



STATE,
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Ekateryna Zorya. Magic in the Post-Soviet Space: Definitions, Sources, Verbal Markers

Alexey Glushaev. “Without Preachers, in a Corner of the Barracks”: Protestant “Barracks Congregations” in the Perm-Kama Region in the Second Half of the 1940s through the Early 1960s

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Dear Reader,

A LONG with our parent journal, *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov' v Rossii i za rubezhom* (GRTs), we at *State, Religion and Church* (SRC) pride ourselves on publishing some of the best work in religious studies produced in Russia and the post-Soviet space generally. Our work in this area reflects two broad tendencies marking post-Soviet scholarship. The first is the productive exploration of new paradigms and theoretical approaches; GRTs has been on the cutting edge of this tendency, breaking new ground while ensuring that scholarly rigor is maintained in the process. The second is the creation of spaces for direct, open exchanges and collaborative efforts between scholars from the West, on the one hand, and scholars from Russia and other post-Soviet republics on the other. Here, too, the editorial staff of both journals have helped to lead the way.

We launched the English-language journal early this year with the goal of providing precisely such an institutional space, and in this second issue we continue to pursue our mission by publishing translations from our parent journal and articles revised from Russian originals; translations of book reviews and review articles that provide those who do not read Russian with a window into discussions taking place within religious studies in Russia; and original material. In this time of heightened geopolitical tension, we believe that fostering scholarly exchange and collaboration between Russians and non-Russians is all the more important.

The translated articles published in this issue can be divided roughly into two categories: 1) esotericism in Russian-speaking contexts, and 2) the lived experience of religious communities in the Soviet Union. The first category provides a case in point regarding Russian scholarship's exploration of new paradigms and methods. In

his article on the worldview of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian freemasons, Yury Khalturin relies on techniques of discourse analysis to make the case that this worldview fits into Antoine Faivre's conception of Western esotericism. In a similar manner, drawing on both anthropological techniques and historicist textual analysis, Kateryna Zorya argues that post-Soviet magic is also a variation of Western esotericism. Both scholars devote considerable space to demonstrating their conclusions through many examples, while both also point toward specificities of the Russian variations of the phenomena under consideration that deserve further study.

Meanwhile, the study of the lived experience of religious communities in the Soviet Union is exploding, both within and outside Russia, in conjunction with the broad religious turn in the humanities and social sciences and a natural scholarly interest in assessing the Soviet legacy. Since the Soviet Union represents the most radically secularist regime in history to date, many scholars are currently drawn to examine the impact of anti-religious policies on religious communities; the actually existing relationships between religious believers and state institutions; and the ways these policies, relations and experiences shifted over time within the broader Soviet context. The archives offer plenty of tantalizing stories to those who go looking for them, and in this issue of SRC we bring you two of them. Both are ambitious in scope, but, being thoroughly grounded in their authors' previous research and the relevant historiographies, they rise to the occasion as mature scholarly achievements that deserve wide attention. The first is Alexey Glushaev's study of both ethnic German and ethnic Russian Protestant "barracks congregations" in the Perm-Kama Region from the 1940s through the 1960s, a story intimately connected with deportations, "special settlers," and the Soviet Union's particular post-war situation. The second is Galina Zelenina's investigation of the generational transformations of Jewish life through the entire span of Soviet history, which, drawing on large repositories of oral histories, she examines through the lens of Soviet and post-Soviet Jews' evolving relationships to books and reading practices.

While the research mentioned above is appearing here for the first time in English, this issue of SRC also contains one entirely original contribution: a lecture by leading British sociologist of religion Bernice Martin that lays out an intriguing, provocative, and theoretically nuanced interpretation of the rise of Pentecostalism in Brazil in the context of that country's power relations and post-

colonial history. The lecture was delivered at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) in Moscow on September 13, 2013, as one event in a larger project called “Religion, Science and Society” put together by the Saints Cyril and Methodius Institute of Postgraduate Studies, with funding from the John Templeton Foundation.

Another such international collaborative effort has set SRC’s agenda for 2015. RANEPA hosted an international conference from May 14 through 16, 2014, under the auspices of the Center for Russian Studies, and organized by SRC’s editorial staff: “The Varieties of Russian Modernity II: Religion, State, and Approaches to Pluralism in Russian Contexts.” Revised versions of papers given at this conference will provide the basis for two special issues of SRC, projected for March 2015 and September 2015.

Meanwhile, we hope you find the current issue stimulating. If something in it strikes you, feel free to blog or tweet about it or to let us know your thoughts directly via our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/state.religion.and.church>) or through e-mail — religion@rane.ru or cstroop@gmail.com. As a new electronic open-access journal, we appreciate any help in spreading the word about our efforts. Finally, although our 2015 issues are for the most part planned already, we continue to be open to original manuscripts, which you can send to the e-mail addresses listed above.

Happy reading!
The Editors



YURY KHALTURIN

Esotericism and the Worldview of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Russian Freemasonry: Toward a Conceptualization

Translation by anonymous

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This article represents an attempt to characterize the worldview of Russian Freemasons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead of relying on the concept of “Christian mysticism,” which Khalturin finds to be highly problematic, it draws on the theory of “Western esotericism as a form of thought” developed by Antoine Faivre, applying it to the study of archival materials from the Masonic collections in the Russian State Library’s Manuscript Division. The benefits of this new conceptualization are as follows: firstly, it helps to explain contradictions in the Masonic worldview; secondly, through reconstructing this worldview as an integral system, it provides a key to understanding certain enigmatic Masonic texts; thirdly, it can help us to situate Russian Freemasonry historically so that we can understand its role as the “third pillar” of Russian culture along with Orthodox Christianity and Enlightenment rationalism.

This text is a substantially revised version of an article first published in Russian: Khalturin, Yury. (2013). “Ezoterizm i mirovozzrenie russkogo masonstva XVIII – XIX vekov: popytka opredeleniia.” *Gosudarstvo, religiia, tserkov’ v Rossii i za rubezhom* 31(4): 87–112.

Keywords: Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism, esotericism, principle of correspondences, living nature, mediation, transmutation, practice of concordance.

RUSSIAN Freemasonry of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries represents an exceedingly complex and heterogeneous phenomenon. In Russia, there existed many Masonic systems, regulations, disciplines, orders and the like (Serkov 2000; Vernadskii 2001; Melgunov and Sidorov 1991). However, the Rosicrucian Order, whose doctrine and practice were concentrated most intensely on mystical, esoteric and occult themes, offers the greatest interest for investigators of Russian religious life in this period (Kondakov 2012a; Kondakov 2012b). Actually, when referring to Russian Rosicrucians, this essay will have in view the entire esoteric tradition in Russia (at least for the designated period). In addition, the most noteworthy representatives of Freemasonry, who had direct influence on Russian culture, religious thought, and politics, belonged to that Masonic system, including N. I. Novikov, S. I. Gamaleia, I. G. Shvarts, I. V. Lopukhin, A. F. Labzin, I. A. Posdeev, and S. S. Lanskoi, among many others. Moreover, the most substantial corpus of material preserved in Russian archives derives from the Rosicrucian Order (held first and foremost in the archives of the Russian National Library and the Russian State Library—this article relies on archival materials preserved in the manuscript division of the latter: NIOR RGB). Henceforward, this article will treat the terms “Russian Rosicrucianism” and “Russian Freemasonry” as synonyms. After all, the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross, which propounded Rosicrucian ideology, was organized as a Masonic system, and in their writings its members identified themselves as both “R. K.” (*rozenkreitsery*, i. e., Rosicrucians) and “V. K.” (*vol’nye kamenshchiki*, i. e., Free Masons).

An investigator of the intellectual and spiritual heritage of the Masonic Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross confronts many problems.

1. Empirical problems. On the one hand, abundant sources, exceeding the capacity of any single researcher, while on the other, their obvious inadequacy, especially for the history of the higher degrees of enlightenment and the esoteric aspects of Masonic doctrine.
2. Ideological problems. The long tradition of criticizing the mystical component of the Masonic worldview and its significance for Russian culture on the part of both liberal

- pre-revolutionary historians and Soviet researchers, the various “conspiracy theories,” and the like.
3. Hermeneutic problems. Contemporary scholars find many Masonic texts difficult to read and comprehend because the worldview they express is so distant, linguistically and historically, from the present.
 4. However, the key problem is the fourth—the methodological problem. In the first place, a conceptual approach to the worldview of Russian Masons is lacking. Moreover, its various aspects are very poorly studied, and there is no precise definition of the Masonic worldview as a unified whole. As a result, complications arise in the analysis of Masonic texts, in the reconstruction of Masonic doctrine as a system, and in the evaluation of the role of Freemasonry in Russian culture. In this article, I would like to propose such a contextual approach.

Problems with the Conception of Russian Freemasonry as “Christian Mysticism”

Let me begin with a few words about how the most significant previous researchers of Freemasonry have defined the Masonic worldview. Practically all scholars who have studied Russian Freemasonry agree that Rosicrucianism (the most influential, long-lasting and well-developed system within the intellectual corpus of Russian Freemasonry) represented a variety of mysticism. This approach dates back to Nikolai Karamzin’s well-known remarks about Nikolai Novikov:

Around 1785, he established a Masonic tie with the Berlin Theosophists, and in Moscow became the head of the so-called *Martinists*, who were (or in essence were) nothing other than Christian mystics. They interpreted nature and humanity, sought the secret meaning of the Old and New Testament, praised ancient traditions, belittled the wisdom taught in schools and the like. They also demanded of their students that they possess genuine Christian virtues and avoid involvement in politics. Their regulations required fealty to the tsar. (Karamzin 1964: 231)

This excerpt defines both the positive and negative dimensions of Freemasonry according to Karamzin’s point of view. All subsequent investigators have repeated this evaluation, together with the conclusion that Freemasonry contributed to the development of the moral

consciousness of Russian society, but at the same time to the rejection of the role of science and reason in favor of faith, tradition, revelation and Holy Writ.

The leading early researcher of Russian Freemasonry, Alexander Pypin (1833–1904), wrote: “Mysticism constitutes one of the main characteristics of our Freemasonry, just as it was also very widespread in eighteenth-century European society” (Pypin 1916: 204). Calling the worldview of Russian Freemasons nothing more than “dreamy mysticism” and “mysticism and pietism,” Pypin held an exceedingly negative view of Freemasonry (Pypin 1916: 80, 84). In his eyes, it was a “strange, obscure, fantastic, in the final analysis, even ridiculous thing” (Pypin 1916: 85). However, more important than this appraisal was Pypin’s definition of mysticism:

The name mysticism is generally applied to a moral and religious view that accepts that a clear conception of the divine being, nature and humanity is impossible for ordinary human comprehension, and that positive religion does not offer it, either. Instead, it is achieved through an unmediated approach to the divine being, a miraculous unity with the higher divine world that takes place without any participation by arid reason. (Pypin 1916: 204)

For Pypin, this contempt for reason and rational thought, the priority given to inner contemplation, emotion, fantasy and faith were the basic characteristics of mysticism. From his point of view, “mysticism leads very naturally to obscurantism” (Pypin 1916: 206). It is the very opposite of positive knowledge and science, and consequently must be either a delusion or charlatanism, a result either of ignorance or individual greed. In the Russian case, mysticism arose from delusion and ignorance, in Pypin’s opinion. Russian Freemasons sought genuine ideals and values, but, because of the weak development of enlightenment and the dogmatism of the church, they became inclined to vague mysticism. By contrast, Germany, from which Russian Freemasons adopted the Rosicrucian Order, represented charlatanism, deceit and conscious intrigue. But one way or the other, mysticism for Pypin was superstition, not however, for the masses, but rather for educated society, the intelligentsia, the result of helplessness caused by its inadequate education (Pypin 2010: 202–16).

Many other scholars have repeated Pypin’s and Karamzin’s appraisal. For example, Nikolai Bulich, a nineteenth-century historian of Russian literature and a professor at Kazan University, reiterated many

of Pypin's clichés. Russian Freemasonry was “mysticism,” “pietism,” “a delusion,” “an absurdity,” “a fog” (Bulich 2010: 107–17). However, Stepan Eshevsky, a pre-revolutionary historian and professor at the same university who preserved for future researchers a large quantity of Masonic manuscripts (now fond 147 of the Manuscript Division of the Russian State Library), offered a more favorable evaluation. Concurring with the definition of Freemasonry as a “mystical science,” he considered that the very appeal of mysticism to peoples’ feelings and imagination provided a more beneficial moral influence on them than the skepticism and chilly rationalism of enlightenment ideology and science (Eshevskii 2010: 117–22). Pavel Miliukov put forth a similarly positive appraisal (Miliukov 2010: 130–31), as did other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commentators including the activist, publicist, amateur historian and marshal of the nobility Nil Koliupanov (Koliupanov 2010: 136–40), and Vasily Sipovsky, historian of Russian literature and subsequently professor at Leningrad University and corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences (Sipovskii 2010: 140–45).

In other words, there appeared among the majority of pre-revolutionary researchers of the topic an unspoken agreement that the worldview of Russian Freemasons was nothing other than mysticism. The few Soviet historians of Masonic philosophy subscribed to this view as well (Boldyrev 1986: 155–74; Kurdiukov 1968: 7–12; Utkina and Sukhov 1991: 157–72; Plimak 1957: 50–62; Shchipanov 1971: 80–89). Only appraisals differed. Some investigators regarded mysticism as superior to materialism, but the majority judged it from the standpoint of liberal enlightenment ideology or the standpoint of materialism and condemned it as a regressive and reactionary phenomenon in comparison to the philosophy of enlighteners. Alexander Nezelenov, a late nineteenth-century historian of Russian literature at St. Petersburg University, summed up the situation very well: “our researchers of Freemasonry agree in recognizing that mysticism was one of its main characteristics” (Nezelenov 1875: 80). However, there are scholars who have attempted to transcend such a simplified and schematic view of Masonic ideology.

Georgy Vernadsky was one of the first to notice that not all the ideas of Russian Freemasons could be categorized under the broad umbrella of mysticism. In his 1917 study *Russian Freemasonry during the Reign of Catherine II* (*Russkoe masonstvo v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II*), he defined the Masonic worldview not only through the term “mysticism,” but also through a number of others: pietism, quietism,

hermeticism, mystical philosophy, hermetic science, religious philosophy, mystical-hermetic literature (Vernadskii 2001: 76, 78, 131–33). Unfortunately, while offering a more complex portrait of Masonic thought, Vernadsky neglected to provide more precise definitions of the terms he used, or to explore their interconnections in order to reconstruct Masonic philosophy as a single integral system. However, it remains very important that he paid attention to facts that contradict the definition of Russian Rosicrucianism as mysticism, and especially to the important role that Russian Freemasons attributed to reason, the intellect and science as among the various capacities that God granted to humans and even as forms of divine revelation (Vernadskii 2001: 111–14). Thus mysticism somehow meshed with rationalism among Russian Freemasons, but how, exactly, Vernadsky does not explain. He regarded rationalism as a stage through which Russian Freemasons passed and which they overcame in their quest for higher mystical understanding.

Vladimir Tukalevsky, author of the book *The Quests of Russian Freemasons (Iskaniia russkikh masonov)* also observed the contradictory unity of rationalism and mysticism in the philosophy of Russian Freemasons. He viewed the contradiction between rationalism and mysticism as in fact the motive force behind these very quests. In explaining the strange combination of these two opposite modes of thought, Tukalevsky stressed differences in the particular worldviews of various authors and in the historical stages of Masonic development (Tukalevskii 1911). However, this explanation is insufficient, since often both tendencies are present in one and the same text by one and the same author, or in various texts of one and the same historical period.

The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century historian of Freemasonry Alexander Semeka also remarked upon the presence of two tendencies in the Masonic worldview: Rosicrucian doctrine “is sharply divided into two parts: one of them can be called spiritual and moral, the other scientific and philosophical” (Semeka 1902: 7). Along with the epithet “mystical,” when defining the Masonic worldview, the historian of Russian philosophy Vasily Zenkovsky used terms such as Gnostic, occult and esoteric. He emphasized that in Freemasonry, “besides religious and mystical tendencies, natural philosophical tendencies persistently stand out” (Zen’kovskii 1991: 100). In addition, he stressed that “Freemasonry called for the unity of faith and knowledge (Zen’kovskii 1991: 109). Thus, from Zenkovsky’s perspective, the Masonic worldview in no way contradicted rationalism and enlighten-

ment, but was rather among the varieties of enlightenment ideology and even, still more broadly, contributed to the processes of Westernization and secularization. Moreover, from Zenkovsky's point of view, Freemasonry was not a marginal and erroneous Russian cultural phenomenon, but rather quite the opposite, a phenomenon that was typical and that anticipated the further development of Russian religious philosophy. This conception presents Masonic thought as both complex and multifaceted, but unfortunately the worldview of Russian Freemasons was not Zenkovsky's primary research subject.

It was Nezelenov who set forth the conception of Freemasonry that most radically diverged with its image as "Christian mysticism". In his study of Novikov, he called Russian Freemasonry a "worldly monastic order" and a "collection of individuals with a mystical frame of mind," on the one hand (Nezelenov 1875: 79). But on the other, he wrote that "at the basis of Freemasonry lay an elevated idealism (...) which, however, descended (...) into the coarsest materialism" (Nezelenov 1875: 105). By materialism, Nezelenov had in mind the attraction of Freemasons to alchemy, the transformation of objects into gold, the deification of nature and "incarnation" of the divine, intercourse with spirits, magic and the like. Noting the Masonic conception of nature, God and humanity as essences consisting of male and female principles, Nezelenov concluded that Freemasons believed in the Mother of the World, "in a pagan goddess, the Mother of God of the Flagellators [*Khlysty*]," and concluded that "here, Freemasonry becomes paganism" (Nezelenov, 1875: 115). Nezelenov also saw Pagan materialism in Masonic rituals, which seemed to him to echo Pagan mysteries and sacrifices, in Masonic symbols with their baroque tableau that defied rational interpretation, in the Masonic striving to rule over nature and spirits, in the collection of payment for initiation and in much else. In other words, from Nezelenov's perspective, Freemasonry only seemed like Christian mysticism and idealism. In fact, it was Pagan materialism, not "worldly monasticism" at all, but rather a "flagellant sect" for the intelligentsia.

If one generalizes from criticism of approaches to the worldview of Russian Freemasonry as Christian mysticism, several problems or questions can be formulated:

1. If Russian Freemasons genuinely considered themselves to be "true Christians," and their order an "inner church" to be headed by Jesus Christ himself, how then can one explain the presence in their worldview of Pagan motifs, their attraction to Egyptian hermeticism and Jewish Kab-

balism and many other non-Christian mythologies and doctrines? How did they combine “true Christianity” with the teachings of Jakob Böhme and Emanuel Swedenborg, mesmerism and other occult theories?

2. How did Russian Freemasons combine their mysticism (that is, their renunciation of free will and reason in favor of tradition, revelation and faith) with their faith in the power of reason and human will, with the rationalistic and Gnostic elements of their doctrine, and with their struggle against fanaticism and fideism? How is it that mysticism, presupposing the passivity of humans in their unmediated union with the divine, their unique dissolution in the divine, was combined in Russian Freemasonry with the supernatural and occultism, which presuppose humans actively exerting influence on nature and the divine through the action of intermediaries (spirits, angels and demons)? How did the mystical worldview of Russian freemasonry coexist with enlightenment practices (publishing, the organizing of seminars on translation and pedagogy, of pharmacies, philanthropy and charity)?
3. The various formulations of the goals of Freemasonry offer an example of contradictions in the Masonic worldview that require special interpretation. How did Russian Freemasonry combine such diverse goals as: a) “to make people more virtuous and draw them together”; b) “experimentation with the nature of things and by that means to acquire the force and power needed to reform other people; medical science; the renewal of bodies; the transmutation of metals”; c) “merger with the divine (...), intercourse with spirits” (Nezelenov 1875: 88)?

The adherents of a mystical conception of Freemasonry overlook these contradictions or try to avoid noticing them, while their critics, although noticing these contradictions, explain neither the nature of the contradictions nor their interconnections. In both cases, the Masonic worldview disintegrates into separate pieces and fragments (mysticism, occultism, hermeticism, Gnosticism, enlightenment, rationalism, magic, alchemy, Kabbalah, theosophy, natural philosophy), turning into a chaotic tangle of ideas, images and symbols. Practically all researchers speak of the eclecticism of Masonic thought, which for them serves as one more argument for the marginality and insignificance of Freemasonry in Russian culture.

However, as early as 1916, in his critical essay on Pypin's book, Nikolai Berdyaev indicated the need to reconsider the key concepts that characterize the Masonic worldview, and to penetrate the "meaning" and "spirit" of Freemasonry, reevaluating its role in the "history of the Russian spirit" and granting Masonic mysticism an independent significance as a phenomenon of spiritual culture (Berdiaev 2004: 128–31). To carry out that task, a new approach, a new conception and a new definition of the Masonic worldview are required, one capable of changing the treatment of Freemasonry as a cultural phenomenon. To my mind, such an approach already exists in Western scholarship, and it is simply necessary to apply it to Russian Freemasonry. I have in mind the scholarly concept of "Western esotericism."

Esotericism as the Foundation of the Worldview of Russian Freemasons: Six Key Characteristics

I emphasize once more: mysticism, especially Christian mysticism, undoubtedly played an important part in the spiritual life of Russian Freemasons. Several contemporary researchers are investigating the theme of Masonic mysticism on the basis of new and interesting material (Kuchurin 2005). However, in my view, the term "esotericism" applies more accurately to the Masonic worldview. It is not mere terminological subtlety that is at stake here, but rather, which ideas and concepts offer the best possibility for understanding Russian Freemasonry.

It should be said that the concepts "esotericism," "esoterics" and "esoteric" have many meanings (Hanegraaf 2006: 336–40). Moreover, there are several different approaches to defining the concept "esotericism" (Zhdanov 2008). The relationship between esotericism and Freemasonry is problematic and ill defined (Dachez 2006; Bogdan 2007). In light of these circumstances, I will limit myself to examining the esoteric foundations of only a single branch of Russian Masonic thought—Rosicrucianism. My understanding of esotericism relies on the concepts of Antoine Faivre, whose classic study has provided the basis for all scholarship on Western esotericism as an academic object of inquiry for more than 20 years (Faivre 1994).

Faivre defines esotericism as follows: "Esotericism' is a form of thought identifiable by six fundamental characteristics or components distributed in varying proportions inside its vast, concrete, historical context" (Faivre 1994: 10). In other words, esotericism is not a kind of tradition concealed in exotic forms of this or that religion or of all

religion. It is a definite representation of the world, a worldview that can be present in the most varied traditions and texts, as for example alchemy, magic, Kabbalah, hermeticism, Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism, Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry. Below, the characteristics of esotericism as put forth by Faivre and their manifestations in the Masonic worldview will be examined in turn.

1. Thinking in Correspondences

Thinking in correspondences is the first feature of the esoteric type of worldview. Faivre explains this feature in the following way: “Symbolic and real correspondences (...) are said to exist among all parts of the universe, both seen and unseen” (Faivre 1994: 10). Everything in the world is interconnected. The universe is a system of mirrors, reflections, analogies and references, a collection of signs, symbols and hieroglyphs. There also are at minimum two distinct kinds of correspondence: 1) between the various parts of the universe (the earth and sky; the visible and invisible worlds; microcosm and macrocosm); and 2) between the universe and Holy Writ (Scripture includes the secrets of the universe and the universe is a kind of book).

This characteristic of esoteric thought is reflected in the worldview of Russian Freemasons. The idea of correspondences is in fact the point of departure for and basic principle of that worldview. In one Masonic text, this idea is formulated as follows: “The world below is a representation of the world above; and just as here one environment [*stikhiia*] lies above another, so it is there: and each [environment] has its own inhabitants” (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 97, *Izbrannye rechi po Teoreticheskomu gradusu*, l. 25).

The idea of correspondences can be found not only in analogies between the higher and lower worlds, but also in the interconnection between the macrocosm and microcosm. “Thus the person, as the final creation of the essence, is drawn from everything visible and invisible, for this microcosm must have everything within itself that is in the macrocosm. Therefore, you must have within it both the seen and the unseen” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 682, *Shvarts I. E., Lektsii po filosofii 1782 g.*, l. 4). Moreover, a person reflects in himself not only the universe, but the God who created it, and is therefore not only a microcosm but also a “micro-divinity”: “So mankind, this Pure Extract and almost quintessence of all worlds, can justifiably be called not only a miniature world but also a miniature God” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 52, *Nekotorye poniatiia pocherpnyia iz pouchitel’noi 4-i stepeni*, l. 8).

In other words, for Freemasons, God, nature and humanity were very closely connected through the system of correspondences.

It must be said that the principle of correspondences was not simply an abstract idea for Russian Freemasons. It was directly connected with the goals of the Order: "The duty and the aim of this degree is the comprehension of God and oneself through the examination of nature" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 227, *Teoreticheskii gradus solomonovskikh nauk*, l. 64). The comprehension of God, nature and humanity, in turn, was also no mere abstract, speculative task for Freemasonry. It was supposed to lead to more elevated, mystical goals. What were those goals?

In the first place, to locate in oneself the "inner man," that is, the elevated, eternal, and divine principle, the image and likeness of God: "The unseen is comprehended through the seen (...) which we accept into ourselves through feelings, which touch our reason and from there, our heart, the place where our eternal man is to be found" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 615, *Tezisy iz besed I.A. Pozdeeva*, *Chast' pervaya*, l. 88). In the second, to comprehend Providence, God's will and intentions for mankind and the world: "By obeying genuinely, simply and sincerely the teachings of the Holy Order, you receive the hope, through observation in the light of this visible Creation, to learn in this very act the contemplation of the invisible, to apprehend wherein lies the benevolent and perfect will of God, and what is not the will of the Almighty Father" (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 97, ll. 9–10). Third, to attain the Kingdom of God: "This is best accomplished through the apprehension of Nature, which through appearances displays inner reality, that is, the Kingdom of God" (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 97, l. 11). Finally, to correct man's fallen state, to restore his original perfect state, salvation and rebirth: "Freemasonry is a kind of academy of the ancients, the chosen and the prophets, in which true Wisdom was implanted. Its elevated goal is to bring the worthy to the knowledge of God, nature and mankind, and thus to restore the threefold edifice of human perfection" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 434, P.S. Stepanov, *Vysochaishee tainstvo istinnogo masonstva*, 1780 g., l. 2).

In addition to the correspondences between the various components of the universe, Russian Freemasons wrote of the correspondence between the universe and Holy Writ. They conceived of the universe itself as a book, consisting of symbols or hieroglyphs: "Therefore, dear brothers, the visible is for us simply a book, in which we would read the laws of the invisible, to which the invisible inner man must also conform" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 434, l. 13). Only the initiated could read and understand such a book, not everyone. From the point

of view of Freemasons, only by undergoing initiation into the Order did a person obtain the keys to perceiving the correspondences between the various levels of reality and Holy Writ: “three books are given to humanity for acquiring the light of truth. They are the Bible, Nature and the Person, which are so closely connected that what the one says, the others confirm. To the Brothers of the Order is given a fourth, secret book, that is, the documents that provide them with keys to comprehending the other three books” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, *Tezisy iz besed I. A. Pozdeeva, Chast’ vtoraia*, l. 14).

Masonic self-consciousness, their perception of their orders and lodges, is also based on the principle of correspondences. Thus of the Temple of Solomon, with which Freemasons identified their lodges, it was said: “The Temple of Solomon and everything found in it depicted the power of Nature” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, *Tezisy iz besed I. A. Pozdeeva, Chast’ tret’ia*, l. 1). At the same time, lodges also reflect the loftier, invisible world: “And what, do you think, is the significance of the mysteries and all Masonic lodges? It is the image of the higher, Celestial Circles, which the wisdom of God established in this world, so as to fit men for living in it” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 671, *Zapiski iz besed R. S. S., skonchavshogusia 1828 goda ianvaria 11-go dnia*, l. 1).

The interconnection between the visible and invisible worlds is also reflected in the central element of a lodge’s furnishings—the Masonic carpet: “The carpet is a book, depicting the process of rebirth of the spiritual and the corporeal, that is, of Spirit and substance, that is, of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, l. 163).

2. Living Nature

The criterion of esotericism as a form of thought discussed above—thinking in correspondences—presupposes that the world is a complex, multi-level, hierarchically ordered whole, that is, a kind of organism. If everything in the world is interconnected (“all in one” and “one in all”), that interconnection must have some kind of foundation—the Soul or Spirit of the World, the Primary Force, the Hidden Fire or Light and so forth. What is more, such a living, animated, feeling universe suffers just as humans do. Fallen alongside humanity, nature pines and thirsts for salvation (Faivre 1994: 11).

In fact, precisely this way of regarding the world is intrinsic to Russian Freemasonry. Freemasons even inscribed the conception of nature as a living entity in the instructions for their orders: “In the instructions it is said: Nature is an invisible, subtle spirit, manifest,

however, when acting through bodies and having its place in the will of God" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 247, *Vybor iz besed T.G.S.K.*, l. 5 ob.). This spirit can take various forms: "And the light itself is a universal fire, which magicians jointly call nature, for the subject behind all wonders is the spirit—the motive force, the primary force, or the universal spirit" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 690, I.G. Shvarts, *O Nature*, l. 5 ob.)

This makes the goal of the order comprehensible—to penetrate precisely into the spiritual, vital, inner and secret side of nature: "One ought not to occupy oneself with the world, but rather, to observe attentively and investigate what is concealed in the world" (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 97, l. 8 ob.). At the same time, by contrast with the profane, only the initiated possess the ability to perceive the living essence of the universe: "Our wise masters are in fact the only legitimate examiners of nature (...) because their science penetrates to its innermost being (...). By contrast, profane physicists, so called investigators of nature, (...) always bounce around on the surface of all three kingdoms of nature" (quoted in Pekarskii 1870: 68). The conception of the world as a living, inspirited organism leads to the formulation of a basic law of nature—the law of universal sympathy: "The invincible law of Nature, the common substance of all creatures, depicted in every inscrutable assembly of its multitudinous offspring is: 'like seeks like; the similar strives for the similar'" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 301, *Rech', pri-nadlezhashchaia k shotlandskoi stepeni*, l. 2).

The law of universal sympathy and magnetism is at the basis of the world as a unified whole, in which all things are interconnected. The unity of the world is the basic principle of Masonic philosophy, which in their self-perception distinguishes Freemasons from "secular scholars": "Secular scholars, unaware that the cause of all phenomena is one and the same universal world spirit, often assume these phenomenon are particular forces, and therefore get all tangled up in their many and various hypotheses or propositions" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 247, l. 34).

Thus, nature is a single, living, animate organism. But this organism is damaged by sin and vice, and, to follow Faivre's interpretation, nature suffers from this and thirsts for salvation: "That we would sigh like nature, thirsting for freedom! Oh! That our outer person would rot every day, in order that the inner might be renewed!" (NIOR RGB, f. 237, d. 2, *Besedy s Teoreticheskimi Brat'iami*, l. 14). The order and its initiates must facilitate the process of liberating and renewing nature. Their goal is not only to comprehend nature but also to save her: "The goal of the order's work is the liberation of the Spirit of Nature" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, l. 146).

3. Imagination and Mediations

When the world is presented as a living, animated system of correspondences, analogies, resemblances and interconnections, mediators are required to bring about and support these interconnections. These mediators might be, for example, heralds of the higher world in the lower—angels, demons, spirits. From another perspective, as Faivre notes, mediators might be symbols, images, magic talismans, or mandalas, which present the invisible by means of the visible and allow for influence on the higher world through the lower. Contact with mediators is possible with the help of the imagination. Imagination is understood as a kind of creative and cognitive force, magical by its nature (the very word *imaginatio* is linked to the word *magia*), and capable of capturing the hidden and secret correspondences within the esoteric universe. A mediator might also be a guru, a preceptor, a master who, initiating a person into secret knowledge, leads him along the steps of the cosmic hierarchy, and guides him from one world to the other, from the lower to the higher. Mediation and imagination differentiate esotericism from mysticism. A mystic seeks unity with the divine, a unity that exceeds the bounds of all forms of expression, whether verbal, symbolic, figurative or ritual. Mystical experience is inexpressible and immediate. By contrast, the esoteric strives for the most part for contact with intermediate essences and beings, evoking them in his imagination through meditation, prayer, magic ritual and so forth (Faivre 1994: 12–13).

This feature of the esoteric worldview corresponds to the worldview of Russian Freemasons. For example, Freemasons regarded their knowledge as deriving from angels: “The seven so-called free sciences were bestowed on or were released to this world from above by angels, and angels support them to this day” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, l. 91). Alchemy, as one of the “sciences of the order,” also derived from angels: “Some maintain that angels taught this useful science to our forebears, and from them it passed down to us” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 681, Lektsii I. G. Shvartsa, l. 51). Angels were created to help humans along the path to knowledge, salvation and initiation: “And therefore, not only spirits below the moon, but also above the moon and in the heavens, and even the angelic spirits themselves are put in service to man, just as those who serve and are sent to save humanity” (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 204, Ob izustnom predanii evreev, l. 16). For their part, people can appeal to angels, but only after they have purified their will, feelings and reason: “if the will is turned to God—he is a child of

God, accompanied by and having comrades among the Angels of God” (NIOR RGB, d. 14, f. 247, l. 35).

The knowledge of correspondences, which the acquisition of genuine wisdom requires, presupposes the knowledge of mediators: “And so if someone knows which herb, which stone, which animal, which human member and which creature in the sublunar world corresponds to which star in the celestial world and which mind in the angelic world, he must be considered someone who has found the key to perfect knowledge of all things and the path to bliss in this life” (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 204, l. 17). In Masonic archives it is possible to find texts that describe in detail the correspondences, names and signs necessary for appealing to the angels (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 169, O kabale; f. 147, d. 204; f. 14, d. 1642, Smes’; f. 147, d. 98, Materialy dlia istorii masonstvo, ll. 164–90, 207–15). In addition to angels, Russian Freemasons often refer to Sofia, the Wisdom of God, as a mediator: “This wisdom, serving as mediator between humanity and God, opens the gate to the inner Temple of Nature and by revealing the three first principles and four elements, leads us up the seven steps to contemplation of the inscrutable power of the Almighty Creator” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 301, l. 14).

