. The colonizing group

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[9]J.H. Rushbrooke, Baptists in the USSR, Some Facts and Hopes. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1943), pp. 4-5.

[10]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[11]Ibid.

could have its own government, language, schools, and religious freedom. They were not required to give military service and were given economic aid.[12]

There developed among the early Mennonite immigrants two denominations which continued into the Soviet era. The differences between the two groups, the Church Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren, included doctrinal and procedural elements. Church Mennonites baptized by pouring or sprinkling, whereas the Mennonite Brethren used immersion. In the Mennonite Brethren congregations, emotionalism was important, whereas the Church Mennonites rejected this and instead were restrained in their services. Church Mennonites also had a stricter view of ecclesiastical duties than the Mennonite Brethren. They mainly used elders to perform religious ceremonies such as baptism where the Mennonite Brethren appointed many believers to perform ceremonies.[13]

A third group, the Seventh Day Adventists, arrived in Russia in the 1880's. Most members were German by nationality, although the first Adventist church was established at Berdebular by an American preacher, Ludwig R. Conradi. His first church had only 19 members, but the movement grew in numbers into the Soviet era.[14]

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[12]Gerd Stricker, "Mennonites in Russia and the Soviet Union: An Aspect of the Church History of Germans in Russia," Religion in Communist Lands 12(Winter 1984): 293.

[13]Ibid., p. 303.

[14]Marite Sapiets, "One Hundred Years of Adventism in Russia and the Soviet Union," Religion in Communist Lands 12(Winter 1984): 256-257.

Keeping in mind the history of representative evangelical groups, it is possible to trace the origins and evolution of the paradoxical church/state relation and the evolution of the position that provides the needed link between the two in the Soviet era. This evolution can best be examined by considering various time periods. The initial period was from 1917-1928. During this early period dominated by Lenin, three methods for dealing with the church emerged: the drafting of legislation, the loose or strict interpretation of this legislation, and the use of anti-religious propaganda.[15]

Early national legislation dealing with religious issues was enacted on February 2, 1918. This act, "On the Separation of the Church and the State and of the School and the Church," contained thirteen articles outlining specific areas of separations, illustrated by the following examples. Article One stated that the church and the state are separate. Article Two established freedom of conscience. Article Five asserted that the state's right to be obeyed superseded the church's right. Article Nine established school/state separation. On July 10, 1918, the constitution adopted by the major republic, the Russian Republic, reinforced this national position on separation. In that constitution, Article 13 assured freedom of conscience and church/state, church/school separation.[16]

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[15]Andrew Blane, "Protestant Sectarians and Modernization in the Soviet Union," in Religion and Modernization in the Soviet Union, ed. Dennis J. Dunn (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1977), p. 401.

[16]A.Y. Yodfat, "La statute legal de la religion en Union Sovieteque et son incidence sur la religion juive," Istina 17 (January-March 1972): 57-58.

In June, 1922, the Russian Republic adopted a new criminal code. Articles 119-125 of this code dealt with religion. Examples of these articles include Article 121 which prohibited teaching religious subjects to children. This outlawed Sunday Schools for groups such as the Baptists. The "1918 Laws" previously outlawed using a public place for religious ceremonies. Article 124 of the "Criminal Code" specified a penalty of hard labor for up to 3 months or a fine of up to 300 rubles.[17]

Interpretations of these and other articles listed in the "Criminal Code" and "Separation Laws" were interpreted fairly loosely because of the Civil War and consolidation efforts. Prior to this period, the evangelical groups had been fairly insignificant in size, and they therefore did not pose a great threat to the Soviet state. The Orthodox church, on the other hand, had stricter regulations because of its strength in size, its wealth, and its previous close association with the Czar. During this era, evangelical groups vastly expanded, growing from one hundred thousand to over two million members. Many activities were allowed such as religious societies, publishing, education, and public evangelism.[18]

The "Separation Laws" guaranteed freedom of conscience and gave to both atheists and religious believers the right to disseminate propaganda. However, the right to disseminate religious propaganda soon ended with new laws in 1929 while anti-religious propaganda continued. Lenin's writings indicate that he viewed religion as being an

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[17]Ibid., pp. 61-63.

