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Orthodox Anti-Ecumenism as an Element of the Mobilization Model of Society: Political Aspects of Religious Fundamentalism

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This article explores the anti-ecumenical movement in Russian Orthodoxy, its facets of religious separation and isolationism. The article analyzes the sociocultural and political premises on which the isolationist ideology of Orthodox fundamentalists relies, in particular defensiveness and security, both of which intertwine with revanchism, geopolitical resentment, and an idealization of the Soviet past. It also explores the cultural phenomenon of “mobilization consciousness” — a psychological conviction that positive transformation processes in Russia can only occur in circumstances of extreme stress and danger. The article also compares of key features of modern Orthodox fundamentalists and radical right movements.

Keywords: Orthodox anti-ecumenism, ecumenical movement, Orthodoxy, fundamentalism, mobilization model, militarization, securitization, Soviet values.

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Introduction

A GAINST the backdrop of globalization and increasing intra-church relationships, the ideology of religious isolation seems illogical. The Theory that social progress leads to the mutual understanding of different religions and cultures is based on the UN Universal Declaration and serves as the primary factor in determining interfaith relations, sometimes in regard to issues as serious as dogmatic theological doctrines. Nevertheless, anti-ecumenical groups and the ideology of religious isolationism in Orthodoxy are significant and actively struggle against the development of interfaith contacts.

Several socio-political, economic, and cultural factors influence the phenomenon of religious isolation. For example, George Demacopoulos envisions political reasons for anti-ecumenism. He believes that anti-ecumenists in many countries operate within the framework of postcolonial logic, constructing their attitude towards the West and predominantly Western Protestant denominations and Catholicism in a manner similar to how colonized countries construct their attitude towards the metropole. Anti-ecumenism, according to Demacopoulos, demarcates the identity of Eastern Christianity, that is, it manifests itself as a component of identity politics (Demacopoulos 2017, 477). The theological scholar Will Cohen generally agrees with Demacopoulos' opinion, and religious studies scholar Vasilios Makrides characterizes the anti-ecumenist consciousness as Orthodox rigorism (Koen 2018; Makrides 2016).

Theologian Paul Ladouceur, who calls this phenomenon "ecumencism," referencing the "iconoclasts" who struggled against the veneration of icons, sees in it a manifestation of neo-traditionalism in modern theology (Ladouceur 2017). He also suggests that scholars must analyze this phenomenon not simply from the perspective of theology but from those of religious studies, psychology, and politics (paying attention to the relationship between geopolitics and Russian foreign policy) (Ladouceur 2017; 2019).

This article will also analyze the ideology of the opponents of ecumenism from a socio-cultural standpoint. That is, it will explore the sociocultural and political preconditions that underlie this movement, the extent to which its principles can change as the socio-political context changes, and the degree to which, at one time or another, it constitutes the socio-cultural background of anti-ecumenical protests, which will be analyzed through the concept of mobilization. The essence of this concept rests in a particular type of societal development, the mobilization model, reflected in the work of Peter Nettl. (Nettl

1967). In such a model, social-political attitudes are tied to societal development achieved through “extreme stress,” in which extraordinary measures become the norm. In this case, this study relies on the definition of R. A. Lubskii, introduced in the section “Applying the mobilization model of social organization” (Lubskii 2006). This work also takes into account O. Gaman-Golutvina’s theoretical developments of the mobilization model, discussed later (Gaman-Golutvina 2006).

An overview of the anti-ecumenical movement and its typical arguments

The Orthodox anti-ecumenical movement arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in response to ecumenical initiatives of Christian churches. Paul Ladouceur distinguishes three groups among anti-ecumenists: the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), Greek Old Calendarists (protesting the transition from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar), and the Athonite monks. All other anti-ecumenists who do not fit in these groups are not specifically classified (Ladouceur 2017, 324).

In response to the formation of the World Council of Churches, the ROCOR presented an expanded anti-ecumenical position. Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Bogucharsk, who managed Russian Orthodox communities in Bulgaria from 1921 to 1950 and was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church in 2016, was one of the most influential anti-ecumenical voices. In his report “Should the Russian Orthodox Church participate in the ecumenical movement?,” read at the 1948 Pan-Orthodox Conference in Moscow, the Orthodox hierarch denounced the ecumenical movement as a Protestant-Masonic project aimed at building an ecumenical Church of the Antichrist with the intent to destroy the true Church of Christ on Earth (Sobolev 1949, 364-8). His claim against ecumenism (itself the first argument of anti-ecumenical criticism) boils down to the fact that ecumenism contributes not to Orthodox missionizing among Protestants, but, on the contrary, to the expansion of Protestant missionary activity among the Orthodox population (Sobolev 1949, 364-8).

In the 1960s “branch theory,”¹ which supports the relativistic idea that truth or holiness is not concentrated in a single Orthodox faith but

1. According to “branch theory,” Although the Church may split into several archdioceses or groups of archdioceses that are not in communion with each other, each of them can still be a branch of the one Church of Christ, provided that it continues to adhere to the faith of the undivided Church in order to preserve the apostolic succession of her bishops. See Cross and Livingston 1997.

is distributed among different confessions, gained popularity in global Orthodoxy and became the bane of anti-ecumenists. Metropolitan Filaret (Voznesenskii), one of the leaders of anti-ecumenical ideology and the ROCOR's first hierarch from 1964 to 1985, strongly opposed this theory (Filaret n.d; Filaret 1970, 348-59). According to Filaret, ecumenism is a unity based on secular foundations on the path of mixing good and evil, truth and error, which destroys the church, forcing people to become indifferent to faith and God. Archimandrite Justin (Popovich) (canonized in the Serbian Church in 2010 and revered as a saint in other local churches) supported this viewpoint in his work *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (Popovich 2006). In his view ecumenism was unacceptable because it served as a rationale for a humanistic worldview — a specific understanding that suggested the possibility of existence without God, one in which progress, culture, enlightenment, and inspiration could be achieved by human forces (Popovich 2006). Thus, as the second programmatic argument in the anti-ecumenical polemic, this work singles out the idea that ecumenism is inextricably linked with a humanistic worldview, which replaces faith in God with faith in man.