As noted above, contact with mediators is established through the activity of the imagination. For example, through meditating on the symbolism of the Masonic carpet, it is possible to achieve contact, even marriage with, Sofia, one of the goals of a Rosicrucian initiate: “The gaze is powerful. It is said: you have only to look upon your wife in order to have carnal relations. Consequently, the opposite is also true. If you gaze upon the carpet with pure and passionate love, then you will also be able to invisibly *couple* with Wisdom” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, l. 165). The role of mediation and imagination in Freemasonry can briefly be formulated in the following thesis: “The teachings of the order are also preparation for dealing with spiritual beings, so that it will not seem savage and tormenting to us, as it does to others” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 616, l. 159).

4. The Experience of Transmutation

By transmutation, Faivre understands the passage of a person from one existential plane to another, his internal transformation and “second birth,” the stages of which might be, for example, the three steps of the mystical path: “purification,” “enlightenment,” and “unity,” which might correspond to the three steps of the alchemical Mag-

num Opus: *nigredo*, *albedo*, and *rubedo* (Faivre 1994: 13–14). Transmutation is the “Gnostic” element of esotericism, presupposing the transformation and salvation of humanity in the process of cognition, understood as the unity of experience, intellectual activity, active imagination and revelation. Without this element, esotericism might be equated with speculative philosophy and metaphysics, just as without the element of mediation and imagination, esotericism might blend into mysticism, or, without the idea of living nature, into some forms of poetry (for example Symbolism) or simply into the practices of magic and soothsaying. The necessity of transmutation is again closely connected with the other characteristics of esotericism. It is necessary for proceeding along the path to enlightenment in a hierarchal universe with many levels, and for establishing contact with the higher world, for which the purification, transformation and rebirth of the person are required.

As did alchemical ideas and practices more generally, the idea of transmutation occupied an important place in the Masonic worldview (Khalturin 2013: 181–93; Khalturin 2012, 50–64). The idea is evident, for example, in a letter of Prince Nikolai Nikitich Trubetskoi to Alexey Rzhevsky. Trubetskoi writes that it is the duty of the Freemason to “serve as a tincture for the transmutation of others from carnal, astral and bestial humans to spiritual, angelic and divine ones.” Furthermore, Trubetskoi affirms that this is in fact “the aim of the true follower of the Rosy Cross of our Divine Brother-Master and Savior” (Barskov 1915: 265). The process that Faivre discusses is evident in this excerpt: alchemical terms, applicable to the process of transforming metals (tincture), acquire a more inward, spiritual, and mystical dimension, linked with the idea of the “inner man” (appropriated from the Apostle Paul). Thus, the alchemical process of transforming nature becomes similar to the process of regenerating man: “The operations of Nature do not cease with the transformation and ennoblement of metals, but in the process, show the path to regeneration” (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 97, l. 4). The contrast of the spiritual and the carnal on the one hand, and on the other, the idea that they might be mutually transformed and unite into some sort of “spiritual body” is characteristic of Masonic thought. Thus, the Masonic portrait of the world was closer to the hermetic idea of likenesses than to the radical dualism of the Gnostics.

The rebirth of fallen humanity, the goal of Freemasonry and alchemy, leads to the discovery of the Kingdom of God, and in that way, corresponds to the goal of Christianity: “Thus, the discovery of the King-

dom of God is the sole object and most important cause for whomever seeks to establish a connection with the holy Order, and, once having joined, all our striving must be aimed at the destruction of decrepit Adam, of worldly man" (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 97, l. 11 ob.).

5–6. The Praxis of the Concordance and the Transmission of Tradition

On Faivre's interpretation, the four signs of esotericism analyzed above are necessary and essential. Without their presence, a current of thought cannot be called "esoteric." However, in addition, Faivre identified two supplementary, relative characteristics, which are inherent in many but not in all esoteric teachings, practices and movements.

The first is the idea of concordance, that is, the search for a common denominator and source for all religious, scientific, and philosophical traditions, access to which allows the adept to rise to a higher level of comprehending reality. In a certain sense, this idea follows from the principle of correspondences: reality, with its multiple levels and complex structure, cannot be comprehended and grasped in its entirety within the framework of any single discourse; various teachings can and must supplement one another.

Russian Freemasons often resorted to a similar "practice of concordance." For example, Ivan Shvarts, the founder of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross in Russia, reconstructed "the eternal philosophy" or the "ancient theology" as follows: "1) the philosophy of magicians from Zoroaster is the Chaldean; 2) the Jewish from Moses is the Biblical; 3) the Pythagorean Greek in Italy; 4) the Socratic, Platonic and Aristotelian in Greece; and 5) the Rabbinic Kabbalah is a mixture of all" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 992, *Kratkoe poniatie o kabbale*, l. 8). All aspects of that tradition are connected by a common idea, which, according to Shvarts, was transmitted from them to Christianity as well: "hermetic Egypt = Indian Zoroastrianism = Pythagoreanism = Platonic = Kabbalistic = philosophical = Christianity. Gnostics affirm that humanity was created as entirely spiritual beings and this coarse body is the consequence of sin" (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 992, 7–7 ob.).

As the practice of concordance assumes the idea of a hidden tradition lying at the basis of all religious-philosophical teachings, it becomes very important to establish how that tradition is communicated and transmitted, and the degree to which this transmission is genuine,

authentic and “regular.” Faivre dubbed this final, sixth characteristic of esotericism “transmission” (Faivre 1994: 14–15). It also played an important role in Russian Freemasonry. The Masonic Order was in fact the bearer of the tradition: “The original documents of the Order assure us that Freemasonry is the Science with which God inspired the first man ... that it is a tradition that will ensure humanity’s well-being” (NIOR RGB, f. 147, d. 138, Materialy dlia vol’nykh kamenshchikov, l. 25). Freemasons regarded the transmission of that tradition to be the main goal of their order: “The most important aim and basis of the order, its reason for being (...) is the preservation and transmission to future generations of a certain important mystery that has come down to us from ancient times and even from the first man. The fate of all mankind may depend on this mystery” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 227, l. 15).

The content of the tradition that lies at the basis of the Masonic Order turns out to be, essentially, just the very same “eternal philosophy” as knowledge of the triune nature of God, nature and mankind. Thus, in the “Forceful exhortation, drawn from the true writings of the lofty and consecrated Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross,” that tradition is traced to Adam: “That Adam, our common Father, received directly from the creator his lofty Wisdom in knowing God and all Nature. The man who believes in God and his holy Word will surely never doubt it” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 195, l. 3). The most diverse personages are among the bearers of this tradition, which returns us again to the practice of concordance: “We know for certain that among those who radiated this genuine light and most lofty science were Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Aaron, Joshua son of Nun, David, Solomon, Hiram Abiff, Hermes Trismegistus, and innumerable wise men of our times who have been enlightened by God” (NIOR RGB, f. 14, d. 195, l. 4).

Concluding Remarks

Thus, the analysis of the worldview of Russian Freemasons of the Rosicrucian Order has shown that this worldview can be classified as “esoteric” according to all six of the criteria set forth by Antoine Faivre. What does this classification add to our understanding of Russian Freemasonry? In the first place, the concept of esotericism helps to resolve the contradictions that arise when the Masonic worldview is understood as “Christian mysticism.” So, for example, the practice of concordance explains the attraction of Russian Freemasons to non-Christian teachings. The idea of living nature and mediation explains their engagement with magic and occultism, with studying the

world of spirits and the means to influence them. The ideas of living nature and correspondences make clear that it is equally inappropriate to apply the concepts “idealism” and “materialism” to the Masonic worldview. Hylozoism should be used instead. The idea of transmutation and the principle of correspondences unify such diverse goals of Freemasonry as the “rebirth” of humanity, the transformation of society, and the “salvation” and “restoration” of nature by exerting magical powers over it. The respectful relation of Freemasons to the mind and to reason is explained by the idea of living nature, a “spirit” which can be attained only in the act of gnosis, and only by an initiate who has been enlightened and transformed by reason, who has undergone transmutation. Directed by faith, revelation and tradition, the intellect is capable of penetrating beneath the superficial shell of the visible world, assisted by “true chemistry” and “the order’s physics,” the “true,” “lofty” and “secret” sciences.

Secondly, the concept of “esotericism” is the most general, and incorporates the characteristics that various researchers have attributed to the Masonic worldview, such as “gnosis,” “occultism,” “hermeticism,” “natural philosophy,” and “mysticism.” As was partially demonstrated above, all these concepts are aspects of esotericism, in accordance with Faivre. (Faivre 1994: 19–35). In particular, Masonic mysticism, which is based on the concepts of the “inner man,” “rebirth,” “salvation,” “resurrection” and a “second birth,” is obviously linked with such aspects of esotericism as the experience of transmutation. It is no accident that Masons used esoteric and, more specifically, alchemical images when they described the events in the life of Christ essential to Christian mysticism (birth, baptism, transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension) as well as the most significant Christian rituals (the Eucharist, unction).

Thirdly, the concept of esotericism permits the Masonic worldview to be presented as a unitary system of interrelated principles. In turn, this facilitates the analysis of Masonic texts, which are fragmentary and written in complex esoteric language. Although the system is to a certain degree an “ideal type,” a debatable scholarly construction, there are two bases for hypothesizing its existence. The first is the methodological necessity of linking the fragments of Masonic tradition that have come down to us. The second is that Masons themselves considered holism the basic criterion for “true philosophy,” “true religion,” and esoteric tradition.

Fourthly and lastly, approaching Russian Freemasonry as one of the manifestations of esotericism makes it possible to include it within a

broader scholarly context and to assess it adequately. As the well-known scholar of Western esotericism and Freemasonry, Henrik Bogdan, has written: “Western esotericism can thus be viewed as a third pillar of Western culture, a form of thought that took a middle position between doctrinal faith and rationality” (Bogdan 2007: 7). Thus, the phenomenon certainly has an independent significance. It is a mistake to regard Russian Freemasonry as a reaction to the dogmatism of the Orthodox Church and the skepticism of the philosophers and encyclopedists of the Enlightenment, giving it a correspondingly positive or negative appraisal as something progressive or regressive. Russian Freemasonry represents a variant of the “third way” of Russian culture, together with the religious philosophy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and also the Gnostic strivings of Silver Age culture. Therefore, it is not a marginal part of Russian culture but quite the contrary, an integral one, and in turn, closely connected to the culture of Europe. At the same time, the esotericism of Russian Masons had its special features: a close connection with Orthodox tradition (its asceticism, ceremonial rites, dogmatism, symbolism); an emphasis on the spiritual dimensions of esotericism (as opposed to occult practices); and the secondary status of organizational aspects of esoteric association in comparison with ideological. However, these special features require separate study.

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KATERYNA ZORYA

Magic in the Post-Soviet Space: Definitions, Sources, Verbal Markers

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This article examines definitions of magic in the context of the humanities and shows how many working definitions are inaccurate. It proposes that we view magic as an umbrella term, the use of which depends on cultural context, and that the best way to approach the study of magic in the present is to determine its borders anew with regard to each particular culture, carefully examining whether a particular phenomenon belongs to the occult in that specific context. It then aims to provide a guide for historians and scholars of religion on handling primary sources on magic, both print and oral, illustrating the usefulness of the methodology described above by applying it to the study of magic in the post-Soviet space. In the process, the transition of the post-Soviet magician from a person of knowledge to a person of power, the redefinition of previously negative terms (witch [ved'ma] and inhuman [neliud'] or un-human [ankhuman]) into positive ones, and the use of terms borrowed from Western occulture are examined.

Keywords: folk magic, witchcraft, ceremonial magic, anthropology, translations of magical texts, otherkin, folk Christianity, Carlos Castaneda.

Introduction

THIS article examines some of the major developments and tendencies in post-Soviet occulture (occult culture), drawing on oral, written and electronic sources, and situating them in their historical context. The empirical analysis is based primarily on texts, internet discussions and practices commonly found in occulture, re-

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vealing a turn toward voluntarism that is based in novel interpretations of both early twentieth-century sources and modern New Age concepts. In the first section I assess and contextualize the printed materials that are the primary sources for the occult knowledge of today's occultists. In the second section I demonstrate common interpretations of these printed materials and how they differ from the occult interpretations in vogue before the late twentieth century, as well as show how oral tradition influences occulture. In the third section I examine verbal markers—words that a historian or anthropologist should know, because their use in casual conversation or printed texts mark occulture's influence on that text. Verbal markers are of particular importance, because they are essentially universal and visibly demonstrate both the influence of printed materials on oral culture and, correspondingly, the feedback from oral occulture back into printed form.

In working with my primary sources on magic, I utilize a combination of historical and anthropological approaches that I have found supplement one another well. While both history and anthropology yield a great deal of useful information when applied by themselves, the study of contemporary magic requires knowing both its history and the oral discourse surrounding it. It is difficult to apply a purely text-based historical approach to modern magic, because many printed texts rely on additional information being transmitted orally to their reader. This information needs to be known if a scholar is to understand how these texts are put into practice. On the other hand, a purely anthropological approach, making use only of interviews and participant observation, is also not entirely reliable, as it is all too easy to miss the incredible number of references to older cultural phenomena. Many texts put into practice word-for-word today are hundreds of years old, and without understanding these texts, it is impossible to fully understand contemporary practices. I thus examine some of the complex interplay between the influence of written sources on modern practices and the way modern readings of old texts are different from more traditional readings. Untangling this interplay is where my combined approach has shown itself to be most effective.

My temporal scope for print media is 1990 to the present, corresponding with the boom in occult publications that took place as and after the Soviet Union fell apart. I will examine roughly the last five years in the greatest detail, as space will not allow for a comprehensive study. The verbal markers I am focusing on can be found at least from Odessa to St. Petersburg. Like their Western counterparts, local

representatives of the occult are highly active in networking and reading. Where I touch upon folk magic I must limit my examination to the areas with which I am most familiar, Ukraine and western Russia, although I should point out that Belarus, the Russian North, East, and South, and the other post-Soviet republics are vast regions that are home to a great variety of distinctly different folk practices.

My work on magic is naturally based on the work of my predecessors, both historians and anthropologists. The field I work in is called “Western esotericism,” and its *de facto* status was that of a stepchild of the humanities (excepting the work of several notable scholars such as Lynn Thorndike and Antoine Faivre) until the last decades of the twentieth century, when a well-defined field emerged as exemplified by several learned societies and university centers. A good concise overview of today’s scholarship on Western esotericism has been provided by Vadim Zhdanov (Zhdanov 2009), and Randall Styers has published a landmark work on the history of its study (Styers 2004). Importantly, Styers demonstrates how the very notion of “magic” has been used as a “trash bin” for ideas, and he clearly demonstrates the difficulty inherent in finding a single, overarching definition of magic for scholarly use. There are definitions of magic that seem universal at first glance, but almost none of them hold water when checked against data collected in the field, as the material collected always transcends the limitations imposed by the definition. Following Styers’s line of argumentation, I suggest that the best approach to beginning any study of magic is as follows: 1) to establish the boundaries of the concept of “magic” in the particular time and culture that the scholar is studying; 2) once the scholar has chosen a particular subject of study—a practice, a social element, a philosophy—then he or she should locate it within the discourse of magic (where, how, and why did the object come to be called “magical,” and what impact did its entry [and that of any concurrent or concomitant concepts] into the discourse have on the discourse in general). When scholars examine any magical practice, there is a dire need to place it into the appropriate context. The next three sections illustrate this methodology by focusing on occulture in the post-Soviet space from 1990 to the present: first through an examination of the written sources that inform participants in Russian-speaking occulture, then, second, noting how these sources have influenced their definitions of magic in comparison with their folk counterparts and Western occultism, and, third, through an exploration of some of the more telling verbal markers concerning occulture.

Written Sources: Books on Magic in the Post-Soviet Space

There are mainly three types of sources about Russian magic from the 1990s and the first years of the twenty-first century: 1) internet and FidoNet archives, where a great number of print materials are preserved (the formation and dissolution of particular groups is likely best examined through perusing these archives, at least until we have enough researchers in the field); 2) journals and books, which comprise a significantly smaller volume of print sources; 3) interviews with informants. The third source is generally the most difficult to obtain and interpret, even for trained anthropologists, as one needs to be known and have a reputation in occulture even to be able to ask the right questions, to say nothing of getting answers. Print sources are likely the most available and reliable sources, but many occult writers prefer independent publishing on the internet to pursuing contracts with publishing houses, as that way they can control what remains in circulation and what does not, which texts will represent them, and which texts they can edit and republish. Materials presented on the internet provide the richest trove of primary sources that we have at the moment and for the foreseeable future. To give internet materials the treatment they deserve, however, would require far more than one researcher, so I am limiting their use here to supplementary materials. In the third part of this article, I will be referencing conversations recorded online that I find to be typical of off-line conversations that I have been privy to. A surprising number of points have been repeated almost word-for-word.

Here I will be focusing on print materials and how they have influenced post-Soviet notions of magic along with the way these print sources have actually been read by magicians. I have chosen print sources for one key reason: even though the early days of the internet became the golden age of book piracy in the post-Soviet space, notably, the generation that had come into the internet largely consisted of voracious readers who amassed huge libraries. Many occult libraries, both online and offline, private and public, contain scholarly literature as a major part of their holdings. The home-based Theosophical Library in Kyiv is actively used by students of the humanities, because it has rare books on history, religion and anthropology; the Russian Ordo Templi Orientis Library in Moscow (associated with Aleister Crowley) has a better selection of scholarly literature on the history of esotericism than our own Association for the Study of Esotericism and

Mysticism. Online libraries include uploaded works by historians on such topics as Assyrian magic (Fosse 2001), ancient Greek magic and theurgy (Petrov 2003), Christian folk magic (Drozd 2005), Slavic mythology (Vinogradova 2000), and ancient Slavic religion (Glinka 1993, Rybakov 1981), among many, many others, which are all read and used in practice. Many of them are outdated, but the sources themselves are often classified along with such practitioners of magic as Scott Cunningham or Raven Grimassi: the typical occultist makes no distinction between scholarly and practical texts.

Before the 1990s, the number of books available was sharply limited, and they were a prized commodity. In the 1990s, a flood of translations still left occulture yearning for higher quality. The turn of the twenty-first century saw a robust publishing industry emerge that has been crucial to the development of occulture. The lion's share of the magical book market goes to translations; the number of original texts available in Ukraine and Russia, in Russian or other languages, is far smaller. These translations can be divided into two broad categories: reprints of texts translated at the beginning of the twentieth century or published through *samizdat* (self-publishing) channels in the late Soviet Union; and those translated after the fall of the Soviet Union. Reprints dominated the market in the early 1990s, and since they can be found practically anywhere on the internet, many would-be practitioners still begin their studies with them. For example, in the English-speaking occult world, which is currently the best-studied branch of contemporary occulture and is thus the best measuring stick we currently have for comparison with occulture elsewhere, only the very dedicated know Gerard Encausse (Papus) or Pierre Piobb. Eliphas Levi is somewhat more famous in Anglophone occulture, but he is still not as significant an influence as many authors writing in English. But in the Russian-speaking occult milieu, books by the above-mentioned authors are everywhere, and anyone who has ever been interested in magic has picked up at least one of them at some point in her career. Papus's explanation about the coach driver, horse, and carriage (in which the magician is seen as the coach, the coach driver is his will, the carriage is his body, and the horse is his life force) has been cited to me numerous times, and it is still one of the most prevalent "introductory" explanations of how magic works (Papus 1992).

French influence is also notable in the terms adopted by Russian occulture; for example, the French word *envoûtement* (evil eye, charms, sorcery) has been Russified as *envoltatsiia*, seemingly through the early Piobb translations. The term *volt* (an image or doll used for magical

operations), however, seems to have appeared in Russian spontaneously as a derivation of the term *envoltatsiia*—at the very least I have been unable to find an analogue in the relevant French texts. When one observes Russian magicians or sorcerers stylizing their activity as if they were village wise people, heirs to a unique tradition passed down for generations, using the words *envoltatsiia* or *volt*, one can be completely certain that they are not drawing solely on oral sources, but that they have been influenced by occult books (or at least pulp newspapers, which often reprint texts from books published in the 1990s, in violation of copyright law, without a hint of remorse). French sources also provided Russian occulture with the concept of “animal magnetism” (*zhivotnyi magnetizm*), but, in contrast to *envoltatsiia*, one can hardly find it in use anymore.

There were very few English texts on the occult translated into Russian at the beginning of the twentieth century. This gap was partially filled during the time of *samizdat* and after the end of censorship. The most common *samizdat* books are either written by Theosophists (particularly Annie Besant) or by Carlos Castaneda (his first works). Castaneda’s practices were more popular, and the 1990s and first years of the twenty-first century were a time of *stalkers*¹ and *dreaming*² techniques. Castaneda gave Russian-speaking occulture two notions that nearly everyone who has had any part in it knows (Panin 2012). The first is the concept of *personal power*, which means pure potential for action (something similar to the concept of *luck* among the Scandinavians in the Middle Ages). A practitioner who has *personal power* can do anything, and the circumstances will change to suit her. A magician who has none is doomed to failure, no matter how much theoretical equipment he may have. The second is the concept of *intent*, which here means that pure act of will necessary (and, most importantly, sufficient) for a magical act (Castaneda 2003). Castaneda and his background in phenomenology turned the practitioners’ attention to the idea that a magician’s main instrument is the magician himself, and any supportive means are just that—supportive, useful but not necessary. We will see more about how *personal power* and *intent* changed the concept of magic in the post-Soviet space in the next section.

1. A *stalker* is someone who follows themselves, essentially always being attentive to what they do and why. Stalking is a technique of self-observation.
2. The concept of *dreaming* is based on the idea that dreams and reality are two sides of the same coin, and that the world of dreams is as real as the waking world. This, in turn, means that both worlds are changeable by an effort of will.

Other notable translations include texts on ceremonial magic. The earliest I am aware of was Donald Michael Kraig's book *Modern Magick: Eleven Lessons in the Art of High Magick*, published in St. Petersburg in 1991. Kraig is a representative of one of the many orders that are the successors to the original Golden Dawn, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century magical order whose interpretations of older materials and whose own writings influenced the entire discourse about Western ceremonial magic. Ceremonial magic had initially been reintroduced into post-Soviet space in interpretations of the Golden Dawn, mostly in variations developed by Israel Regardie or his followers. Those who taught themselves ceremonial magic through Kraig and Regardie are usually recognizable by the following elements of their practice: 1) an emphasis on power over the elements, including mastering yourself as part of that training; 2) several basic ritual structures—for example, the Golden Dawn's most basic ritual, the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP), exists in an endless variety of interpretations, though the most common one I have seen (known by nearly all my informants, though without a title) uses the seven chakras and not the five sephirot; 3) the four ritual instruments—wand, dagger, cup, and pentacle; and 4), naturally, sexual magic, for where there is power, there is sex, and magic is almost always concerned with power (Kraig 1991).

Naturally, Kraig's book is no longer the only available source. The Golden Dawn was unable to establish a serious foothold in the post-Soviet space, even though some of their texts had been published here—notably, books by the aforementioned Regardie. But Thelemic texts and translations are currently far more influential, because Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) is the only large-scale Western magical order that functions openly and actively in the post-Soviet space. The post-Soviet OTO, as exemplified by its head lodge in Moscow, has several outstanding and productive translators, which allows them to publish a large volume of quality magical texts such as Aleister Crowley's treatises; and reprints of grimoires important to Thelema, such as *The Book of Abramelin*, are now known in Thelemic translations and interpretations.³

The 1990s saw newly translated English literature flooding the market, even though many of the books were 15 to 20 years old. Few of the local publishing houses took enough care to ask permission: the

3. The books translated by the Thelema Creative Group are published by the Ganga Publishing House.

books that were released were mostly pirated. Nonetheless, works by Paul Huson, Laurie Cabot, and Scott Cunningham introduced Wicca to Russian-speaking occulture and started a “witchcraft fad,” just as they had in the West. Up until the early 1990s, the word “witch” had connotations coming purely from folk magic; that is, they were overwhelmingly negative. This change will be examined in the next section in more detail, together with how the aforementioned sources influenced notions of magic. I will compare Western occulture, which is the source for the large bulk of these texts, with post-Soviet occulture, to show how the same texts enjoy a widely different reception.

Print Sources and Changes in Post-Soviet Conceptions of Magic

I shall begin my analysis with the use of sources that still rely in many ways on concepts that originated during the Renaissance. Representatives of Western occulture currently make active use of a wealth of earlier print materials, integrating the rituals, spells, and other elements of these sources into their contemporary practices. This approach places great importance on the use of Renaissance sources, and its adherents decry practices that appeared as innovations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as inauthentic. But the timeframe is not as important here as the fact that Western occultists attempt to follow old instructions as faithfully as possible, especially in the creation of magical objects such as amulets. Russian-speaking occultism differs here; while utilizing earlier sources is something that does happen, and, indeed, reference to early twentieth-century philosophies of magic occurs frequently, precisely implementing instructions laid down a hundred years ago or earlier is rare in post-Soviet territory. To take just one example, in Western occulture there are quite a few practitioners who supplement their income by making “authentic” magical instruments. In Russian-speaking occulture, crafting talismans is also fairly common; however, over the entire course of my work I have only once seen anything like the items sold on the English-speaking amulet market. The item I saw was a *lamen* (a large magical pendant to be worn around the neck; in this context, its purpose is to demonstrate the authority of the magician to a summoned spirit). The embossed metal *lamen* was clearly derived from Papus, but the embossing had not been done in complete accord with Papus’s instructions. Papus’s talisman to command spirits was to be “created in the day and hour of the Sun, in the first decade of August [...]”. It can also be de-

picted on a very thin gold sheet” (Papus 1992). The best material for such a talisman was supposed to be virgin parchment, but I have not seen anyone follow the original recipe. The auctioneer’s page reads: “Embossed on thin bronze on Sunday, the day of the Sun. During the Moon’s first quarter” (Auktsion 2012). The necessary correspondences between the object and nature are listed, but they are not the same as those provided in their most likely source, but rather similar ones, adapted by the practitioner. While the philosophy of correspondences is still there, the concrete correspondences are not. This is an example of the interesting kinds of discrepancies scholars can find when they take to the field.

My initial hypothesis about the lamens described above was proved wrong by one of my conversations with practitioners, which further underscores the importance of fieldwork. My assumption was that Russian-speaking practitioners had simply become so used to improvising with their material elements during the Soviet era that in the Russian-speaking space there was little demand for magical instruments made to very particular text-based specifications. At least for witchcraft, however, this demand does seem to exist. The proprietor of a recently opened specialized Wiccan shop in Kyiv, the only one of which I am aware in all of Ukraine whose main business concerns imported items, has informed me that the wares most in demand are those that practitioners have a hard time making themselves: athames, altar pentacles, and cauldrons (Personal conversation with Kristina Tverdokhlebova, January 14, 2014). There is simply no local supply of these wares—at least not yet.

Nevertheless, the amulet market in the post-Soviet space is, for the most part, saturated with amulets that do not originate from any historical source but rather are created by the magician, where correspondences are either not utilized at all or at least not as an integrated whole. They are instead used separately: a planetary sign, the planetary hours, a material, a color, and so on. But far more often the amulet is simply created with the practitioner’s aesthetic preferences and the way they perceive correspondences (not necessarily drawing on a source but rather inventing new ones), and then the amulet is implanted with intent (*namerenie*), which means that it is directed toward a particular result. Intent is one of the many terms found in post-Soviet magic that are borrowed from Carlos Castaneda.

This situation is actually a very good illustration of the change I believe to be most prominent in twentieth-century post-Soviet occult discourse: the idea that the meaning of an act is more important than its form, which stands in stark contrast to the orthopraxy of folk

magic. This shift is one of the elements that makes it difficult for anthropologists who are unfamiliar with the history of Western esotericism to work with modern magical contexts. In order to illustrate the importance of this shift, it will be necessary to contrast this new approach to magic with folk magic, which has been studied far more extensively, and the approaches to which are often applied to scholarly interpretations of modern magic. This shift is part of the general voluntaristic turn in Western magic, in which personal power has come to replace the traditional source of power in folk magic, knowledge. Even while magicians seek out older sources, in some cases adhering to their methods as closely as possible, they now operate within a different philosophical framework. The magical will powers each operation, and without it all the books on magic in the world are useless—as opposed to the orthopraxy of earlier magic, in which one can easily stumble into trouble by accidentally reading a formula that has inherent power. So the ritual practice may be the same, but the reasoning behind it is wholly different. From folk sources and anthropological research into them, it is clear that the practitioner of folk magic has historically been wholly dependent on knowledge. Charms (in this context a variety of verbal spells, common to folk magic) can be “passed on,” and many *znakhars* (folk healers, or village wise men and women; for more detail, see Ryan 2006: 135–37) believe that once you pass on a charm, you cannot use it anymore yourself; the knowledge is almost physical (Volodina 2013).

A *znakhar* is not a person of power, but of knowledge. Their power is borrowed: they simply know the right formulas for calling upon God, the saints, and possibly pagan gods. The ritual formula may include the *znakhar*’s right to its use or a sympathetic or homeopathic principle (the classic formula “as [...] is, so [...] shall be”), but the *znakhar* is a mere conduit. His knowledge is equivalent to his strength as a practitioner, and together these are equivalent to his power over nature and the supernatural. This situation seems to continue to prevail in most post-Soviet folk magic, which is usually far less differentiated than city magic. The *znakhar* has no *personal power*—another Castaneda term that has taken up permanent residence in urban magical discourse and which refers to a person’s ability to influence the reality that surrounds him or her; a non-magician can have relatively high levels of personal power. The classical *znakhar* does not have personal power in Castaneda’s sense—she has only knowledge, which actually is her power. By that knowledge she can command other entities.

But folk magic is just one of the sources for modern magical discourse. Modern occultism is in many ways a product of the Christian magic that developed from Western European folk magic, Christian theology and Renaissance philosophy. Christian magic held to the notion that a human being is integrated into a complex hierarchy of creatures created by God. Naturally, many of its ceremonies are also aimed at establishing authority, explaining who the magician is, where he stands in relation to the spirit that he has summoned, and why he has the right to command that spirit. It is well known that the magical formulae of the Middle Ages hardly differ from exorcism formulae (Kieckhefer 1998). The magician does not master the power, but mastery is given to him. This authority is first and foremost social, but not exclusively. After going through the corresponding rites of cleansing and, possibly, through initiations, the magician stands at a higher place in the sacred hierarchy. This is why he can summon a demon and have full right to command that demon. It is notable that this power is mixed, both “political,” in a certain sense, and physical, and the boundary between the two is not crisply cut. A demon cannot cross the summoner’s circle because he is afraid of God—both as an entity that completely outclasses him, and from fear of the physical pain that touching something sacred will bring.

This element has been preserved in part in contemporary ceremonial magic, where all the elements of the rituals have essential, physical meaning. Moreover, tests for whether the spirits are who they seem to be still exist, and these tests are based on the idea that a spirit is essentially linked to a concept. For example, an undine should have a negative reaction to names of God and symbols connected to the element of fire. Today, however, a magician who surrounds herself with the appropriate symbols can, for all intents and purposes, *be* the required symbol. In practice, this means that even the most complex ritual can be undertaken with whatever is at hand, as the magician can serve as a substitute for any required physical component. A key step down this road was made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the idea that one could use an appropriately attuned practitioner as a replacement for a correspondence. And then another logical step was taken: why do we need physical correspondences at all, if everything can be replaced by a human being and her amazing ability to imagine? If a ritual element imagined with the appropriate intensity is not any worse than the real thing, then why do we need actual correspondences? Thus, a change in practice over time led to a change in ontology. It is this change that makes modern magic so different

from magic as it was practiced in the Renaissance, when it was believed that magic was just part of the book of nature, which man needed to read to get results. Today's magician uses herself in place of any of the letters of the book, embodying those very symbols. In this way, modern magic uses different rationales than earlier magic, despite the use of the same basic texts. Therefore, to approach modern magic it is necessary to look at the extended history of the topic in order to understand how current magical methods and philosophies came about.

The approach centered on the individual practitioner's power is very common in contemporary magic, and it is deeply connected to personal power and the magical imagination. According to the very influential Papus, the imagination is the medium through which the magician interacts with the world, but imagining is not understood as a simple flight of fancy. Instead, the imagination is something that influences the world far more than the uninitiated believe (Papus 1992). This idea developed into the very common explanation that astral journeys and out-of-body experiences consist merely in diverting attention to the astral body and the mind, and that one should not expect (at least at first) those fantastic experiences described by, for example, Robert Monroe (Monroe 1971)—but that astral journeys are no less effective for all that. This development exists both in Western occultism and in post-Soviet occultism. It seems to have been brought to the post-Soviet space through the translations of Kraig and has been adopted by many practitioners. The process of working in the astral collectively often superficially looks like a quiet conversation one would not find out of place in a tabletop role-playing game, the only discernible difference being the seminal questions “Do you see what I see?” (to which the appropriate reply is to describe what you see and to wait for your partner's reaction), and “Do you remember...?” I have never witnessed the “classical” form of astral experimentation, in which a practitioner lies down and is asked to retrieve a particular piece of information hidden elsewhere. In this example, we can see how a change of ontology turns into a change of practice.