[18]Steeves, "Amendment of Soviet Law," pp. 39-40; and Yodfat, "La statute legal," pp. 65-66.

obstacle to the workers in attaining their true class goals. It distorted their vision and was therefore a distinct threat to the Communist vision. Post-Lenin propagandists based the philosophy and utilization of anti-religious propaganda on these writings, although Lenin's position on the matter was not so strong as his descendants claimed. However, the use of Soviet anti-religious propaganda became an established pattern during Lenin's time.[19]

At the 9th Party Congress of 1914, the members adopted a program which promised to organize a broad field of anti-religious propaganda. In 1921, the publication of atheist books, pamphlets, and articles began. The 10th Party Congress of 1921 confirmed the party's support for anti-religious propaganda by adopting a resolution similar to that of 1919. The State Publishing House for Anti-Religious Literature, founded in 1924, published atheist writings by Soviets and foreigners. In 1925, the "League of the Militant Godless" was formed and soon carried the bulk of anti-religious publishing.[20]

Propaganda, legislation, and the interpretation of that legislation can be viewed in two ways. In the words of the Soviet scholar Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, there are "fundamentalists" and "pragmatists." The "fundamentalists" are those who carry the Leninist ideology of separation and the support for anti-religious measures to an extreme. They want religion to be immediately removed. The "pragmatists" also want to remove religion from Soviet society, but they realize there is a time and

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[19]Blane, pp. 397-398., and Joan Delaney Grossman, "Kruschev's Anti-Religious Policy and the Campaign of 1954," Soviet Studies 24 (January 1973): 215.

[20]David E. Powell, Anti-Religious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1975), pp. 34-35.

way to do it which would decrease alienation of large groups of people. Lenin's policy followed the more pragmatic line.[21]

During the next time period, the Stalin Era of 1928-41, a definite fundamentalist move towards ideology began in legislation and implementation. The "1929 Amendment" of Article 124 in the Soviet Constitution brought many changes. Religious groups by this law could only participate in religious activities; they could not give material goods to anyone except the clergy; they could not gather to study the Bible or have any type of group recreation. The implementation of these laws resulted in the closure of thousands of churches and the arrest of many believers. By the end of the 1930's, very little organized religion, evangelical or Orthodox, operated in the USSR.[22]

Another significant point of this "1929 Amendment" was the requirement for all churches to register. From 1922 to the present, a religious group of more than fifty members which leased nationalized state property could be registered. However, other religious groups not meeting these specifications could also legally function. After 1929, if a church was not registered, it could be prosecuted. This registration process gave the state much stronger control over churches in that they could refuse requests for registration, thus forcing the church to act illegally.[23]

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[21]Bociurkiw, "The Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy," p. 41.

[22]Blane, "Protestant Sectarians and Modernization," pp. 397-398; and Steeves, "Amendment of Soviet Law," pp. 40-41.

[23]Steeves, "Amendment of Soviet Law," pp. 40-41.

The new constitution adopted on December 5, 1936, reinforced freedom of conscience and separation of church and state in Article 124. This article gave the right to worship in a church. It also gave the right to produce anti-religious propaganda. Therefore, it implicitly denied use of propaganda favorable to religion. Overall, this constitution was interpreted strictly in its use against religion.[24]

Thus, under the ideologically oriented policies of Stalin, the most important tool used against religion was the passage of new legislation and the strict implementation of those laws. Propaganda did play a role during this era, but the empasis began to shift away from the "League of the Militant Godless," whose methods of propaganda were fairly crude. The advent of war necessitated a swift change in Soviet religious policy during 1941-1954. The most severe anti-religious measures were dropped, and the state actually adopted a conciliatory policy toward the church in order to gain support for the war effort and unify the nation.[25]

The state acknowledged this rapprochement by creating two new agencies to provide a liaison between the church and the state. In October, 1943, the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox church was created, followed closely in June, 1944, with the creation of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, regulating all non-Orthodox groups. These councils are not to be confused with the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, a denominational group which was registered with the state. These new councils were for all religious

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[24]Yodfat, "La statute legal," p. 71.

[25]Blane, "Protestant Sectarians and Modernization," p. 398.

groups and were charged with providing a liaison between the church and state, suggesting legislation for religious groups and voicing the needs of religious groups. Basically, the establishment of the councils signaled the end of Stalin's use of harsh ideological methods against religious groups.[26]

Another indication of this period's concessions was the creation of the previously mentioned All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in the USSR. The two regional Baptist groups, the Russian Baptist Union and the Union of Evangelical Christians merged in 1944. Besides the Russian Orthodox Church, this was the only Christian group allowed to unite on an all-Union scale. Since the Union's inception, discontent over leadership seems to have been present. The purposes of the Union were questioned and some asserted that it was yet another means of state control. Therefore, the paradoxical nature of its leadership began to form.[27]