One component of anti-ecumenical criticism of “branch theory” centers on the participation of the Russian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate (ROC MP) in theological dialogues with Ancient Eastern Churches during 1964-1985 and from 2005 to the present day that considered lifting all mutual anathemas and condemnations (Shaio 2013). It is noteworthy that the parties of this dialogue are called the “families of Orthodox churches” (*sem'i pravoslavnykh tserkvei*). This turns out to be an even bolder claim for rapprochement than “branch theory,” as it recognizes the Roman Catholic Church as a “sister church,” within the framework of the Balamand declaration.²

Rapprochement with other churches is envisioned not only as a phenomenon associated with dogmatic disputes and negotiations, but also a reconciliation with other cultures that threaten the traditional way of life. Thus, the third programmatic argument in anti-ecumenical discourse is directed against the erosion of cultural traditions and traditional foundations. In this regard, for example, there are those who on behalf of ROCOR members correlate ecumenism not only with the ideas of progress and humanism, but also with revolution-

2. In June 1993 the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches adopted the Balamand Agreement, in which the parties rejected union as a method of seeking unity, banned missionary activity and the conversion of believers from one church to another, and strengthened the mutual recognition of the sacraments of the Orthodox and Catholic churches as “sister churches.” See Speranskaia 2012.

ary transformations aimed at destroying traditional ways of life. Thus, one ROCOR scholar, the Orthodox historian Vladimir Moss, pointed out that ecumenism in the late twentieth century was continuing the work that the October Revolution began on the church front. Among other things, he attempts to correlate the ideas of ecumenism with the ideas of communism, noting that these two phenomena are aspects of one global heresy, which can be designated by the single term “ecumenism” or “ecumenist heresy” (Moss 2001). The basis of Moss’ theory is that ecumenical and communist aspects act as revolutionary forces that destroy traditional foundations. In his words, ecumenism “is intensifying to destroy the significance of the church as a pillar and statement of Truth (I Timothy 3:15) by preaching that there is no single church” (Moss 2001), and “the communist aspect of the ecumenist heresy is intensifying to destroy the moral, social, and eschatological teaching of the church by preaching a new ‘revolutionary morality,’ the goal of which is not the Kingdom of Heaven, but a communist paradise on earth. Instead of the church, we see the Party, instead of God — history” (Moss 2001). To draw connections between ecumenism and communism, Moss also points to the phonetic consonance of the terms.

Common among almost all anti-ecumenists is an eschatological position and an attraction to conspiracy theories, that is, what Bakrun calls “a culture of conspiracy” (Bakrun 2003). Ecumenical rapprochement is understood as a process that is the fruit of a conspiracy of secret forces aimed at creating a “single world state” of the Antichrist, in which a single “All Church” exists. In accordance with this position is the notion that any unification of churches is part of an external super task intended to build the world state of the Antichrist. Here, anti-ecumenists, especially those inspired by the ROCOR, rely on the book of Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose), *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future*.

The Post-Soviet era: the “non-commemoration movement” versus the “loyalists”

During the Soviet period, the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church ignored the issue of ecumenism. On the one hand, this can be explained because under conditions of state persecution, religious life and the purity of faith receded into the background. Moreover, both Western heterodoxy and Orthodoxy were persecuted, and therefore they perceived each other similarly, as “friends in misfortune.” On the other hand, given the degree of control on the part of the commission-

ers for religious affairs, the church lacked the opportunity to put issues of an external ecclesiastical nature on the agenda (Serafim 1975).

The situation changed dramatically, however, with the arrival of religious freedom. According to Fr. Alexandr Borisov “for the orthodox (*ortodoksal’nyi*) part” of the clergy, the problem of ecumenism has often been “issue number one” (Borisov 1994, 155). The most striking expression of the struggle for the purity of faith in the 1990s was the “non-commemoration movement,” which revived in reaction to the exceptionally complimentary speech Patriarch Alexy II delivered on November 13, 1991 in New York at a meeting with rabbis. Few believers knew that the patriarch had reproduced the text of Archbishop Nikanor’s (Brovkovich) “The Mystery of Israel” speech (Smakov 1993; Solov’ev 1993, 34), which preached unity between Christians and Jews. As a result of the speech, many Orthodox priests stopped considering Alexy II to be the patriarch and ceased commemorating his name and the names of other ecumenically-minded bishops during services (Poliaikov, n.d.; Hegemon Arsenii Mednikov, interview by B. Knorre; Soldatov, Alexander, interview by B. Knorre).

The “non-commemorators” of the 1990s relied partly on the experience of the Catacomb Church, which in 1927 rejected the declaration of Sergius (Stragorodskii) and ceased to commemorate bishops during divine services who were subordinate to Soviet power (Regel’son 2017). Despite their institutional disobedience to the hierarchy of the ROC MP, those who did not commemorate drew a canonical legal basis from the Church Abroad, itself an authoritative part of Russian Orthodoxy but one that was not in canonical communion with the ROC MP. Alongside “Sergianism” and the nonrecognition of the new martyrs who suffered under the Soviet regime, ecumenism represented one of three claims that the Karlovtsy³ had against the Moscow Patriarchate. In particular, the Orthodox abroad considered “Sergianism,” or loyalty to the godless authorities and a tendency to grovel before and serve them, and ecumenism itself — a phenomenon caused by “Sergianism” — as the basis of two other lies of the ROC MP. (Filatov 2004, 62).

Of course, the episcopate could not ignore the threat of the expanding “non-commemoration movement.” In order to reconcile with the “non-commemorators,” it selected from zealots, “loyalists,” that is, those who despite their anti-ecumenism demonstrated loyalty to the hierarchy

3. The name “Karlovtsy” was assigned to the members of the ROCOR because on December 3, 1921, in Sremski Karlovtsy in Serbia, an all-foreign Russian Church meeting convened, which adopted the main provisions and documents of the ROCOR and formed its administrative structure.

of the ROC MP and opposed withdrawing from subordination. For example, the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, Ioann (Snychev) (Shnirel'man 2017, 280), and the famous Russian priest from the Pskov-Pechersk Lavra, Archimandrite Ioann (Krest'iankin) (Archimandrite Ioann (Krest'iankin), interview by B. Knorre), were authoritative among fundamentalists and played a mediating role, reconciling many non-commemorating groups with the high clergy. At the same time, they held a critical view of the policy Patriarch Alexy II pursued but were loyal to the institution of the Church (Poliakov 2015). From the side of the ROC MP establishment, Bishop Nikon (Vasiukov) of Ufa and Sterlitamak, Bishop Anthony (Masendich) of Barnaul and Altai, and Bishop Veniamin (Pushkov) of Vladivostok and Primorii, made anti-ecumenical statements and voted against the document "On the Basic Principles of the Russian Orthodox Church's Attitude to Non-Orthodoxy" at the 2000 Jubilee Council (Vsiakii arkhieri 2000, 9).