To link the above to the notion of transfers of power discussed earlier in connection with the *znakhar*, we need to note that some aspects of this transfer are preserved in contemporary magic, but not in the transfer of actual knowledge. It is not knowledge that is usually transferred, not the information about correspondences and the names of spirits and demons, but power and/or *lineage*, which here is not an anthropological term, but an insider term referring to one's teachers in magic. Learning magic usually means joining a group and com-

ing to share in its earlier treaties with the supernatural world. Being in a group adds “magical authority,” that is, power. This is one of the possible meanings for an initiation: not starting on a particular path, but recognizing that the individual already has certain achievements and has the right to some sort of power. It is also believed to be possible to transfer not only information but the way this information is to be used, the subtle experience of a magical practice, and to show how exactly a practice should be carried out. This demonstration can be pushed forward in time: information and/or the demonstration is turned into an “energetic cluster” that is given to the student (a term that seems to have been borrowed from channeling but that I have seen in the context of witchcraft and ceremonial magic as well. For example, see *Doroga k volshebstvu* 255). This information is then remembered by the student when the time comes.

These two notions and their simultaneous existence gave rise to a particular occult elitism, used only for an inner referential group. It became possible to explain any failure by a lack of personal power or a badly crafted intent, otherwise known as “not trying hard enough.” A person who does not live the right way, who is not magical enough, is doomed to failure or at least to significant difficulties. Post-Soviet occulture, despite being dispersed over a very large territory, is very compact in the sense that every practitioner is not far removed from any other practitioner. This is due to the number of available sources on magic: for most of the 1990s the number of available books was somewhere in the low hundreds, and any interested practitioner would have a common context with any other. There were several groups I will tentatively term “subschoools”: Eastern esotericism, Western esotericism, New Age, Castaneda followers. But due to the sparseness of materials, even practitioners operating within superficially unrelated contexts read each other’s materials. Moreover, each “subschool” had approximately five to ten “gurus” known to most of the interested practitioners in post-Soviet territory. People tended to gravitate to these gurus to learn what they needed and then to fade into either private practice or complete obscurity. Still, this did mean most practitioners had at least heard of one another—and the chances that they knew each other’s “guru” were rather high. This helped restore to magic one of the social functions it once had in the very close quarters of the village: explaining failure through someone’s ill will, through placing blame (for an examination of these functions, see Khristoforova 2011). Unlike in the village, however, the blaming takes place among self-identifying magicians. The person who has the right

to place the blame becomes an authority, while those who allow the burden to be placed upon their shoulders become the underlings of the authority figures, often becoming eternal students of magic, never taking on their own pupils but always coming back for more learning. Here, identifying who is to blame for a set of circumstances is not so much a means of reducing social anxiety, as a matter of social status. This is the reason why magical conflicts and battles are so fierce: they are not mere competitions of skill. Instead, they represent competing identities and worldviews—the one who wins is not just a better sorcerer, but a better person.

In this context, Alexander Sekatsky's philosophical novel *Those in Power and Their Powers, or the Mogs and Their Might*s (where "mog" is a pun on magician, *mag*, linking the word visually to the term *moch*', "to be able") is incredibly spot-on (Sekatskii 1996). Sekatsky is an academic philosopher from St. Petersburg, an assistant professor in the St. Petersburg State University Department of Social Philosophy and Philosophy of History. From its very first page, *Those in Power and Their Powers* gives away that the author is intimately acquainted with occulture. It begins with likely the most common ESP exercise in all of Russian occulture—throwing a ball of energy around. It contains most of Russian occulture's contemporary clichés, and probably introduces one or two in the process. Many aspects of the novel are present in occulture: "curiosity and daring" as important values; living among regular people and subtly yet noticeably influencing them; and different states of consciousness including the so-called OS (*osnovnoe sostoi-anie*, "basic state," whose basic characteristic is "I can")⁴ and the SP ("state of reception," *sostoianie priema*, i. e., extrasensory perception). Sekatsky's dialogues are so typical that one can be certain that he either spent significant time as an insider in occulture or was so good at his vocation as a social philosopher that when he reconstructed the experiences purely from reading about them, he did it so flawlessly that his book was widely accepted in occulture and used as a grimoire.⁵

As I mentioned above, another important trend that Western translations brought were the changes to the concept of witchcraft. Witchcraft went from being a term found exclusively in contexts of folk magic to contexts of occulture, much in the same way as it did in the West. As noted above, until 1990s, the word "witch" carried extreme-

4. Compare the Wiccan formula: "To will, to know, to dare, and to be silent."

5. I use *grimoire* in the broad sense of the word to denote any text with instructions on magical practices.

ly negative connotations that were informed primarily by folk magic. As is well known, the witch in folk belief cannot always control her own power to inflict evil; she is not nearly always conscious of what she is doing. One can be a witch or a sorcerer against one's own will, and no one in their right mind would take up such an appellation for themselves.

A good example of this attitude would be Alexander Aksenov's book series, popular in the 1990s, published under the general series title "I am Not a Sorcerer, I am a Wise Man and a Healer" ("Ia ne koldun, ia znakhar"), which is clearly aimed at those who live in the context provided by folk magic and Christianity. Associations with witchcraft include the evil eye, which can be given by absolutely anyone (either consciously or unconsciously through envy), and fighting sorcerers and witches by removing the curses they place (it is a common belief that a witch whose curse was removed would feel very ill or possibly die). Aksenov styles himself an exorcist; his demons (naturally sent by sorcerers and witches) speak a language common to villages everywhere and are easily recognizable to anyone coming from a village or a small town. The following quotation gives a demonstration of this particular style:

He told me: "Ya know, Sanyok, I'm a full general. I got six shoulder boards and every board has six skulls. I sent some 500 human souls to the other side in my life. I'd sat in [i. e., possessed — Translator] many people over my life. During the war I was in a German *Oberleutnant*. Do you how many people we shot, he and I? And after the war I and his wife Elsa, who was a witch, quickly sent him to his forefathers. Last time I'd sat in a woman who lived in Smolenskaya Oblast. I killed her in just about a year; she liked drinking too much." Vaska often said, "I'm a noble demon." He also told me: "Did you know that we were looking for you, but couldn't find you? We looked among the faithful, the monks, the clergy—you were nowhere to be found" (Aksenov 2008).

The witchcraft borrowed from England and America is very different. We should note right away that what is commonly called "witchcraft" in the Western world can be very crudely and broadly divided into two large categories: Wicca and witchcraft as such. Wicca is first and foremost a religion, even though it emphasizes having no laity; every Wiccan is a priest him or herself. Every Wiccan contacts the gods and the sacred on their own, even though more experienced clergy help and teach. It is also very convenient that basic Wiccan rituals are

very simple, and that Wiccan magic is mostly a simplified version of correspondences borrowed from ceremonial magic. As Gerald Gardner, the founder of Wicca, borrowed Masonic ritual and protocol, Wicca turned out to be a religion uniquely suited to microcommunities. It has a number of traditional social procedures for the administration of small groups. For example, I do not know of other religious groups that have an established procedure for “graduating” a new group after a critical number is reached, whereas Wicca has its “hiving off” process, which happens when a group reaches the sacred number 13—a number that is very close to the boundary between a small group and a middle-sized group. It is likely not a coincidence that the optimal size for a small group is 9–12 people, whereas the maximum size for such a group—and the moment where the social processes begin to change and it begins splitting into smaller groups, only nominally belonging to the same group—is 20–30 people (*Sotsial’naia psikhologiia* 2002). Wiccans believe that by the time this happens the new group should already have a priest and priestess who are competent enough to lead it. Wicca is a duotheistic religion, which believes in the essential binarity and equality of the two creators of the world, the Goddess and the God. All other manifestations of divinity are believed to be merely masks of these two primordial forces, and preference between them is mostly aesthetic. This is why the Roman Mars and the Irish Morrigan can coexist in one ritual, as can the Virgin Mary and Odin, and the Wiccan will see no contradictions.

In contrast to Wicca, Anglo-American “fam trad” (that is, “family tradition”) witchcraft emphasizes an unbroken family line, how well the craftsperson knows their craft, and trusted and true “folk” methods. I put “folk” in quotation marks because neither England nor America preserves the type of connection between the village or small town and the city that is still actually present in the post-Soviet space. Even though by now second and third generations of witches exist simply because of Wicca, when we compare materials collected by ethnographers and anthropologists (and, in America, experts in folklore studies), one can see that in most cases fam trad witches have more in common with occulture at large than with folk magic. In any case, such witchcraft is more of a practice than a religion, and is aimed not at interacting with the gods but first and foremost at effectiveness (even though the dividing line is, as always, thin). In comparison to Wicca, fam trad also has more hard polytheists or witches who limit their worship to one or several deities.

The post-Soviet space inherited a mix of these two approaches in its borrowings from the English-speaking world, with certain differences. For example, the reception of Wicca in feminism is not nearly as strong here. The initial popularity of Wicca in the United States and Britain owed much to feminists and women's rights activists (for example, Starhawk). There, Wicca had covens that actively restricted male membership as well as groups who only worshipped the Goddess under her many guises. I know of no such groups in the post-Soviet space. The refined duotheism in which it does not matter what guise a deity takes (and all the Goddesses are one Goddess) has also not found much of a following. Local witches have a tendency toward hard polytheism, seeing the gods as manifestations of Deity on about the same level as human beings—that is, as independent entities. Most Russian and Ukrainian witches are neo-Pagan and follow a pantheon (from Greco-Roman to Slavic), but not nearly all Pagans are witches or sorcerers.

Observations in Occulture: Verbal Markers of Occult Discourses and What They Tell Us

In this part of the article, I will be implementing some of the methodology I proposed in the introduction by examining some of the verbal markers that give an occult practitioner away in casual conversation. Verbal markers are words or combinations of words whose use demonstrates a familiarity with a certain culture. They are equally important for work with both oral and print sources: their use in casual conversation shows that a person is either familiar with a particular set of print sources or, at the very least, has been heavily influenced by someone who is familiar with them; at the same time, the use of characteristic turns of speech in writing also gives away the influence of a particular subculture. Here I will note some of the most important verbal markers in recognizing a person or text as belonging to occulture and elucidate the meaning of these markers. I will also touch upon the particularities in working with these markers in occulture.

In the seminal work on Russian folk magic *The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia*, William F. Ryan writes about the difficulty of distinguishing “folk” tradition from “learned” or “book” tradition (Ryan 2006: 216), and about how the famous lexicographer Vladimir Dal was accused of borrowing his folk charms from written sources rather than oral ones. This shows how difficult it is to track influences only through analyzing borrow-

ings; a modern researcher might very well meet with the same difficulties. Some researchers not familiar with both print and oral sources believe that post-Soviet occulture is comprised of multiple discourses that have not been significantly influenced either by each other or by folk practices, but I believe the situation to actually be completely reversed. Not only do folk magicians borrow from written sources, as we have seen with the term *envoltatsii*, but, uniquely to the post-Soviet space, witches and sorcerers turn to actual folk practice very often, either by way of connecting to their roots in villages (it was only 30 years ago that having a plot of land often made a critical contribution to a family's food supply) or through actually reading anthropological material. The works of anthropologists serve as a sources of charms and formulae, sometimes used as found and sometimes serving as a base for further modification. Still, there are some verbal markers that can help us distinguish between those practitioners who have their roots in folk magic and those who are more immersed in Western esotericism. For example, in contemporary urban occulture in the post-Soviet space, most Christian elements are usually replaced with neo-Pagan elements, and elements seen as archaic are preserved as much as possible. A typical example, strikingly similar to explanations often given in fam trad witchcraft, is as follows:

When I was little, I often heard how my great-grandmother calmed down me and my brother when something hurt by calling about the wind or the moon, the Alatyr Stone and the Buyan Island. I now remember that these charms weren't Christian but rather Slavic, because she did not finish them with "Amen" but always with "Goy!" (Aelita 2013).

The marker here is the typically Christian charm structure combined with "Slavic" (whether real or invented) words. It shows the researcher that the charm user has left the traditional "folk Christian" context of magic, which is predominant in villages, and has become a part of contemporary urban occulture instead. There are "Christian witches" in cities, but they can largely be found in magical parlors, where magical services are provided for money and which do not cater to occulture but rather to people who are outside it. Their advertising is aimed at those familiar with magic in villages, and their choice of words reflects it.

Christian sorcerers seem to be strangely absent from urban post-Soviet occulture and the general magical discourse, even though most of the classic texts of ceremonial magic rely on the magician being

a Christian. The Christian sorcerer of the parlor is not interested in theology or dogma, but in folk Christianity. Such a parlor magician is usually skeptical toward non-Christian witches and sorcerers, as well as toward ceremonial magicians. To give an example, V. P. Khazan, a fairly typical and well-known Ukrainian parlor magician, is dismissive of ceremonial magic, referring to “the completely harmless *Practical Magic* by Papus or some other similar work, interesting to read but completely useless” (Khazan 2008: 8). His use of Papus as an example is especially interesting, first of all because it shows how topical 100-year-old magical theory is for post-Soviet occult discourse, and, second, because although Papus’s collection of folk recipes was published in Russian, it is completely ignored in Khazan’s practice. Khazan is thus familiar with occulture, yet he chooses consciously to distance himself from it.

When a scholar needs to distinguish between folk practice and practices associated with Western esotericism, he or she can also attempt to make a judgment based on how money is spoken of. In villages, magic is often bartered for. There is even a rampant belief that taking money for using God’s gift for someone is a direct way either to lose that gift or to bring about other problems (Volodina 2013). But in city witch culture the opposite belief prevails. There is a widespread opinion that someone who was not paid for their work will have difficulties “breaking off” the connection between themselves and the client, possibly resulting in what is usually called “taking the client’s problems onto themselves” (*zabirat’ problemy*) (Kucherenko 2010). “Taking on the client’s problems” is a common notion, prevalent in occulture from witchcraft to clairvoyants. Clairvoyant Stanislav Kucherenko in his FAQ gives a fairly common description of it:

There is a certain chance that someone doing a cleansing will “take on” some of the [client’s] problems. But this can happen only if the “cleanser” is feeling weak, not sure of himself, has “allowed” such thoughts to get inside him and has his own negative energy inside him (that is, has not been “cleansed” himself) (Kucherenko 2010).

Many practitioners repeat this common notion word-for-word, and add that not taking money is something that attracts negativity to themselves. Payment can be made through the traditional channel of barter, but money is usually seen as the simplest and most potent means to restore balance and to clear the practitioner of any

attachment he might harbor. To illustrate the point, consider a typical conversation about taking payment (I have attempted more or less to preserve the style in translation):

I'd also like to say that when a client pays they put their energy into the work, because money is energy, and if you don't put in energy you can't hope that a result will just come falling from the sky. There have also been cases when a person comes and asks for help, you don't take payment and then get sick, because you take the client's bad luck and illnesses on yourself by not taking money. And when someone asks you to do something that is very important for them but is skimping on you or says they'll pay later, then it's usually best not to work with them! Best to think twice before taking them on! First, it might take longer for the result to be reached, or the magician can take the client's karma off them and feel everything himself later. I had a ton of cases even when I did work before I was paid, especially when it concerned removing the evil eye or bad luck, and later you really feel sick, so it is better to take money because it is energy, it is what the client can use to pay you for your energy spent, otherwise it is unlikely something good'll come of it, you'll just take many things on yourself and then you have to cleanse yourself and get sick!" ("Uslovia i oplata" 2008).

Besides being a good demonstration of occulture's perception of money, this conversation displays two important verbal markers: "energy" and "karma." Both terms sound very commonplace to the English-speaking person—even someone not familiar with occulture can say they're not feeling full of energy today or that they've gotten some good karma by giving to charity—but in Russian both words are not used nearly as widely, and so their use can help a researcher identify potential occult influence. I must note, however, that these are still relatively weak markers, and should be considered as such only in conjunction with other characteristic words or sets of words. "Energy" can be both understood literally in occulture or used as an umbrella term to describe the particular set of feelings a practitioner may get from certain practices (tingling, a feeling of connection, or others, all well described in occult literature). In post-Soviet occulture, the notion of karma has gone far from its roots in India and mostly now means cause-and-effect extended to occult causes.

Practitioners from occulture can also be identified by their attitudes toward so-called "parlor magic," from the usual appellation "parlor of magical services." "Magical parlors" are not to be confused with the

“parlor magic” used in prestidigitation: in that context it means “magical tricks done for an audience of approximately fifty people, where the magician can be seen close up.” Opinions on magical parlors in occulture range from “real magic isn’t advertised, practitioners are known by word of mouth” to—although it may seem to contradict the urban occult attitude among professional practitioners laid out above—“You can’t take money for magic” (“Salony magii” 2010).⁶ Both opinions are common enough to mark someone as having participated in occulture, as even though many of the witch-and-practitioner group of occulture take clients and accept money for their services, there is a certain contempt among typical occult practitioners toward those who make a cottage industry out of it, taking as many clients as physically possible. It is widely believed that quality is impossible with such an approach, and the most famous witches and practitioners choose their clients as carefully as the clients choose them. The website of Yulianna Koldovko is a particularly interesting example, because she has published several typical examples of correspondence with clients that she has rejected. Notably, she self-identifies as a black magician and is quite willing to inflict the evil eye upon someone, but nonetheless says: “Please understand and remember: whatever monetary reimbursement you may offer me, I shall never go against the Principles of my work, the Ethical Principles of Black Magic.” These principles include not working with underage clients, not working with insane “in all senses of the word” clients, not working with pregnant women, with those who are skeptical or mistrustful, not working on a problem at the same time as another practitioner, not working on matters that would violate her personal ethics, and so on (Koldovko 2013).

Another good set of identifying markers concerns how the notion of “magic” interrelates with the notions of “work” and “craft.” As in English occulture, “work” (*rabota*) is practically a synonym for magical practice, and carries the same connotations of professionalism and practical results, as well as additional connotations, mostly involving the additional sets of skills a practitioner should know. This usage coincides both in folk tradition and Western esoteric traditions, and is thus rather reliable. There are also a number of other related idioms and words; for example, Daene Sidhe, probably currently the most famous Russian witch, coined the phrase “A witch can’t be all thumbs”

6. The following thread is a good summary of popular opinion about magical salons among people who are part of occulture but not professionals: [http://directmagic.ru/index.php?option=com_kunena&Itemid=0&func=view&catid=8&id=257].

(Shi, n. d.), meaning that there can be no real witch who does not know at least one other craft. Even though in practice this is mostly an ideal, something to aspire to, there is a rather deeply rooted feeling in the culture right now that witchcraft is first and foremost a *craft* (or the “Craft,” *Remeslo*), and a craftsperson must know and understand other crafts. A witch, sorcerer or magician cannot restrict themselves to mere knowledge—they need *to be able* (*moch'*), a verb that in Russian shares the same root with the word “might” (*mogushchestvo*). Crafts that have a certain romantic flair with an element of gender-specificity to them are especially popular: sewing, weaving, and cooking for women; smithing for men; art and creating amulets and magical jewelry for both sexes. In short, when a field researcher encounters the word “work” or “craft” used in a way that implies religion, it is very much a cause for asking additional questions related to magic.

Late twentieth-century magical practice was also heavily influenced by fantasy and science fiction, both in English-speaking occulture and in post-Soviet occulture. I go into more detail in my article “Using Literature to Study Concepts in Modern Magic” (Zorya 2009), and here I will limit myself to just a few examples of word usage explicitly borrowed from fiction. For example, after Sergei Lukyanenko’s *Night Watch* series came out, people who self-identified as “Light” and “Dark” Watchers were seen among the younger members of occulture, especially since Lukyanenko fed into the widespread conspiracy theory that “the Inquisition still exists and it is out to get all practitioners.”⁷ I have also seen the terms “Logrus” and “Pattern” from Roger Zelazny’s series *The Chronicles of Amber* used in magical practice; Andre Norton’s work and Robert Jordan’s “channeling” have also seen use. It can thus sometimes be beneficial in the field to be familiar with fantasy terms in order to see whether there is a reaction in occulture.

Next, I would like to turn to the verbal markers I believe to be the most telling; however, they also require the most explanation. They are related to the fact that many occult practitioners self-identify as *neliudi* (“inhumans” or “un-humans”). When someone calls him or herself a *neliud*, the field researcher in occulture can be all but absolutely certain that she has found a potentially valuable informant. Historically, *neliud*⁸ is a loaded term, applied to someone

7. This observation is based on personal conversations with practitioners in the period from about 2003 to 2008. After that time, Lukyanenko references seem to have disappeared; the Inquisition does still show up from time to time.

8. Ozhegov’s dictionary gives the following definition: “Bad, heartless people. Non-Christians.” It is no wonder that the relatively anti-Christian occulture took it up as a banner.

so evil she cannot be called human. In post-Soviet occulture, however, it almost always means *otherkin*—in short, people who believe themselves to be non-human entities trapped in human bodies, an extremely broad term (see for example Lupa 2007 for the most complete collection of field materials in print that I know of). While the term is broad, the circles associated with it are relatively narrow in the West, whereas identification as otherkin is very common in post-Soviet occulture. It will take further research to determine a precise date by which the term *neliud* came into regular use; however, at this point it is clear that by 2000 the term and its synonyms were very frequently used.

What is important here is that the practitioner who self-identifies as non-human rather believes himself to be an *entity*, separate and distinct from humanity and its defining characteristics, however he may perceive them. The concept of the entity (*sushchnost'*) is in itself multifaceted and would likely deserve separate treatment in the study of Russian occulture, as it has no direct analogy in English-speaking occulture. The English term “entity” usually refers strictly to incorporeal creatures, while *sushchnost'* concerns the inner core of every sentient (and in some cases non-sentient) being. Traditional Christian terms that mean a human being’s eternal, spiritual essence are largely not in use in a specialized post-Soviet magical context. They are replaced by terms coming from theosophy’s wide-ranging influence and, thus, from its system of “seven bodies” (the so-called etheric, astral, mental, and other bodies). Some of these bodies are seen as “the soul in a vulgar understanding” (the “mortal” subtle bodies), and some as the “spirit” (correspondingly, the “immortal” subtle bodies). Entity is, then, most often a synonym for “spirit,” an umbrella term for that eternal core concealed under the husk called “personality” (*lichnost'*).

To be clear: for post-Soviet occult practitioners humans are entities, too, but calling yourself an entity means you define yourself by the immortal part that will survive your death, not just by your mortal body and personality. There are many kinds of entities. Some are animals, some are characters from folklore and religion—angels, demons, fairies, and so on. When talking about a particular person or being, the cognate *sushchestvo* (“being”) is often used (as in: “Hi, being!”). Both *sushchestvo* and *sushchnost'* are abbreviated to *sushch*, which can sometimes be a bit confusing. Still, the use of *sushchestvo* is a very clear marker that the person before you likely has some connection to the occult subculture.

As noted briefly above, the term *neliud'* is not the only term associated with non-human entities. Another term, the “unhuman,” which has its origins in the context of Satanism, means that its carrier is consciously distancing themselves from humans in the worst sense of the word. The choice of ontology here is connected to ethics. Someone who calls themselves an *unhuman* says: “If *that's* a human, then I'm not one!” The fido.ru.unhuman polemics, preserved at Warrax's infamous website (the first large-scale Satanist website on the Russian internet), are likely the earliest example of related discussions that we will be able to identify. I will, however, quote another website here that features a typical conversation that uses “human” as an insult.

Pipa is too hUman to be UNhuman! This is easily proven by what she has been saying in this topic. First of all, all the positions that she is trying to defend about life and its value are completely human. Second, she's doing it in a totally human manner, that is, without trying to get at their essence but just defending her point of view; I notice she hasn't budged an inch after all the arguments given. Third, she interprets others' arguments liberally and “refutes” them in the same manner—see the simple example with the peacock tail. It is obvious that we're talking about humans and UNhumans, but when Pipa sees the word “peacock,” she says, with typically hUman consistency, “speaking of birds,” and gives a half-hour long lecture about the usefulness of tails in evolution (“Neliudi” 2003).

This conversation is typical. When *neliud* is used in an insulting manner (always outside of occulture), it usually means that the addressee is immoral. When *human* is used as an insult (always inside occulture, and also a very good verbal marker), however, it means that the addressee is foolish and self-absorbed, unable to think for herself.

The very concept of being inhuman, along with the concept of the witch, changed connotations completely in post-Soviet urban occulture relative to its origins in folk discourse. Whereas people in the villages see these notions as direly negative, occulture sees them as largely positive. Someone who is “inhuman” has an inherent connection with other worlds. The fact that this connection is “inborn” serves as a defense from the skepticism of colleagues within the occult, which is usually given much more weight than any outside skepticism. Examining the phenomenon of “unhumans” is necessary, as it is an obvious and important change in the way occultists see themselves. Instead of viewing themselves as the best of the best, as saviors or as “the most

advanced strain” of humanity, Russian-speaking occult practitioners largely perceive themselves as simply different. On a very basic level, this allows an occultist to declare different physical and psychological needs. On a level that is more complex it serves to further differentiate the occultists from the regular people, shifting social priorities and even marriage strategies.

There are several more specialized terms that are used to denote the type of “unhuman” one is dealing with; all of them pertain to occulture. Some of them are reminiscent of fantasy terms, and one must take care not to take role-players for occultists (though there is a degree of overlap in the two subcultures). Indeed, the most widespread “unhumans” are all sorts of elves, whether Celtic folklore’s Sidhe, Tolkien’s elves, or generic fantasy, but there are a great many other romantic creatures present, such as dragons, angels and demons. Other common creatures look like they hail from urban fantasy—“vampires” and “werewolves/foxes/cats” being rather commonplace as well. Some “unhumans” are so-called *uselentsi*, or combined personalities. The word itself seems to have come from a crossover between occulture and other youth subcultures. A person with a *vselenets* is someone who believes that his body hosts some sort of other entity, either supplementing or displacing the host entirely (in this latter case, informants usually say, “There used to be a human being in this body, but they are gone now”). This is usually treated by the non-practitioner as the *vselenets* having a mild case of multiple personality disorder; however, practitioners take pride in “not being crazy.” To reiterate: one does not necessarily have to be “unhuman” to practice magic; however, it is highly unlikely that someone who identifies himself as any kind of “unhuman” has never even dabbled. On the contrary, it is very likely that she has been involved in occulture at some point in her life.

Finally, a small but important group of markers examines personal mythologies that speak of prior lives in other worlds, of a different magic that does not work on Earth. There is an echo of Gnosticism in the concept of Earth as a “prison world” (*mir-tiurma*), a world created for exile. This view is not newly introduced to post-Soviet territory—on the contrary, we can find hints of it earlier, for example in the work of the influential Russian esotericist Evgenii Golovin (Nosachev 2012). However, to what extent this neo-Gnostic worldview is borrowed and to what extent it is indigenous remains yet to be determined. I am of the tentative opinion that the concept of Earth as a prison for many lifetimes is likely to have come to modern post-So-

viet territories through Scientology,⁹ but the power of the metaphor and its suitability for local social tensions after the fall of the USSR led to it being spread far outside of that context, and it is likely to have been reinvented more than once. It is interesting that this “Gnostic” concept exists side by side with an idea borrowed from the famous sci-fi writers, the Strugatsky brothers—the idea of the “homeostatic world,” which slowly turned into the abstract internet meme *dorogoe Mrzd* (short for “dorogoe Mirozdanie,” or “dear Wrld”). The “Wrld” is a friendly place, somewhat sentient, which takes care of its inhabitants’ needs carefully and non-intrusively. This is a softer, kinder, New Age variation on the idea of a responsive world. Whether the world is friendly or not can be used as a fairly reliable indicator of which part of occulture the respondent is likely to belong to. If the world, in general, is friendly in a particular group’s conception, they are likely to be mostly influenced by New Age or English-speaking witchcraft. If the world is seen as an enemy, they are most likely to belong to the most radical groups using ceremonial magic or to those for whom magic is connected first and foremost to their past lives.

Conclusion

Here I end my short survey of how the term “magic” and other related notions have been transformed in the post-Soviet space. I have not touched upon many other important topics, such as the relationship between “to know” and “to do” in folk magic and how it has been reinterpreted in city magic; the relationship between the paranormal and the occult; local magical orders and how they grow, die and transform practices; interpretations of the Tarot as a system of both divination and magic, and so on. But I hope that I was able to give an overview of most sources that modern post-Soviet occult discourse relies on, to showcase how Western occulture has brought significant changes to local occulture, and to explain the most common verbal markers of occult discourse. I also hope that I have been able to showcase some of the transformations of “magic” in the post-Soviet space: the

9. My preliminary investigation seems to trace the notion to the old Magic Tower forum group [<http://old.magictower.ru/>]⁹—one of the first magical forums on the Russian internet, and one read in the first decade of the twenty-first century by almost everyone who was looking for information on magic online. Many of its participants went on to write influential texts and to raise whole generations of students. One of them, Silica, had gone through Scientological courses and explicitly borrowed their methods for her own work, likely introducing ideas from Scientology to the rest of this influential group.

way it sees itself as both a craft that the magician can ply and an art, the way skill and personal power trump knowledge or a place in a hierarchy, and the notion that personal responsibility is above all. All of the aforementioned notions deserve further examination, for it is they that define magic in the post-Soviet space specifically, rather than the forms of rituals and the many and varied systems of correspondences.

To sum up my main points: first, there is no single universally definable concept of “magic” to speak of. “Magic” has different meanings depending on culture and is not connected to any one or two key concepts, but rather with a group of them (and not necessarily with all of them in a particular context), and therefore the first thing that a researcher beginning the study of a new context must do is to define what magic is and how it is situated in relation to other discourses. I contend that it is beneficial even for researchers who study magic in a wholly historical context to be aware of magic’s contemporary permutations as uncovered by anthropologists, since the insights they provide into the ways that philosophies of magic become actual magical practices and vice versa can be useful for a comparative analysis of related older sources.

Second, the most important primary sources for the researcher of contemporary magic are (in order of priority for study): 1) oral interviews with practitioners; b) print materials; c) online materials. However, the order of accessibility for these materials is, naturally, reversed. Internet archives are often the best “token of times passed” that we have: they are not to be overlooked but are an important source of material. While they do not tell us which practices are actually in current use—and this is why anyone attempting to work with them for the study of modern magic needs to spend time in the field proper—they are a priceless recording of attitudes and tendencies. Moreover, they are the most accessible source for occultists themselves, which means that they are often more influential than print materials, even though print materials provide essential historical context.

Third, in the post-Soviet space, city magic is slowly moving away from the archaic notion that knowledge equals power equals authority to the idea that power trumps knowledge and authority. The most important element is now “personal power,” a responsibility for one’s own circumstances (including the way the world itself works around the magician). Dry knowledge gives neither authority nor power; authority received as the result of initiation or acceptance into an occult group does not always manifest as direct power to influence the world; personal power, however, is seen as the most direct path to both knowledge and authority. It is possible to transfer pure power,

and with it both knowledge and authority. Thus we see how folk notions that are relatively archaic or originate in the Middle Ages are shifting into elements that have their origin in modernity. Older elements do not disappear altogether—they are still spread rather widely geographically; however, purely archaic elements and worldviews are far more rare in post-Soviet practice than formerly.

Fourth, many notions that were completely negative in folk magic have gained positive connotations in city magic. The terms *witch* and *inhuman* are neither insults nor causes for caution—instead, they are positive ways to identify oneself. Such concepts as “supernatural” or “extramundane” have been transformed into “otherworldly.” Our Earth is often seen as the part of a larger macrocosm, and one can be “at home” in the universe at large but “a stranger” on Earth.

Fifth, Russian-speaking occulture borrowed a great many notions and ways of thinking from Western occulture, but most of them have changed positions and occupy an entirely different place than they do in Western occulture. For example, Castaneda’s concept of *intent* in English-speaking occulture is familiar mostly to Castaneda’s own followers. But in Russian-speaking occulture you would be hard-pressed to find an occultist unfamiliar with it; it has become a far more general term. If Western occulture is now more focused on a variety of practices aimed at establishing magical authority, post-Soviet occulture, by contrast, searches for personal power.

Sixth, magical practice is not only material for literature and cinema, but also plunders them for practical ideas. Any concept developed in popular media that is cohesive and popular enough will be put into regular magical practice by some magician.

Seventh, city magic reflects upon scholarly discourse on itself and incorporates elements from scholarly research into practice. Folk magic does not usually have this reverse influence on such a large scale, although folk healers who use an ethnographer as an informant and/or read books on magic do exist. This influence is, in any case, limited, but is significant enough to be noticed by scholars.

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ALEXEY GLUSHAEV

“Without Preachers, in a Corner of the Barracks”: Protestant “Barracks Congregations” in the Perm-Kama Region in the Second Half of the 1940s through the Early 1960s

Translation by Jan Surer

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This article examines the genesis and evolution of Protestant groups in the cities and workers' settlements of the Perm-Kama Region from the 1940s to the early 1960s. The circumstances of life in the conglomerations of settlements in cities in the Urals led to the formation of “barracks congregations” of believers. Glushaev argues that in these years the barracks communities of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Mennonites played a unique social role, through which horizontal ties were restored and religious practices, adapted to new conditions, took shape.

Keywords: urban conglomerations, workers' settlements, barracks congregations, special settlers, Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Mennonites, anti-religious propaganda.

1.

ANTI-RELIGIOUS propaganda called them “sectarians” (*sektanty*). The authorities gave out limited information on the presence of Baptists, Pentecostals, and Mennonites in Soviet society, always relegating them to the side of the “road to building Communism.” But the time had passed when Evangelical believers had been called “sectarians—the kulak’s [rich peasant’s] Petrushka,”¹ portrayed in anti-religious posters as a rosy-cheeked puppet with the “hostile face of a village kulak” leering out from be-

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hind its back. The creation in 1944 of the joint Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (which some Pentecostals later joined) was to demonstrate, in the political calculus of the Stalinist leadership, that “the Soviet state takes into consideration the existence of religious ideas and (...) does not limit the free performance of religious rituals” (“Religiia i tserkov”: column 1782).

But in practice the tolerated activity of Protestant groups was significantly circumscribed by control from state structures and dependent on a fleeting political conjuncture. In particular, in contrast to the capital cities (Moscow, Leningrad) and some regional centers, in which Evangelical Christian-Baptist houses of worship (*molitvennyye doma*) were active, there were no officially registered congregations of Evangelical believers in the towns and settlements of Molotov Oblast² before the mid-1950s. (In Izhevsk and Kirov, administrative centers of regions bordering on Molotov Oblast, communities of Evangelical Christians-Baptists³ were registered by organs of the local executive committees in 1945–46 [Iarygin 2004: 110].) The lack of officially registered Evangelical congregations in Molotov Oblast, however, does not mean that none existed there. In the first year after the war, 1946, a group of Evangelical Christians in Molotov (the name of Perm from 1940–57) presented an official⁴ of the Council on Affairs of Religious Organizations (SD RK) with a petition to open a house of worship (Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Permskogo kraia [GAPK], f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 60, l. 1). The registration process dragged on and in the end became mired in bureaucratic red tape.