In spite of this discontent, several groups joined the All-Union Council for various reasons. The Baptists merged for a welcome relief from oppressive Stalinist measures. Other denominations were encouraged to participate in this union. The Mennonite Brethren, who shared some beliefs with Baptists on baptism, registered many congregations with the All-Union Council between 1945 and 1948. The Mennonites' only other option was to meet illegally since their denomination was refused recognition. Some Pentacostals also joined

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[26]Blane, "Protestant Sectarians and Modernization," pp. 398-399; Bociurkiw, "The Shaping of Soviet Religious Policy," p. 198; and Steeves, "Amendment of Soviet Law," p. 42.

[27]Bourdeaux, "Church, State and Schism," p. 109.

for the same reason. In order to join, they had to change their practice of speaking in tongues and submit to government controls.[28]

During the war period and until 1954, anti-religious oppression greatly lessened. The "1929 Law on Religious Groups" still stood, but it was interpreted far more leniently. The creation of the All-Union Council and the two new councils on religious affairs evidenced important new changes in the religious structures. The events of the war years forced Stalin's ideological policies to become more pragmatic.[29]

In the following time period, from 1954-1959, religious policies and implementations seemed in limbo. Stalin's death left a power struggle among the top leaders in which Nikita Khrushchev eventually triumphed. Changes in leadership also brought changes in religious policy, including both concessions and renewed repression.

From 1941 until this era, anti-religious propaganda had greatly decreased when compared to its pre-war level; but in 1954, one year after Stalin's death, a strange anti-religious campaign took place. In July, 1954, anti-religious propaganda greatly increased and raged for one hundred days until stopped by a Central Committee resolution. Khrushchev signed the cessation order. It is still not clear why this campaign suddenly occurred and just as suddenly halted. Apparently

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[28]Bohdan R. Bociurkiw, "Religious Dissent and the Soviet State," In Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe, eds., Bohdan R. Bociurkiw and John W. Strong, assisted by Jean K. Laux (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 59-60; Michael R. Bourdeaux, "The Recent History of Soviet Baptists," In Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power, eds. Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher (New York: Praeger Publishers for the Centre de Recherches et d'etude des Institutions Religieuses, 1969), p. 106; and Stricker, "Mennonites in Russia," p. 298.

[29]Blane, pp. 398-399.

the Central Committee issued the initial order due to concern over increased interest in religion.

As for the campaign's sudden end, outcry from religious groups was partially responsible. Another possible factor was that Khrushchev was showing his power over a political opponent, Georgi Malenkov, who perhaps started the effort. Other analysts disagree. One writer, Joan Delaney Grossman, asserts that the campaign was both begun and ended by Khrushchev as a move towards his future hostile policies from the rapprochement of the war years.[30]

If the propaganda's halt was a show of power, it was an accurate one. In the years from 1954-59, Khrushchev consolidated his power and called for a new scholarly approach toward anti-religious propaganda. This new policy must also be credited to anti-religious propagandist Bonc Bruevik, although Khrushchev certainly utilized the movement for his own gain. This movement reached from the 1954-59 period into the main Khrushchev period, from 1959-64.[31]

The new propaganda addressed the ideological issue of why religion had not yet disappeared. New academic fields such as religious sociology and psychology started in places such as the Academy of Sciences. These propagandists utilized similar distribution methods as used in the 1930's: widespread printed matter and agitators

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[30]Joan Delaney Grossman, "Khrushchev's Anti-Religious Policy and the Campaign of 1954," Soviet Studies 24 (January 1973): 374-375; and Powell, "Anti-Religious Propaganda," pp. 39-40.

[31]William C. Fletcher, "Reductive Containment: Soviet Religious Policy," Journal of Church and State 22 (Autumn 1980): 499; and Grossman, "Leadership of Anti-Religious Propaganda," p. 216.

holding lectures and discussions. In the Khrushchev era, however, mass media was also at the propagandists' disposal, creating endless options using radio, television and film.[32]

During these early Khrushchev years, religious policy was uncertain. Concessions were made to churches, such as permission for the Baptists to publish small versions of a hymnbook and the Bible. However, ominous hints from the increased anti-religious propaganda forces paved the way for Khrushchev's policies.[33]