Since anti-ecumenical criticism in the nineties erupted from the "lower classes" in the form of Orthodox brotherhoods, the Church leadership formed the Union of Orthodox Brotherhood (UOB) in order to have at least partial control over them. At first, the UOB acted quite independently, but over time, it took firmly loyalist positions. Other loyalist organizations loudly declared sharply anti-ecumenical positions. These include the Orthodox Citizens Union, which set itself the goal of churching and attracting the political elite to church interests.⁴

It is important to note that these organizations and others that emerged at the turn of the millennium display a fundamentally different position from the "non-commemoration movement." A characteristic feature of them is that, on the one hand, they criticize the Church leadership for ecumenism, and on the other, they try not to cross the line in their criticism and to ensure the Church that they remained loyal to the leadership, the Synod, and the structure of the ROC MP. That is, they in fact voice loyalist positions. At the turn of the millennium, criticism of ecumenism developed in fundamentalist circles along with massive protests against TINs (tax identification numbers), barcodes, and other various electronic means of accounting. As a result, Orthodox zeal is increasingly presented as anti-globalism. Speakers who criticize ecumenism point to the danger of destroying national ties and favor state institutions over international corporations and supranational institu-

4. In the post-Soviet days, the agenda of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhood (UOB) spelled out the struggle "against the influence of the West, Zionism, ecumenism, Freemasonry, and Judaism within the Russian Orthodox Church." See Verkhovskii 2003, 16-8.

tions. The underlying reason for these types of protests against ecumenism is, to a fairly strong degree, national-imperial ambitions.

For example, the aforementioned critic of ecumenism, Bishop Ioann (Snychev), headed a visible political trend, whose ideas concerned not only ecumenism, but also, to no less extent, ethno-nationalism, Russian imperialism, and the Orthodox monarchy (Verkhovskii 2005). Here, anti-ecumenism is an auxiliary element added to national-imperial sympathies. In his article “Look, do not fear. . .” Bishop Ioann noted “the anti-state, anti-national essence of ecumenism” (Bishop Ioann 2005). He points out that the ultimate goal of all ecumenical efforts is “the ideological foundation of mondialism, the ideological foundation of a new world order.” Ecumenism, in his opinion, “spiritually substantiates the need for the destruction of sovereign nation states for the sake of a Western planetary dictatorship, led by the United States.” Thus, for Bishop Ioann, events such as “the defeat of Iraq, the suffocation of Yugoslavia, and the barbaric bombing of Orthodox Serbs” fall in the same vein as ecumenism (Bishop Ioann 2005). Konstantin Dushenov, an active participant in the campaign against TINs and a former assistant of Snychev, notes not the religious but the political background of ecumenism, proposing that ecumenism is a veiled form of liberalism that erodes national foundations and state sovereignty.

In 2000 Valerii Filimonov, an anti-globalist leader who organized the movement “For the right to live without TIN, personal Codes, and microchips,” associated the perniciousness of ecumenism with the destruction of states, nations, and religions, in an effort to create a world government based on ecumenism. He puts ecumenism on par with an attack on patriotism and national identity which in his opinion strives to remove the “nationality” (*national'nost'*) column from passports of citizens of the Russian Federation. The fact that many anti-globalists who oppose digital codes and TINs are also anti-ecumenists is unsurprising. Ecumenism, the introduction of digital personal codes, and globalization in general threaten to erode national identity and state sovereignty.

Alongside growing interest among fundamentalists in the archaic, in attempts to return “to the roots” in one understanding or the other, the anti-ecumenists of the early 2000s often emphasize strength and violence as a value (Maler 2010). Anti-globalists and imperial-oriented opponents of ecumenism are usually monarchists who support an autocratic monarchy or a deeper understanding of a strong central power. In this regard, protests against any kind of ecumenical interaction between churches sometimes correlate with ideas of *tsarebozhie* (Tsar-as God), related to the sacralization and veneration of Ivan the

Terrible and Rasputin. The figure of Ivan the Terrible, in particular, is attractive to some anti-ecumenists because within the framework of his mythological ideas, he personifies a force of national power that should help Russia isolate itself from the outside world, or at least prevent the harmful Western influences that threaten to erode national identity. This, in particular, is the opinion of Konstantin Dushenov (Dukh dyshit, gde khochet 2003). Ivan the Terrible somehow legitimizes a distinct isolationist, partly revanchist, position aimed at protecting Russia and rejecting Western social institutions that penetrated Russian society in the 1990s (Knorre 2005). It is no coincidence that in the *tsarebozhie* prayer to Tsar Ivan the Terrible a special place is given to the role of a tyrant in the struggle for the purity of the faith and in opposing heresies, heterodoxies, and gentile threats of all sorts:

You, preserver and strengthener of the House of the Virgin Mary and the Orthodox Faith; uniter of Holy Russia; smiter of the Jewish heresy; expeller of the demons in flesh — the Yids (*sic*); eradicator of treason; conqueror and converter to Christ of the Hagars, Latins, and pagans; enlightener and savior of the Russian people.

In 2007 the only bishop who decided to openly accuse the ROC MP hierarchy of ecumenism, Bishop Diomid (Dziuban) of Anadyr and Chukotka, was a *tsarebozhie* devotee, as evidenced by the icons of Ivan the Terrible. After the discovery, the Church defrocked Diomid. It is important to recall that in 2007 he made an appeal against all bishops and clergy, and Patriarch Alexy II personally, which contained accusations of ecumenism (Ruskaia ideia 2007). For this, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church expelled him from the priesthood in 2008. It is worth noting, however, that Diomid is the only example of a bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church who went over to the camp of the “non-commemorators.”

In time, Diomid’s address coincided with an event that greatly narrowed the ideological base of the anti-ecumenists. At a 2007 Council, the ROCOR signed an Act of Canonical Communion with the ROC MP, renouncing its claims against it. The signing of the act deprived ROC MP anti-ecumenists of the essential institutional support of the foreign church. Of course, the second and third groups of anti-ecumenists, about whom Ladouceur speaks (the Greek old calendarists and a special community of Athos monks), remained true to their anti-ecumenism, but the relationship of Russian Orthodox ultra-conservatives with these two groups has never been as close as with the Kar-

lovtsy. Ecumenical protests of the Russian Orthodox Church became less pronounced in the second half of the 2000s. Diomid did not recognize the decision of the Council and formed his own small group of alternative Orthodoxy separate from the ROC MP — the “Russian Orthodox Church. The Most Holy Governing Synod” (Ierarkhiia liturgicheskikh tserkvei 2018).

New defenders of a “Soviet caliber” faith

A surge of anti-ecumenical protests occurred in connection to the signing of the Havana Declaration by Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis and in connection to preparations for a Pan-Orthodox Council, which took place in Crete on February 20, 2016 without the participation of four national churches. The most prominent and largest social actor, which initiated anti-ecumenical protests and united several anti-ecumenical groups, was the political nationalist association, the “People’s Council” (PC), headed by the imperialist-minded publicist Vladimir Khomiakov.⁵ At the conferences he prepared, organizers dressed in military uniforms and demonstrated their militant passions. Moreover, the PC organized anti-ecumenical events with volunteers who visited hot spots during the hostilities in the Donbass during the 2014-2015 Russian-Ukrainian conflict, in particular, the Union of Donbas Volunteers and the ideologically linked militarized political organization ENOT Corp (Sergeev 2019). The PC itself formed in close cooperation with the military and has close ties with retired paratroopers. In particular, there are several generals among the leaders of the PC. Oleg Kassin, the co-chairman of the PC, for example, is a former activist of the paramilitary organization “Russian National Unity,” which was one of the most famous ultra-right political groups in the nineties.