Other population centers in the oblast also witnessed the formation of Protestant communities. But at that time city and district au-

1. Petrushka is a comic character in traditional Russian folk puppet theater. — Translator.
2. In the Russian version of this article, the author uses the designations “Molotov (Perm) Oblast,” “Prikam’e,” and “Permskoe Prikam’e” as synonyms. “Prikam’e” and “Permskoe Prikam’e” are translated here as Perm-Kama Region. (The Kama River runs through the region.) — Translator.
3. The Russian term “Evangelical Christians-Baptists” signifies believers affiliated with the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (formed in 1944). The cumbersome name reflects the union of two prominent, related strands within Russian Evangelicalism. This translation interprets “Evangelical Christians” as believers affiliated with that strand of Russian Evangelicalism, whereas the phrase “Evangelical believers” includes those of other branches as well, such as Mennonites and Pentecostals. — Translator.
4. The Russian term *upolnomochennyi* (“plenipotentiary”) is translated in this article as “official” or “representative.” These “officials” most likely worked for either the Council on Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church or the Council on Affairs of Religious Organizations (two state bodies that dealt with religious matters), although the connection is often not stated explicitly in the text. — Translator.

thorities preferred not to notice the small religious groups, whose members, moreover, included a particular category of Soviet citizen, “deportees, listed in the special registry,” according to a 1953 report (Permskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii [PermGANI], f. 105, op. 20, d. 129, l. 163). With respect to local information on the religious situation in the oblast’s districts at the beginning of the 1950s, an oblast official, N.G. Muzlov, repeatedly complained that reports from district and city authorities lacked information on active non-registered believers’ groups, and the reports arrived late (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 20, d. 131, l. 168). It was not rare for officials to learn of prayer meetings by chance, as when residents, neighbors of a Baptist believer in the barracks, came to the Municipal Executive Committee in Gubakha (Molotov Oblast) in 1955 “with the complaint that the frequent singing and gatherings Marchenko holds violate the rules of the dormitory and interfere with normal life” (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 22, d. 106, l. 6).

The incomplete nature of information on small religious groups active in the region during the late 1940s and early 1950s created the impression of an insignificant number of Protestant communities. For example, V. P. Buldakov, a lecturer for the Oblast Committee of the Communist Party in the 1950s and 1960s, wrote during his tenure that before 1954 in the oblast’s cities and settlements, “isolated groups [of Evangelical Christians-Baptists], few in number, existed,” and “groups of Mennonite believers, mainly Germans by nationality, were not particularly active” (Buldakov 1972: 119, 121).

There are several reasons for this initial fragmentation of Evangelical believers’ religious life. First, there were the consequences of the political regime’s repressions directed against religious leaders and rank-and-file believers in the 1930s and 1940s. Thus, in 1935 the most active members of the Perm community of Evangelical Christians were arrested, and the leaders were sentenced to varying prison camp terms and exile. The other believers ceased meeting together in public places (Derbenev 2001: 5; *Gody terro-ra* 2003: 112).

Second, the scattered nature of the Evangelical movement stemmed from a whole series of social, political, and cultural processes at work in the second half of the 1940s. The actual conditions of life of the majority of the Perm-Kama Region’s population influenced the emergence of Protestant groups. It is worthwhile here to reconstruct the everyday environment of the population centers in which groups of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, Pentecostals and

Mennonites took shape, and to examine through a social lens believers' involvement in various social networks, their interpersonal relations and their interaction with official institutions. In the final analysis, the history of everyday life in the cities and settlements of Molotov Oblast in the 1940s and 1950s can illuminate to no small degree the specifics of religious minorities' development in the region.

The urban world of the Perm-Kama Region at the turn of the decade was a complex mixture of different ways of life, preserved and accumulated during the preceding years of Stalinist industrialization and calamitous wartime. The policy of extensive exploitation of the region's natural resources and the bureaucratic interests of industrial enterprises produced a distinctive kind of population center, known in official propaganda as a "Soviet city." These centers of administrative authority, founded upon the economics of large-scale enterprises and the power of the penal organs, characteristically exhibited a "patchwork" building-up of the territory with the attachment of separate workers' settlements to plants, factories, and mines. As candidly described in a 1949 report: "[Our] cities—for example, Gubakha, Polovinka, Solikamsk, Krasnokamsk, Chusovoi and others—up to now amount to a conglomeration of many poorly built settlements strewn with rubbish" (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 15, d. 510, l. 69).



**A view of the workers' settlement at the J. Stalin Factory, Perm,
at the beginning of the 1930s.**

The population of the workers' settlements presented a motley picture of various categories of Soviet citizen, brought by fate to the industrial plants of Molotov Oblast. The majority were immigrants from rural districts, gathered by recruiters for work in the factories and mines, or peasants who had fled the collective farms for the city. During the Great Patriotic War, the urban population of certain industrial centers (Gubakha, Kizel, Krasnokamsk) increased by one-and-a-half to two times (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 13, d. 175, l. 55). In heavy industry, timber processing, and coal mines, evacuees and mobilized civilians replaced workers conscripted into the military. A sizeable number of former prison camp inmates and special settlers, restricted in their right of movement within the oblast's territory, were among the workers and staff. And as a result of the social upheavals in which migrants found themselves, the violation of traditional cultural norms, significant demoralization, and a coarsening of morals took place. According to the testimony of one police official in a 1952 report on the security ministry's police work: "The continuous flow of workers recruited for industry and timber processing and the presence of corrective labor camps, Ministry of Internal Affairs [MVD] colonies, and special exiles are producing a strained operational environment in the oblast's center and on the periphery" (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 18, d. 195, l. 123).

Incidentally, the level of "hooliganization" of daily life in the early 1950s in the cities and workers' settlements of Molotov Oblast was so high that at one point it became a subject of discussion at the highest government level. By the fall of 1953, the crime situation in the oblast had effectively escaped the authorities' control. On February 27, 1954, the minister of internal affairs and the general prosecutor of the USSR had to give a special report to the highest Soviet leaders on the crime situation in Molotov Oblast (Kozlov 2010: 84–85).

On the whole, according to composite data on the socio-economic development of Molotov Oblast in the first half of the 1950s, the extensive growth of the cities through the incorporation of villages and the construction of barracks housing districts meant that "workers' settlements" concentrated around industrial enterprises became the main structural units of urban space (Chashchukin 2009: 64). The settlements, consisting of barracks and dormitories, privately built dwellings, and mud huts, could scarcely be considered the cities of an industrial society. Instead, they were reminiscent of the industrial camps that arose in the British Isles at the dawn of capitalism (Leibovich

1993: 65). These conglomerations of settlements “did not enjoy a unified cultural and territorial space. They would only become cities, as characterized by autonomy of individual life and the division of social relations into private and public spheres, in the post-Stalin era, during the housing construction initiatives of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev years” (Kabatskov 2012: 26–27).

From a different perspective, the expanse of barracks housing taking shape on the city outskirts brought together people of extraordinarily different social positions and conflicting cultural mentalities. The files of official P. S. Gorbunov preserve his observations of the barracks residents in the workers’ settlement of Chernushka: “Zorin was a powerful old man, 62 years old, with a long white beard and the hair on his head also completely white. He wore no clothes—no trousers or shirt, no hat—except for a long white linen shroud, and on his feet he wore only white linen slippers fastened with a row of buttons (...). Thus attired he walks seven kilometers to church, winter and summer.” The chairman of the district committee of the Voluntary Society for Support of the Army, Air Force and Navy (DOSAAF, a Soviet social organization that still exists in Russia today), M. D. Poponin, who lived with Zorin in the same barracks, complained, according to a 1955 report, that “people are continuously coming to Zorin, and when will they stop all this and give us some peace and quiet” (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 22, d. 107, l. 81).

In other words, the everyday provincial life of the Soviet people consisted of conflicting and marginal elements. A Baptist’s account (recorded by a journalist) provides a vivid picture: “We were living then in the barracks, in one of the settlements in Perm. We could often hear fights among the neighbors on Saturdays and Sundays and, of course, on paydays. We wanted somehow to resist such people, to counter them with a different atmosphere” (Tiuliandin 1964: 6). In this respect, a chaos of cultural practices filled the communal life of the barracks, and the boundary between the public and private spheres of life was almost non-existent. Neighbors routinely witnessed arguments between spouses or conflicts between barracks residents; and no matter who prevailed in this environment, instead of the collectivization of life, its atomization, the obliteration and collapse of “normal” forms of human cohabitation, resulted (Orlov 2010: 128). Given these circumstances, I suggest that the formation of Protestant communities was believers’ unique response to the anomie of everyday life and their attempt to restore ruptured social, and more simply human, ties.

2.

In the early postwar years, low-level administrative staffers regarded the religious activity of settlement residents with complete neutrality. The social closeness of the “little bosses” to the culture of the ordinary people and the officials’ immersion in the settlements’ practical life affected their attitudes toward residents’ piety. Moreover, in the realm of official state policy and political rhetoric, “the precise Stalinist formulation” of Article 124 of the Constitution—On the Free Exercise of Religion and the Freedom of Anti-Religious Propaganda—prevailed (“Religiia i tserkov” 1947: column 1781). The emotional stresses of postwar life’s difficulties and its disorder permeated the general mood, but there was hope of a softening of the political regime that proved “nothing more than an illusion. But even these illusions were a reality of postwar life, a strategy for survival” (Zubkova 1998: 26).

For instance, it was not at all strange that in 1947–48 groups of Orthodox believers in the large workers’ settlement of Borovsk (near the city of Solikamsk) on more than one occasion petitioned different government authorities about opening a church. In its petition, one such group “indicated that the settlement had 3,242 believers” (GAPK, f. r-1351, op. 2, d. 14, l. 20). The chairman and secretary of the Borovsk settlement council endorsed and certified these petitions (GAPK, f. r-1351, op. 2, d. 14, l. 21).

In turn, the activity of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (VSEKhB) lent legitimacy to Evangelical believers’ requests to regional officials for permission to conduct prayer meetings and to open houses of worship. In October 1946 a group of Evangelical Christians in Molotov applied to an oblast official to open a meeting-house (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 60, l. 1). Attached to the application was a list of a group of 20 (*dvadtsatka*) plus supplemental pages with 20 different surnames of believers (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 60, ll. 1 ob. –3).⁵ According to this surviving evidence, the Russian-speaking congregation had no fewer than 40 members. As surmised from documents from the 1920s containing some of the same surnames, some members of the group had formerly belonged to the Perm Congregation of Evangelical Christians, which was closed in the mid-1930s (“Protokol Obshchego sobraniia”).

5. The Soviet state required a core of 20 believers to petition for registration of a church community. — Translator.

If one considers only those included in the aforementioned lists, the group consisted of 11 men and 29 women. The majority were over fifty years of age (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 60, l. 1. ob. 2, 3), and pensioners and housewives constituted the main social group in this community. The document noted that among “the group of 20 who signed the petition there were no minors or persons deprived of their voting rights by a court” (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 60, l. 1).

But, in reports marked “secret,” officials from the Council on Affairs of Religious Organizations (SD RK) for Molotov Oblast pointed out another peculiarity of Evangelical groups’ composition. They often remarked, as in a 1949 report on a believers’ petition to open a house of worship, that the believers in such religious associations were not “continuous” residents of the oblast (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 268, l. 1). This euphemism hinted that the religious groups brought together special settlers (i. e., deportees).

This suggests that the “silence” of the district and municipal executive committees’ secretaries concerning unregistered groups of Baptists, Evangelical Christians, and Mennonites in the cities and settlements of Molotov Oblast, of which the official N. G. Muzlov complained, is explained by the following: The special-settler component of Protestant groups was subject to the jurisdiction of special commandants’ offices of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Security (MVD, MGB). In 1948 the chairman of the Gubakha Municipal Executive Committee hazarded a request to the head of the city’s MGB office seeking information on clergy “who independently and illegally go about the city and the district settlements to perform rites in believers’ homes: they baptize, perform funeral services and readings, and conduct organized worship services and missionary work” (GAPK, f. r-1351, op. 2, d. 14, l. 24). Staffers of the municipal MGB did not judge it necessary to share the information and recommended that he “turn to the Oblast Administration of the MGB regarding this question” (GAPK, f. r-1351, op. 2, d. 14, l. 25).

Parenthetically, this incident raises the question of the interrelations of the oblast officials from the Council on Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (SD RPTs) and the Council on Affairs of Religious Organizations (SD RK), on the one hand, and the MVD–MGB organs in Siberia, on the other, from the second half of the 1940s to the early 1960s, a question A. V. Gorbatov has researched. In Gorbatov’s view, “The State Security organs in particular possessed the most complete and objective information on religious congregations’ daily activity, as

well as confidential information on religious leaders and activists. For the most part, it was the Religious Affairs representative who subsequently made use of this information *to a limited extent* [italics mine—A. G.], but party workers, propagandists, and journalists did so as well” (Gorbatov 2008: 76).

One distinctive aspect of urban development in the Urals (incidentally, something also characteristic of cities in Siberia and the Far East) was the establishment of settlements of special settlers and their subsequent incorporation within the city boundaries (Mazur 2002: 178). Until the mid-1950s, in the mining industry centers and cities in the Perm-Kama region and in the mining settlements of the Kizelov Coal Basin there were “special regime” zones, built up primarily with barracks, whose inhabitants labored at the local enterprises. Special Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) commandants’ offices were in place for the surveillance and administration of the settlers. On paper, special settlers enjoyed the full rights of Soviet citizens in the 1940s and 1950s, except for freedom of movement. But, as is well known, the actual discrimination against deported groups was not limited to their right to relocate.

By the early 1950s, a special administrative-legal structure had been finalized for different categories of special contingents. In these years Molotov Oblast ranked in the top five regions in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) for the number of special settlers living there (Zemskov 1990: 10). In July 1950 the Oblast Department for Special Settlers had 90,860 people in its registry (Suslov 2010: 158). Some fluctuation in the contingent’s numbers was observed from time to time, but the oblast’s ranking remained unchanged. In 1952 a police official reported: “During the Patriotic War and the following years, 89,153 people arrived—members of General Andrei Vlasov’s anti-Soviet fighting force [*‘vlasovtsy’*], Germans, Crimean deportees, members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists [*‘ounovtsy’*], Kalmyks, Lithuanians, and those exiled for infractions of various decrees [*‘ukazniki’*]” (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 18, d. 195, l. 122).⁶ In other words, part of the urban and rural population of Molotov Oblast consisted of forced migrants who found themselves on the territory of Perm-Kama Region.

The representative of the Council on Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (SD RPTs) in the oblast, P.S. Gorbunov, saw a direct cor-

6. These decrees included the June 2, 1948, decree against “spongers” on the collective farms. — Translator.

relation between the special contingent relocated to the oblast and the rise in sacramental observance among Orthodox parishes. For example, a 1949 memorandum noted: “The city of Kizel occupies the first place among the oblast’s parishes in the number of rites performed (baptism, marriage, burial, and others). To be sure, one cannot fully attribute this piety to the native population of Kizel, insofar as a significantly numerous contingent was brought to Kizel from the western oblasts, Crimea, and elsewhere. Among them there are many believers” (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 15, d. 153, l. 12).

The formation of Protestant groups in the industrial centers’ sprawling settlements also had ties with the special settlers. A petition from the village Mitrakovo (Krasnovishersk District) to the representative of the Council on Affairs of Religious Organizations (SD RK) in 1948 requested registration of a congregation aligned with the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists; the group numbered 20 to 30 adherents (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2, d. 2, l. 14). In their incorporation of special settlements, Mitrakovo and its neighbors Morchany and Bakhari were typical of the oblast’s northern settlements at the time. According to first-hand accounts, already in the 1930s near the villages “a settlement of special settlers was organized. There were several barracks, a canteen, a bakery, and an office. (...) Most of the arrivals came from Ukraine” (Bondarenko 2008: 146). Local residents and special settlers worked at the Krasnovishersk pulp and paper mill, an early product of Stalin’s Five-Year Plan, built by prisoners.

An official reported in 1949 that in the group of Evangelical Christians in Mitrakovo “the majority of the believers are not continuous residents, but immigrants from other oblasts of the Soviet Union” (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 268, l. 1)—in other words, special settlers, a majority of whom were Ukrainian, according to existing records. Thus, forced migration to the oblast changed the region’s map of piety substantially and gave rise to new sites of Evangelical activity (See Glushaev 2012).

One category of deportees, the Soviet Germans, faced particular discrimination. More than 10 directives issued by the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR (SNK SSSR) and by the State Defense Committee during the war years authorized deportation, resettlement and forced settlement of the entire ethnic group. (Categories of exiles and special settlers were defined in accordance with such directives [See Pobol’ and Polian 2005; Leibovich 2009: 28–30; Belkovets 2008]). By the time the special-settlement system was dismantled

in the mid-1950s, more than 52,000 ethnic Germans, including children and elderly retirees, were living in Molotov Oblast. (For a 1952 tally, see Suslov 2010: 389; my calculations of a 1954 figure of 52,507 individuals are based on a report found at PermGANI, f. 105, op. 21, d. 142, ll. 8–14).

German believers—including those exiled from their places of residence in the 1930s (“former kulaks” from the German villages of Ukraine and the Volga region), some of those mobilized during the war into the “workers’ army” (transferred to the special settler category in 1945–48), and Soviet Germans repatriated from Germany after the war—practiced Catholicism or were adherents of Protestant denominations (Lutherans, Mennonites and Baptists). The deportations and mobilizations of the German population, for all practical purposes, destroyed the church institutions that had existed earlier. “Without priests or preachers, in the corners of barracks and in mud huts, they recited to each other in a whisper what they were able to remember. They held church services within a very narrow circle, often just within a single family,” wrote V. Veber of the Soviet Germans, deported beyond the Urals during the war (Veber 1989: 373). Later, the special-settlement regime and the degraded atmosphere of the settlements resulted in the definitive weakening of church life, in its becoming more primitive, and in the spread of extra-institutional religious practices. Thus, in the absence of male clergy, women conducted religious rites. For instance, in the northern settlements of Cherdynsky District (Molotov Oblast) in 1955, women presided over German Catholics’ religious gatherings; they baptized children, married the young, and performed “other religious offices” (PermGANI, f. 105, op. 22, d. 106, l. 13).

In time, Protestant congregations took shape in the cities of Molotov Oblast—Molotov, Berezniki, Gubakha, Kizel, Solikamsk, Krasnokamsk, Nytva, Krasnovishersk and others—where “specially registered” populations lived in close proximity to each other. Religious brotherhoods served as their foundation, formed amid the conditions of the special administrative-legal regime and reflecting the specific daily circumstances of the sprawl of settlements surrounding cities in the Urals. “Barracks congregations”—Walter Sawatsky’s image to describe the Mennonite and Baptist groups that arose in the post-war years (Zavatski [Sawatsky] 1995: 72)—effectively conveys the distinctiveness of such religious brotherhoods that existed irrespective of the confessional or national makeup of particular groups. Analogous

associations existed in regions of the country whose development resembled that of the Perm-Kama Region. For instance, a Pentecostal preacher in Perm, formerly a prisoner in the Vorkuta camps, recalled religious gatherings in the settlements on the outskirts of Vorkuta: "The meeting took place in something (...) like a barracks, the rooms were already prepared" (Babushkin 2004).

One can most likely trace the formation of German-speaking religious congregations in the Perm-Kama Region's industrial districts to the arrival of labor battalions of Soviet Germans in Molotov Oblast. In January and February 1942, the mobilization of Germans into worker colonies sent to industrial works, coal mines, logging operations, and fisheries took place following decrees of the Council of People's Commissars and the State Defense Committee (GKO) and instructions from the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) (See Belkovets 2008: 153–76). Those mobilized into the labor army were not considered a repressed category.

In the autumn of 1942, almost one thousand mobilized girls and women arrived in Krasnokamsk (Molotov Oblast) for work at the oil refinery, the Molotov Oil Works, the Kamsk Pulp and Paper Mill, and other plants in the city. As the German women in the worker battalions were housed in barracks and cellars, small communities began to cohere. In these circumstances, confessional differences played a secondary role. Former labor army worker P.P. Peters wrote: "The older people went over hymns [*molitvennye pesnopeniia*] they remembered so as not to forget them, wrote them down in notebooks—yes, in the regular notebooks from the paper factory, which in a town of paper-mill workers it was still possible to lay hands on. Some of the female labor army workers remembered the old numerical-notation transcriptions and filled a mass of notebooks, arranging the melodies for four parts and secretly trying to rehearse these songs that brought help to tired, oppressed people" (*Nemtsy v Prikam'e*, t. 2, 2006: 111). The public space of the barracks, in which any gesture or spoken word could be interpreted as political sedition, reduced the display of piety to basic, inconspicuous acts: short daily prayers, quiet singing of certain Evangelical hymns, and the observance of holidays on the Christian calendar.

Later, during the postwar years when repatriations from Germany swelled the number of German special settlers, religious gatherings of Mennonites, Baptists, and Lutherans became regular events in the workers' settlements of cities in the Urals. A memorandum from the Solikamsk Municipal Committee of the Communist Party

(GK VKP [b]) reported: “[In] the new settlement at the Magnesium Works in Barracks No. 54 (...) repatriated Germans gather, mainly on Sundays from nine in the morning till noon, and read ‘the Good Book’ (...) Citizen Klein [a woman] reads, and one old man (...) explains [what was read] to those present. (He is the leader.)” (*Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 226). The enduring tradition of the Protestant confession, with its “emphasis on the idea of eternal predestination and on the inevitability and even the blessedness of suffering” (Mitrokhin 1997: 397), facilitated the restoration of religious life in these barracks congregations. Fate was accepted as the manifestation of God’s will; and only personal, unconditional faith was required for “the salvation of one’s immortal soul.” Moreover, Protestant preachers not only spread the Gospel, but also established congregations, close-knit collectives of coreligionists, in which each individual received constant consideration. For the Germans of the barracks enclaves, amid the disintegration of familial and personal bonds, the rootlessness of everyday life, and social discrimination, the communal life of religious brotherhoods supplied lost human connections and gave the Germans the opportunity to speak in their native tongue.

But the special regulations to which deportees were subject made the barracks congregations’ preachers very vulnerable: more often than others, they became the objects of the state security organs’ attention. When the regime was hardened, as happened in 1946–49 (Belkovets 2008: 190), the penal organs used repressive measures against them. A Mennonite group in Solikamsk that was uncovered in 1947 was subsequently scattered and demoralized by the arrest of its preachers. Officials charged believers with making use of their religious beliefs in the struggle against Soviet authority. Under pressure from interrogators, an aged Mennonite preacher, Ivan Korneevich Penner, repatriated from Germany, “confessed” that while living in occupied territory during the war, “using religious convictions, in his sermons (...) he condoned the existence of the fascist authorities.” In the opinion of the interrogating officers, as a consequence of these sentiments, Penner “*waged war against the Soviet state* [emphasis in the source document]” (*Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 327). Having found himself in Molotov Oblast, said the preacher, “I was dissatisfied with my position in the special settlement and thought my life was difficult, while they wrote to me from America that there they live well, and I believed this” (*Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 328).

Through the layers and obfuscation of the state security interrogator's bureaucratise emerges a picture of a frightened old man whose fate was replete with the twists and turns brought on by the social upheavals of the twentieth century. It is difficult to interpret the preacher's "anti-Soviet" opinions as calls to struggle and resistance, especially given the Mennonites' opposition to violence. But to his religious frame of reference, the circumstances of life in the workers' ghetto and the blatant discrimination for national and religious reasons appeared as a trial of his Christian soul, and he desired to leave this sinful world and "take refuge" in the community of fellow believers.

The humble people's critical view of the authorities, the natural dissatisfaction with the daily struggles of life, and the tense criminal environment in the workers' settlements became eschatological signs in Protestant circles, and gave rise to a sense of "the last days." Special settler Evald Karlovich Gubert, a worker in the Solikamsk cooperative "Red Dawn," appeared with Penner in the interrogation file. A Lutheran by confession, Gubert had joined a Mennonite congregation through force of circumstance (*Nemtsy v Prikam'e*, t. 1, 2006: 329–33). An interrogator transcribed his statement under questioning: "In my sermon, I first read several chapters from the Bible and then began to speak of how we must not forget that we live on earth for a short time, and therefore should pray to God for our future life. I also *called upon believers to pray for those in prison, that God would give them health and that they could return safely to our family* [emphasis in the source document]" (*Nemtsy v Prikam'e*, t. 1, 2006: 333). These were utterly typical religious statements that one might hear in any Protestant community. It was only the authorities' particular view of this religious dissidence that transformed it into political subversion and a cultural-political phenomenon (Kozlov and Mironenko 2005: 7).

In 1950–51, the oblast's high court sentenced the Mennonite preachers to 25 years in a corrective labor camp. In his appeal to the Supreme Court of the RSFSR, Penner, a former stablehand at the Solikamsk Children's Sanitarium, wrote with a touch of amazement:

I ask the Supreme Court to take into consideration my advanced age (63 years), my peasant origins, my lack of education, and my work until my arrest as a blacksmith on a collective farm since 1929. (...)

And also, since I have had little education, how could I carry on any actions against Soviet authority, when I do not understand political matters and do not try to figure them out? (*Nemtsy v Prikam'e*, t. 1, 2006: 329).

Interestingly, in his private dispute with official ideology, the preacher employed the same conceptual system as the authorities. His emphasis on social proximity to the foundational classes of the socialist state and his use of illiteracy as justification for “political mistakes” reproduced key elements of the Soviet person’s discourse in the Stalinist era. This verbal manifestation of everyday Soviet life, which Stephen Kotkin has called “speaking Bolshevik,” was “the obligatory language for self-identification and as such, the barometer of one’s political allegiance to the cause” (Kotkin 1995: 220).

In other words, daily life in the Perm-Kama Region’s industrial centers did not do away with believers’ religious system of beliefs and values, but in a bizarre way it merged this system with the norms, rituals and stereotypes of Soviet ideology. Believers used the language that surrounded them and thought in the categories of Soviet “newspeak.” Phrases from formative Soviet propaganda texts appear especially frequently in Baptist congregations’ petitions for registration in the 1950s. For example: “The Russian October Revolution proclaimed the equality not only of all citizens of the country but also of all churches and confessions. We believers are deeply grateful to the party and the government of our great Motherland for a happy and joyful life and for the gift of religious freedom to all churches and religious associations, including also the Baptists” (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 1, d. 7, l. 1). The faithful hoped that the authorities would actually allow them to worship freely. Usually these expectations remained unfulfilled, but the congregations continued to exist.

Around 1950, Protestant barracks congregations, along with traditional religious communities of believers worshipping in Orthodox churches and Old Believer chapels already active in Molotov Oblast, became an almost universal phenomenon in workers’ settlements, in which special settlers and migrants from different regions of the Soviet Union lived close together. In particular, communal, neighborly relations revived and gave rise to the formation of religious groups. For example, according to field reports from 1951, in the settlement of Yaiva (Aleksandrovsky District), “in the barracks where deported Germans live, believers gather weekly and read the Bible and the Gospel and sing psalms. (...) The group numbers up to 20 believers of both sexes” (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2, d. 2, l. 110).



Roman Karlovich Shlender (center), presbyter of the congregation of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Berezniki (Molotov Oblast), and members of the congregation in front of the barracks of the workers' settlement, 1957.

In Berezniki, a major industrial center in Molotov Oblast, groups of Evangelical Christians-Baptists met together. An official report in 1952 noted: "According to the information we have (...) [the congregation] numbers up to 130 people, divided into two subgroups": a Russian group, under the leadership of I. G. Pikulev (born 1895) and A. D. Voronova (born 1900), and a German group, whose preacher was Roman K. Shlender (born 1900). In today's terms, the congregation served as a social network. Believers gathered in groups of 10 to 15 and held prayer meetings in their apartments. The Russians "favored" the barracks on Rabbit Hill (*Zaiach'ei Gorke*), while the German believers "favored" the barracks "in Block 19 and in the first sector" (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2, d. 2, l. 223). Thus, the composition of the Baptist community was not ethnically homogenous, and the sub-communities maintained a constant connection with each other.

According to the recollections of an elderly believer in a present-day Pentecostal community in Perm, German special settlers lived in the workers' settlement of Eranichi in the city of Molotov in the early 1950s. On Sundays, joint religious services of German Baptists and Evangelical Christians from the city's Russian Evangelical Christian-Baptist congregation took place. In the "German barracks," two of the rooms where settlers lived were partitioned off, and on certain days they used them for prayer meetings (Tsiurpita 2010).

The evidence of archival documents from the 1940s and 1950s and the memories of Evangelical believers, as we have seen, often link Protestant congregations to the distinctive environment of the barracks enclaves in which believers (particularly German Baptists and Mennonites) found themselves. Religious brotherhoods existed in the constricted space of believers' daily activities and were almost invisible to the outside observer. For instance, as the official N. G. Muzlov wrote in 1950 of Russian-speaking groups of Evangelical Christians in Molotov and Berezniki: "They stubbornly deny the evidence that they hold prayer meetings—they say they 'go visiting'" (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2, d. 2, l. 94). In this way, the gradual establishment of horizontal social and religious ties facilitated the genesis of Protestant congregations in the Perm-Kama region in the postwar period.

3.

Against the background of political events and social reforms that followed Stalin's death in 1953, the energetic activity of Protestant preachers came as a surprise to the regional authorities. In May 1955, a large religious gathering took place in the settlement of Yaiva, on the outskirts of Aleksandrovsk, attended by representatives of the oblast's Evangelical congregations. The gathering turned into a special official meeting of the religious groups' leaders, at which they elected a senior presbyter for the oblast (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2, d. 7, l. 5). And although this central Baptist assembly was short-lived, it demonstrated the Evangelical movement's ability to consolidate believers outside of the official system—believers who had often disregarded decisions of the leaders of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and circumvented control by state structures.

The cancellation of the special settlement regime in the second half of the 1950s and Protestant preachers' return from the labor camps made the presence of religious minorities obvious to the civil authorities. Thus, in a barracks enclave on the southern side of Solikamsk with the characteristic name "Worker Town," archival documents from 1960 show that two unregistered groups of German believers existed: a Baptist group with 40 adherents and a Mennonite community of 25. These groups were branches of larger communities on the northern outskirts, in what had been Borovsk (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 23, l. 185–185 ob.), which was administratively incorporated into Solikamsk in 1959.

Regular gatherings of the Baptist and Mennonite barracks congregations proved an effective mechanism for the adaptation and con-

solidation of the German-speaking population, especially its young people, amid the specific conditions of longstanding discrimination on the basis of their nationality. A list of Baptist believers who had met together on August 6, 1960 “in the workers’ town, in Barracks 6, apartment 14, in Mrs. Anna Petrovna Martens’s place,” provides a vivid example (GAPK, f. r-1205, op.1, d. 23, l. 180). G.I. Martens (born in 1924), a machinist in the mining section of the Solikamsk Potash Works, served as the preacher for the group. Of the list’s 20 individuals, 17 were women and three men. A fourth man, not on the list, was the preacher himself. Many of the surnames indicate familial and relational connections. All the believers, mainly young or middle-aged, lived in the “German” barracks located close together (See Appendix 1).

One official, V.V. Beliaev, describing the believers’ life in a given settlement, noted:

Upon visiting the Germans’ apartments in the settlement of Worker Town in Solikamsk, the following scene was revealed: of all the people, Germans, we talked to in the quarters (about ten apartments), who lived in the barracks, all turned out to be connected to one degree or another with religious sects. There were no radios, no lectures take place there, and no agitators visit these barracks. In the apartments there were ‘slogans’ from the Gospel, embroidered onto rugs and towels and in frames, and so forth, such as ‘God is love,’ ‘I and my house will serve the Lord,’ ‘The best minutes are those I spend with the Lord,’ and so on. Some of the believers we met and with whom we spoke extensively were extremely fanatical (*Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 253).

In fact, embroidered, framed Biblical quotations were a constant feature in Mennonites’ living quarters (Bulatova 2000: 143).

The religious population’s spontaneous activity evoked a completely predictable reaction from the local authorities, although without the use of mass violence; times had changed. Seen in this light, the anti-religious campaign deployed at the end of 1958 seems more like a quest for a means of control over unauthorized religious institutions. The unfolding campaign placed explicit emphasis on the unmasking of and control over “sectarians,” including the Protestant communities in places in which believers lived in close proximity to each other. Indeed, Tatiana Kirillovna Nikolskaia sees this as a particular mark of the Khrushchev anti-religious campaign; she comments that “the ideology of the time was strikingly anti-sectar-

ian" (Nikol'skaia 2008: 176). The local party executive committees summoned preachers and, after a short interview, "collected signed statements" on the cessation of "sectarian meetings." This was reminiscent of the well-known procedure applied in the special commandants' offices in the settlements when in 1948 the state criminalized "flight from the places of obligatory, continuous residence by people deported to remote districts of the Soviet Union during the Patriotic War." The relevant decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, dated November 26, 1948, authorized "permanent resettlement" for all categories of special settlers (See, for example, Belkovets 2008: 218–23).

In addition to this method of policing, the administration of workers' settlements applied "joint responsibility" as a mechanism of control. (Khosking [Hosking] 2012 discusses the use of this archaic practice in Soviet society.) Commandants from among barracks residents were placed in charge of the barracks, known in official speak as "communal houses." Elected "house committees" regulated everyday practical questions within the barracks-like dormitories. The functions and degree of responsibility of these collective institutions replicated, in part, the main elements of community life in the village commune. The commandants and house committee members were to maintain discipline among the residents, which required them to monitor the loyalty of the barracks residents. Thus, as a report on the town of Nyтва (Molotov Oblast) pointed out in 1957: "Bauman, commandant of the barracks, Vais, a member of the house committee, and others were summoned from the communal houses, where cases of the Germans meeting in apartments for prayer were also observed. (...) They were ordered not to permit prayer meetings in the apartments" (GAPK, f. r-1205, op.1, d. 23, l. 81).