During the main period of Khrushchev's power, from 1959-64, harsh repressions against the church were again enacted. Khrushchev and his newly formed policy closed hundreds of churches, arrested many believers and introduced numbers of state officials into the All-Union Council. The authorities refused to register large numbers of churches. These measures were strictly interpreted implementations of the laws of 1929 and paralled legislation drafted by Khrushchev in 1960 and 1962. Ironically, Khrushchev also utilized the churches in his foreign policy even while he was increasing implementation of the anti-religious laws.[34]

Under Khrushchev the importance of religious groups in foreign policy increased. Creating a favorable image to the West was much easier with church cooperation. Therefore, Khrushchev called upon the

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[32]Fletcher, "Reductive Containment," pp. 499-50; William C. Fletcher, "Soviet Sociology of Religion: An Appraisal," Russian Review 35 (April 1976): 173; and Grossman, "Leadership of Anti-Religious Propaganda," pp. 213-215.

[33]Bourdeaux, "Church, State and Schism," p. 110.

[34]Fletcher, "Reductive Containment," p. 500; Gerhard, Church, State and Opposition, pp. 154-155; and Powell, "Anti-Religious Propaganda," p. 40.

registered leaders to present the world a face of harmony in religious life. Russian church leaders traveling to the Baptist World Alliance or other similar conferences helped to mold the image Westerners had of the Soviet churches.[35]

One example of this use in foreign policy was a March, 1964, meeting held to protest injustice toward religion in the USSR. The meeting was held in Paris to inform the West of alleged injustices. Concurrently, France was considering withdrawal from NATO, a move the USSR could not afford to have disrupted with bad publicity over religious grievances. To counter this activity, the Soviets brought the religious leaders in to deny charges and even invited some Westerners as observers to the USSR.[36]

Khrushchev also enacted new legislation during his era. In 1960, a new "Criminal Code" passed which in Article 227 prohibited "the commission of fraudulent acts" for the purpose of "arousing superstitions among the masses" and "compelling others to perform religious rites." The article prohibited introducing minors into groups, which, under the cloak of religion, could harm their health. Religious instruction within a family was judged illegal in many cases by this code. An amendment to the "1960 Criminal Code" came in 1962. It further restricted rights of believers by outlawing any religious activity which would induce a person to refuse performance of a civil duty. This could include refusal to

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[35]William C. Fletcher, Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-70, (London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1973), p. 96.

[36]Ibid., pp. 96-97.

let children wear the necktie for their Soviet youth organization, the Pioneers.[37]

The state also increased pressures upon the All-Union Council. Besides arrest and closures of congregations, the Council leaders were forced to issue a statute by the Union in 1960 and an "Instruction to Senior Presbyters" stating that previous laws such as the "Religious Laws of 1929" had been broken. Alleged infractions included the baptism of youths under eighteen, assistance given from church funds, Bible studies, youth excursions, and meetings for preachers. The "Instruction" required Senior Presbyters to oppose such evangelistic tendencies. The numbers of baptisms from the ages of 18 to 30 were to be cut "to the absolute minimum." Children could not participate in actual church services.[38]

Reaction to these laws combined with other factors, such as inter-denominational factions and dissenting believers within the All-Union Council (AUCECB), led to a schism in 1961. In May, the Initsiativniki (Action Group) formed, desiring to call a special Congress of the AUCECB. Initsiativniki leaders A. F. Prokofyev and G.K. Kryuchkov presented a statement to the All-Union churches, signed on August 23. They stated:

> Today Satan is dictating through the servants of the AUCECB while the church accepts all sorts of decrees which openly contradict the commandments of God.... Because of the subservience of the AUCECB leadership to human directives, the church has deviated from the Lord's teaching and is riddled with unworthy people; this is the reason for the schism in our communities.[39]

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[37]Blane, "Protestant Sectarians and Modernization," p. 399; Powell, "Anti-religious Propaganda," p. 43; and Yodfat, "La statute legal," p. 72.

[38]Gerhard, Church, State and Opposition, pp. 156-157.

[39]Bourdeaux, "Church, State and Schism," pp. 110-111.

This attitude evidenced reaction to perceived state effort to control the church through registered leadership, thus further showing the paradoxical relationship of these leaders.