Political engagement is also a characteristic feature among these anti-ecumenists. For the members of the PC political motives are not only significant, they are decisive. The goals of the PC are overtly political: the protection of the traditional family, refutation of LGBT propaganda and sexual freedom, and the protection of public morality (Ofitsial’nyi sait dvizheniia “Narodnyi Sobor 2020). A shift of emphasis towards political tasks is visible. Compared to these tasks, concern for the purity of the church acts as an appendage to the general course of isolationism (since it is necessary to resist Western institu-

5. The People’s Council is an all-Russian movement founded in 2005, composed of several nationalists, imperialist, and Orthodox organizations.

tions and values, then any form of ecumenism is unacceptable). The religious component of PC activities is exclusively in the vein of “political Orthodoxy”; for example, the PC supports expanding the functions of Orthodoxy in the public sphere, in particular, introducing Orthodox Christian lessons in the education system and protecting believers from blasphemous actions (Ofitsial’nyi sait dvizheniia “Narodnyi Sobor 2020).

Groups, such as the news agency “Amin.su,” headed by the well-known ultra-conservative Vladimir Semenko (discussed below), the “Messenger of the Faithful” information portal, and the Basil the Great Analytical Center, led by Deacon Il’ia Maslov, the center’s senior analyst, expressed solidarity with the PC. In relation to the leadership of the ROC MP, representatives of these groups took a loyalist position. They spoke out against both the cessation of the commemoration of the patriarch and separation from Church authorities. While criticizing the Havana Declaration and any steps towards integration with Western Christians, PC activists supported continuing liturgical communions for Patriarch Kirill and remaining administratively subordinate to him. The PC began to insist that constant loyalty should be maintained towards the patriarch in order to increase the pressure on him, so as not to let him fall further into the “heresy of ecumenism” and to eventually compel him to reject the Havana Declaration.

The prevalence of representatives loyal to Church leadership among critics of ecumenism in the 2010s testifies to the growing prevalence of the fundamentalist wing within the ROC MP rather than outside of it. Nevertheless, the Havana Declaration gave some impetus to the “non-commemoration movement,” although it had a smaller role in church life than in the nineties. Alexei Moroz, an ultra-right and ultra-conservative priest of the ROC MP, organized one such group. Moroz’s attention to the spiritual leadership in Russia is reflected in the group’s name, the “Cathedral of Orthodox Intelligentsia” or the “Cathedral of Orthodox Priests of the Russian Orthodox Church who remain in the patristic tradition.” In a September 2017 resolution from fifteen priests, this organization announced a break in the canonical communion with “heretics who seized power in the ROC MP” (*Rezoliutsiia sobraniia Sobora pravoslavnykh sviashchennikov RPTs, v sviatootecheskom predanii stoiashchikh 2017.*) At first, Moroz swore and swore that he would never leave the “mother church”; he would simply refuse to commemorate the “heretics,” but in the summer of 2019 he joined one of the fragments of the ROCOR — the Synod of the Metropolitan of Filaret (Semovskikh) — and completely broke with the Moscow Patriarchate.

Increased militarist sympathies, however, were a common feature among both loyalist zealots and representatives of the “non-commemoration movement” of the late post-Soviet period. Among the leaders of the “non-commemorators” in 2016 and 2017, Hieromonk Dimitrii Prokhin-Hristov, a former employee of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian Federation, was especially authoritative and organized a number of major anti-ecumenical events in 2017 with a group of Athos monks, led by the prominent anti-ecumenists monk Raphael (Berestov) and Hieroschemonk Onufrii (Stebelev-Velaskes). With their spiritual approval an event took place at the Sinaxis (Cathedral) in Krasnodar on October 5, 2017 in which about 70 clergy participated. Also standing out among the ranks of the “non-commemorators” was Fr. Dimitri Nenarokov (the confessor of paramilitary groups of Moscow Cossacks, the centurion [junior officer] of the “Southeast” District Cossack Society in Moscow,” and the organizer of several “Orthodox military-patriotic clubs” and a number of intimidation campaigns against actionist artists) (Gerasimenko 2012).

Thus, it is clear that professional military men or priests with special militant sympathies prevailed in the anti-ecumenical movement of the 2010s. They formed these militaristic attitudes within the framework of a dualistic worldview that features a battle between good and evil. If in the political plane fundamentalists formulate the idea of a fundamental confrontation, a “sacred battle” in the context of Samuel Huntington’s conflict between the values of “Russian civilization” and the Western world, then in the religious sphere this confrontation is perceived in the tradition of the bloc-system. Post-Soviet anti-ecumenists inherit the value picture of the world of the “Yalta-Potsdam system,” which divided Europe into “spheres of interest” (blocs) between the USSR and the Western powers. Despite the fact that the role of the ROC in this system was to implement the foreign policy of the USSR through building influence abroad, contemporary post-Soviet anti-ecumenists transform the role of the Church in this ideologeme from an exclusively official and state-dependent one to one beneficial for the development of the Church and the state as a whole. The position of the Church in the international arena transformed from a conciliatory one, when the threat of a global nuclear war was high, to one of ultra-right nationalist and imperial sentiments, accompanied by the consecration of weapons, banners of military units, and formations (Krasikov 2009).

Plainly, this is a fairly pronounced group that is not indicated in the Ladouceur classification, which includes only foreigners, Greek old calendarists, and a group of Athos monks. Russian anti-ecumen-

ists of the late post-Soviet period differ from these three groups, although they occasionally collaborate and some of their views overlap.

It is clear that anti-ecumenism is becoming increasingly political. Protests against communication with the non-Orthodox more often reflect the rejection of the Western mentality than concern for Orthodox doctrinal purity. Furthermore, the nationalist component is beginning to manifest itself more strongly in the Russian anti-ecumenical movement. The protests of many Orthodox conservatives reflect fears about the loss of national identity, the erosion of Orthodoxy as a faith inherent in the Russian people. This reveals a significant divergence between post-Soviet anti-ecumenism and the anti-ecumenical criticism of ultra-conservative fundamentalists in the Moscow Patriarchate and the Karlovtsy, both of which focus on dogmatic arguments. In contrast to the ROCOR and the Soviet catacombists, the fundamental feature of modern Orthodox anti-ecumenists in post-Soviet Russia is their obvious sympathy for the Soviet heritage and ideology, i.e. they assimilate certain views on Russian foreign policy that are characteristic of the Soviets, which when translated into religious language take on the form of anti-ecumenical protests and militarism. Among “loyalists,” a special reverence to the state accompanies a desire to rely on it as a protector of the purity of faith (in the zealous understanding described above). Many Karlovtsy characterized this as “Sergianism,” a concept that fundamentally distinguished post-Soviet “loyalists” from the Karlovtsy.