Nonetheless, the influence of barracks religious associations among the German-speaking population was quite consequential in settlement life in the second half of the 1950s. Oblast official V. V. Beliaev reported: "When Anna Emmanuilovna Berg, a deputy of the Nytvensky District Soviet, began to conduct active social work among the citizens living in the Kamsk dockyards settlement (an outlying district of Nyтва), many of her friends immediately turned their backs on her and stopped speaking to her. They conveyed their aversion and warnings orally through her husband, also a believer, and forced Berg to sign a statement of her resignation from her position as deputy, which she did" (*Nemtsy v Prikam'e*, t. 1, 2006: 237). In the settlement of Worker Town in Solikamsk, with close-knit, active barracks congregations of German Mennonites and Baptists,

the “red corner”⁷ in the local club was temporarily closed under pressure from the believers; and unknown individuals broke a radio that played Soviet music (*Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 254).

In time, a cultural conflict emerged among the ethnic Germans as a result of a quite unmistakable process of acculturation effected by Soviet propaganda and the influence of mass-distribution productions of Soviet culture. Oleg Leonidovich Leibovich, in his analysis of the local German milieu of the late 1940s–50s, rightly comments that in these “years German culture was a preserve of traditionalism, a return to the practices and beliefs of early Protestantism. Naturally, this aspect of German culture alienated many young people who had received a Soviet and indeed simply a secular education, thereby strengthening the assimilation process” (Foreword to *Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 20).

The drama of the cultural fissure among Soviet Germans at the end of the 1950s intensified in the wake of anti-religious propaganda that charged barracks congregations’ preachers with creating a religiously based closed national community. The propaganda targeted the Mennonites in particular. As the regional propagandist of atheism Edmund Mikhailovich Kremzer wrote: “The teaching of the Mennonites in our country is not only religious but also nationalistic” (Kremzer 1960: 4–5). Kremzer acknowledged that as a result of his propagandistic work, “many Germans who had in the past been my good friends turned from me, and now do not give me the time of day” (*Nemtsy v Prikam’e*, t. 1, 2006: 254).

The subsequent fate of the barracks congregations was determined, in part, by general processes of socio-economic development in the Perm-Kama Region’s cities. Mass housing construction begun at the end of the 1950s gradually changed the look of the cities, as prefabricated housing districts replaced the barracks zones. The relative normalization of life in the 1960s permitted many believers to acquire their own places to live—private houses. The socio-cultural environment of the barracks deteriorated, ultimately becoming a zone of social alienation.

Additionally, the anti-religious campaign of 1958–59 and local authorities’ administrative control that was directed toward constraining Protestant groups’ religious life spurred many believers to leave for other parts of the country. Former special settlers, deportees from Ukraine, returned to their homeland. The German population of the workers’ settlements, including Baptists, Pentecostals, and Mennon-

7. The red corner was an area in the barracks used for Soviet propaganda events. — Translator.

ites, in most cases left for Kazakhstan, Orenburg Oblast, and other regions of the Soviet Union. Some managed to emigrate abroad.

The reduction in German Baptist, Mennonite, and Lutheran congregations was most pronounced amid the migrations of the early 1960s. According to data from 1958–59, active Protestant congregations in the oblast numbered 59 and represented between 2,220 and 2,320 believers, whereas figures from an irregular census conducted in the autumn of 1961 indicated the presence of 37 Protestant groups representing a total of 1,161 Evangelical believers. Of eight Mennonite fellowships in which approximately 400 German believers participated, two remained (with 117 adherents); four Lutheran communities (200 people) shrank to two groups (30 people); and the number of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, about 1,200 believers in mid-1958, had dwindled to 720 by 1962 (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2 d. 7, l. 172; PermGANI, f. 105, op. 27, d. 133, ll. 59–60; GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 3, d. 47, ll. 11–73).

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the barracks religious brotherhoods of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Mennonites arose in the specific conditions of the industrial settlements of the Perm-Kama Region in the postwar period. The special restricted zones, the limited mobility of the settlement population (resulting from undeveloped urban infrastructure and the attachment of the workforce to the industrial plants and coal mines), and also the repressive practices of the state for a long time obstructed the formation of Evangelical Protestant associations in the cities. The barracks congregations in the workers' settlements became the first link in the emergence of Protestant groups in Molotov Oblast.

The German-speaking congregations of Evangelical Christians-Baptists occupied a special place in this confluence of circumstances. By 1958, on the territory of Perm Oblast, 28 or 29 Baptist groups consisting of about 1,200 faithful were active, including 15 groups that consisted entirely of Germans (about 900 people). In population centers in which "citizens of German nationality" were comparatively few, German believers joined "religious communities of Evangelical Christians-Baptists together with citizens of other nationalities" (GAPK, f. r-1204, op. 2, d. 7, l. 173). Eventually, some of these groups either disbanded or merged with larger religious congregations in the oblast. But subsequently the number of Protestant believers stabilized and, gradually, representatives of Evangelical Protestantism became a noticeable presence in the religious life of the region. Thus, Protestant barracks congregations, including German-language religious brotherhoods, served as a catalyst in the formation of Evangelical associations on the territory of the Perm-Kama Region in the postwar years.

Appendix 1

Compiled from “List of Participants at a Gathering of Sectarians-Baptists on August 6, 1960, in the Workers’ Town in Solikamsk, Barracks No. 6, Apartment 14” (GAPK, f. r-1205, op. 1, d. 23, ll. 183–84).

No.	Surname, First Name, Patronymic	Year of Birth	Occupation	Address
1.	Penner, Anna Yakovlevna	1909	housewife	barracks 6, apartment 15
2.	Broun, Renata Andreevna	1905	—”—	barracks 6, apartment 18
3.	Fal’kinshtern*, Lilia Andreevna	1939	—”—	barracks 5, apartment 6
4.	Shnarvasser, Renata Rengol’dovna	1938	Combine No. 8, Sector-2, plasterer	barracks 6, apartment 4
5.	Zimens, Lilia Germanovna	1936	Solikamsk Magnesium Works, KhPR, plasterer	barracks 6, apartment 14
6.	Shiller, Marta Eduardovna	1924	Housing and Utilities Department, Solikamsk Magnesium Works, housing complex	barracks 5, apartment 9
7.	Freilikh, Erna Eduardovna	1923	shoe repair shop	barracks 5, apartment 13
8.	Martens, Lilia Eduard.	1931	Solikamsk Magnesium Works, Repair and Construction Administration, housing complex	barracks 5, apartment 4
9.	Shiling, Gerta Avgustovna	1909	housewife	barracks 2, apartment 26

No.	Surname, First Name, Patronymic	Year of Birth	Occupation	Address
10.	Leven, Susana Davydovna	1942	Combine No. 8, Construction Administration No. 1, painter	barracks 2, apartment 19
11.	Leven, Elizaveta Petrovna	1906	housewife	—"—
12.	Fal'kanshtern*, Gerbert Robertovich	1930	potash works, mining section, locomotive operator	barracks 5, apartment 6
13.	Gibler, Rudol'f Arturovich	1930	potash works	barracks 6, apartment 16
14.	Gants, Roman Avgustovich	1924	potash works	barracks 5, apartment 14
15.	Fal'kanshtein*, Elena Petr.	1899	pensioner	barracks 5, apartment 6
16.	Shparvat, Iza Ivanovna	1897	housewife	barracks 6, apartment 4
17.	Zimmler, Elena Davydovna	1927	unemployed	barracks 2, apartment 19
18.	Gants, Lina Robertovna	1924	housewife	barracks 5, apartment 14
19.	Leven, Elizaveta Davydovna	1945	not in school	barracks 2, apartment 19
20.	Martens, Mar. Ivanovna	1897	unemployed	barracks 5, apartment 15

* This should read "Fal'kenshtern" (*Nemtsy v Prikam'e*, t. 1, 2006: 205).

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GALINA ZELENIINA

“One’s Entire Life among Books”: Soviet Jewry on the Path from Tanakh to Library

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The bibliocentrism of traditional Jewish culture is well known, and its various manifestations—the foundational role of the Tanakh for all Jewish literature, the place of Tanakh studies in religious education, the significance of education and bibliophilism in society, and the image and functions of the Torah scroll in ritual practice, among others—are well studied. This article seeks to consider the place of the Tanakh, religious books, and books in general in the culture of Soviet and post-Soviet Jewry from the end of the 1910s to the start of the 2000s. This was the culture of a declining, nearly moribund and then re-emergent Judaism; simultaneously, it was a culture that, even if only in part, formed and established the Soviet intelligentsia; finally, it was the culture of a doleful and proud national minority that, though keeping a low profile, forgot nothing. The sources used here are of personal provenance and include memoirs, and, above all, oral histories: several hundred interviews with Soviet Jews born between 1910 and 1940 (principally Ukrainian, but also Russian, Belarusian, Moldavian, and Baltic), which were recorded in the 1990s and the 2000s. The interviews are drawn from the archive of the Kyiv Ju-

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daica Institute, specifically the collections “Witnesses of the Jewish Century” and “Jewish Fates in Ukraine,” as well as portions of other collections. For context, Zelenina has incorporated ethnographic interviews conducted at the end of the 2000s and the start of the 2010s housed in the archive of the Center for Biblical and Judaic Studies of the Russian State University for the Humanities.

Keywords: USSR, Judaism, Jews, Bible, Tanakh, Anti-Semitism, Holocaust, World War II, oral history, libraries, cheder.

“The Remnants of *Yiddishkeit* Are Lost Approximately in the Fourth Generation”

Before addressing the decline of Jewish bibliophilism, we must sketch out the backdrop for this process by depicting the dynamics of religiosity among Soviet Jews in the prewar and postwar years.¹ The level of adaptation to the new Soviet reality and the degree to which tradition was preserved varied considerably in relation to several factors, above all one’s place of residence and generation. The regions annexed to the Soviet Union just before or immediately after the war (Northern Bukovina, Transcarpathia, the Baltics) are a case apart—on the eve of the war, traditions were observed in these areas as they had been 20 years prior in Soviet territories. Jews typically distanced themselves more swiftly from religion and tradition in cities, especially large ones, while a traditional way of life was preserved longer in small towns. The older generation (the grandmothers and grandfathers of the interviewees) was religiously observant, nearly without exception: they went to synagogue, celebrated religious holidays, kept the Sabbath, observed kashrut, and wore traditional clothing. The generation of the parents of the interviewees exhibited a certain amount of diversity in this regard: their adherence to Judaism depended upon their place of residence, as well as on their professional life and their gender—many of the interviews reference the phenomenon, so characteristic for crypto-religious groups, of preponderant female participation in the preservation of ritual practices. Many respondents note that their mother was

1. On the cultural-religious profile of early Soviet Jews, the convergence of “speaking Bolshevik” and “acting Jewish,” the variable relationship between “new” and “old” as well as “active” and “passive” identities, and the formation of a synthetic Soviet-Jewish identity, see Rothenberg 1972; Gitelman 1991; Altshuler 1998, especially 89–102; and Shternshis 2006; as well as numerous local case studies, including Beizer 2007; Zeltser 2006; Zeltser 2007; and Bemporad 2008.

“more pious than father,” that she was the one in charge of holiday celebrations, and it was from her (and/or grandma) that they learned of traditions (Interview with Mikhail Anatol’evich Rossinskii 1997; Interview with Mikhail [Rakhmil’] Iur’evich Shmushkevich; Interview with Naum Markovich Balan 2003).² This phenomenon can be explained by the gradual annulling of the Jewish public sphere, for example, through the closing of synagogues.³ As a result of this, tradition retreated into the private, domestic sphere (the kitchen, holiday meals, etc.), where women were in control. This phenomenon can also be explained by the fact that women were more loyal to older family members, their parents above all, and thus preserved traditions. In addition, many mothers did not work outside the home (older interviewees typically relate that their mother was a homemaker), and children interacted with them more and observed their behavior to a much greater extent than the behavior of their fathers.

There were also parents who were revolutionaries, ardent Communists, and, correspondingly, strident atheists; but even individuals who generally adhered to tradition oftentimes neglected this or that commandment, including for economic reasons, and did not seek to inculcate tradition in their children, partially for the sake of their greater integration into Soviet society. Interviewees frequently recall that their parents “didn’t force them to do anything” (Interview with Dina Shuevna Dukhan), as they understood “it was simply a different time, and they, being demoralized both morally and materially, were no longer in a position to shape the fate of their children and left everything to [...] chance, so to speak” (Interview with Anna Efimovna [Khantsiia Khaimovna] Limonnik). One of the older interviewees relates the following episode, which attests to the extraordinary flexibility of his family members:

Our family was intellectual [*intelligentnaia*] and clerical, but also modern. [...] [Father] gave us latitude, not complete freedom and not officially, but let’s say ... he shut his eyes. And we, all the children, were grateful to him our entire lives. [...] At the age of 13, it came time for my bar mitzvah. I understood that I wouldn’t be able to complete all these rites, going to the synagogue, tying these little straps, these so-called phylacteries, around my arms. [...] [Grandma] heard me praying and asking God to free me from this obligation [...]. The next day, the one after that, the one after that, I noticed that they weren’t reminding me to prepare for my bar

2. Interviews cited without dates are undated in the original source material.

3. On this process in Leningrad see Beizer 1999.

mitzvah, there was no talk of it. A long time passed like this—two, three, four months. Then later I found out that Grandma [...] had told Mama, Mama had told Papa ... At any rate, he didn't remind me about it through all the years that followed, and they forgave me for not fulfilling the obligations of a pious Jew [...]. On the contrary, I became a big-time activist at the workers' school ... (Interview with Natan Iosifovich Shapiro 1995).

Education facilitated secularization: Jewish schools that in one way or another familiarized their pupils with tradition were closed in the course of the 1930s, and the children carried on their education in atheistic Russian or Ukrainian schools.

In retrospect, the interviewees tend summarily to deny or downplay their parents' religiosity (the remark "they weren't fanatics" is particularly popular), although further description typically makes clear that their family was fully observant (Interview with Shmushkevich; Interview with Iosif Abramovich Bursuk 2002). The level at which traditions were observed in many interviewees' families can be identified as a declining intermediacy, between the "kosherness" of their older family members and the complete secularity of their children and grandchildren. The latter, however, may, particularly in conditions of emigration, return to "kosherness," or even go all the way to "fanaticism" (Interviews with Anna Iosifovna Ivankovitser, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007 [CBJS]; Zelenina 2012b).

The traumatic experience of war, and especially the Holocaust, bolstered two contradictory tendencies among Soviet Jews: a national-isolationist one ("never forget" and "stick together with one's own") and an assimilationist one (Gitelman 1997; Arad 2009; Gitelman 2014). They were manifested in various social and marriage strategies, but in both cases the level of traditional observance dropped, with the rare exception of purposeful crypto-Jews, such as the Chabad.⁴ As a consequence of the war and genocide, small towns were destroyed—homes, synagogues, ritual items, and books—and along with them the entire small-town way of life. Large families were thinned out, particularly at the expense of the older generation, who were the most observant and who served as the bulwark of tradition and were least capable of bearing the strains of occupation or evacuation:

4. For Soviet Chabad memories, see Shekhter 2014. Shekhter unduly standardized his sources and subjected them to overly literary editing, which has resulted in a rather problematic historical source, yet one that nevertheless provides a depiction of the worldview and values of this group and its relationship with the state.

All was lost in the war. It wasn't until after the war that we didn't celebrate holidays, that assemblies were no longer held, that the entire family was gone (Interview with Ida Moiseevna Gel'fer 1995).

In the second half of the century, identity was maintained through social intercourse and marriages among Jews, observance of certain rites—particularly circumcision (Zelenina 2012a)—solidarity in the face of anti-Semitism, and solidarity with Israel (which coexisted with indifference toward Judaism).

In the 1990s, a renaissance of Jewish life began in the former Soviet republics, but it typically did not involve the rebirth of local traditions, but rather the importation of external ones—whether Israeli, Chabad, or others. Interviewees evaluate this occurrence positively, but do not view it, naturally, as the closing of the circle and the return to the prewar way of life, although reverberations of the latter have been preserved and integrated, to one degree or another, into the new Jewish life. One interviewee, an intellectual from Kyiv who studies Jewish history, reflected upon the topic of the decline of tradition and shared his “approximate estimate”: “*Yiddishkeit* is lost already in the first generation. But the remnants of *Yiddishkeit* are lost approximately in the fourth generation” (Interview with Kh. Kantor 1997).

Below we shall consider the decline of religious bibliophilism among Soviet Jews and investigate how the role and place of the Tanakh and other central texts of Orthodox Judaism changed and what came to replace them.⁵ The interviews allow us to uncover who read the Tanakh and its surrogates and with whom and under which conditions this occurred, as well as what they learned from their reading of it; or, to use the terminology of Michel Foucault and Roger Chartier, the interviews shed light on strategies and tactics of appropriation (Chartier 2006: 14, 198ff.).

“Either the Bible or the Gospels—Some Hefty Book Like That, I Don’t Remember Anymore”

A minimal selection of religious books (the Pentateuch, a prayer-book, special prayer-books for holidays) was an attribute of every tradition-

5. We have decided to use the term “Tanakh” throughout the body of this translation for technical accuracy in English whenever the authorial voice is used, even though the more ambiguous Russian “Bibliia,” frequently rendered “Bible,” is used in the vast majority of cases in the original. In quotations from primary source material, we have rendered the term “Bibliia” as “Bible” in order to distinguish it from the much rarer mentions of the term “Tanakh” in the primary sources. — Translator and editors.

al Jewish home; a wider corpus of religious literature (the Tanakh—i. e., Prophets and Teachings in addition to the Pentateuch—the Talmud, and later Halakhic works) was an attribute of a Jewish home of at least some education. The representatives of the older generation—the grandparents of the interviewees born in the 1930s or the parents of the interviewees born in the 1920s—particularly in non-Soviet areas, owned and made use of the Tanakh, and in this capacity—as a part of the family library and as an object of reading and discussion among older family members—the Tanakh and other “holy books” (*sifrei kodesh*) became fixed in the interviewees’ childhood memories:

Papa had a magnificent library, there were books in leather bindings, which was something incredible. [...] holy books! [...] I remember them: they were these big books, just in leather bindings with golden embossing, remarkable books (Interview with Shapiro).⁶

A change in reading practices from the generation of grandparents to the generation of parents is evident, and the further secularization of these practices among the generation of the interviewees themselves can be discerned:

- Grandma had religious books.
- *Did your parents have secular books?*
- Yes, Grandma Betty had various books, she read a great deal. My parents had secular books (Interview with Leonid Grigor’evich Averbukh 2003).

Having grown up in these kinds of families, my parents, even though they spoke Russian, couldn’t completely tear themselves away. Papa was a doctor, he got his degree in 1926 from the Kyiv Medical Institute, he would sit together with his father and they would discuss which medical recommendations are in the Talmud. So, Papa knew the Talmud, but it didn’t get passed on to me (Interview with Kantor).

The family Tanakh had one more function, one that naturally diverged from its traditional function (since the editions in question were not

6. See also: Interview with Debora Iakovlevna Averbukh 2001 (“Father was very educated. All the way up to the war, we had a wonderful library in Hebrew”); Interview with Ernest Ishaevich Gal’pert 2003 (“The Talmud, the entire set, then the Chumash, the Tanakh—we had all the Jewish literature in its enormity at home”). In numerous other interviews, the Tanakh and Talmud are mentioned as books that were kept at home (Mark Grigor’evich Golub, Irina Davydovna Sadynskaia 1997, among others).

traditional ones, but rather bilingual and illustrated editions): an aesthetic-recreational function, the Tanakh as an artistic album, as an object of beauty.

Father acquired [...] a Bible with a red cover with illustrations from Doré [...] This was a splendid edition of the Bible, in Hebrew, with the script in Hebrew and old high German, not even in Russian. But I grew up with this Bible because a child would get sick, there weren't any vitamins, no food ... As soon as I would get sick, they would place this Bible in my lap, so I remember all the Bible stories as depicted by Doré. Doré's illustrations are such splendid drawings that still haven't been surpassed (Interview with Elizaveta Moiseevna Usherenko 2002).⁷

Some interviewees—primarily older men (born in the 1910s or 1920s)—mention the Tanakh (Interview with Mikhail Tsalevich Loshak 1994; Interview with Evgenii Moiseevich Geller), more often the Torah or Chumash (Interview with Nikolai Izidorovich Shvarts 2003; Interview with Ernest Ishaevich Gal'pert 2003; Interview with Shapiro) and Rashi (Interview with Abram Iankelevich Krupnik 1998), as subjects in school. Even some who studied the Torah in a cheder do not exhibit bibliographical precision (below we shall consider cases of considerable confusion among younger interviewees, including women), perhaps due to the imposition of generally accepted Christian terminology (Old Testament, New Testament) upon traditional Jewish terminology (Chumash, Nevi'im, Ketuvim, Gemara):

[G]randma took me to a cheder [...] I studied Hebrew, then we read various Bible stories—now when I think about it, it wasn't the Old Testament, it was, most likely, a compilation of the history of the Jewish people. For example, to this day I remember this really strange story ... [he proceeds to tell the story of Sodom and Lot's wife] (Interview with Samuil Davidovich Sukhenko 2001).

Boys from more well-to-do families, and girls as well, did not go to cheders, but rather studied Hebrew and the Torah at home, with a melamed (Interview with Leonid Shapsovich Mar'iasis 2002; Interview with Isai Davidovich Kleiman 2003), a rabbi (Interview with Ge-

7. In addition, the Tanakh is elsewhere described as "a very pretty book" with "pretty pictures" in the interview with Evgeniia Grigor'evna Krishtal' 2002.

nia Peretiat'ko 1998), or their fathers (Interview with Anatolii Petrovich Shor; Interview with Peretiat'ko):

— *Did everyone go to a cheder?*

— The rebbe came to us, but boys definitely went to the cheder. [...] But the rebbe came to the girls. I was four or five, I too had to sit at the table when the rebbe with the white beard [...] came. The girls sat and studied, while I crept under the table and pinched the rebbe's legs (Interview with Gel'fer).

The terminological distinction is noteworthy: the interviewees typically call what they had at home and studied at the cheder—the Tanakh in book form—the Chumash (the Pentateuch), while they call the Torah scroll they read at synagogue the Torah. It was the scroll that boys were summoned to for their bar mitzvah, and this is another type of childhood memory connected with the Tanakh:

The day came [...] father took me to the synagogue, I put a tefillah on my head (it's this little box), a second on my arm, and I attached it to my left arm with a little strap—to keep it short, they took out the Torah and I read aloud for the whole synagogue [...] This was the custom. My coming of age (Interview with Miron Il'ich Chepovskii 2000).⁸

But more often—especially in the case of women (girls did not go to cheders, and poor families could not have a rebbe come to their home) and younger interviewees (born in the second half of the 1930s, when Jewish schools were closed)—the Tanakh came to be known via oral transmission from parents or grandparents. In many interviews, the grandmother acts as the main conveyor of tradition to the grandchildren (she typically lived longer and socialized more intimately with the children and grandchildren), if not the main bearer of tradition (this could also be the grandfather):

Papa would tell many stories from the Bible, tales, anecdotes (Interview with Anna Grigor'evna Rysina 2008 [CBSJ]).⁹

Grandma prayed, she had the Bible with her. Grandpa knew everything. Whenever I asked him something, for example: “Grandpa, tell me about

8. See also interview with Shor; Interview with Bursuk 2007 (CBSJ).

9. On the topic of “Tanakh legends” as told by one's father, see also interview with Gel'fer.

Samson and Delilah”—he would tell me all about it. He would tell me the story not from the opera, but on the basis of Scripture, the Tanakh. He knew everything (Ol’ga Rapai-Markish 1998).¹⁰

She would always tell me stories, I would join her in bed—she was in bed most of the time. [...] The Bible, she knew the Bible by heart. Her vision was no longer very good. I would ask Mama: “Mama, grandma can’t even see. How does she pray every day, looking at the Bible and reading?” Mother says: “No, she simply knows it all by heart” (Interview with Klara Lazarevna Dovgalevskaia 2001).

In the process of oral transmission and out of concern for safety, the Tanakh underwent certain tendentious changes, which may be labeled atheization:

They would tell us some tales, stories [...] they even would tell us things from the Bible, but very carefully, very carefully. [...] They didn’t draw our attention to what the Bible is, what it represents, what God is, what this is. There was no talk of this (Interview with Iurii Kliment’evich Pinchuk 1998).¹¹

When speaking of traditions, holidays, and ethical norms, the interviewees often see the Tanakh as their source, which is sometimes true, sometimes false, but the contention is rarely based on familiarity with the text:

It’s written in the Bible: a man comes and asks you for alms. It doesn’t matter whether it’s a Jew, a Russian, a Gypsy or a Moldavian. All the same, you have to give them (Interview with Moishe Khaimovich Frimer 2011 [CBSJ]).

Jews are given names on the basis of their parents’ or family members’ names [...] this is a law, Jews aren’t named arbitrarily, this is written in the Torah (Interview with Ruvim [Grigorii Vladimirovich] Gitman 2009 [CBSJ]).¹²

10. See also interview with Basia Gutnik.

11. For other memories of how the Tanakh was passed on orally “as either tales or stories,” see the interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003; Interview with Lazar’ Veniaminovich Sherishevskii 2003.

12. Few interviewees proved sufficiently knowledgeable to differentiate between the Torah and post-Tanakh tradition and to determine that this or that practice was “not included in the Torah,” that “the rabbis dreamed it up,” and those who could were naturally

We see that the Tanakh, which has given rise to various traditions and faiths, serves as a universal “legitimizer.” The obverse also holds true: stories from the Tanakh are told without reference to the Tanakh, and post-Tanakh (aggadic) stories are told without reference to Midrash and other sources, simply as authentic histories. Both scenarios seem natural for a community where Scripture maintains its authority, but where intimate familiarity with it has been lost, and the “scribes” have lost control over the knowledge of the “flock.”¹³

* * *

In the Judaism in decline practiced by Soviet Jews, certain ritual, especially culinary, practices (holiday menus were painstakingly reproduced) were better preserved than the practice of reading and studying Scripture. This can be explained through both the loss of the books themselves—in the inferno of war and the Holocaust, and also as a result of moving (due to evacuation or peaceful causes such as a work assignment, study, service or Communist construction projects)—and the forgetting of the language. A further reason was the dominant role of women in clandestine domestic religious observance and the transmission of tradition, given that Jewish women did not participate in the public reading of the Torah and were not obligated to study scripture and Talmudic literature (some rabbinical authorities even consider it forbidden) or to know Hebrew.¹⁴ The proverbial “women’s” position is expressed, for instance, in the following statement, although it was made by a rather young interviewee:

— *What does the Torah mean for you? [...]*

— I don’t know. For me the Torah is something radiant. [...] What can it mean for me? I didn’t read it in the original. And if I had read it, how do I know whether I would have understood it? I just have a good feel for [Judaism]. To me it seems that certain impressions are true, on an

among those who were able to go to a cheder or a Jewish school or who studied at home with a rabbi (Interview with Lazar’ Mikhailovich Gurfinkel’ [CBSJ]).

13. Or for a community where there is a great gap between “the people” and “the scribes.” The existence of Bible stories as folklore (“the people’s Bible”) is well-researched in the Slavic context (see, for instance, Belova 2004), and in recent years research on the topic has also been conducted on the basis of expeditions to former shtetls.
14. See, for instance, the individual articles in Wolowelsky 2001 as well as Fuchs 2014, a new in-depth survey of the various positions within Judaism (ancient to modern) on the question of religious education for women.

intuitive level. It's not knowledge. [...] Though they say that for a Jewish woman it's completely sufficient to be a good wife, a good mother, and she'll go to heaven. For men it's more difficult (Interview with Elena Kasavina 1997).

But it would be erroneous to presume that this position was held universally by Soviet Jewish women, and all the more for their mothers and grandmothers. Grandmothers, as previously mentioned, are frequently recalled as a source of deep knowledge of the Tanakh, gained through reading, not oral transmission of tradition; some grandmothers read the Talmud, too. In the following example, a description of two grandmothers, the differentiation between book-based religiosity, which was associated with great piety, and basic (mechanical?) observance, is noteworthy:

Mama's mama, Grandma Etl, never parted with the Talmud. She was very pious. And Grandma Khaika always observed all the Jewish traditions, but didn't display particular piety. But she observed the traditions without fail (Interview with Efim Shoilovich Zhornitskii 2002).

Women who did not know Hebrew (just like their male counterparts) made use of special editions of the Tanakh in Yiddish translation, the so-called *taytsh-chumash*:¹⁵

[S]he had a prayer-book, it was called the *taytsh-chumash*, it was in Hebrew here and a Yiddish translation there, the first upper half was Hebrew and the lower half was Yiddish. Well, of course the children—there were two of us [...] would sit next to her and listen to her pray, she would pray out loud. So, by the time I reached adolescence, I had memorized the content of these prayers, starting with the day the world was created, and for a long time in my life, a long time, I remembered just those images starting with the day the world was created—the story of Adam and Eve, their sons, all the way up to Moses, and then the story of the Exodus (Interview with Anna Efimovna Limonnik).

15. That is, *taytsh* (the Yiddish word for the German language, then Yiddish, and also commentary) plus *chumash* (the Pentateuch). The books of the Tanakh and prayer-books were translated into Yiddish as early as the early modern period, and the Yiddish translation included a commentary, hence the word *taytsh* taking on a corresponding meaning.

Until the universal closing of Jewish schools in the mid-1930s, girls born in the 1920s were able to study at such schools and gain a certain knowledge of the Tanakh, including in an unconventional manner: they staged stories from it.¹⁶ Some even recall studying at the Holy Pentateuch Talmud Torah (Interview with Sura-Dora Nisman) or using connections to get into a cheder (a primary school for boys):

Aside from the gymnasium ... there was also a progymnasium there [...] and a Jewish school for poor children. When the war started brewing, it wasn't possible to send me to the progymnasium, you had to pay a lot. I could have been sent to the poor Jewish school, but they wouldn't accept me. It happened that I wasn't rich enough for the progymnasium and I wasn't poor enough for the Jewish school. I thus wasn't able to go to any school, and I was already eight years old. Then they decided to send me to a cheder because, for people who were so pious, it was a great tragedy if children weren't educated at the proper time, and how. But the cheder didn't accept girls, only boys went there. But thanks to the fact that Father had good friends in the synagogue who held sway with these melamed types, they prevailed upon the melamed to allow me to be enrolled in the cheder together with one other girl so I wouldn't be alone. It was just under one condition: that we wouldn't be beaten (Interview with Limonnik).

* * *

One symptom of the forgetting of "holy books" is loss of familiarity with their titles. A minority of the interviewees uses the appropriate terminology—Tanakh, Chumash, Gemara—typically those who went to a cheder or a Jewish gymnasium for school, as well as the children of rabbis. Some interviewees recall and use these words (owing to Yiddish folklore and songs, for example), but do not remember their correct meaning:

[Father] was well-educated in this regard, he knew the Tanakh—this, this is the highest teaching, yeah. It's even some kind of philosophical teaching, the Tanakh (Interview with Polina Iakovlevna Leibovich 2004).

— At some point there were rebbes, they studied Hebrew, studied the Gemara, the Chumash. At home, in the cheder.

— *What is the Gemara?*

16. "They put on pageants in Hebrew. Even though we didn't know Hebrew, it was a Bible story, as far as I know. Since they wrapped up the children ... with paper, with costumes made of paper, and they wove garlands from multicolored paper flowers [...] my joy knew no bounds" (Interview with Anna Efimovna Limonnik).

- The Gemara is prayers.
- *And you said something else, too. The Gemara and what?*
- The Chumash. [...] This is the same. It's Jewish prayers to God. It's also history, it's Bible stories. There's this one song [...] A mother sings a lullaby to her child. Sleep, my boy, my babe. [...] Soon you'll go to a cheder and you'll study the Chumash and Gemara, and soon you'll be betrothed, you'll be betrothed, but now you've wet yourself (Interview with Esfir' Borisovna German).

I remember, there was rebbe Iankl, who taught me. [...] I had learned to read, [...] so I went on to study translating, the Chumash—this meant “to translate” (Interview with Iakov Abramovich Driz 2002).¹⁷

Various surrogates—sources of knowledge about both Tanakh history and the Jewish people as a whole—came to take the place of the Torah and its manifold, partially forgotten names, which were left behind in childhood. First, the Gospels:

When I turned eight years old, Father decided that I had to know Russian, so they sent me to a parochial church school. [...] I read pages from the Gospels, and I developed a passion for the Gospels. I started studying hard, I knew the Gospels well, and I still know them well, and I later studied the Gospels. And the Gospels led me to atheism [laughter] (Interview with S. D. Sukhenko).¹⁸

In the Soviet period, I didn't read the Bible, I didn't read it. But sometimes its words struck me, their harmoniousness, their succinctness. The start of the Bible goes, “In the beginning was the Word.” You understand? It's so succinct, expressive, deep, musically powerful (Interview with Mikhail Saulovich Turovskii 2001).¹⁹

Second, there are the Jewish “classics”—Sholem Aleichem, Isaac Babel and anecdotes:

17. See also the interview with A. P. Shor, who likewise has difficulty explaining what the Chumash, which he covered in his cheder, is.
18. This is an atypical, though not unique, case: some other interviewees recall parish schools as the basis of their education or that of their parents.
19. “In the beginning was the Word” is actually the beginning of the Gospel of John, not of the Tanakh. — The editors.

I only knew about the Torah from the stories of Sholem Aleichem. I only knew about kashrut, which was never observed in our home, from anecdotes (Interview with Berta Solomonovna Trakhtenbroit 2002).