The Initsiativniki stated its loyalty to the Soviet state and maintained that its opposition was directed toward the AUCECB, not the government. This movement grew in popularity among church members. To counteract this threatening pull, the AUCECB held meetings concerning the Initsiativniki. They published a warning to the reformers which cautioned against using letters that might hurt the position or the registered church and its brotherhood with the state. This warning was not successful in stopping the reformist pressure.[40]

The Initsiativniki organized a conference attended by people from the AUCECB and the reformers. The unofficial printed records are dated March 22, 1962, and state the ending date of the conference as February 25. The meeting called for the purification of the church while it reaffirmed that the dissenters supported the AUCECB. However, the Initsiativniki could not support the new 1962 restraints and the AUCECB leadership's consent to these rules. An Organizing Committee headed by five men resulted from the conference. This committee headed the Initsiativniki movement from that time forward.[41]

This Organizing Committee's stance on AUCECB leadership and ECB (Evangelical Christian Baptist) churches was presented by quoting a

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[40]Ibid., pp. 112-113.

[41]Ibid., p. 113.

communication paralleling their viewpoint which had been written to the Soviet Government:

> The now existing religious center calling itself the AUCECB (in Moscow) has not been elected by the local ECB churches, has not been authorized by them, and does not represent them. The members of the AUCECB have long since cut themselves off... followed the path of dictatorship, and abolished the rights of local churches to self-determination.[42]

The Initsiativniki also drew up an agenda for an anticipated Extraordinary Congress of the AUCECB. They wrote new statutes which they hoped to have approved, including provisions for the presbyters which were elected by the communities, not chosen for them. Meetings in private homes were not to be prohibited. Any person could deliver a sermon with the consent of the community. The statutes were to be altered only by the All-Union Congress, not the ten-man committee of the AUCECB.[43]

In October, 1963, the AUCECB held a congress which granted many concessions to the Initsiativniki in an attempt to persuade them to rejoin the registered church. These concessions included the repeal of the "1960 Statute" and "Instructions to Senior Presbyters." The Congress drafted a new statute and restructured organization of the Union. From that point on, the All-Union Congress was to be the supreme power. It was to have meetings once every three years to elect the All-Union Council. The All-Union Council could be in contact with the unregistered church. All church members had the right to preach. The Union also

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[42]Ibid., p. 114.

[43]Ibid., pp. 113-115.

issued several appeals to the break-away group to rejoin the Union. They appointed a commission to encourage reunification.[44]

The efforts by the registered church were successful to some extent. Many of the Initsiativniki did rejoin the Union. However, misunderstandings still hampered complete reunification. The dissenters wanted more freedoms in worship and an admission of guilt by the All-Union Council. The AUCECB, in light of the many concessions it gave, expected recognition of Soviet laws on religion by the dissidents. For some, unification did not come. In September 1965, the Organizing Committee renamed itself the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists and officially split from the AUCECB.[45]

The effects of the split reached into the post-Khrushchev era. Immediately after Khrushchev's fall in October, 1963, there was a brief period of thaw. Anti-religious propaganda leveled off at the 1964 levels, thus leaning to a more pragmatic policy. Efforts were made to refine the propaganda instead of increasing it. Fewer Initsiativniki were arrested, and some prisoners were actually released.[46]

The dissenters reacted to this change by bringing their movement much more in the open. They moved their services from private homes and isolated forests to main squares. These meetings took place in several cities on November 7-8 and May 1-2, 1966. Preachers began to have conferences. They demanded freedom to evangelize, freedom

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[44]Ibid., pp. 160-162.

[45]Ibid., pp. 162-163.

[46]Fletcher, "Reductive Containment," p. 502; and Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, p. 166.

for their brothers in prison, and called for permission to hold a Congress of the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists.[47]

On May 16-17, 1966, about 500 delegates demonstrated in Moscow. They asked to speak to Brezhnev in order to give him written demands concerning the ending of repression and persecution. Demonstrating outside the Central Committee Building, the believers were not given entrance until May 17. At noon, the officials offered to grant ten leaders entrance if the rest of the crowd would disperse. The leaders agreed, but the crowd did not leave. The crowd was removed onto buses by force and the leaders were held for investigation. On May 19, President G.K. Kryuchkov, Secretary G.P. Vins,and Preacher M.I. Khorev went to the Central Committee to discover the fate of those believers who had been arrested, and they also were arrested.[48]

New arrests and legislation governing arrests followed this incident. The Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults prepared three edicts passed by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic which gave courts and local authorities firmer laws to use against the Initsiativniki. One prohibited establishing religious groups and holding religious meetings with a new fine of up to 50 rubles. In March, 1966, a new paragraph added to Article 142 of the "Russian Republic Penal Code" gave the possibility of up to three years imprisonment for the breaking of church-state laws more than once. The third edict restated points of Article 142 as being important in implementation. Reinforced were the illegality of organizing children's religious teaching, disturbing

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[47]Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, p. 167.