Special service rhetoric in defense of the faith

As a result, another distinctive feature of post-Soviet anti-ecumenists is the prevalence of special service rhetoric. In protests against interreligious dialogue, anti-ecumenists demonstrate a tendency to view contacts with Western religious organizations not in a religious, but in a purely political plane, as a threat to Russia’s national and state security. According to Nenarokov, interreligious dialogue is “an attempt to bring the ROC into the orbit of the Vatican’s influence”; it is nothing more than “subversive activities against Russia, part of an information war that has become an aggressive conflict with Russia, with the foundations of its state and spiritual security and the spiritual sovereignty of the nation” (Sotnik 2016). That is, he puts the concepts of “state security,” spiritual security, “national sovereignty,” “purity of faith,” and the “struggle for Orthodoxy” in the same category. For Nenarokov, state security and confessional authenticity are of the same order (Sotnik 2016). The co-chairman of the PC, Vladimir Khomiakov, expressed

a similar position at a protest when he urged Vladimir Putin to force the patriarch to abandon the Havana Declaration (Vladimir Khomiakov o vstreche Patriarkha s Papoi-iezuitom 2016). Khomiakov's appeal to the President of the Russian Federation reflected Putin's assumed authority over the patriarch not only in secular, but in church affairs.

According to professor Olga Chetverikova, another leader of modern anti-ecumenical protests, the Vatican should be viewed not as a religious organization but as a "theocratic state with considerable financial and administrative resources and the finest intelligence agencies, which work closely with Western intelligence communities" (Chetverikova 2016a). She believes that the West uses Catholicism to instill the European Union and globalization with a religious dimension (Chetverikova 2016a), one in which an ecumenical interreligious dialogue is required to "bring everyone toward a global standard of thinking and organize a system of world governance" (Chetverikova 2016b).

The aforementioned anti-ecumenists look at ecumenical contacts through the prism of securitization. This approach fundamentally distinguishes modern anti-ecumenists from those of the twentieth century, who not only did not operate with the concept of state security, but, on the contrary, criticized ecumenical contacts with the non-Orthodox for furthering state interests and censured ecumenists for their ties with the KGB. In particular, the researcher of the relationship between the ROC MP and the ROCOR, Deacon Andrei Psarev, concludes that "the ecumenical activity of the ROC during the Cold War primarily depended on the goals of Soviet foreign policy" (Psarev and Kitzenko 2020). Vladimir Moss, in his book *The Orthodox Church at a Crossroads*, elaborates on the WCC as a platform enabling the KGB to spread its influence behind the Iron Curtain (Moss 2001). Similarly, Archpriest Lev Lebedev, a prominent spokesman for the ROCOR ideology in the post-Soviet space, criticized the leader of the late Soviet ecumenical movement, Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), because he and his church associates "in all their activities had the powerful support of the KGB, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Council for Religious Affairs" (Lebedev 1999). That is, the viciousness of ecumenism on the part of the ROCOR was explained, among other things, by the fact that political considerations of the Russian special services guided its church leaders, thereby proving their "Sergian" subordination to the state.

Today, it is the opposite — pro-Soviet zealots of the faith accuse ecumenists of neglecting the interests of state security. Anti-ecumenists urge church leaders to weigh their actions against the instructions of

the FSB for military and strategic reasons. The language of the special services and the discourse of state security have become vernacular among many contemporary church fundamentalists. The penchant for special service rhetoric further demonstrates the adherence among late-Soviet anti-ecumenists to the Soviet past as a more “correct” ideological and political tradition. Despite the persecution of the church, adherents of the “Soviet caliber” faith consider the Soviet era preferable to the post-Soviet one in the spiritual sphere because in their opinion globalization processes had less of an imprint on it.

The penchant for special service rhetoric reflects more than just sympathy for the Soviet past, it is a manifestation of the secularization of spiritual and moral values in Russia. As Jardar Østbø posits, “spiritual and moral values” began to be securitized or defined as a matter of national security in Russia at the highest levels of state politics and political discourse (Østbø 2017). According to Østbø, in the mid-1990s the narrow concept of “spiritual security” emerged as a weapon in the hands of the “anti-cult movement,” which in Russia was mainly composed of Orthodox, and was initially directed against new religious movements, sects, and non-traditional cults. Later it was expanded to include the recognition of spiritual and moral values as a matter of national security, and such recognition has already given rise to a negative attitude towards the West and Western values in general, including not simply sects, but also established Western religions (Østbø 2017). Fundamentalists do not only adopt this tendency, they try to strengthen it and sharpen it in every possible way, since their very militaristic attitude and their inclination to view the world as a battle between good and evil strengthens this security rhetoric.

Applying the mobilization model of social organization

The views of post-Soviet anti-ecumenists, described in the previous two sections, allow this study to correlate their socio-cultural preferences with the mobilization model of societal development. According to Lubskii’s definition “mobilizational development is one of the ways to adapt the socio-economic system to the realities of the changing world which consists of systematically addressing conditions of stagnation or crisis through emergency measures” (Lubskii 2006). The mobilization model also presupposes implementation over the short-term. Contrary to this assumption, however, some analysts have identified long-term implementation of the mobilization model. For example, in Openkin’s definition, the essential feature of the mobilization

of social organization “is the regular, widespread use of emergency means to solve the problems that constantly arise in the life of our people” (Openkin 2012). That is, the implementation of the mobilization model need not be short-term. Openkin believes that the long-term historical development of Russia is linked with the mobilization model (Openkin 2012).

Gaman-Golutvina adds to this, noting that

A society developing in a mobilization mode is in a militarized type of development, the main imperative of which is defense; modernization impulses are formed not as a result of cumulative effect (as an organic need for economic, technological, and military-financial modernization), but come from an external source and are carried out discretely, catastrophically, revolutionarily, and often as a result of military defeats (Crimean [War], Russo-Japanese [war], and World War I) or in connection with a potential threat (Gaman-Golutvina 2006).

The extent to which the mobilization model is characteristic of the history of Russia in general is beyond the scope of this article, since the format does not allow such a large excursion into political science theory. Yet, it is clear that the socio-economic development of the USSR was carried out within the framework of the mobilization model. Currently, the model and the Soviet past influence the construction of the political system in Russia. Its appeal and influence is also expressed in the fact that within the framework of contemporary mainstream Russian political ideology, the pre-revolutionary past is interpreted through an ideological focus that fully corresponds to the mobilization model — regardless of how much it really was shaped by it.