We didn't purposefully deny our roots, but we knew very little about them. With no little effort my wife got hold of a book by Babel, so we could read it. We no longer had any living ancestors to tell us stories, though my wife's grandma enlightened us a bit (Interview with Simon Nusievich Gonopol'skii 2003).

Paraphrases of the Bible, authored primarily by Zenon Kosidowski,²⁰ as well as "Biblical" novels were available only to the urban intelligentsia:

S.G., a convinced atheist, knew the Pentateuch well and, as it happens, condemned Thomas Mann for his excessively impudent treatment of the Torah in *Joseph and His Brothers*. He liked neither this novel nor *The Master and Margarita*. I lapped up both books, but I didn't dare say it out loud since at that point I still hadn't read the Bible and, perhaps, hadn't even seen a copy of it. My sources for Biblical history were the Hermitage and Zenon Kosidowski's popular book from 1963 *Tales from the Bible* (by the way, at that time it was very difficult to obtain the Bible. It wasn't sold in bookstores) (Maz'ia (Maz'ia n. d.), unpublished manuscript).

"I'm a Member of Three Libraries"

Starting in the 1930s, religious literature is gradually supplanted by *belles lettres* (the Russian classics and foreign fiction), and the paradigm of traditional, if not Orthodox, behavior is supplanted by the paradigm of "culturedness" (*kul'turnost'*), which by definition included a cult of reading and being "well-read" (*nachitannost'*). Not so much chronologically as in terms of meaning, secular Jewish literature, including Yiddish authors like Sholem Aleichem, Mocher Sforim, and others, served as an intermediate literary corpus—between the Tanakh and Pushkin (or Jules Verne). Older family members collected and read these books in Yiddish:

20. Zenon Kosidowski (1898–1978) was a Polish writer and the author of popular scholarly works, including paraphrases from the Old and New Testaments (accompanied by some critical analysis). Both books, *Tales from the Bible* (1963) and *Tales from the Gospels* (1977), were translated into Russian and were reprinted numerous times in the USSR.

[Grandma] was, by and large, an interesting woman. You could talk to her about many things because she read so much. [...] She read different types of literature, including Yiddish literature. This included, naturally, Sholem Aleichem, Bialik, Frug, etc. (Interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003).

My papa, as soon as new Jewish books in Yiddish appeared, would immediately buy them. Even though this was a bit risky for him since he was the head of a division in the district [*okruzhnyi*] hospital and they, of course, kept an eye on him. [...] Maybe he didn't even always read them. But how could that be? It's a Yiddish book, a Soviet book, and he's not going to have it at home? (Interview with Kh. Kantor 1997).

The national “statistics” which affirm that the works of Sholem Aleichem were an indispensable attribute of every Soviet Jewish household that was in the slightest intellectual are well known.²¹ Our sources indeed confirm Soviet Jews’ love for this central writer, but it should be noted that the works of another author were also indispensable in these households: those of Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin. One may say that Pushkin—who, in respect to significance, the position of principal book in the home, and tradition, occupies the top spot on any list of books—supplanted the Tanakh. Without exception, the interviewees include Pushkin in the long descriptions of their home libraries. He invariably leads the list of classic Russian and Soviet authors (Tolstoy, Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky, Korolenko, Kuprin, Gorky, et al.) and popular foreign novelists (Walter Scott, Dumas, Sienkiewicz) (e. g., Interview with Viktor Semenovich Fel’dman 2003; Interview with Motel Goren 1998). But Pushkin is often mentioned singly, as one’s favorite author, or together with Tolstoy (the main poet and the main prose writer) or Lermontov (the two main poets). Entire poems by Pushkin were learned by heart and, in the absence of books, passed on to one’s children, like the Tanakh, through oral transmission:

21. It is difficult to define this group precisely and objectively, since professional and social status did not always adequately reflect one’s cultural level, whether due to difficulties stemming from the war, among other circumstances, or due to anti-Semitic discrimination in education and job placement. Permit but one example of this incongruity: A. E. Limonnik, a machinist by profession, requires many paragraphs to describe her reading preferences and uses expressions like “equilibrium” (*paritet*) and “indifferent.” (*Indifferentsnyi* — a foreign borrowing that sounds much more literary in Russian than does its English equivalent. — The editors.) On the integration of Sholem Aleichem into Soviet literary canon see Estraiikh 2012; Krutikov 2012.

- Pushkin is my favorite [author].
- *Which of his works?*
- I like them all (Interview with Fenia Aronovna Kliaiman).

Well, my mama knew Lermontov and Pushkin very well by heart. So, even though we didn't have the books, I absorbed them by listening (Interview with Khana Davydovna Bronshtein 1995).²²

As has been observed, the universal Pushkinization of literary tastes in the prewar Soviet Union was not an arbitrary occurrence, but rather purposefully inculcated and far from unique to Jews.

The mythology of Pushkin's invisible presence in the USSR at the end of the 1920s and in the 1930s ("Pushkin is part of our lives and the construction of our culture") is certainly comparable with analogous forms of the sacralization of Lenin. [...] Pushkin is the chief in the assembly of Russian poets, a martyr who perished "in the struggle against autocracy," one of the patrons of the new Soviet Russia (Panchenko 2005: 539).

But in the case of Jews, one substitution is especially apparent: Pushkin is cited on questions central to both narrative and life; that is, Pushkin, in the role of primary referent, supplants the traditional Torah. One interviewee, for instance, was in a POW camp, where he at first found himself in a storage barn that seemed ready to collapse at any moment. He was taken from there and placed in a column, where everybody was ordered to remove their pants. He was about to be exposed as a Jew, but this did not come to pass as the storehouse collapsed and everyone rushed over to it:

I wouldn't call it good fortune; it was misfortune that actually helped. For when the entire roof collapsed on the wounded, everyone who happened to be under the beams, of course, was crushed. And I was there at the time, so I either could have been shot or I could have been crushed by the roof, but that's not how things turned out—like Pushkin wrote: "But Eugene was by fate preserved" and so forth (Interview with Leonid Borisovich Serebriakov [born Vol'f Kagan] 1998).

22. On knowing Pushkin by heart, see also: Interview with Efim Shoilovich Zhornitskii 2002; Interview with Lazar' Veniaminovich Sherishevskii 2003; Interview with Dukhan.

Some interviewees attempt to connect Pushkin, as a representative of the pantheon and simultaneously as “a part of our lives,” to their family history: “Just think. Pushkin lived in Kishinev at that time, and my great-grandma had already been born. A link in the chain of time” (Interview with Boris Grigor’evich Molodetskii 2003). One interviewee takes a volume of Pushkin, her most precious book, with her during evacuation—Pushkin, not the Torah, which, as we are able to discover, was also in this interviewee’s library:

Our father left us a wonderful library. It was lost during the war. The only thing that was saved was a volume of Pushkin that I took with me during the evacuation. It then returned with me to Odessa. [...] The mama of my brother’s classmate, Iasha Shikhtman, had given me a Bible as a gift before the war. It was one of those where one page of text was in Russian and the other was in Hebrew (Interview with Berta Solomonova Trakhtenbroit 2002).

Veneration of Pushkin and deep knowledge of his poetry marked the entrance of our protagonists and their parents into the ranks of the Russian-speaking intelligentsia—first under the Russian Empire, then in the Soviet period. Hereby, the object being read is not always of relevance—it might be a Russian, Soviet or foreign classic, it might be an adventure novel, political economy²³ or even the press²⁴—the culture of reading itself is what is important: regular reading practices, begun in early childhood, the scope of what is read (“being well-read”), the presence of books in the home, visiting the library, being informed of the latest literary news. All this, in particular, distinguished a member of the urban intelligentsia from a small-town Jew with an accent.²⁵ Here are but a few of the dozens of declarations of love for books and of devotion to ‘binge reading’ (*zapoinoe chtenie*):

23. Interview with Dukhan: “[My husband] wound up with a group, Jews incidentally, drunks, and lived in some kind of cellar with a cot, but he would spend entire days in the library studying Marxism-Leninism.”

24. Interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003: “[Grandma] didn’t work, but she was very well read. She read newspapers without glasses until the last year of her life.”

25. An example of this sort of disassociation from small-town life: “Some of the workers were very much ... from small towns. The small town had left its stamp upon them. They were, nevertheless, sufficiently cultured, it was just their appearance that gave them away, and their accent a bit” (Interview with Dukhan). On the contempt of the Soviet Jewish intelligentsia for small-town culture, which was “associated with a provincialism combining a primitive range of interests with self-assurance and a certain insolence,” see Krutikov 2010.

I started reading when I was 4 years old. I learned to read from newspapers left lying on the window-sill, and I learned to read by myself, I read in Russian and in German (Interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003).

I was already following those writers I liked, whether prose writers or poets; I followed their creative doings and their works which were published for a broad audience (Interview with Anna Efimovna Limonnik).

Mother read a great deal. My brother acquired such unique books, I don't know where he bartered for them. [...] My brother attached a little battery and a small lamp to himself and read under the covers since my parents objected to reading. We got drunk on reading [*chitali my zapoem*], we read a great deal (Interview with Debora Iakovlevna Averbukh 2001).

When I was still in school, I read a great deal, generally speaking I read a great deal. Literature is my habitat (Interview with Shifra Sel'evna Gol'dbaum 1997).

The epithet "well-read" is often encountered in our interviewees' descriptions of themselves or their family members, followed by passion for reading as the second (if not the first) trait, even if there are only two total. For example:

- [Grandpa] was engaged in some sort of business, all I know is that he was *well-read*, was seen as an authority, provided counsel to all. [...] [Grandma] was small, very energetic. *Well-read*. [...]
- *Tell me about your mom.*
- She *read* a great deal. She was pretty. [...] Our clothing was quite modest, but we were satisfied with life. I don't recall any grumbling at home ever, we had many *books*, we *read* a great deal (Interview with Simon Nusievich Gonopol'skii 2003; emphasis added).

On the one hand, this cult of reading both manifested itself and was perceived as an inheritance of Jewish bibliophilism, simultaneously on the personal, familial, and cultural levels: Jewish religious tradition demanded, in theory, universal literacy, which gave rise to the habit and love of reading, and ancestors possessing this trait passed it on to their descendants:

Well, I know that before the revolution all children of Jewish nationality were literate and certainly went to school, to a cheder, including grandma. But she only learned to read Russian when she was 52. She read a great

deal, she loved to read, sitting at the window with her glasses on her nose, a footstool beneath her feet (Interview with Luiza Abramovna Kagosova).

We fired our stove with the husks of sunflowers. [...] And [Grandma] and I sat for hours and poured these husks into the stove. [...] And during this time she told me Bible stories. [...] I know that she was religious, and she was very well-read [...] She awoke in me interest in reading literature (Interview with Simon Nusievich Gonopol'skii 2003).

On the other hand, the cult of reading manifested itself as part of the “culturedness” ideal, formulated by Soviet propaganda in the 1930s in the context of the attempt to build a “new man,”²⁶ which was maintained in the following decades.²⁷ The concept of culturedness comprised various everyday, behavioral, ideological, and intellectual components: from personal hygiene and new standards of consumption to the struggle against “linguistic unculturedness” and political vigilance. Reading²⁸ was encouraged along two lines—broadening one’s horizons and proper organization of one’s leisure time, under which was understood, aside from reading (including at the library), visits to concert halls and theaters, engagement in sports, and excursions into nature. The interviewees frequently draw a picture of their free time that corresponds to these priorities. Sometimes, of course, this is the result of their natural tastes and desires, perhaps inculcated from childhood. At other times, this appears to be a rather idealized description, a demonstration of “correctness,” and perhaps the fruit of systematic autodidacticism (“I tried to inculcate in myself ...”). Cultured free time, including reading and purchasing books, was also seen as a required part of raising children:

We traveled around the entire southern coast of Crimea and photographed it. Then, when I went to a mineral springs resort, I took [the children] with me. [...] I tried to inculcate in my son, my wife, and myself a love of nature and beauty. We read a great deal, we subscribed to many magazines, and we had

26. On the concept of “culturedness,” see Fitzpatrick 1992 and Volkov 1996 as well as local studies of the same phenomenon, for instance Klimochkina 2006.

27. “And although this movement was not officially revived after the war, many cultural imperatives continued to be realized on the level of everyday life, including in the 1950s, transforming the norms of cultural life into commonplace customs. When this occurred, people simply forgot about culturedness, as you don’t talk about something habitual, and continued to speak in general of culture” (Volkov 1996: 211).

28. “The book must be the most powerful means of instruction, mobilization, and organization of the masses for the tasks of economic and cultural construction” (“Postanovlenie TsK VKP (b),” 1931).

interesting friends. [...] Then we all became passionate about subscribing to thick journals. My wife tried so much to get them that sometimes we denied ourselves food in order to buy some of the available the books. [...] Our son grew up very well-read (Interview with Simon Nusievich Gonopol'skii 2003; see also: Interview with Efim Shoilovich Zhornitskii 2002).

The source of books—the library—is the most important cultural locus in the life narratives of Soviet Jews. In their memories of childhood, home libraries, primarily of their grandfathers and fathers, figure prominently; in their memories of adolescence, these are joined by public libraries, which are dominant in the memories of their adult years as well. The 1930s to the 1950s was a period when Soviet public libraries flourished (Dobrenko 1997), fulfilling both their primary function and, given the deficit of other forms of entertainment, the function of a club. Finally, in the epoch of Jewish rebirth in the 1990s, “Chesed”²⁹ libraries and libraries of other Jewish organizations appeared. These “generations” of libraries sometimes flowed into each other:

— *Did the library of your grandfather, the rabbi, survive?*

— No. [...] It was transferred to the library of the Academy of Sciences sometime after the rabbi died, perhaps even while he was still alive, around 1926 or 1927 (Interview with Lev Evgen'evich Drobiazko 2001).

Father had the most splendid library. He was a great lover of books, and it was books that made him human. [...] [During the evacuation] we lived in Serdobs'k, a rather solid merchant city where there was the most wonderful library. The reason for this, most likely, was the confiscation of many private libraries (Interview with Larisa [Klara] Aleksandrovna Rozina).

When I was leaving for Israel, [a friend] gave me a large library of Jewish books by Jewish writers. I kept a few Jewish books for myself, but I gave the rest to the Jewish library in our community. [...] I view these books as sacred objects (Interview with Ida Moiseevna Gel'fer 1995).

Many interviewees or their family members—mainly women—worked in libraries, work which granted high social status and numbered them among the intelligentsia, in their own eyes as well as others’:

29. The name or a part of the name of the Jewish charitable centers created in the 1990s in many cities of the former USSR (*chesed* is Hebrew for “kindness”).

My aunts sang in the famous Leontovich choir. One of them was the head of a Ukrainian library. [...] They were considered part of the intelligentsia and everyone listened to them (Interview with Efim Shoilovich Zhornitskii 2002; see also Interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003 and Interview with Rakhil' Davidovna Shabad 2004).

Librarians and bibliographers themselves speak of their activities with notable self-regard:

I graduated from the institute in 1947 and began working in the oblast scientific library. I've been working in this library from '47 to the present day (Interview with Berta Solomonovna Trakhtenbroit 2002).

I so adored my medical institute, the medical institute where I worked, I was the head of the bibliographical division (Interview with Sarra Solomonovna Shpital'nik 2004).

I was the head bibliographer. [...] I slept four hours a day because I always came in with a mountain of books and read and acquainted myself with them. [...] It was extraordinarily interesting work! I can be proud: I worked in the library for 52 years, and for 52 years I was happy to go to work every morning. Things didn't work out this way for everyone (Interview with Viktor Semenovich Fel'dman 2003).

Assessments of the profession change with the following generation, the generation of the interviewees' children, when the salary of librarians employed by the state becomes insultingly low:

My daughter worked in various libraries, both children's libraries and otherwise. The last seven years she worked at a medical institute. [...] When her salary came to equal what she spent on riding the bus to and from work, she gave it up, even though she worked as the head of the professors' reading room (Interview with Boris Grigor'evich Molodetskii 2003).

"Two Years Ago, I Read the Torah with Great Pleasure"

All the internationalization of Jews' cultural horizons and reading preferences notwithstanding, Jewish identity certainly was in evidence prior to perestroika, but more in national-political than cultural-religious terms: Soviet Jews compiled "libraries of classic Russian authors of Jewish nationality" (Interview with Natan Iosifovich Sha-

piro 1995), cultivated an interest in Israel, read *Exodus* by Leon Uris (Interview with Lev Evgen'evich Drobiazko 2001), and, given the absence of a suitable literature, developed the habit of utilizing hostile discourse—by reading between the lines:

[My husband] would buy all the books like *Caution: Zionism!* [Iu.S.Ivanov, Politizdat, 1970] and read them very carefully. He would take certain phrases, like “they think that they allegedly,” and cut out all the nonsense, like “allegedly.” Then the phrase had a completely different meaning. [...] This is how he obtained information on Israel. He also would take newspapers that scolded us, likewise cut them up, and between the lines understand how things were actually going (Interview with Larisa Aleksandrovna Rozina).

The situation changed with the advent of the Jewish revival in the post-Soviet space in the 1990s (Gitelman 2003, 2012; Aviv and Shneer 2005; Friedgut 2007): religious-cultural identity was revived, or rather began to be fostered anew, and the Torah returned to bookshelves—of Chesed libraries at least. Many interviewees note that they began to read the Torah “quite recently,” “two years ago,” “in retirement” or “when Ukraine gained independence” (Interview with Grigorii Isaakovich Stel'makh; Interview with Kh. Kantor 1997; Interview with Zel'da Aronovna Lerner 1997; Interview with Shifra Sel'evna Gol'dbaum 1997; Interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003). Some reflect upon how their interests in things Jewish changed in comparison with the Soviet period:

Grandma told us Bible stories, too. Now, in the mid-1990s, I have read these stories in the Bible myself. This didn't interest me before. Though everything that happened in Israel always interested us, and we took joy in its successes and triumphs (Interview with Efim Shoilovich Zhornitskii 2002).

The revival was built upon supports different than the declining underground observance of Soviet times. If the key concepts at that time were family, privacy, prohibitions, and traditional cuisine, then in the 1990s these became communality, publicness, positive injunctions, and new ritual dishes.³⁰ Tradition is not so much reborn as it

30. On the replacement of the traditional East European Hanukkah dish—potato pancakes (latkes)—with Israeli doughnuts (sufganiyot), see, for instance, Amosova and Kaspina 2010: 26.

is imported, and the books involved in the religious revival are not those editions of the Tanakh from one's grandfather's or father's library. Those have most likely been lost, while the Cheseds "give out" (Interview with Moris Shiff 2006) "new" copies of the Torah and prayer-books. And secularized elderly Jews' attitude toward them is typically far from a traditional one: to them it is "pleasant to read," they view it as a "most magnificent literary-historical work," as fine literature "of the highest sort," as a "very insightful book" (Interview with Shiff; Interview with Leonid Moiseevich Dusman 2003; Interview with Kh. Kantor 1997). Some, however, draw greater inspiration—they apply stories and images from the Tanakh to themselves, that is, they reproduce the essence of the traditional Jewish relationship with the Torah: the Torah remains eternally relevant, all contemporary events are merely a renewal of Biblical archetypes:

Our names: his is Isaak and mine is Rimma, that is, Riva. And Riva is Rebecca. So, when we began reading the Bible, *and we began reading it fairly late in life* [*ne tak rano*], we reached the conclusion that we are the descendants of the Biblical Isaac and Rebecca. [...] Since ours is a friendly union and we have been married already for 50 years, this means that it's not a coincidence and it's a blessing. We aren't religious, but there's some kind of element of this sort to it (Interview with Rimma Markovna Rozenberg 2003, emphasis added).

The bond of time, of course, could not completely be torn asunder, and some interviewees' fresh familiarity with the Tanakh elicits memories from before the war, breaking through the shroud thickened by decades: "When a chapter of the Torah is read aloud in the Chesed, Grandpa's stories come back to me from the dark recesses of my memory" (Interview with Anna Grigor'evna Rysina 2008; Interview with Grigorii Isaakovich Stel'makh; Interview with Mikhail Iankelevich Shkol'nik 1998).

From "Constitution" to "Imaginary Book" to Real-Life Encounter

In the context of the declining crypto-Judaism of the Soviet period, the Tanakh and religious bibliophilism gradually lose their central cultural position and their relevance for identity. From a community of "scribes" who read the holy books and studied the Torah as a constitution of sorts, the Jewish community transforms into a so-called tex-

tual community (Stock 1990): most do not read and are incapable of reading the holy books (the heretics described by Stock are illiterate or minimally literate; Soviet Jews do not know the relevant language), and in any case the books for the most part are simply not available (banned, destroyed). Owing to certain knowledgeable individuals, representatives of the older generation, and individual copies, the memory of these books, the Tanakh above all, is preserved, and as a result it maintains some authority—even when nearly completely absent. In particular, all sorts of norms and popular beliefs—sometimes erroneously—are derived from it.

The community contents itself with surrogates (translations of the Tanakh into another language and retellings lacking in sacrality, completeness and exactitude), and the Tanakh functions as an “imagined book,” which is known and remembered, but which cannot be accessed and which effectively does not exist (Mel’nikova 2011). Correspondingly, the holy books cease to be the core element of crypto-Judaic tradition, identity and society (which gradually ceases to be a “textual community”), and are supplanted by other elements: prohibitions (the least notable and least labor-intensive), rituals, particularly for holidays, particularly their culinary component (we are dealing with “women’s religion”), as well as a unifying common threat—national and state anti-Semitism—and a common, if external, hope and solace in this world: Israel. The “Jewish revival” of the 1990s, the appearance of new Jewish institutions, and the restoration of religious life return to elderly post-Soviet Jews³¹ the Torah, but its meaning is far different than what it once was: it becomes for them one facet of Jewish experience alongside holidays in the “Chesed,” the Jewish press, Sholem Aleichem, and news from Israel; that is, the Torah becomes, in essence, an additional element of Jewish life.

31. The “appropriation” of the Torah by their children and grandchildren born after the war is a separate topic, upon which our sources shed hardly any light. One can speculatively presume that their perception and assimilation of Jewish religious bibliophilism differed from what has been described here for a number of reasons: the absence of prior experience (I am not taking into consideration the families of practicing crypto-Jews, Chabad above all—see note 4), a more active life disposition and greater openness to change, a different level of involvement in the religious rebirth of the 1990s, a different sort of participation in the programs of Jewish organizations, a rather different cultural background, and a different level of criticism of Soviet ideology. Research on this topic (together with others, above all the Chabad Lubavitch movement’s strategies for missionary activity) may help to answer the question of why, of all currents within Judaism, the ultra-orthodox have prevailed in the post-Soviet space.

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BERNICE MARTIN

Religion, Secularity and Cultural Memory in Brazil

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This article is devoted to issues of religion, secularity and cultural memory and the ways they are connected and determined by power relations and power structures. These connections and determinations are illustrated by the colonial history of Brazil and the postcolonial power structures this history gave rise to. The article explores several paradoxes of the contemporary Brazilian religious Gestalt and interprets them in relation to power and status hierarchies of the colonial and postcolonial periods. Special attention is devoted to the rise of Pentecostalism (since the 1970s) and the concomitant breaking of the long-standing “cultural agreement” that the Catholic Church would preside (benignly) over a harmonious religious arena.

Keywords: religion, secularity, cultural memory, Brazil, Latin America, power structures.

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IN his recent revisionist history, *The War on Heresy: Faith and Power in Medieval Europe*, R.I. Moore remarks that it had taken many decades for historians to correct the story of the “war” on heresy between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries because “[t]here has been a long tradition of separation between the study of secular and religious history” (Moore 2012: 334). This separation of scholarly disciplines is one institutional aspect of the taken-for-granted distinction in the West between “religious” and “secular.” Moore argues church historians had steered clear of the methodological and theoretical developments in secular history and secular historians had avoided tackling issues of personal faith except to “accept religious belief, individual or collective, as sufficient explanation for actions—mass murder or mass suicide, for example—that might otherwise seem to call for further investigation” (Moore 2012: 334). This judgment has an instructively contemporary ring in spite of its medieval referents. The revision of the history of crusades against heresy had to put together the dissociated evidence from two scholarly fields about the operation of power, by monarchs and competing local elites, on the one hand, and on the other its interaction—cooperative, competitive or violent—with ecclesiastical, papal, monastic and popular “religious” constellations of power, which were often also in conflict with each other. Once the choreography of power was assembled and clerical accounts of heresy trials were located within that power play, it became clear that heresy accusations “were regularly aligned to long-standing political divisions and factional rivalries” (Moore 2012: 296) in the context of attempts by both monarchs and papacy to centralize their own power in a period of fast economic change, the growth of towns with new urban elites and novel extremes of wealth and poverty. It also revealed that “Cathars,” “Manichaeans” and “Albigensians,” as cohesive, dualist heretical movements, were at best dubious constructs extrapolated from the standard rhetorical tropes of the Paris schoolmen, and at worst the nightmare fantasies of highly placed ecclesiastics and leaders of monastic orders. “Heresy” codes and occludes underlying tensions and rivalries.

There are lessons here for social scientists of religion, not least a reminder to “situate” the accounts of intellectuals rather than assuming they are disinterested (most of the accounts of the medieval heretics come either from their prosecutors and accusers or from clerical apologists for the church) and to pay close attention to the dimension of power. Most of us have now got the message that “religion” and the “secular” are culturally and historically constructed categories rath-

er than universal entities, with the power relations of the colonial encounter as the primary source of their modern usage. Yet the vocabulary of the social sciences continues to deploy the terms. Indeed, they are central to many of the metrics, such as survey and official census data, on which cross-societal comparisons and theory construction depend, though quite what is being measured and compared always raises issues of interpretation, as will be seen below in the Brazilian data. Both the critique of “religion” and “secularity” as historically contingent constructs, and the revision of the story of the medieval “war on heresy,” emphasize the salience of the power dimension in ecclesiastical structures, as well as *between* them and “secular” powers, if we want to understand what the categories conceal. The colonial history of Brazil, and the postcolonial power structures it gave rise to, are crucial to understanding Brazil’s “religious arena” today and the apparently very limited role of “secularism” in it, notwithstanding the fact that Brazil has been a “secular state” for a century and a quarter.

Let me begin from a puzzle about the nature of that Brazilian “religious arena” that David Martin and I confronted when we were researching Pentecostalism in Brazil in 1990. We interviewed Catholic and Protestant social scientists of religion and found a—to us—curious consensus that the rise of Pentecostalism, especially the recent appearance of neo-Pentecostal churches preaching a prosperity gospel, violated a long-standing “cultural agreement” that the Catholic Church would preside (benignly) over a harmonious religious arena in which African and indigenous “spirituality” found expression through folk Catholicism and a minority of Afro-Brazilian “religions” tolerated and semi-legitimated by the educated classes. The new Pentecostals were doing something entirely new in aggressively attacking the Catholic faith and even mainstream Protestantism. The researchers we spoke to deplored this as “un-Brazilian.” Some of them repeated the popular media view that Pentecostalism was a foreign import, an instrument of “American cultural imperialism” and global capitalism, though a few had recognized that the movement was in fact thoroughly indigenized. Its supposed “foreign” origin, finance and control were conjured to explain Pentecostalism’s “un-Brazilian” tendencies. The research institute of the mainstream Protestant churches (CEDI, Centro Ecumênico de Documentação) proudly showed us dossiers and videos designed for popular education which represented Pentecostalism, notably its mass healing spectacles, not only as alien but as a form of propaganda akin to the Nürnberg rallies of the Nazis. Our informants also deplored Pentecostalism, especially the Uni-

versal Church of the Kingdom of God, as uniquely “racist” in a culture they believed was distinguished by non-racist “mixing.” Pentecostalism made trouble by condemning the Afro-Brazilian *orixas* as “demons,” and members of the Universal Church noisily exorcised them, even on the beach in Rio during the Afro-Brazilian New Year ceremonies for “Our Lady of the Sea.”

Assessments of this kind were repeated in the account of Brazilian religion David Lehmann published in 1996, *Struggle for the Spirit*. Lehmann “went native” in re-presenting the opinions of what, following Carlos Rodriguez Brandão, he termed “the erudite elite” (those who are *culto* or “cultivated”). Lehmann went beyond Brandão’s notion of a fluid flow of dialectical exchanges (*trocas*) between the “popular” and the “erudite,” where popular religion, including evangelical and Pentecostal elements, is a form of resistance (Brandão 1980). Lehmann rejected Brandão’s characterization of Pentecostalism as grassroots resistance or response to social dislocation, and insisted it was a “cultural onslaught” by which intransigent leaders were attempting to transform the whole field of popular religion. Yet he concluded Pentecostalism had genuinely broken open the religious arena by refusing the sponsorship of “erudite” patrons and persisting in its own offensive “bad taste.” Lehmann agreed with some Brazilian scholars that “blackness” or “Africanness” had become a desirable, even fashionable quality in Brazil, affecting every status level. He also insisted that, although Pentecostal churches were full of black and indigenous people they could not be regarded as “black churches” because they did not have an explicit project (that is, an ideology or politics) of black (or indigenous) “emancipation” like the “black churches” of the USA (Lehmann 1996: 158–59). While Lehmann voiced no suspicion that “erudite opinion” might, perhaps, be “constructed” or *partis pris*, he regarded Pentecostal claims about the faith’s beneficent effect on marriage and family life as an obviously “idealized petit-bourgeois lifestyle” which had generated a parallel female discourse of empowerment in which, “be it only in fantasy,” women could “force men to shoulder responsibilities” (Lehmann 1996: 225).

We were dubious about some of these interpretations, given the hard evidence that Brazilians themselves were the effective evangelists for Pentecostalism, that the movement only took off once it was indigenized and that it had a particular appeal for women and for ethnic and marginalized groups as well as the poor in general. A paper for the World Council of Churches in 2000 by Otávio Velho, professor of Social Anthropology of the Federal University of Rio de Ja-

neiro, describes the ideas we encountered in 1990, and which David Lehmann largely endorsed, as part of “a hegemonic national ideology (both popular and erudite) which considers ‘mixture’ in general as typically Brazilian, contrasting it favourably with ideologies of racial and/or cultural purity prevalent in other parts of the world” (Velho 2000). Protestants had historically been excluded from this complex as “immigrants” and Velho comments that the view of Pentecostalism as an American import “is no longer sustainable.” Deconstructing or at least recontextualizing this “hegemonic national ideology” is one object of this paper.

Assuming for the moment that we can broadly accept the metrics, the current composition of Brazil’s “religious arena” gives little obvious support to the classical European theory of secularization as the inevitable accompaniment to modernity. Brazil looks more like one of Shmuel Eisenstadt’s “multiple modernities.” The status of Brazil as a BRIC economy, with growth rates most “modern” states in Europe and North America might envy, indicates that *economic* modernity is not in question. But the relation of “religion” and “secularity” looks very unlike Western Europe, not much like the USA, and, except for their common experience of recent Pentecostal growth, significantly different from the postcolonial societies of Africa and Asia that furnished much of the evidence for the critique of “religion” and the “secular” as constituents of the secularization hypothesis (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and Van Antwerpen 2011). Brazil’s contemporary religious arena exhibits a good deal of what Peter Berger calls “furious belief” with precious little explicit atheism; it appears to be a still “enchanted” culture interwoven with Brazil’s economic and technological modernity. Though all the countries that emerged in the nineteenth century as independent states out of the two Iberian Empires share important features, there is a higher level and more diversity of religious adherence in Brazil than in the rest of Latin America. In the 2010 population census of Brazil, 64.6% of the population was Roman Catholic (down from 90% in 1970 when the startling rise of the *evangélicos*, over 60% of them Pentecostals, was first being widely felt). Evangelical Protestants were 22.2% (up from 15.4% in 2000). Other religions were 5.2%, with the Afro-Brazilian complex of movements—Spiritism, Umbanda, Kardecism and Candomblé—most prominent, but also including Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, and a variety of new religious movements. In 2010 the No Religion category (Sem Religião) covered some 5.3 million persons out of the almost 191 million Brazilians, or 8% of the population (up from 7.4%

in 2000), with men substantially outnumbering women. Yet 81% of the No Religion category believed in God with only 2.5% claiming to be atheist (less than 0.2% of the total population), though this is an increase since 1980 when the number of atheists was negligible. What the No Religion category mainly seems to point to is a pattern of de-institutionalization, a free-and-easy approach to church doctrine and discipline without an outright repudiation of identity, rather than a definitive rejection of a “transcendent” dimension of life. Overall, 97% of the Brazilian population believes in God (IBGE Censos 2010).

Despite these apparently decisive metrics, several respected observers suggest current developments point to an increasing convergence with the Western European pattern of secularization, particularly the slow but steady growth of the No Religion category and the rise of agnosticism and atheism, especially among younger generations. Philip Jenkins believes a triangular development is occurring between “secularists,” Catholics and Pentecostals (Jenkins 2013). Both Andrew Chesnut (cited in Romero 2013) and Jenkins argue that the true figure for the No Religion category may well be higher than 8%—Chesnut surmises nearer 15%—taking into account how many nominal Catholics, especially men, are effectively de-institutionalized already: six out of ten Catholics regard themselves as “not very practicing” or “not practicing at all.” Fernando Altmeyer, a theologian at the Catholic University of São Paulo, believes Latin America is beginning to resemble the Western world in losing its homogeneity of faith, less through the growth of Pentecostalism than through Catholics, notably among the young, dropping out of the Church and becoming agnostic (Brooks 2011; *Independent Online* 14-03-2013). Marcelo Côrtes Neri, director of the Social Policy Unit of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation in Rio and author of a report on the recent growth of the middle classes in Brazil, also comments on the increasing number of women leaving the Catholic Church and the rejection of the Church’s reproductive morality by those who stay (Neri 2011). The Catholic Church is losing adherents faster than the Pentecostal churches are gaining them, though Paul Freston estimates one in two Catholic drop-outs still join Pentecostal groups, even though the rate of conversion has slowed (Freston 2013). There is also a rise in the number of religions that, in Velho’s phrase, have “a mythological indigenous origin,” such as Santo Daime or Unio do Vegetal, both, like Umbanda, founded in the 1920s with “erudite class” participation, incorporating elements of the late nineteenth-century “erudite” spiritism of Kardecism, and centered on the use of the hallucinogenic drug ayahuasca (Velho 2000). These religions have

developed transnational missions in recent years (Groisman 2009; Cohen 2009). There is a growing interest in neo-shamanism and eclectic movements combining elements from different spiritual traditions, many of them with an interracial following. Velho relates this growth to the increasing visibility and political engagement of indigenous peoples, of which there are at least 200 separate groups in modern Brazil (Velho 2000). It may also represent seepage from nominal Catholicism since indigenous, black and mixed-race people traditionally tended to combine attendance at Afro-Brazilian and spiritist cults with official Catholicism. Some of it may also be a reaction against the promotion of the larger Afro-Brazilian cults, especially Candomblé, as part of a “heritage industry” put on display for tourist consumption. At all events, this development, though small, is distinct from the Western or the Eastern European patterns of “secularity.”