[48]Ibid., pp. 167-168.

public order with gatherings, and writing letters circulated to speak against religious laws.[49]

Generally speaking, these arrests and military repression in the post-Khrushchev era were restricted to the dissident and underground movements while registered group controls consisted of registration, legislation, and anti-religious propaganda. Examples of this repression can be seen throughout this period. One well-known example was the Siberian 70 and their hunger strike in 1985. These Siberian Pentecostals conducted hunger strikes over eighteen months. Many received threats and many lost their jobs. Their pastor, Viktor Walter, received a five year labor prison sentence under the 227-1 Articles.[50]

While the numbers of arrests were not great in comparison to the total religious community, they did arouse concern among the dissidents. In reaction, some of the dissidents formed a conference to investigate the matter. The All-Union Conference of Relatives of Prisoners Belonging to the ECB Church took place in February, 1964, and appointed a temporary Council of Relatives of Prisoners Belonging to the ECB Church. The Conference collected information on 155 prisoners. The Council met again on July 5 and revised the list. The Council's first All-Union Conference was in November, 1969. It revealed that over 500 Baptists had been arrested and put in prison since 1961. The Council has

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[49]Ibid., p. 168.

[50]"Chuguyevka Pentecostals Make a Desperate Appeal," Religion in Communist Lands 13(Winter 1985): 320.

published its prisoner information in its underground newsletter, The Bulletin of the Council of Prisoners' Relatives.[51]

The Bulletin published by the Council of Prisoner's Relatives is an example of another phenomenon of the dissent movements, dissident publications. These manuscripts, or Samizdat, described arrests and other underground occurrences and reached the West by individuals smuggling them from the country. The Samizdat writings voiced dissenter protests to the West. They were fairly successful in the age of modern media in bringing attention to the underground movement.[52]

In reply to these Samizdat publications, efforts to use registered Baptist leaders in foreign policy increased. The Initsiativniki group especially provided a need for state leaders to polish their image with foreign religious and human rights groups by utilizing registered leadership. These leaders' testimonies helped to promote a positive image towards the AUCECB and a questionable image concerning dissenters. The validity of dissenters' claims were questioned by some after testimony from registered leaders.[53]

Another result of the schism was increased concessions for the registered church. In 1968, theological correspondence courses were revived. In 1969, the state granted permission to publish 26,000 new song books and 20,000 Bibles. The offical magazine of the All-Union Council, Bratsky Vestnik, increased its circulation from 6,000 to 7,000. Several new

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[51]Bourdeaux, "Church, State and Schism," p. 123; "The Bulletin of the Council of Prisoner's Relatives," Religion in Communist Lands 12 (Winter 1984): 326; and Gerhard, p. 170.

[52]"The Bulletin," pp. 326-327.

[53]Fletcher, Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, p. 97.

churches opened. These concessions came as part of an effort to draw dissenters back into the registered group.[54]

In other evangelical groups, dissent movements also gave registered groups more freedom. The leaders of the registered Seventh-Day Adventists denied claims of persecution by the unofficial True and Free Adventists. The official church was allowed to publish a hymnbook in 1980 and a New Testament in 1982. They were also able to begin publication of a yearly journal summarizing Adventist work.[55]

Thus, as seen by the differential treatment between registered and unregistered groups, the registration process has become the primary way to deal with religious groups in the post-Khrushchev period. The registration process dealt with several churches in the post-Khrushchev period, and control over the denominations was consolidated in 1966 when the two councils for religious control created during Stalin's time emerged into one body, The Council for Religious Affairs.[56]

A 1969 published list of recognized religions included the following Christian evangelical groups: the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Latvia; the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Estonia; the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Lithuania; the Reformed Church of Carpathian Ukraine; the Evangelical Reformed Church of Lithuania; the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists; the Seventh-Day Adventists and the Methodist Church of Estonia.[57]

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[54]Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, pp. 146-147.

[55]Sapiets, "Adventism," p. 271.

[56]Bociurkiw, "The Shaping," p. 48.

[57]Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, p. 103.