Among the fundamentalists that this study assessed there exists a theory that any accomplishments in Russia (the correct organization of life, for example), are only possible under conditions of extreme stress, a state of emergency, or martial law — in other words, only under extreme mobilizational forces. That is a key sign of the mobilization model. Also common among the fundamentalists is the presence of a strong centralized government that has sufficient political will to force society to mobilize, including through the means of war. In such a situation, prospects for a national upsurge are associated mainly with political and military conflicts. For example, ideologues from the Center of Basil the Great note the positive shock effect of the “Russian Spring” in 2014, which actualized the importance of strong state power and the imperial past. In their words:

“Maidan” awakened the consciousness of a large number of Russian people, not only those in Ukraine, but also in Russia. The “Russian Spring” — the return of Crimea, the heroic resistance to the ukrofascist regime on the part of the DPR and LPR⁶--made many of our compatriots, many of whom previously thought exclusively in terms of “bread and circuses,” ask the question — who are we? What is the basis and core of our “Russianness”? What is the historical meaning of the existence of Russia? The correct answers to these questions are the key to our survival and we need to look for them in our imperial past. Autocracy, strong state power, and Orthodoxy are the civilizational code of Russia. Only in this sense does the “Russian Spring” have the potential to restore the uniform civilizational space of Rus (Tsentr sviatelia Vasiliia 2017).

In the aforementioned appeal to President Putin, Ilya Maslov adds: “Our economy can be national only during a war, in peacetime an American hamburger is somehow sweeter. . . (Maslov 2018). Thus, militarization is viewed not only as a factor useful for countering external threats, but also improving the national economy.

The most prominent proponent of this ideology among the clergy was Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, who passed in January 2020. Chaplin repeatedly expressed hope for the early onset of a global world war, in which Russia would be an obligatory participant, yearning: “Peace does not last long, currently we have long been at peace, thank God it will not be much longer. Why do I say ‘thank God’ — a society which is too well-fed, too calm, too comfortable, and problem-free, is a society abandoned by God, this society does not last long” (Archpriest Vsevolod and L. Gozman, interviewed by T. Fel’gengauer 2015). Thus, political threats to national security are an important component of the mobilization rhetoric of new zealots.

The questions of “sacrality” and “passionarity”

In the lexicon of anti-ecumenists there are peculiar concepts and terms that reflect their mobilizational attitude and outlook on the world, in particular, “sacrality,” which Vladimir Semenko, one of the leaders of the anti-ecumenical movement, frequently uses. Semenko understands “sacrality” as the intensity of people’s perception of the sacred aspects of being, the depth or degree of involvement of human consciousness in religious thoughts. A high degree of “sacrality,” or “in-

6. The Democratic Party of Russia and the Libertarian Party of Russia

candescent sacrality” in Semenko’s formulation means a willingness to place one’s faith as the highest value, raising it to a level at which one would defend it even at the cost of their life. That is, in “incandescent sacrality” religious thoughts determine a person’s motivation.

Take the Old Believers. Who was correct in the dispute with Nikon is a separate question. I suppose I think that Nikon was correct to a greater extent. But now something else is important to us: a fairly large mass of Russian Orthodox people so confidently place their faith above their earthly life that they were prepared to self-immolate in the name of this faith. This is called incandescent sacrality (Archpriest Vsevolod and L. Gozman, interviewed by T. Fel’gengauzer 2015)!

According to Semenko, “if sacrality is sufficiently incandescent, then it is impossible to remain indifferent to its action, even if you belong to a different faith” (Semenko 2007). That is, “incandescent sacrality” is capable of producing a serious missionary effect, and therefore is important in spreading the faith. Thus, the talk of “sacrality” is also associated with expansionist perspectives.

At the same time, “incandescent sacrality” can also be made to serve the protection of national interests. Semenko believes that a high intensity of “sacrality” in a nation provides it with a strong vitality, originality, and independence from outside influences (Semenko 2007). That is, where there is “sacrality,” there is also state sovereignty. Semenko shows the political significance of “sacrality,” for example, he speaks of “sacrality” as the sacred core of the people. Thanks to a strong “sacrality,” the people become able to reject alien, foreign traditions and influences, that is, to ensure their sovereignty:

Take the history of Rus, during those times when Orthodox sacrality was still inflamed. At first, the false Dmitry enjoyed considerable popularity among the people, but everyone knows what a sad fate befell him when it became clear to our Russian ancestors that his comrade did not respect the ancient customs of the people and, most importantly, was making advances toward the papists. “The accursed Russian question”: where is that gun from which ash from the burnt body of Mr. Shvydkoi should be fired??! (said in jest) (Semenko 2007).

It is obvious that Semenko’s ironic question reflects his negative attitude toward the former Minister of Culture, Mikhail Shvydkoi (2000-2004), who oriented Russian cultural policy towards Western values

“alien” to Russian consciousness. It should be noted that Semenko’s concept of “sacrality” is similar in meaning to Lev Gumilyov’s concept of “passionarity”/“passionaries” in the church sphere.⁷ In post-Soviet Orthodoxy, fundamentalists called “passionaries” widely used this concept to press the state to consolidate Orthodox norms at the legislative level in order to protect church interests in society.

The Church leadership also began to use the concept of “passionarity.” For example, even patriarch Kirill cited the presence of “passionarity” among representatives of societal and youth organizations in a positive manner in 2014, when he thanked them for “their capacity to defend church interests” (Sokolov 2020). For Patriarch Kirill, “passionarity” is an “inner strength,” “undertaken for centuries in the soul of man, including among the Orthodox; it is the capacity to resist unfavorable external circumstances” (Patriarch Kirill 2016). The need to be prepared to undertake an act of bravery, to sacrifice, to do something that requires extraordinary efforts from a person is no less “passionarity.” That is, it is a manifestation of the above-mentioned mobilizationist attitude or a mobilizationist worldview.

In fact, the idea of the act of bravery is central because the true development of the individual, of society, and of the state is linked to it. Otherwise, the brain becomes overgrown with fat, the individual and the nation lose their “passionarity.” This is a wonderful concept that determines the capacity of a nation to accomplish a feat; and if “passionarity” is lost, then the civilization’s potential is reduced. . . (Patriarch Kirill 2016).