Paul Freston predicts that within two or three decades the Protestant population will meet its ceiling at no more than 35%, restricted by the effect of the scandals and disappointments the Pentecostal movement has produced particularly through its incursion into politics, while he believes the Catholic Church is unlikely to sink below 40%, given its long cultural hegemony (Freston 2013). Freston, however, sees little evidence of the spread of serious “secularism” and does not envisage a “secular” pillar paralleling the Catholic and Evangelical ones as Jenkins does. Freston believes Pentecostalism has radically transformed the Brazilian religious field “from below” in a culture traditionally organized “from above” through patron-client networks, turning what was “hierarchical syncretism” into “competitive pluralism.” Chesnut and Jenkins may well have over-interpreted the significance of detachment from institutional churches, made too little of the exiguousness of explicit atheism, and underestimated the continuing salience of an exuberantly enspirited cultural tradition, but their predictions about the route of travel cannot be dismissed out of hand. Yet it is important to place any snapshot of the pattern of religious attachment within a historically formed cultural *Gestalt* rather than simply focusing on isolated “variables” and extrapolating from them. The paradoxes of the current *Gestalt* are startling and call for further explanation.

The first of these paradoxes is that Brazil is more religious and more religiously diverse than the rest of the Latin American-Caribbean world, yet it displays far more liberal moral attitudes, especially in the field of interpersonal relations, than that might imply, especially in view of the historic hegemony of the Catholic Church and the more

recent rise of morally rigorous Pentecostalism. Although the Catholic Church, sometimes in concert with leaders of the *evangélicos*, has engaged in political struggles with the secular state in recent years over issues such as abortion, reproductive medicine and the civil rights of homosexuals, it has won unequivocal legal victories in few of these areas, though it has been in a position to impede certain aspects of the delivery of welfare. Divorce was legalized as long ago as 1977 and same-sex unions were legally recognized in 2004. As Marcelo Neri observes, social attitudes do not follow official Catholic teachings very closely despite two-thirds of the society regarding themselves as Catholics. Between 1970 and 2010 the number of children born to the average woman declined from 5 to 1.82, below replacement rate, though Catholic rejection of contraception has not softened (Pentecostals are opposed to abortion but some accept contraception). This certainly mirrors most of the Catholic societies of Europe, other than Malta, which have followed the same trajectory and now have below replacement birth rates. In 2007 the Pew Foundation found that though 83% of Brazilians believed it was necessary to believe in God to be moral, 65% accepted homosexuality and only 30% did not. Philip Jenkins interprets the growth of liberal attitudes to personal morality as an index of the weakening hold of the institutional church in Brazil. Yet Paul Freston notes: “every day in Brazil morally and socially more flexible churches are created” (Freston 2013: 69), and two years ago I heard a conference paper about burgeoning homosexual Pentecostal churches in Rio (Alves 2011). We should not take as self-evident a tight association of religious identities with conservative moral attitudes or assume their divergence is an automatic index of weakening “religion.” It calls for further exploration.

The second paradox is that Brazil sees itself, and is widely regarded elsewhere, as a “naturally” Catholic society, eliding the fact that Brazilian Catholicism was imposed by conquest on indigenous Amerindian peoples and black slaves shipped in from Africa who had their own beliefs and ritual practices, and has been sustained by colonial and postcolonial power elites in a dialectic of alliance and competition with the papacy. The image of Brazil as immemorially Catholic lies behind the widespread dismay that greeted the rise of Brazilian Pentecostalism and the unwillingness to believe the figures, which we were still encountering in the early 1990s when the movement had already been growing fast for three to four decades. It also underlay the reluctance among the research population as well as popular Brazilian media opinion to believe Pentecostalism was successfully outbidding

Liberation Theology and drawing the poor out of the base communities in the 1980s and 90s. Today there are probably more Pentecostals than Catholics in church in Rio and São Paulo on any day of the week. Otávio Velho recognizes the paradox in the image of Brazil as immemorially Catholic. He coined the term “productive anachronism” for his insight that the emergence of “colonial missionization” might be seen as the historical mirror image of contemporary globalization and, reciprocally, postcolonial globalization might be seen in terms of “missionization” (Velho 2009).

The third paradox is the coexistence of a cultural myth of Brazil as a uniquely non-racist society that celebrates harmonious “mixing,” with a stratification system which is certainly closely correlated to skin color and is arguably close to being a racial caste system: although no single boundary marks white from non-white, status is minutely coded in a vocabulary that specifies variations of skin color (Loveman, Muniz and Bailey 2011). Until the last few decades when the inequalities have been somewhat softened, Brazil had one of the most extreme distributions of wealth in the world, and even today, while the rich are mostly white, the poor are disproportionately black or mixed race. The richest income group earns 42 times more than the poorest, and wealth is even more unequally distributed: average earnings for black and mixed-race people are 2.4 times lower than for whites and people of Far Eastern origin; among the richest 10% of the population only 20% are black while 73% of the black population are in the lowest 10% of the income scale; and nearly three-quarters of those in extreme poverty are black. Further, although white and black in the lowest income brackets are equally poor, the small minority of blacks in the top income sectors have incomes substantially lower than those of the whites in the same bracket (Barbosa et al. 2012). While the illiteracy rate for the whole population is now down to 8.6% of those over the age of 15 (down from 13.6% in 2000), twice as many black and mixed-race people as whites are illiterate (IBGE Notias 2011; IBGE Censos 2010). There is a clear ladder of employment opportunity that traditionally tended to consign black, indigenous and mixed-race people to manual work or jobs in the service sector and commerce that are out of the public eye, and qualifications do not entirely offset color status in the competition for professional positions even today. “The Real Brazil,” a report of research by CEBRAP (Centro Brasileiro de Análise e Planejamento) for Christian Aid, shows that, while strongly correlated with other indices of inequality, color status operates as a variable in its own right. As the report summarizes baldly, “[r]acial

inequality is one of the principal characteristics of Brazilian society” (Barbosa 2012: 56).

Slavery was not abolished until 1888, just before the fall of the monarchy, amid a flurry of slave revolts. Brazil had imported slaves from the beginning of the sixteenth century and slavery was accepted throughout the colonial period and the first 66 years of independence. The Church owned many slaves itself, though with increasing unease by the nineteenth century—the Benedictines freed all children henceforth born to the order’s 2,000 female slaves in 1866, for example, and the Rio Branco Law of 1871 freed all the slaves of the Carmelite and Benedictine orders. Through the whole period of the Portuguese Empire some 3.5 million Africans were taken to Brazil. By the start of the sixteenth century there were 20,000 Africans and the numbers increased by around 8,000 a year. In 1822, the year Brazil became an independent state, a census found that two-thirds of the population had some African descent, though only 20% of these were slaves (Geipel 1997; Lynch 2012). In the 2010 census 50.7% of the population described themselves as “black” or “mixed race,” a figure that had risen from 44.7% in 2000. It is widely believed that this recent rise reflects the increased social acceptability of “black” identity in recent years. The combination of widespread genetic mixing with the maintenance of white status superiority is the third historical irony calling for further exploration.

The patterns underlying these three paradoxes were laid down in the power and status hierarchies of the colonial and postcolonial period, notably the power relations between the Catholic Church and the monarchy and court, and among Church, court, the white elites and the conquered indigenous peoples and the enslaved African blacks. From the conquest at the beginning of the sixteenth century the Portuguese monarchy controlled the church, including the right to appoint the posts at the top of the Church hierarchy, which throughout the period of the Empire were reserved for Portuguese- rather than Brazilian-born whites. The seminaries in which priests were trained were under the control of the state, as were the activities of the monastic orders. Men of indigenous origins were eventually permitted to become priests but usually assigned to rural areas, while white priests served in the cities. Blacks and mulattoes were excluded from the priesthood and the religious orders (Lorea 2009; Lynch 2012).

The state became independent in 1822 when the Portuguese monarch fled to Brazil after Napoleon invaded Portugal, and when the Portuguese monarchy was restored, Brazil still remained a monarchy of the Portuguese royal house until 1889 when its second king, Pedro

II, was ousted with minimal armed struggle and the state became a republic. The republic took over all the monarchical powers over the Church, notably the power of appointments to the upper echelons of the Church, and a new breed of “political priests” became in effect government servants furnished with sinecures. The Church has retained an influential role in the secular state even though it was disestablished in 1891. In that year a strict separation of state and church was enacted, state financing of the clergy was withdrawn, secular marriage was introduced, religious education was removed from the public schools, the practice of religions other than Roman Catholicism was legalized and areas previously under church oversight, such as cemeteries, were secularized. In practice the state soon found it impossible to perform all the roles it had officially taken over from the Church, partly because it could not afford the cost, so after a short secular hiatus the Church informally resumed many of its traditional roles. In 1931, at the beginning of the Estado Novo period under Getúlio Vargas, religious education was officially reintroduced into the public schools. Public religious holidays and Church involvement in the armed forces were recognized. Religious symbols as part of most public buildings have long been taken for granted, and this was legally challenged for the first time only in 2007. The 1988 Constitution, introduced when Brazil returned to formal democracy after the fall of the military junta, declared the nation “under the protection of God,” inscribed the phrase “God be praised” on the currency and made religious education a part of the curriculum of all public elementary schools, though attendance became optional. The state continues to subsidize religious activities, particularly pastoral campaigns for the Catholic Church, especially in the field of health and education, which means that health and reproductive issues, notably sexual health, unwanted pregnancy and infertility, tend to be approached in terms of what the Church will countenance, as President Lula sometimes found to his embarrassment. The Brazilian state under Lula largely financed the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to São Paulo in 2007 and entered into a compact with the Vatican over restricting abortion that had not been agreed in Parliament (Lorea 2009).

Over the period from independence to the present, more particularly during the Vargas dictatorship and the Estado Novo between 1930 and 1954, Church and state cooperated to hold back democratic tendencies, particularly from the political Left. The involvement of parts of the Church in Liberation Theology after Vatican II and especially in the 1980s under the military Junta was a new departure for a

national church that until this point had been the partner of the state in support of the traditional privileges of elites and a generally politically conservative force in politics and society.

Nevertheless, historically both state and Church have been weak institutions. Throughout the colonial period and in much of the almost two centuries since independence, the state's writ did not run much beyond the major cities. The rural hinterland was controlled by, and in the interests of, the great landowners, and most towns and cities by, and in the interests of, the white urban elites, from the 1890s including the mining and industrial business elite. Miguel Angel Centeno argues that the state has been "far less able to impose itself on its societ[y] than its European counterparts," in particular it taxed a much smaller proportion of wealth and never managed to extract a significant surplus from the rich to finance the state (Centeno 2002: 11). Centeno argues, following Tilly, that the institutional weakness of the state, which is a common feature of Latin American societies, is both cause and consequence of the virtual absence of inter-societal wars on the continent—he points out that the boundaries of Latin American states hardly altered from the point of independence to today. International wars in the modern era have had certain common consequences. They require the state to extend its tentacles into civic life, legitimated as part of the patriotic war effort, and to extract surplus as taxes from everyone, including the wealthy and powerful. They also induce the state to foster nationalism and a sense of patriotic citizenship, above all willingness to make sacrifices for the nation on the part of the people who will pay for the conflict both in privation and with the lives of their young men. In the absence of war, states do not have to develop institutional mechanisms for controlling in detail the lives of the population and the distribution of resources. In colonial and postcolonial Brazil the state had had little need for such mechanisms or for organizational means of ensuring the efficient use of resources to deliver particular policies. In particular, the Church was largely left to deal with welfare, such as it was, including education. The resources the state did control tended to be used for the private enrichment and influence of top state functionaries in the tug of competition and cooperation with non-state elites. For that reason postcolonial Brazil fostered an ever-expanding state, as government office with its entitlement to salary was one of the "resources" the state had to bargain with (Owensby 1999). This produced bloated state employment combined with ineffectiveness, even after the belated introduction of competitive examinations in 1938, which only supplemented

rather than supplanted the ubiquitous dependence on clientelism. Frequent bouts of inflation tended to erode the value of government salaries, alienating public employees and forcing them to take supplementary jobs, also dependent on securing the recommendation of higher status patrons. The state was both inflated and weak.

In most Latin American societies independence was only gained through armed struggle, a process that tended to make the military a powerful power center. In Brazil, by contrast, the transition from monarchy to republic was so smooth and involved so little violence that its elites never needed to become deeply involved in a war of independence as they did, for example, in Mexico. This contributed to the weakness of the military as an arm of the state (with a chronic tendency elsewhere to act in its own rather than in the state's interest). It also helps to account for the failure in Brazil to develop a common sense of national identity or a widespread distribution of the liberal Enlightenment ideas associated in Europe with liberation struggles and democratic aspirations. Until the early twentieth century there was little patriotic sentiment among the peasant population and the urban poor: Lynch comments that the rural laborers in the nineteenth century had little sense of identity with the Brazilian Republic and in the often brutal stratification system of the landed estates and plantations; the Church was the only institution that attracted any sense of belonging. Patriotic sentiment was eventually developed as a result of deliberate policy, especially under Vargas, as a part of attempts to undercut the appeal of organized labor and leftist politics in the twentieth century. We will come back to that below.

Centeno argues that, until recent decades, the Latin American state never asserted a real "monopoly of violence" (one of the characteristics that most Western political science routinely uses to define the state), because there were so many private militias, often better trained and equipped than the national armed forces. For most of the colonial and postcolonial period, although the elites did not regard the military as a desirable profession for themselves, they tended to keep their own militias. Soldiering was a form of manual work which was seen as the metier of black slaves and indigenous people and disdained by whites. For much of colonial and postcolonial history the military was recruited from the "offscourings" of society, sometimes even from coerced convict populations, rather than being a disciplined and trained force.

Despite the absence of significant wars there was no shortage of organized violence in Latin American societies, usually deployed either in inter-elite rivalries or, more significantly, as Centeno stresses,

to suppress the “internal enemies” of the state, that is, the chronically rebellious indigenous poor and the black slaves who staged frequent insurrections and, as runaways, might join communities of outlaws. The last of these Brazilian messianic communities in Bahia was wiped out only in 1897. Ironically the state military responsible for carrying out such suppressions and massacres was mainly recruited from those very same subaltern populations for whom a military career was one of the few avenues of mobility open to them.

The Church, too, was in important ways always a weak institution, even though its upper echelons were privileged, wealthy and individually powerful, and all priests had certain privileges: for a long time they enjoyed immunity from certain state laws including taxation. The Church was always undermanned—in 1891 when it was disestablished after a series of scandals about Masonic infiltration, the Brazilian Church had only 12 dioceses. Throughout the colonial period Brazil had only 700 secular priests to serve 14 million people, and in the mid-nineteenth century after independence the religious orders, which had evangelized the indigenous and black population, largely the Jesuits and Franciscans, were on the point of extinction because of republican opposition (Lynch 2012). Disestablishment in 1891, though unwelcome, stimulated the Brazilian Church to reform itself. Between 1891 and 1930 the church looked to Rome and received a new supply of foreign, mainly European, priests appointed on papal rather than republican authority, to strengthen the undermanned parish system in the increased number of dioceses. The Church curbed its own laxity and began to use its own resources to found new dioceses, recruit and train more Brazilian priests and to encourage and deploy the religious orders in evangelism and the delivery of education and welfare. It continued to court political influence in the secular state, which found its resources too meager to monopolize “secular” functions such as the delivery of welfare. The Church was often successful in acquiring political clout, especially in the Vargas period after 1930 when, as we saw above, it was officially reinserted into public education and a number of other areas the First Republic had attempted to secularize.

Apart from the first few years of the First Republic, the state depended on the Church not only to Christianize the population as the basis of national cultural discipline, but also to educate them. As late as 1920 when literacy was still a requirement for voting, 75% of the Brazilian population remained illiterate. In the rural areas literacy was rare outside the elite and even in the cities the development of a sizable literate white-collar and professional middle class mainly oc-

curred between the 1890s and the early decades of the twentieth century: in Rio and São Paulo the literacy rate rose from 50% to 75% between 1887 and 1920 when it was only 25% in the rest of the country (Owensby 1999: 28). This has significant corollaries. Access to Enlightenment ideas was confined within a small, literate, white elite even in the early nineteenth century when ideals of national independence were spreading, and in the opinion of John Lynch liberal political notions may well have been disseminated by Catholic thinkers as much as by secular sources. Comteanism had something of a vogue at the end of the nineteenth century, less for its championship of secularist rationalism than for its ideal of government by “experts,” which mirrored the aspirations of a section of the republican state functionaries. The Masonic movement also had a following among the elite, including the ecclesiastical one which furnished most of the incumbents of high Masonic office. What did not happen was a wide dissemination of secularist ideas to the mass of the population through the schools. The carriers of secularist perspectives in Europe were the elites controlling education and the media of communication, whereas in Brazil the gatekeeper of education and communication was the Catholic Church until the second half of the twentieth century. The lower status parts of the population, especially in the rural areas, have remained overwhelmingly unlettered until very recently, and no elite group has taken pains to induct them into the secularism of the European Enlightenment. There has been a Communist element in the labor movement which affected a proportion of urban manual workers, though not a majority. The exiguous role of atheism in the Brazilian religious arena is not entirely surprising.

Insofar as the indigenous and black colonial population was “Christianized,” it was the work of the Catholic Church. The indigenous and the blacks were never subject to the Inquisition and, beyond requiring baptism and attendance at mass, the Church did little to ensure or monitor their orthodoxy. Some bishops expected slave owners or employing families, rather than the Church, to teach the catechism or see it was taught. The Church allowed mixed-race and black peoples to develop a largely autonomous arena in which their rituals, especially healing cults and spiritual practices, could be exercised under a Catholic “sacred canopy.” Fiestas, often imported from Portuguese Catholic culture, were hospitable to indigenous and Afro-Brazilian practices, and Brazil’s ecclesiastical museums often display images that are simultaneously pagan spirits and Christian figures. A depiction of the Trinity displayed in the Paraty museum would have been taken in pro-

cession in the fiesta of a slave church, Our Lady of the Rosary, on the coast between Rio and São Paulo: it is a platform on a staff holding two tiny statues of the Father and the Son among bushes, dwarfed by a Holy Ghost in the form of a dove at least three times their size. The dove was, not coincidentally, the image of an important spirit in the local African pantheon, and is now the logo of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, founded in Rio in the 1980s. Indigenous and black people also had their own confraternities that needed the services of a priest perhaps once in the year to say mass at the fiesta. The black brotherhoods, in particular, tended to operate as funeral associations, welfare organizations and sources of credit as well as organizing the fiesta (Myers and Hopkins 1988). The folk Catholicism that emerged in colonial Brazil was thus intimately intertwined with African and indigenous elements.

Indigenous and black cultures did not practice voluntary celibacy as a sacred status, and tended to assume that, of course, a Catholic priest would have a woman. The moral laxity of many of the colonial clergy in this respect was no scandal to the people, merely normal. John Lynch quotes rural priests in the eighteenth century reporting during pastoral visits that their people were devout but not moral (Lynch 2012). (Many rural priests themselves came from indigenous cultures.) The moral teachings of the Catholic Church were never fully internalized by the poor even if the reformed Romanized Church from the later nineteenth century did begin to work on the moral formation of its white flock. Deviation from official moral orthodoxy, especially in sexual behavior, therefore has a long history in Brazil.

This is also relevant to the coexistence of a celebration of racial “mixing” with the maintenance of a caste-like system of racial/color stratification. The large proportion of the population claiming black ancestry is clearly evidence of extensive interbreeding, but whether it represents a history of exuberant sexual congress between races, as the “hegemony ideology” holds, or a history of sexual predation of the powerful at the expense of indigenous, black, and mixed-race women, is a very moot point. A sentimental Brazilian, myth of irresistible mutual sexual attraction, across color/race boundaries seems to have a long history. In the nineteenth century mixed-race people were called *gentes de cor*, “people of the heart,” or what the English language used to refer to as “love children.” The myth got its definitive expression in a book published in 1933 by Gilberto Freyre, *Casa-Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves*), and was popularized, for instance, through the novels of the celebrated Brazilian novelist, and

(for a time) Communist intellectual, Jorge Amado, especially *Tenda dos Milagres* (*The Tent of Miracles*). It was also disseminated in much modernist high art and popular culture, especially at the instigation of the Estado Novo from the mid-1930s, prominently including the Rio carnival, and, crucially, football, which from the 1920s steadily lost its elite white character as an English import and became an arena for hungry black players from the urban slums (Goldblatt 2014). Freyre's account of irresistible sexual attraction across lines of race as the secret of Brazil's uniquely harmonious racial mix was discredited by social scientists and historians at the time, but the idealization has persisted, despite evidence of the sexual exploitation of women from low caste groups by white men from the very start of the colonial era when few of the post-conquest Portuguese initially brought wives or families to settle. Ann Twinam (1999) has documented for the whole Latin American continent the use of legal fictions by which interracial "love children" could acquire "proof" of their pure white descent and the honorific titles that went with it, provided they could "pass" for white. The pattern which the colonial period set up was for white men to take wives from among their own social and racial equals but to form secondary liaisons with lower status women of color. Sometimes men took illegitimate offspring to be raised with their legitimate children, and in lucky cases, furnished with legal fictions of white ancestry. The fate of the mothers is seldom a story of effortless social and status mobility, however, and this pattern of multiple sexual liaisons and secondary families formed with lower status women underlies the whole gender culture of Latin America. The single mother and her children is a family form among the poor familiar in Latin America from the conquest onward, and even today families headed by lone women still account for 16.4% of all families with children (according to the 2010 Brazilian census). Interracial marriage, as distinct from irregular liaisons, stood at almost 30% of all marriages in the 2000 census.

What, then, apart from the interests of elite white males, explains the prevalence of the myth of racial harmony when the dissatisfaction of blacks and indigenous peoples with their low social position has been so often expressed in rebellion and revolt? The colonial and early independent state had no incentive to develop a common sense of citizenship and patriotism among the non-elite. That changed from the late nineteenth century when the republican state began to encourage industrial development. One of the factors inhibiting development was the disdain of the white population not only for manual work but for commerce, and in the 1890s and again in the 1920s and 30s, the state,

particularly during the Vargas dictatorship, encouraged the immigration of Europeans, valuing Protestants as a source of enterprising commercial labor and a Weberian “work ethic.” At the same time the state and the emerging political parties had to face a restless electorate, opposition from a small middle-class political Left and from the labor movement, including a Communist sector that had been growing among the manual workers since the start of the twentieth century. In the Vargas years the curriculum of the public schools and of courses for teachers, social workers and other welfare and health professionals were explicitly designed to inculcate ideals of racial and class harmony (Owensby 1999: 213–14). Belatedly, the state began to promote a sense of common Brazilian citizenship even among the poor, to be delivered by a growing middle- and lower-middle-class cadre of education and welfare professionals. The myth of harmonious interracial sexual attraction was swept up into the wider message of interracial harmony as Brazil’s special glory. The new middle classes were compensated for their relatively powerless position by the flattery of being represented as the pivotal class on whom the state depended to prevent social disorder; their unions and professional associations responded by declaring their partnership with the government (Owensby 1999: 32–33).

Until this juncture the “social imaginary” had, in Charles Taylor’s terms, been overwhelmingly based on “vertical” rather than “horizontal” ties of solidarity. The object of the Vargas policy was to construct the image of horizontal national solidarity without radically disrupting the (racial) hierarchy of wealth and status. This was a delicate task that required the indigenous and black poor to accept their position at the bottom of the heap and subsumed them into an image of the nation formed in the interests of the white elite (Gat 2013: 280–85).

Aleida and Jan Assmann suggest cultural memory is strongly related to power structures (A. Assmann 2011; J. Assmann 2006). The dominant elite defines the “canon,” the ideal images of history that enshrine their own interests, and consign the images and memories of subaltern groups to invisibility, to “the garbage heap.” The Assmanns also argue that before writing began to preserve memories on a kind of palimpsest, memory was inscribed on the body and in the oral traditions of a group. For most of Brazilian history the cultural memory of indigenous and black people has fallen largely outside the “canon” constructed by white elites, preserved mainly in bodies, oral traditions and rituals of subordinated peoples who remained essentially unlettered until at least the 1920s. These cultural memories sheltered under

the “sacred canopy” of the Catholic Church until the religious arena was broken open by the appearance of a new wave of Pentecostalism from the 1960s onward which refused to humble itself before the “canon” of the “erudite.” After Vatican II a new generation of Catholic priests, many of them from Europe, embarked on a process of reform and purification which distanced the church from magical thinking and introduced a new minimalist aesthetic into the church buildings and liturgies. The traditional healing cults were abandoned, the *fiesta* was reformed and modernized and churches were swept clear of the “tat” that cluttered them, especially the folk images and statues of saints, many of which were instantly snapped up by the local *terreros*, unless they were “museum quality.” Rowan Ireland gives a sad, comic account of the clash of this new aesthetic with the traditional expectations of the local congregation in a church in Bahia where the new foreign priest reformed the *fiesta* in what he believed was a style attuned to the folk culture of “the people” (Ireland 1991). The indigenous and black Brazilians must have experienced the repositories of their cultural memory as quite literally a “garbage heap,” and they flocked to the new Pentecostal churches whose healing rituals had the same shape as the hybrid cults the Catholic Church had cleaned out. The indigenous and black spirits, together with the cosmos they inhabited, were preserved as “demons” whose power was subdued and subsumed by the superior spiritual power of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It is not surprising that Pentecostalism disproportionately attracted converts from the indigenous and black population.

Brazil has a cultural *Gestalt* radically different from the pattern of secularization exemplified by Western Europe. The religious arena has never been seriously “disenchanted,” although it is possible that globalization is currently introducing a measure of “disenchantment,” particularly among younger generations, which will spread in the coming years, though as yet it has not gone very far. The “sacred canopy” of the Catholic Church has been tattered by the defection of so many of the subaltern classes, but increasingly also by segments of the new middle classes in the knowledge and communications professions who look to a global community of peers above the heads of the entrenched traditional white elite and the clientelist system over which they still preside. Many of these have joined the *evangélicos*, particularly their prosperous, new megachurches. It is important to recognize, too, that the lowest social sectors had always been politically voiceless and faceless except when they rioted or rebelled, and have only been effectively included in the substantive establishment of political de-

mocracy in, perhaps, the last two decades. Their involvement, especially in Belo Horizonte, alongside the educated middle class protesters in the demonstrations in Brazil's cities in June–July 2013 against the government's giving priority to spending on prestige public events, notably the Football World Cup in 2014, rather than welfare and educational projects, shows them demanding the right to influence important democratic decisions.

The increasing visibility and political engagement of indigenous and black Brazilians to which Otávio Velho draws attention, and the flow into Pentecostalism of just those social sectors, are pointers to the ongoing changes in, and dilemmas of, the Brazilian religious, cultural and political arenas. Since at least the early 1990s social scientists of religion have pointed out the exchange of elements between Pentecostal and Catholic styles of worship, and indeed between Pentecostalism and all other mainstream Christian churches. This is most marked in areas of the world where they are serious rivals in a newly competitive religious market, such as Latin America (Levine 2004). The adoption of charismatic healing rituals by Catholic charismatics is one of the most striking examples, but the neo-Pentecostal reintroduction of ritual “magic,” for example in cults of miraculously efficacious material objects such as the clothing or even the sweat of charismatic healers, sees borrowing flowing the other way in “materializing” rituals such as classical Pentecostalism condemns as “superstitious” (Csordas 1994; Wiegele 2005). Thomas Csordas suggests we are not seeing “re-enchantment” but rather are recognizing “the same age-old waters of religion as they fill the newly constructed channels that flow between the local and the global” (Csordas 2009: 9). Charles Taylor argues that all this may be part of a global change in which the constituent elements of religious traditions are beginning to float free and recombine into ever-new packages in the old “confessional states,” “unbundling” and “rebundling” in a bewildering range of mixtures which include fusions of secularist and transcendent perspectives and mixtures of “religion” and “magic” (Taylor 2013). Something of this kind is clearly happening in the Brazilian religious arena.

The Assmann's analysis of stratified cultural memory suggests the new cultural self-consciousness of indigenous and black peoples may by no means have yet run its course. Given the increased transnational reach of religious traditions, these fragmenting developments raise questions about the traditional (Durkheimian) role of religion in national and cultural identity (Csordas 2009). In the case of Brazil, a national identity is rather recent and only shallowly rooted among many

of the subaltern sectors, particularly the indigenous and black Brazilians. Insofar as their sense of Brazilian identity was historically anchored it was in the Catholic Church more than in the state, and, with exceptions among the indigenous peoples, in the Portuguese language. There are still observers who believe that what Velho called a “hegemonic national ideology” of interracial “mixing” did effectively perform its mythic magic even among the poor. In a recent book on nationalism, Anwar Gat writes:

The extreme class and wealth differences in Brazil closely correspond to race. Still, the reason why Brazilians of all descents view themselves as one people and nation is the distinctive culture, including a common language, they share and the salience of ‘mixed-blood.’ (Gat 2013: 285)

Perhaps Gat is right. Yet David Goldblatt (2014) argues that although football has been a successful vehicle for multi-racial national identity when the country’s national and top league teams are winning, when the national team fails, (as it did in the 2014 World Cup Final) the undertow of racism in the society and in the sport quickly makes itself felt: “Brazilian football has been a conduit for the mental and emotional pathologies of a still brutalized society” (Goldblatt 2013: 221). Moreover, the surging self-consciousness of black and indigenous Brazilians and the continuing flight from the Catholic Church suggests the Church’s role as overarching symbol of Brazilian cultural identity no longer operates for a considerable proportion of the population outside the old white elite. The question is whether anything else has taken, or will take, its place in a nation whose religious arena is now irrevocably pluralist.

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VLADISLAV RAZDYAKONOV

Mapping the Imaginaire at the Frontiers of Science: The Quest for Universal Unity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century (Review Article)

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Drawing upon the latest studies in the history of parascience, this review article examines the key differences between its main branches at the turn of the twentieth century. Razdyakonov cautions us against presentism in the history of science and considers the motivations of both scientists and those that Heather Wolfram has labeled the “step-children of science” in the search for universal principles regulating natural phenomena. Razdyakonov concludes that the degree to which personal values influence an investigators’ conclusions may be used as a possible criterion for demarcating the boundary between scientific and parascientific discourses.

Keywords: parascience, history of science, parapsychology, modern spiritualism, occultism.

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Reviewed Books

Janet Oppenheim (1985). *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. — 503 pages.

Heather Wolffram (2009). *The Stepchildren of Science: Psychical Research and Parapsychology in Germany, c.1870–1939*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. — 342 pages.

Sofie Lachapelle (2011). *Investigating the Supernatural: From Spiritism and Occultism to Psychical Research and Metapsychics in France, 1853–1931*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. — 198 pages.

IN modern historiography the parascientific movements of the nineteenth century are generally examined within two contexts: firstly, in the context of the so-called “Victorian crisis of faith,” caused by the development of scientific knowledge, and, secondly, in the context of the institutionalization of science and the professionalization of the scientific community. The first approach—the philosophical-historical—long dominated Western historiography, until, during the 1970s, it was replaced with a sociological approach, with which all the books reviewed here are associated.

The origins of the first approach are rooted in the ideology of the French Enlightenment, subsequently reworked within secularization theory. This modernist viewpoint presupposed the gradual weakening of religious influence and the emerging perception of science and the scientific method as the single means of obtaining reliable information about the world around us. Toward the 1970s, thanks to a religious revival that cast into doubt the irreversibility of the secularization of Western culture, this approach found itself in need of significant correction. Such social phenomena as the spiritualist movement, earlier considered to exemplify a “crisis of faith,” began to be examined as a manifestation of one of the stages in the evolution of religion, a stage that possessed its own independent specificities and logic of development. In other words, religion was not weakened but took on new forms, reacting to the rationalization of the world and the scientific and technological challenge of modernity.

The dominant position in the historiography was now occupied by the sociological method, which views parascientific movements in the context of their relationship with the scientific community. Formulated within the flowering of a post-positivist philosophy of science and social constructivism, this approach avoids the use of value judgments, which remain popular particularly among various contemporary Russian authors who treat the subject of “pseudoscience.” Shedding light on the mechanism of the formation of scientific authority, the sociological approach greatly facilitated a new response to the problem of how, exactly, educated Europeans of the second half of the nineteenth century defined “science.”

In her study, Janet Oppenheim emphasizes that official institutions capable of delivering an unequivocal scientific evaluation of a scientist’s activity had not yet been formed by the second half of the nineteenth century. Enumerating various examples that bear witness to the institutionalization of science, she remarks that in the majority of cases not one of these “implies the existence of a single canon of scientific respectability, a single *cursus honorum*, which it would be considered unacceptable to transgress” (Oppenheim 1985: 392). Despite the attacks of the social and academic press, such scientists as William Crookes, Lord Rayleigh, Joseph Thomson, and William Huggins, who took part in “psychic experiments,” could simultaneously occupy the post of president of the Royal Society. In this way, the “enemy” embodied in the scientific establishment, which Sir Oliver Lodge designates as “orthodox science,” was in many ways defined by “heretical scientists” themselves.