There were many evangelical groups in the Soviet Union which had not been recognized. Some of these were the Uniates in the Western Ukraine, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Pentecostals, the Adventists-Reformers, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church outside Latvia and Estonia, the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, the Mennonites and others. Some of these sects were outlawed as a whole, while others were factions which had split away from the registered church for varying reasons.[58]

Several clarifications about these unregistered groups must be made. These unregistered or underground churches were not necessarily large bodies of believers separated from the registered community. It was highly possible that some believers and leaders participated in both types of worship services. Because a church was unregistered did not mean it was a dissident group, or a group voicing complaints against the state. Some of the groups which did request registration did not receive permission, even in the Baptist denomination.[59]

New legislation in 1975 enforced the registration system as the state's status quo method of maintaining church/state relations. The 1975 legislation was an amendment to the "1929 Laws on Religion". Article 59 stated permission was required to perform religious rites "under the open sky". The "1975 Amendment" added "in apartments and homes of

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[58]Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, pp. 103, 109; and Bociurkiw, "Religious Dissent," p. 60.

[59]Bourdeaux, "Church, State and Schism," p. 109; and Gerhard, Church, State, and Opposition, pp. 180-182.

believers." Therefore, this legislation closed the opportunity to meet in houses.[60]

The legislation also reaffirmed the registration system. It transferred registration responsibilities from local officials to the Council of Religious Associations. There also seemed to be a push by this new control agency to register the unregistered churches, even by asking them to join. Not all congregations were willing to join, however, for several reasons. Some were not experiencing enough local opposition to induce them to join and add new restrictions to their group. Others did not want the state controls. Still others were hoping for answers such as immigration to solve their problems. In spite of this resistance, AUCECB Secretary-General A.M. Bychkov reported that many groups did rejoin the Union after the 1975 legislation.[61]

By the 1975 "Amendment", the registration system of controlling church/state relations was reconfirmed and upheld. It was through and by this system that religion could officially survive in the Soviet Union. The registered church was allowed to continue, as did overt repression against various dissenters. They had to accept the registration system and resulting paradoxical position in church/state relations or not legally exist.[62]

The paradoxical leader appears at all levels. After the previous discussions of general origin and development, the reader would

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[60]Steeves, "Amendment of Soviet Law," p. 44.

[61]Ibid.; and "La nouvelle politique sovietique d'enregistrement des communautes protestantes," [documents] Istina 26 (July-December 1981): 433-437.

[62]Steeves, "Amendment of Soviet Law," p. 37.

perhaps benefit from a personal description of the figure in order to not only understand the general concept of the position, but also to get a "feel" for the paradoxical nature and life of such a person. In order to accomplish this type description, the writer will draw upon first-hand interviews with and exposure to such a leader and several of his peers. She will utilize a narrative style of writing to best convey the information to the reader.[63]

I met Pavel in a Baptist church on the outskirts of Leningrad. As a student of the Russian language, I needed a translator to fully understand the sermons. Pavel explained to me out loud during the sermon, apparently feeling no shame at receiving several babushka's glares. It seemed to me he was either oblivious to them or considered his task of greater importance than their undisturbed attention. Although interested in the sermon and worship service events, he moved about during the service to do his official administrative duties such as counting the offering.

I told Pavel I wanted to write a paper on the Baptists and their beliefs. He invited me over to his apartment along with another foreign visitor and two girls from the church with whom I could discuss and ask questions. Pavel lived in a rather luxurious place by Soviet standards, especially considering the fact that he lived alone. This fact, coupled

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[63]Interviews utilized in this narrative were conducted while the author was in Leningrad with Associated Academic Programs in Leningrad through the University of New Hampshire. These five weeks of study during the summer of 1986 were partially funded by the Ben Elrod Scholarship of the Ouachita Baptist University Honor's Program. The names and locations of all interview citings have been changed to protect the identities of the participants as is customary in Soviet area writings.

with the size of the apartment, indicated a position of some importance. The ride up the elevator was crowded with only four occupants. The small doorway guarded with strong locks led to a square foyer. I entered and noticed a kitchen large enough to hold a table and several chairs. There was also a living room boasting bright regional carpets.

The apartment, while thoroughly Russian, was also filled with many foreign objects such as tea, cassette tapes, literature, electronical equipment, and much other evidence of foreign contact. Pavel entertained us with Russian tea and white bread. While eating, we discussed American and Russian churches and ideas. Our background music was an American gospel tape.

One of the girls I met at the apartment could also speak some English. Katya and I strolled through the city one night discussing her church's practices and rules. We talked about organizational structures, the All-Union Council, tax payments to the state, and the role of pastors and preachers in the church. Katya seemed saddened by the system and the restrictions placed upon the church. She also told me that Pavel was a sort of translator for the church.