Here, the patriarch cites as an example heroism in warfare, but examples also include the activities of the apostles, sports, science, and fasting. All of these, in his opinion, are inseparable from “passionarity” and heroism. The concept of “passionarity” also appeals to other hierarchs, for example, Metropolitan Tikhon (Shevkunov) (Arkhimandrit Tikhon 2013). Thus, it is not only anti-ecumenical fundamentalists who use “passionarity” but also high-ranking official Church leaders, such as Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Tikhon. This also allows one to attribute their view of human life to the mobilization model of societal development. Within the framework of this model, war, monastic asceticism,

7. Gumilev defines “passionarity” as “an excess of biochemical energy of living matter, opposite to the instinct vector and determining the ability to overstrain” or “the effect of excess biochemical energy of living matter, which generates sacrifice for an illusory goal.” See Gumilyov 2018, 726.

and the ideology of suffering and deprivation are in the same category, since all require an act of bravery or the utmost exertion of forces.

The privatization of religion — limiting it to the field of religious life and to the framework of one's own community and rejecting its claim to influence society as a whole — is completely unacceptable for both the concepts of "sacrality" and "passionarity." Adapting one's own cultural and religious traditions to interact with other traditions and cultures is unacceptable. That is, the demands of religious and cultural tolerance, more generally, adopted in the context of globalization and demonstrating an orientation towards the values of the contemporary Western world, are unacceptable. "Sacrality" and "passionarity" directly oppose the principle of tolerance. In this regard, it is not surprising that the inclinations of those pro-Soviet anti-ecumenists have developed more successfully under the conservative political turn of the 2010s than during the Russian nineties.

Furthermore, the concepts of "sacrality" and "passionarity" can explain why, for many Orthodox fundamentalists, Muslims turn out to be spiritually closer than Western Christians, for example, Catholics, and why some Orthodox priests cite Muslims as ideal examples of the faithful. In the opinions of fundamentalists, Muslims have a stronger "sacrality" and "passionarity" than the "lukewarm" and politically correct Western Christians because Muslims unabashedly and with no fear violate the rules of the secular world for the sake of their faith.

Right or left?

Many features of contemporary Orthodox anti-ecumenism make one wonder whether it is an analogue of ultra-right radical associations. In an attempt to identify the exceptional right-wing traits among anti-ecumenists, one faces a problem — the lack of a clear and unified definition of the Russian political right. "Left" and "right" as concepts arose in political discourse during the French Revolution and originally denoted the Jacobins — supporters of revolutionary changes, who were to the left of the king in the Legislative Assembly — and the Feuillants — supporters of a constitutional monarchy who were on the right. Thus, the Left has a progressive and modernist reputation, and the Right a monarchial and conservative one, convinced that not only are individuals unequal in nature, but nations and states as well (Lebedev 1996, 72). This position in relation to equality is fundamental for determining all the ensuing features of right-wing movements. There are further differences between the Right and the Left amongst their

economic programs: the Left are supporters of a planned economy and collective economic structures, while those on the right favor the market and private property. In contemporary Russia, however, right-wing parties gravitate towards a planned economy and strong state power, complicating the criteria for determining whether contemporary political movements are on the right (Berlin and Lukes 1988, 124).

It will be useful to draw attention to similarities among the discourse of both modern Orthodox anti-ecumenical fundamentalists and the ultra-right radical movements. Here, radicalism means the desire to carry out fundamental socio-political changes, focused not on preservation and development, but on the disintegration of existing systems (Tsentr monitoringa i komparativnogo analiza mezhkul'turnykh kommunikatsii Moskovskogo instituta psikhoanaliza. 2018).

A. V. Shekhovtsov, who analyzes the ideologies of contemporary European right-wing radical parties, deduces the following definition: "New right-wing radicalism is an ideology based on the idea of preserving, realizing, and reproducing an ethnically and culturally homogeneous type of society within the framework of the liberal-democratic system" (Shekhovtsov 2008, 143). It is worth emphasizing that the desire to reproduce a single and homogeneous society among right-wing radical movements is accompanied by intolerance and calls for segregation from all other groups that do not help to ensure ethnic and cultural homogeneity. It also follows from Shekhovtsov's definition that modern right-wing radicalism exists in conditions dominated by the liberal-democratic system and emerges in opposition to it. The contemporary revival of radical right-wing forces and their growing popularity in the world is directly linked to disillusionment with liberal ideas and backlash toward the processes of globalization. As demonstrated, Orthodox fundamentalism also draws its resources and support from disappointment and criticism of liberal-humanistic ideas and constructs its identity in opposition to globalization and modernization processes. If radical right-wing parties build their identity in opposition to the dominant liberal-democratic system, then Orthodox fundamentalism opposes Christian values that followed the processes of globalization, Westernization, modernization, and ecumenism that have dragged the world toward humanism.

The desire to absolutize what is "special" — what is socially exceptional in national self-identity — is yet another important feature of the right-wing radical discourse. S. V. Pogorelskaia notes "special" categories, such as "national character," "national culture," "nation," and "race," which due to their mystification become tools for dissociating from other groups and justifying exclusivity (Pogorel'skaia 2004). In

such a situation, Orthodox anti-ecumenists feel like an elect group, and the Orthodox Church the last bulwark of world salvation. A.V. Radetskaia identifies that anti-ecumenism is supported by the following formula: “Only one’s own faith is true, only one’s own Church is united, Holy, synodic, and Apostolic” (Radetskaia 2010, 40). Thus, the pathos of contemporary anti-ecumenism lies in claims of singularity and exclusivity, the special rights of the Orthodox Church to save people all over the world (i.e. subject them to conversion to Orthodoxy). Its task of preserving the purity of faith is posed as the task of saving the entire world, not the traditions and cultures of a different group of people.

Support for the hierarchal structure of society flows from this supremacy, i.e. convictions regarding the superiority of some groups over others. G.M. Tamash notes that new right-wing radicalism “gets along well with liberal democracy of the Anti-Enlightenment, which, without meeting any serious resistance, rehabilitated the understanding of citizenship as a privilege granted by the sovereign, in place of the previous understanding of citizenship as a universal human right” (Tamash 2000). Thus, another distinctive feature of the ideology of right-wing radicals is statism, or “the cult of a strong state that controls all aspects of society as the primary instrument of revolutionary changes” (Tsentr monitoringa i komparativnogo analiza mezhkul’turnykh kommunikatsii Moskovskogo instituta psikhoanaliza. 2018, 3). Among Orthodox fundamentalists, the embodiment of the strong state is undoubtedly the Orthodox monarchical empire.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the congratulatory letter from Deacon Il’ia Maslov, the senior analyst of the Center of St. Basil the Great, in connection to the election of Putin as President of the Russian Federation in 2018:

Your constituency (including myself) went to the polling stations on March 18 in order to vote against the elections as a political show, but in favor of the election of the Ruler of the Russian land. [To vote] for the election of the traditional model of Russian power — a personified, autocratic power responsible before God and the people as the historical aggregate of all generations — past, present and future; a power that guards both state sovereignty and national identity. In today’s historical time frame, you embody these hopes (Maslov 2018).