It is unsurprising how close this definition of “orthodox science” is to that which Thomas Kuhn would subsequently call “normal science,” and Karl Popper “dogmatism.” The construction of an opposition of this sort was absolutely necessary in order to build defensive epistemological boundaries around knowledge that aspired to create a revolution in science. In this regard, we enter into the socially imagined world of “heretical scientists” (self-defining as “heretics” against “dogmatists”), in essence, into the world of “extraordinary science,” deprived of any kind of epistemological orientation. We hit upon mechanisms of a similar kind of legitimation when a new religion appears: the old religion is perceived to be “dogmatic,” “obsolete,” and “displaced,” at the same time as the new aims for the “recovery of forgotten knowledge” or the “discovery of new knowledge.”

In one way or another, the three books under review here all broach the question of how, while framing a repressive external authority, the

representatives of different parascientific movements framed themselves. Members of the parascientific community such as Frank Podmore, for instance, endeavored to construct their own identity through introducing theoretical and historical analogues with “heretical scientists” of the past: the tradition of comparison with Franz Mesmer, for instance, comes precisely from this strategy. They were, furthermore, aided by the public, who watched the confrontations between the “scientific Leviathan” and the lone fighters for “scientific truth” and “freedom” with great interest. Thus the majority of scientists, invoking both religious and scientific considerations, argued against the parascientific movements, and the press continuously relegated “heretical scientists” to a separate “marginal” status.

It was at precisely this time that a defensive scientific discourse supported by the conservatively minded representatives of the scientific community started to develop. Within the frame of this discourse all parascientific movements began to be pushed toward the same periphery: they received the designation “pseudoscience,” and no attempt was made to differentiate between them. Attentive historical research, such as the studies under review, shows the necessity of such differentiation, insofar as different groups constructed their relationship with the scientific community in different ways and chose their own strategies of behavior and “confrontation” with “scientific authoritarianism.” The differences in these constructions generally resulted from the *a priori* attitudes of the various representatives of the parascientific movements as to what should provide the basis of scientific knowledge.

The first group, which we can designate “normative,” consisted of people for whom the norms and ideals of scientific knowledge continued to possess unquestionable authority. They were convinced that their activities were scientific in the strictest sense of the word. They blamed the absence of any support from the scientific community on its conservatism and often pointed out how other scientists, later accepted and elevated to the pinnacle of the academic establishment, had themselves faced such ostracism.

The most important achievement, perhaps, of Sofie Lachapelle’s latest study is her understanding of why this first group, in which she places, for example, parapsychologists, did not succeed. The ambiguity of their position lay in the fact that, on the one hand, they wished to be accepted as official members of the scientific establishment, yet, on the other, they constantly remarked upon the conservatism and limitations of science, underlining their distinct and progressive char-

acter (Lachapelle 2011: 141). For this reason the scientific community, despite the best efforts of the parapsychologists, continued to associate them with spiritualists and occultists, and in so doing placed them beyond the bounds of science.

The second group consisted of “innovators,” for whom scientific methodology was not an ideal model. They aimed to reveal a new area of research to which old methods of cognition were inapplicable. The knowledge that they endeavored to procure would facilitate a change in the methodology of cognition as a whole, which would ultimately lead to the formation of a single synthetic view of the world, capable of overcoming the separation of science from religion, reason from faith.

Although an attentive examination of the material reveals a certain artificiality to such a division, the distinction is nevertheless necessary in order to define the limits of two poles that ultimately pursued the same goal—that is, the achievement of integral human unity. If the first group suggested that this should be done on the basis of science, while including significant religious ideas within the scientific field, the second, in contrast, aimed for a new synthesis and a language that was capable of transcending the gulf that had emerged between religion and science. The two groups polemicized with each other both face-to-face and in print. The first endeavored to disassociate themselves from the second in order to gain acknowledgement from the scientific community; the second, in contrast, accused the first of excessive “scientism,” “materialism” and “subjectivity.”

As Janet Oppenheim admirably summarizes, the principal leitmotif of the philosophical polemic that developed around science in the second half of the nineteenth century was the aim “always to find the slippery ‘triangular rock’ or the ‘first substance’ of nature” (Oppenheim 1985: 396). The debate centered upon the search for a fundamental theory, capable of overcoming all modernist contradictions and achieving the ideal unity to which modern science had dedicated itself. The pursuit of this ideal in essence united the representatives of the scientific community and their critics, although they progressed toward its achievement along very different paths and left their own distinct imprints on history.

Distinguishing among separate parascientific groups presents itself as an independent scholarly problem, and each of the researchers under review here attempts to resolve it in their own way. The first division is usually made between parascientific groups and groups that have no desire to achieve scientific recognition, for example, healers, conjurors and mesmerizers of various kinds, who assert that they

possess supernatural powers. Parascientific movements expended no small effort in disassociating themselves from these groups, principally because they discredited their own practices, for instance that of hypnosis, employing it for public entertainment. Viewing the activities of such practitioners as essentially positive, insofar as they introduced the public to new phenomena, and appraising modern scientific methods as obsolete, such investigators as Albert Moll aimed to render suggestion and hypnosis legitimate parts of scientific discourse (Wolffram 2009).

A second distinction is made between spiritualists, who subscribed to the so-called “spiritual hypothesis,” and “independent scientists”/“agnostics,” who aimed to emulate science in everything, inclining, for example, toward explanations of “spiritualist phenomena” as hallucinations and hypnosis. The most characteristic and minutely presented example of disagreement between these two groups is the abandonment of the Society for Psychical Research in 1887 by a group of spiritualists who were dissatisfied with the overly cautious explanation by members of the Society of the “wonders” performed by the famous medium William Eglinton (Oppenheim 1985: 140). The incompatibility of these groups was founded upon a question of faith; while the “agnostics” refused to the last to admit the validity of the “spiritual hypothesis,” the spiritualists accepted it unequivocally and found that the doubts of the agnostics simply provided grist for the mill of the materialists.

Another well-known distinction was made within the spiritualist movement itself, which is generally divided into two principal groups: Christian and anti-Christian. If the first considered spiritual experiences to be a viable response to the challenge of materialist science and a means of defending certain principles of Christian faith (for instance, the belief in the continued existence of the soul after death), the second were convinced that spiritualism could serve the cause of creating a single, universal religion, overcoming the differences between different religious systems. Naturally, the central credo of anti-Christian spiritualism was considered to be the idea of “progress,” in pursuit of which its followers were prepared to subvert other authorities, starting with the divinity of Christ and ending with the sanctity of the Old and New Testaments. At the same time, as Janet Oppenheim shows, “to talk about the irreconcilable enmity of these two groups would be wrong” (Oppenheim 1985: 105), in relation to which she justifiably suggests a revision of the epithet “anti-Christian.” Ultimately the so-called “anti-Christian” spiritualists possessed their own positive

program and shared the key ideal of the Victorian epoch—the search for a universal unity—with their “Christian” counterparts.

Another distinction made by all the researchers under review here is that between the spiritualist and the occultist movements. The occultist movement was principally oriented towards the search for “ancient knowledge,” which was expected to lay the foundations for “the science of the future.” Magic was viewed as a unique “ancient science,” as yet unstudied by modern scientific methods that were limited by a series of metaphysical convictions, principal among which was the teaching of materialism. In contrast to the spiritualists, the occultists looked backward more often than forward and valued tradition above progress, yet, like the spiritualists, they rejected the contemporary world that surrounded them, religious authorities in particular. Lachapelle introduces a comparison between occultism and spiritualism based on that made in a book by Gerard Encausse (Papus). She convincingly shows that, in comparison with the spiritualists, the occultists strove to develop a stronger aura of science around their convictions, progressing from everyday language to the man-made language of science (Lachapelle 2011: 49–51).

Yet another by no means insignificant distinction arose from the development of psychology, particularly from investigations into human consciousness. One of the most pressing questions of the day was that of the relationship between psychology and physiology, consciousness and the body—in particular the question of whether the former is derived from the latter. Many spiritualists actively spoke against the idea first proposed by the physiologist William Carpenter of explaining “spiritualist phenomena” through the “ideomotor effect” and the “unconscious activity of the brain,” which represented a rejection of the “spiritual hypothesis” that brought Carpenter into a polemic with those who considered it proven. On the other hand, a proportion of researchers insisted that phenomena linked with spiritualism could be successfully “psychologically explained with the help of the idea of suggestion or as witness to the hidden powers of reason” (Wolffram 2009: 42). One of the most striking examples of the conflict between adherents of these approaches, the so-called “animists” and spiritualists, can be found in the polemic between Eduard von Hartmann and Alexander Aksakov.

It is necessary to note that at the turn of the twentieth century it was impossible within the scientific psychological community to differentiate between psychologists proper and those researchers that “orthodox science” considered to be peripheral to scientific life. Such

clear psychological luminaries as Charles Richet, Hippolyte Bernheim, Cesare Lombroso, Theodore Flournoy, William James and Sigmund Freud worked within the Society for Psychical Research. At the same time several psychologists, such as Wilhelm Wundt, fearing for the respectable status of their own scientific direction, spoke against those groups of researchers not accepted by science, especially if they applied the designation of “experimental psychology” to their efforts (Wolffram 2009: 265). Ultimately, parapsychologists themselves became objects of investigation for various subfields within psychology, beginning with the psychology of deception and ending with the psychology of the crowd.

The appearance of “parapsychology” (a concept introduced by Max Dessoir in 1889) is examined by Heather Wolffram as a part of a “purification” process, a separation of representatives of “pseudoscience” from their forerunners, that is occultists and spiritualists, as they endeavored to conform strictly to the norms and rules of the scientific community (Wallis 1985: 585–601). One of the most meaningful and notable ways in which such a purification was achieved was through the organization of separate locations for experiments, specially equipped laboratories, among which the laboratory of the German researcher Albert von Schrenck-Notzing gained the most fame. Her analysis of the specifics of this purification effort leads Wolffram to a paradoxical conclusion: despite the undertaking of experiments in specialized locations outfitted with scientific equipment, it was necessary for parapsychologists to take the demands of a medium into consideration, and in this way they could not approach him or her as an authentic “object” of an experiment. Ultimately, parapsychology found itself in a situation where it was unable to “shake off its spiritual past, and to rid itself of its dependence on authority” (Wolffram 2009: 175).

A separate merit of the works under review is their attempt to explore the variety of parascientific movements that existed at the turn of the twentieth century in a historical perspective. The teachings of these movements reacted sensitively to both the changes in the epistemological orientation of science and to the general transformation of culture at the start of the twentieth century. The clearest example of such a “response” is provided by the works of the German parapsychologists of the 1930s, in particular, Traugott Oesterreich and Hans Driesch, who, distancing themselves from the latest discoveries in physics and biology, attempted to create a new “holistic science,” capable of transcending the “mechanistic” and “materialistic” basis of Western culture.

Analyzing the reaction of the Protestant and Catholic Churches toward the theory and practice of German parapsychology, Wolffram notes that in contrast to “folk occultism” and “spiritualism,” from which traditional Christian Churches abruptly broke away, parascientific movements were viewed by these Churches as a means of strengthening religion in an age dominated by science. The fact that parapsychologists (in contrast to occult teachings and spiritualism) did not, at first glance, lay claim to the discovery of religious truths of one kind or another, facilitated the appearance of such attitudes. Some Christian thinkers believed that parapsychologists would be able to explain such phenomena as stigmata or even resurrection, challenging their widespread explanation as allegories, devoid of any relationship to reality (Wolffram 2009: 218). In their opinion, parascience, which renounced the aim of discovering a holistic worldview, would become a natural partner of religion, aiming to provide a scientific explanation for phenomena discussed in religious texts.

* * *

The history of science, like any other history, cannot be removed from the complex cultural context of its development. The latest research convincingly evinces the existence of a relationship between the scientific achievements of academics and their marginal “spiritualist” experiments (Noakes 2004 and Raia 2007). At the same time, it remains absolutely clear that science as an intellectual undertaking is minimally conditioned by the influence of more specific historical factors.

The variety of different parascientific groups examined in the books reviewed here clearly demonstrates the varying degrees of interrelationship that existed between scientific and philosophical ideas in the doctrines of parascientific movements. The scientific investigations of spiritualists and occultists, “metapsychics” and parapsychologists were conditioned by their value judgments—by their religious, or, in contrast, anti-religious views, which from the start inspired their experiments and research. The clearest example of such a phenomenon is provided by the German Psychological Society, which split in two directions in 1889—the mystical, with Carl Du Prel at its head, which adopted as its goal the creation of a “transcendental psychology” that would construct a comprehensive worldview, and the empirical, led by Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, which endeavored to create an “experimental psychology,” completely freed from the dictates of physiology (Wolffram 2009: 68).

Remembering the principle of symmetry, it is worth noting clearly that value judgments were manifest in the works of scientists whose achievements were accepted by the official scientific community, and these judgments, perhaps, exerted concrete influence on their discoveries. Thus it would be correct to discuss the degree of interrelationship between the scientific ideas of researchers and their value judgments, and it is productive to view this degree as one of the criteria for the demarcation of authentic scientific knowledge that is minimally influenced by historical context, and the knowledge acquired by the “stepchildren of science.”

“Parascience” as a phenomenon constructs itself on the border between the inductive scientific method—from which it aims to distance itself, considering it reductionist and narrow—and a wide, holistic “worldview,” which it aims to achieve using the experimental method to prove its validity. The significant internal contradiction that existed between scientific methodology and the universalist goal of scientific research became the fundamental reason for the displacement of various parascientific groups during the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century toward the periphery of the scientific life of Western Europe.

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Viktor Shnirel'man (2012). *Russian Rodnoverie: Neo-Paganism and Nationalism in Today's Russia. (Russkoe rodnoverie: Neoiazichestvo i natsionalizm v sovremennoi Rossii)*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Bibleiskogo-Bogoslovskogo instituta (in Russian). — 302 pages.

This is the latest offering from Viktor Shnirelman, a well-known author, who, from the beginning of the 1990s, has been a pioneer in the study of a wide range of topics linked with Russian nationalism, anti-Semitism and the emergence of new ethnic religions in the post-Soviet period. Among these various topics, the delineation of Russian Neo-Paganism has always been central to his research, and the work under review continues and develops several earlier publications.¹ *Russian Rodnoverie*² features new material that facilitates a systematic and logical exposition of the history of Neo-Pagan

discourse and its institutional vicissitudes from the late Soviet period to the start of the 2010s.

The study is filled with innumerable characters who are associated, in one way or another, with *rodnoverie*—Russian Neo-Paganism—and is replete with the names of periodicals, books, organizations, dates and events. The reader is presented with a scrupulously documented and factually verified picture of Russian Neo-Paganism in all its heterogeneous, factional manifestations. Notwithstanding the merits of such microscopic exactness, it is necessary to admit that at times it renders the exposition somewhat difficult to digest; indeed, despite Shnirelman's narrative efforts and recognizably authorial, even moderately emotional, style, in several places the text takes on an almost encyclopedic, rather than analytical, character. The preponderance of facts is due, needless to say, to the au-

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1. See, for instance, Shnirel'man 1998, 2001; Shnirelman 1998.
2. The term *rodnoverie* is derived from the roots *rod* (clan, native, generation, race) and *ver* (faith, belief). — The editors.

thor's unwillingness to sacrifice the abundance of information that he has collected and systematized with such diligence over many years of research. However, this very abundance means that the reader—even if relatively well-informed on the topic in question—at times loses him or herself in the labyrinthine webs of material.

Nevertheless, *Russian Rodnoverie* is undoubtedly the most comprehensive of the works on Russian Neo-Paganism currently available; from a limited survey of the extant literature already published (given in chapter two) it is obvious that the work under review overshadows all other contributions to our present understanding of the subject. Over the course of his exposition Shnirelman makes a number of penetrating and verifiable observations, not all of which can be mentioned here. In this connection I will highlight the study's most interesting insights into the "Soviet" roots of Neo-Paganism, derived from an unbelievably wide-ranging mix of seemingly unrelated phenomena. Shnirelman uncovers these roots, for instance, in forbidden *samizdat* literature such as *The Word of a Nation (Slovo Natsii)* (1970); the patriotic attraction to national memory (exemplified, for instance, in the "monument defense" movement); the veiled

nationalist component of the late Soviet governing establishment; the works of science fiction, published in print runs of millions and closely associated with "patriotic novels," that shade into ethnocentrically charged fantasies (by, for example, Pyotr Proskurin, Dmitry Zhukov, Sergey Alekseev, Yuri Sergeev, et al.); the reductively historical and pseudo-scientific "half-baked intellectuals" (*obrazovanshchina*);³ and, finally, the ubiquitous background of subtly encouraged anti-Semitism.

Chapter seven of *Russian Rodnoverie* provides an admirable description of how Neo-Pagan mythology and ideology have matured in such different environments as the Znanie (Knowledge) Society, the circle of Yuri Mamleev and the Pamiat' (Memory) Society, while in chapter eight Shnirelman traces the ideological development of those he considers to be the "founding fathers" of *rodnoverie*: V. Emelianov, A. Ivanov (Skuratov), A. Dobrovolskii (who "converted" to Paganism under the pseudonym of Dobroslav) and several others. Shnirelman offers an exceptionally fine evaluation of the dual role of Communist Party circles and their ideological apparatuses in relation to ethnocentric patriot-

3. The translation of this term was suggested in Vertlieb and Boldyrev 1985.

ism: they encouraged with one hand what they tried to crush with the other, and Neo-Pagan discourse hovered on the boundary between dissidence and a tendency toward unofficial support from within the party.

Ultimately, Shnirelman associates the entire late-Soviet project of introducing socialist ritualism and invigorating national (ostensibly atheist rather than religious) rituals that began in the second half of the 1950s to the support of Paganism “in the highest echelons of power” (97–98). However, if we are not applying the metaphor of “modern Paganism” to Soviet ideology as a whole, this would certainly seem to be an exaggeration, since the idea of “socialist ritualism” possessed its own logic. There is probably a kernel of truth in Shnirelman’s assertion that “the exaltation of nature” seemed less dangerous than the worship of Christ and the Mother of God (99), but it would not be true to assert that the patriotically inclined party hierarchy gave exclusive preference to Paganism. In fact, Russian Orthodoxy and the Orthodox heritage—in the context of their secular interpretation—had, from a certain time, been relied upon perhaps even more than Paganism as a focus of Russianness and Russian cultural memory, and as a basis for ethnic myth. Moreover, this trend possessed its own well-

known literature, advocates and propagandists, and even its own Orthodox anti-Semitism, showing that such attitudes were not exclusive to Pagans.

Nevertheless, Shnirelman correctly illuminates “the Soviet roots of Paganism” as a whole, offering a methodical description of how the fulminating mix of influences that he presents gave rise to a whole series of ethno-racial myths, which slowly matured, half-observed in the underbelly of Soviet society, and then “exploded” to full strength in the 1990s, directly after the removal of affected, yet hypocritical, prohibitions. According to Shnirelman, the basic mythologem professed by the early and late leaders of the *rodnoverie* movement was what he calls the “Aryan-Slavic myth,” around which all Russian Neo-Pagan edifices have consequently been aligned up to the present day. This myth—the original status of the Slavic-Aryan race, of truly Russian pre-Christian beginnings, of the foreignness of “Semitic influences” (including Christianity) and the vivifying force of Paganism—is the “native faith,” the worship of Nature, of the god Rod. Shnirelman shows how this dominant principle of Neo-Paganism naturally translates into political values, programs and actions, culminating in appeals for ethnic purity, and, subsequently, for eth-

nic cleansing ("Russia for Russians!"); taken to its extreme, it has led to neo-Nazism in the form of the skinhead movement. This logic unfolds as the book progresses and manifests itself in the very structure of the work: not for nothing is the last chapter called "From Ideology to Street Violence."

Here we enter the realm of conceptual demarcations, on which it is worth dwelling in more detail. Shnirelman is most interested by the ethnocentric and ideological, or what could be termed the muscular and masculine, element of *rodnoverie*, which, by extrapolation, is always pregnant with racism and anti-Semitism. In Shnirelman's view it is precisely here that we must look for the core of Russian Neo-Paganism, and it would seem, at first glance, that in this he betrays a certain one-sidedness. However, Shnirelman is wholly conscious of the limits of this position, and he understands completely that the above-mentioned ideological element by no means exhausts the content of *rodnoverie*. Shnirelman is careful to delineate the contours of his investigation in the preface to the book: he aims "firstly, to give a generalized picture of the history of the Russian Neo-Pagan movement, and secondly, to analyze the issue of tolerance and intolerance within its ranks" (xiii). He stipulates further

that "Neo-Pagan myths, beliefs, rituals, communal life and gender roles are not examined here. All these are independent themes that require special consideration" (xiv). In defining the clear boundaries of his own scholarly interests, Shnirelman clearly indicates those directions that future investigations of Russian Neo-Paganism may pursue; when compared with the huge quantity of literature devoted to Neo-Paganism in the West, this remains a very broad and unploughed field.

Let us leave these subjects to future researchers, having noted, nevertheless, that, without an in-depth analysis of them, it is impossible to gain a comprehensive and full understanding of Neo-Paganism as part of a wider ecological paradigm within modern post-industrial culture, with its Romantic roots and its constructivist mechanisms. We shall now turn to that aspect of the problem that Shnirelman himself considers the most important. He devotes a long chapter (chapter fifteen) to "the search for spirituality" in Russian Neo-Paganism, where he turns precisely to those forms of the phenomenon that are *not* directly related to ethnomythology and politics. Shnirelman gives due consideration to "peaceful" "searches for spirituality," yet even there he discovers "latent racism and anti-Semitism" (203). At the same time Shnirel-

man underlines the differences between more and less tolerant, more and less xenophobic, associations. For example, he dwells in detail upon the Circle of Pagan Traditions, which is an exceedingly influential network of societies whose manifestos bear witness to its anti-globalization and anti-consumerist principles, as well as to its overt rejection of the idea of ethno-racial supremacy and anti-Semitism (225–35). Shnirelman also mentions other movements that he describes as “moderate,” particularly those that have taken part in the meetings of the World Congress of Ethnic Religions,⁴ which began in Vilnius in 1998.

In his conclusion Shnirelman carefully provides a balanced summary of xenophobia and tolerance among different directions and groups within *rodnoverie*, and it seems that he hesitates a little in his final evaluation, endeavouring to show caution. He notes that Russian ethnocentrism in one way or another is—perhaps inevitably—characteristic of the absolute majority of groups, and that Neo-Pagans often do not possess “precise answers” to questions regarding the role of the 20 percent of Russia’s popula-

tion that is not ethnically Russian; even worse, however, is when such “precise answers” are present, in which case they reduce to “the carrying out of ethnic cleansing of one kind or another” (251). Radically disposed young people are attracted by the more militantly jingoistic groups.

Yet to what extent is this trend towards ethnocentrism central or marginal? Here, Shnirelman introduces a careful formula full of academic tact, writing that “the negative tendencies that have been analysed in the present work do not flow from the essence of Neo-Paganism itself, but derive from the state of modern Russian society as a whole, and from the prevalence of xenophobic dispositions within it” (253). He adds that, although detailed research that would allow us to calculate the relationship between the “tolerant” and the “intolerant” in this sphere does not exist. If we proceed from an analysis of the printed sources on which Shnirelman’s work is based, we can assert that “those of a racist inclination, with its concomitant chauvinism and xenophobia, predominate” (253).

In my opinion, Shnirelman’s arguments are fully measured and reliable: they link the phenomenon of *rodnoverie* with its social context as a whole, and thus at the same time help to ex-

4. The World Congress of Ethnic Religions is now known as the European Congress of Ethnic Religions. — The editors.

plain the particularities of Russian Neo-Paganism in comparison with its Western analogues. Shnirelman's conclusions also derive from a well-defined source base. The ethno-racial attitudes and political radicalism of the most active Russian Neo-Pagans (*rodnoveryy*), and those most noticed by the media, cannot be ignored, and Shnirelman's study provides full and convincing confirmation of this. For a comprehensive picture of different versions of Neo-Paganism a wider research program is needed, the directions for which are indicated within *Russian Rodnoverie* itself.

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(Translation by Keith Walmsley)

Alexey Sitnikov (2012). *Orthodox Christianity and the Institutions of Power and Civil Society in Russia. (Pravoslavie, instituty vlasti i grazhdanskogo obshchestva v Rossii)*. St. Petersburg: Aleteia (in Russian). — 248 pages.

Alexey Sitnikov's book, which is based on his doctoral dissertation, is devoted to "an analysis of Orthodoxy's influence on the molding of the institutions of power in Russian society, its structural stratification, and the emergence

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of a civil society" (9). It is one of this country's first comprehensive and systematized studies of this issue. Drawing on an extensive literature and a variety of historical sources, Sitnikov analyzes works by Russian and foreign scholars, and demonstrates the contradictions in, and the tendencies of, the development of church-society and church-state relations.

There is no doubt as to the timeliness of a study of this kind. Assuming one agrees with Sitnikov that Russian society has in recent years been undergoing a process of sociopolitical transformation whose endgame is the gradual formation of democratic institutions and the development of a civil society, this automatically prompts one to ask how Orthodox Christianity as a cultural tradition and the Russian Orthodox Church as the largest and most influential religious communion have impacted that process. Does Orthodoxy inherently possess the resources to ease these transformations, or is it, by virtue of its historical, doctrinal, and other particular traits, doomed to do the opposite—to slow and hamper democratic development? In a certain sense, this question may be seen as part of a more general problem concerning the compatibility of religion and political modernity, at least insofar as the latter affects the desacralization of power, the dehierarchization of society's structure, the development of horizontal mechanisms of self-organization, and so forth.

The book's first chapter deals with theoretical issues and research methodology. Sitnikov has chosen to employ the approaches and conceptual apparatus of religious studies used in Europe and the United States. His assumption is that the methods for the

study of religion and its influence on the institutions of power and civil society developed by Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, and Pitirim Sorokin, as well as Peter Berger, Pierre Bourdieu, and Jürgen Habermas, may be usefully enlisted and applied to Russian reality. Leaning especially on Bourdieu's ideas and terminology, he crafts a model for Orthodoxy's influence on the framing of social reality, the production of a legitimate vision of the social world, and the legitimization and grounding of power.

It is, however, impossible to overlook an evident lacuna in Sitnikov's theory and methodology, namely, that he makes virtually no attempt to adapt Western constructs to the realities of Russia. For example, it is not enough to describe, as Sitnikov does in his chapter "The Unique Features of the Religious Situation in Russian Society," Berger's "religious marketplace" and "pluralization" or Habermas's "postsecular society," and then conclude that "using the conceptual apparatus they developed to describe the religious situation in Russia enables us to uncover substantial idiosyncrasies in the position of various denominations, church-state relations, and the religious conduct of the people at large" (29–30). Those concepts need, rather, to be operationalized to Russia's specific realities. Can the reli-

gious situation in Russia really be described through the idiom of the “religious marketplace”? Are we really dealing here with “pluralization” in the Western sense? Can we speak of the coming together of a “postsecular society” in Russia in the same sense of the term as used by Habermas? That these questions are left altogether unaddressed detracts somewhat from the value of the chapter on theory and methodology.

Sitnikov then embarks on a systematic analysis of Orthodox Christianity’s influence, past and present, on the formation of institutions of power. But his diagnosis, as a supporter of democratic transformations, is bleak, since to him, Orthodoxy offers society a model for the religious legitimization of a power structure that is characterized by monocentrism and the sacralization of power relations. This ties in to the fact that prior to 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church was one with the state and conceptualized its position and its relations with the power structure accordingly. The categories of Orthodox social teaching were predominantly based on borrowings from Byzantine thought, which could brook none of the distinction between state and society that became established in Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The ideal of the sacralized, noncompetitive, and stringently

hierarchical model of governance was traditionally inherent in Russian Orthodoxy, which affirmed this model as ordained by God. Such, in fact, is the institutional order supported by the Church’s social teaching today. Orthodoxy’s social ideals do not encompass democracy, a civil society, or a competitive political culture, in conformity with the Church’s unwritten laws, which have formed over many centuries in a system that assumed the existing system of power and the specific vehicles of that power to be heaven-sent, just and unchangeable.

Sitnikov reaches the important conclusion that the Orthodox model of the social order is increasingly evidently running counter to the gathering sociopolitical transformations of Russian society. Drawing on data from a variety of studies, he demonstrates that socioeconomic development in Russia over recent years has given rise to a middle class with its own intrinsically independent economic behavior, values, and political demands. Although concentrated in the major cities and not presently dominant, the middle class is even now becoming an important force in society. This is depriving the paternalist political culture of its monopoly and is producing the prerequisites for a democratic culture. The values of self-expression are beginning to push back against the tra-

ditional mindset, and a demand for democracy and a liberal model of interaction between citizen and state is taking shape. As those tendencies develop over time, the traditional political mindset of Orthodoxy is becoming unacceptable for a certain portion of society, above all for representatives of the middle class.

The development of political institutions in the modern world led to the separation of civil society from the state. The state has relinquished control over morality, religion, and culture, while civil society has assumed the regulation of morality and spirituality. The ruler is no longer perceived as a sacral figure chosen by God to lead his subjects to transcendent salvation. The contemporary model for the legitimization of power, rather, strives to desacralize the bearer of supreme power to the fullest extent possible, seeing him as merely a functionary who is regularly supplanted and is accountable to those who elected him. By contrast, the Russian Orthodox Church's proclaimed ideal of symphony between Church and state automatically injects an element of sacrality into the understanding of the supreme power. Only a noncompetitive system of power in need of pseudomonarchical legitimization, however, can have any use for a symphonic model of church-state relations.

From his analysis of the practical relations between state and Church, Sitnikov concludes that in its relations with society, Orthodoxy tends to aspire to reliance on the institutions of power and the invocation of their help and protection. But this practice runs counter to the democratic norms of the modern world, which suppose that a religion's influence depends less on cooperative efforts with the state than on its own position and authority in civil society, and on the degree to which the religious communities within its purview have developed.

Sitnikov goes on to examine the activity of Orthodox parishes and other associations of believers, and their place in the structure of Russia's civil society. Basing his analysis on well-known studies of parish life, he describes various activities in which communities and organizations of believers engage, while noting the persistent notion of the Church as a rigid hierarchical system whose foundational principle is obedience. This explains why the lives of most who define themselves as Orthodox have very little to do with the parish.

Associations of believers, including parishes, are, however, elements of civil society, in which they champion the traditional values of their members and their right to live in accordance

with their convictions. In the modern state, the Church cannot avoid becoming a civil society organization, yet the Church's leadership continues, through inertia, to pursue a close connection with the state. The Church hierarchs deem it unnecessary to develop and support a diverse network of groups and associations created by rank-and-file believers; on the contrary, this is seen as something of a danger to the hierarchy itself. While desirous of building the Church's influence, its leadership is doing less to develop the parishes and associations created by the rank-and-file faithful than to establish contact with representatives of state power. The Church solicits the support of these state representatives on the assumption that the Church's influence is directly proportional to its connection with the state and that only through this power structure can it attain significance (210).

Sitnikov's overall conclusion is grim: Orthodoxy, the path to democratization, and the emergence of civil society are at present incompatible, since Orthodoxy tends to slow and deter development in the institutions of power. Furthermore, he seems to see no way of surmounting that incompatibility, if one discounts certain optimistic and quite unsubstantiated hints to the effect that "the contemporary demo-

cratic values that are shared by the middle class will, in all likelihood, be included among the desiderata of a significant segment of the faithful. There is an incipient need for the social doctrine of Orthodoxy to perform a 'one-eighty,' in order to accommodate the preferences of the dominant social group of believers" (148).

I do not, however, propose to debate Sitnikov in this review, since the value of his book ultimately resides in the probing questions it asks and provocative answers it gives. I shall therefore restrict myself to two observations here. The first is that Sitnikov leaves entirely untouched the issue of how much influence Orthodoxy actually exerts on institutions of power, "structural stratification" and the formation of civil society, and the terms in which that influence may be analyzed. As Sitnikov himself observes, Orthodoxy and, for that matter, the extent of a person's piety, have a negligible effect on Russian sociopolitical consciousness (105), other than at a few expressly symbolic junctures—the desire to see an Orthodox president as head of state, for example, or the general disapproval of cultural liberalism. An even remotely meaningful link between religious affiliation and sociopolitical views is detectable only among strictly observant Russian churchgoers who, according to

Sitnikov's calculations, comprise only some 2 percent of the population. Even certain tendencies he mentions in the direction of a new symphony between state and Church—or rather, to borrow from Mikhail Shakhov (Shakhov 2002: 58–61), toward “synodalization”—are not in themselves evidence of any meaningful exertion of influence (other than of a particular kind of “gift exchange,” in which administrative and financial benefits are proffered in exchange for ideological support).

Second, Sitnikov is inclined to describe Orthodox Christianity and Orthodox Christians as a unified and noncontradictory entity that is, by and large, inclined to disavow any potential sociopolitical transformations. In so doing, he almost entirely overlooks the existence within Orthodoxy itself of diverse ideological currents and a variety of actors, some of whom are highly sensitive to the challenges that Orthodoxy faces at the present time and who are endeavoring to give the matter the profound consideration it warrants.⁵

I will, however, refrain from further developing these criticisms for now, and will end my review by again pointing up the

fundamental, and even provocative, questions that this study has placed before us. Has Russian Orthodoxy really lacked—and does it continue to lack—the resources that would render it capable, if not of furthering political modernization, then at least of not impeding it? Must Russian Orthodoxy really remain forever hostage to traditional notions of power, society, and man that are deeply rooted in the Byzantine legacy? And what then lies in store for the Russian Orthodox Church if the social transformations that Sitnikov outlines do indeed come to pass?

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5. As an example of an analysis that takes account of the multidimensionality in contemporary Orthodoxy, I refer the reader to the work of Kristina Stoeckl (in particular, Shtekl' 2012).



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