Pavel and I talked several times, sometimes at church and sometimes in other places. In answering questions about the church, he mainly quoted official policy; however, he also admitted to breaches in the regulations, such as giving money to needy people from church funds. During one outing with Pavel and his friend Anton during which I was taking some photographs they had requested, Pavel pulled me aside and asked if Katya had told me anything about his being a state representative. I told him no, not remembering until a few moments later

my conversation with her, and then deciding it was best not to disclose it. Pavel said that Katya worked in a factory and had a good job. She had much contact with foreigners which was unusual for her position. He stated that Katya had been known to tell lies about him to others. "The system is different here," he said. He stated that I could not trust everyone and that I shouldn't trust Katya.

I also met some youths on my first visit to the church. They were planning to play volleyball one evening and invited me to join them. I agreed, but found I out later that there was a special service that evening and that they would not play volleyball. I did not go and asked Pavel to inform the group that I would not be there since he sometimes joined them. He asked which youth had invited me, but I didn't know the individuals and did not specify.

Several days later I approached my hotel in the fading light of the white nights. It was approximately one a.m.; and as I hurried across the hotel parking lot, I was approached by a young male. He greeted me in Russian and looked as if I were supposed to know him. I eventually realized that he was one of the youths that I had met at the church, and we took our conversation away from the hotel. It seemed that they had played volleyball, and Pavel for some reason had not told them I would not be there. It really upset the young Russian as he wanted very much to learn English. He had a very limited knowledge of English at that point, and I agreed to help him.

We met several times and spent hours together in discussions. He was a very devoted Christian; and while I was teaching him some English, I took the opportunity to interview him about his church. He told me about his youth activities and participation in the church. He also told

me that he had once been a member of the Komosol and a worker in a sensitive job. When he became a Christian, he was asked to leave the Komosol and had to change jobs. He also had a distinctly negative feeling about Pavel. At our first meeting, he told me to stay away from Pavel because he was "a very bad man." When I questioned him as to why Pavel was bad, he obviously wanted to be able to tell me; but he always eventually replied, "I cannot tell you." Whether his negative feelings stemmed from personal experiences and knowledge or other reasons I do not know. However, he never let himself be seen with me in Pavel's presence.

My last day with Pavel was also my last day in the Soviet Union. We met at a bookstore; I purchased some maps; and we left for another rushed photo session of Anton's paintings. At Anton's apartment, his grandmother and aunt served us a hot meal while we laughed and talked together. Then I rushed to my next farewell appointment with two other Russian friends not connected with the church. In my hurry, I left my maps at the apartment.

Arriving back at the hotel from my meeting, I spotted Pavel and Anton leaving. They had brought my maps, and Pavel had left them in my room. I asked Pavel to give Katya a dress since I had not been able to contact her. He was reluctant to do this, stating that she got a good salary and did not need clothes. This angered me. I doubted Pavel's motivations. That he did not want to take the dress should not have angered me. It was understandably risky for him. However, this anger was a buildup of all I resented in Pavel, the benefits he received because of his position, my mistrust of him and my frustation at having to maintain a friendship within mistrust.

I left Pavel and Anton after a last series of good-byes and walked another ten feet down the sidewalk only to find my young friend from the youth group. He had seen Pavel but did not question me about our meeting. He gave me some pictures he had taken of me and said his last goodbye. It was lightly drizzling rain now and I headed for my hotel.

I entered the hotel, full of uncertainty. All my friends were sincere in their own limited way, but they were all very vague. They all had to look out for their own needs. They all also wanted to associate with me for what I could offer them as a foreigner, but some real bonds of friendship had formed in their own awkward way. No bond could form as a Westerner conceives bonds because no trust could form. Pavel's abilityto travel abroad, his foreign contacts, his unopposed entrance into a foreign hotel, and his position in the church all attested to his official status. However, he seemed to be operating and trying for the church's benefit. He caused much resentment and anger in me, even as a foreigner, but he also had such interest and zeal about him that I could not help but like him.

My other two friends were in themselves paradoxical. I still do not know who each of these people really was, but they shed a little light on Pavel's many sides. They helped show me the nature of the paradoxical figure in the Soviet Union. He seems sincere in some aspect but is very vague in others. He seems to contradict his stated values and goals in order to gain a step. He causes different reactions from every side, and in effect can be, and must be, a chamelion, adapting and changing to fit the Soviet system of religion. For those in these positions, I have no envy. Theirs is a job of negotiation and hidden motivation, commanding animosity from both sides. The motivations

cannot be read by any outsider with much success. The figure therefore remains paradoxical. It is this paradoxical nature which characterizes the state of evangelical Christian church/state relations in the Soviet Union from the beginning of the registration system until today.

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