It is worth noting that the Russian Empire in the contemporary anti-ecumenical project bears a clear imprint of the Soviet period and even inherits some of its ideologemes. For example, the previously mentioned block-

system, with its division of the spheres of influence between Russia and the West or its manifestations of reverence for the personality of Stalin, is one that fits into the mobilization model of societal development.

Another important feature of right-wing ideologies is the formation of specific mythologemes associated with the revival of the nation and its election. In the Western tradition, R. Griffin studied these mythologemes among fascist ideological attitudes and the “palingenetic myth” (Griffin 1993). Among the anti-ecumenists this study examines, this myth manifests itself in the rhetoric about the revival of a nation, a people, and a state, especially in the form of the “Third Rome,” or the revival of a lost empire, the restoration of the natural path of Russian development which was interrupted by the revolution.

However, according to Griffin, the “palingenetic myth” only becomes the mythological core of fascist ideologies when the mythologeme rejects liberal institutions and the humanistic tradition of the Enlightenment (Potseluev 2014, 80). For anti-ecumenists, this is expressed in protest against globalization processes and modernization; in this sense, anti-liberalism represents a rejection of the Western way of thinking. Griffin notes that “at the heart palingenetic political myth lies the belief that contemporaries are living through a ‘sea-change,’ a water-shed,” or ‘turning-point’ in the historical process.” (Griffin 1993, 35). For modern anti-ecumenists, this is expressed in an eschatological belief that the era of the Antichrist is coming, an era which will entail various catastrophic events, such as a world war, a global crisis, a redivision of the world, as well as the appearance of a new autocratic Russian tsar. Thus, the palingenetic myth is especially important for the mobilization type of societal development because it simultaneously actualizes the past and predicts a clear picture of the future and because it reinforces the belief in the exclusivity of the group and its election to ensure the success, survival, and safety of its members. A. A. Galkin expressed a similar concept in relation to the main idea of right-wing ideologies. In his opinion, the mythologeme underlying the right-wing radical movements boils down to the following ideas: “The revival and rehabilitation in their country of the ‘titular’ nation, considered to be one which is ethno-biologically united and rooted in its original, primordial values, which provide the only effective form of social organization” (Galkin 1995, 12).

For example, the political program of the Russian Imperial Movement (RIM) spelled out “the establishment of a Russian national dictatorship” as one of the ways to restore the autocratic monarchy, one which would offer a “declaration of Orthodoxy as the state religion of

Russia,” “protection of the interests of the Russian people,” and “spiritual and cultural expansion” (Politicheskaia programma Russkogo Imperskogo Dvizheniia, n.d.). This definition characterizes the paradoxical combination of conservative ideas with revolutionary sentiments. Galkin also notes the expansion of the meaning of the phrase “Russian nation” in its use among Russian right-wing radicals, where it is often used in a cultural and civilizational sense, which allows one to combine imperial ambitions with the national idea to include the non-Slavic peoples of Russia in the concept of the “Russian nation” or to deny the territorial independence of fraternal Slavic peoples (Potseluev 2014, 86).

In the same RIM program, the declaration of Russia as a mono-national state of the Russian people is spelled out, which means it has three branches: Great Russians, Ukrainians (Little Russians [sic]) and Belarusians. They are also convinced that

By dividing the Russian people into parts, the Bolsheviks, created phantom nations: the “Ukrainians and Litvin” (the so-called Belarusians) and the “Ukrainians” are a communist product (about which there are documents. In particular, the leadership of the Communist Party made a decision about the creation and imposition of what is called the Ukrainian language)” (Deus vult! ili na poroge Novoi rekonkisty, n.d.).

Thus, we see the involvement of contemporary Orthodox fundamentalists in right-wing political discourse, which allows us to correlate the features inherent in them with the features of the right-wing radical movements. At the same time, they show the imprint of the left Soviet past, manifested in the inheritance of some Soviet ideologies and sympathy for both the bloc-system and the figure of Stalin.

Conclusion

An analysis of the history of the anti-ecumenical movement shows that this movement can fade from time to time and occasionally seem irrelevant and devoid of a real basis. However, it does not completely disappear. It reemerges in the context of interfaith contacts in a new form and, in the twenty-first century, demands an even stricter separation of Orthodoxy from the religious world than was the case in the twentieth century. But the transformation of the anti-ecumenical movement lies not so much in intensity as in the quality of the idea itself and the understanding of what “purity of faith” is. Whereas at the end of the Soviet period and the beginning of the 1990s, the ideology of the ROCOR guided zeal-

ots of the “purity of faith” and denounced the use of Orthodoxy as a political instrument, as an independent post-Soviet Orthodoxy took shape, anti-ecumenism became increasingly correlated with a political background, itself becoming more and more political. In addition, in the post-Soviet Russian context, it employed the Soviet foreign policy bloc-system to insulate the Orthodox cultural tradition from Western influence.

Political rather than religious motives increasingly drive anti-ecumenism as evidenced by anti-ecumenist orientation toward the foreign policy of the late USSR. The ideas of anti-ecumenists are increasingly reminiscent of the ideology of late Soviet politicians who think in the Cold War bloc-system of confrontation. Among other things that post-Soviet anti-ecumenists have in common with Soviet approaches is an aspiration for a mobilization type of social structure and development. Mobilizationism as a feature of Orthodox fundamentalist culture can explain why fundamentalists are drawn toward asceticism, austerity, and minimalism in everyday life, as well as a Soviet-style worldview. The inclination to resort to the feats of Christian martyrs correlates well with the inclination to extol the realities of the Soviet era, not only the exploits during the Great Patriotic War, but in general Soviet asceticism, coupled with the willingness to make do with less and accept hardships. Both are consonant with mobilization mentality. In this regard, it is not surprising that inherent in anti-ecumenist culture are components inherent in mobilizationism — militarism, a martial protective consciousness, the construction of groups on the model of a “military camp,” and the tendency to use the language of special services or special operations in religious argumentation. It is clear that the religious struggle for the purity of faith serves political agendas.

Finally, anti-ecumenists develop right-wing discourse in a religious environment by situating Christian values in opposition to humanism, which has overtaken the world, following the processes of globalization, Westernization, modernization, and ecumenism. A fundamentally important feature of the anti-ecumenical movement that arises from politicization is that today it is not simply protesting against communion with the heterodox or reconciliation with them in religious activities, but also against alliances with the heterodox as such, be it in the sphere of social services or political issues. Due to the above features, if today one speaks of “ecumenism 2.0” (in the words of A. Shishkov) (Shishkov 2017), then one may also speak of “anti-ecumenism 2.0,” the essence of which is no longer engaged in church dogmatic arguments against the establishment of mutual understanding between confessions, but rather in political arguments.

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