

Vol. 2 (1) 2015

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Paul W. Werth. Religious Freedom as a Marker of Modernity: The Imperial Bequest

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Regula M. Zwahlen. The Lack of Moral Autonomy in the Russian Concept of Personality: A Case of Continuity across the Pre-Revolutionary, Soviet and Post-Soviet Periods?

Eugene Clay. Multiculturalism and Religious Education in the Russian Federation: The Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics

Sergei Shtyrkov. Orthodox Traditionalism in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania: The Ethnicization of Religion as the “Internal Mission” of the Russian Orthodox Church

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From the Editors

Dear Reader,

WELCOME to the first issue of the second year of *State, Religion and Church*. Last year, we launched this pioneering journal with the mission of “bringing Russian contributions to religious studies into dialogue with global developments in the field.” Fostering international scholarly cooperation, in addition to the promotion of high-quality Russian scholarship among a non-Russian readership, are among our primary goals.

The articles selected for this special issue were all originally presented at the international conference “The Varieties of Russian Modernity II: Religion, State and Approaches to Pluralism in Russian Contexts,” which took place at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) from May 14–16, 2014. Organized by Christopher Stroop, Alexander Agadjanian and Dmitry Uzlaner, in conjunction with RANEPA’s Center for Russian Studies, the conference represented a continuation of a project launched by Stroop, Ana Siljak, and Alyssa DeBlasio with the international conference “The Varieties of Russian Modernity: Rethinking Religion, Secularism, and the Influence of Russian in the Modern World,” hosted by RANEPA (in collaboration with the Department of International Development) from June 7–9, 2013.

Like the first conference, Varieties II brought together an internationally diverse group of scholars in varying stages of their careers to consider a wide array of issues related to the study of religion and secularism in Russian contexts. Topics ranged from Tatar communities in Soviet Moscow (Marat Safarov) to religion and spirituality in contemporary Russian literature (Maria Hristova) to new religious movements in western Siberia (Elena Golovneva) to Homaranismo, the “religion of humankind” proposed in the late Russian Empire by the inventor of Esperanto, L. L. Zamenhof (Brian Bennett).

Headlining the conference was keynote speaker Paul W. Werth of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a leading expert on minority con-

fessions in the Russian Empire. Werth gave his keynote address, “Religious Freedom as Marker of the Modern: Faith, Indifference, and Confessional Institutions in the Russian Empire” in Russian, and we reprint it here in Werth’s own English translation under the title “Religious Freedom as a Marker of Modernity: The Imperial Bequest.” Other participants included Kristina Stoeckl, Sergey Filatov, J. Eugene Clay, Regula Zwahlen (paper read in absentia), Martin Beisswenger, Francesca Romana Bastianello, Oyuna Dorzhigushaeva, James Meador, Sergei Shtyrkov, Gorkem Atsungur, Michał Wawrzzonek, and Siljak, who joined Uzlaner, Stroop and Agadjanian in a roundtable about future possibilities for the “Varieties” research initiative.

In addition to the keynote address, in this issue of SRC we bring you three articles originally presented as conference papers that have subsequently undergone peer review and revision. They are thematically linked not only by the conference’s broad concerns, but also by the ways in which they demonstrate the relevance of Russia’s imperial past to issues concerning late Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. In her piece, Regula Zwahlen explores Russian conceptions of personality (*lichnost’*) across pre-revolutionary, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russian intellectual history, focusing on the significance of these conceptions’ lack of the element of Kantian moral autonomy, without thereby rejecting the value and meaning of Russian and Soviet attempts to theorize the individual. Although she finds the lack of a notion of moral autonomy to have been a source of problems and paradoxes for late Soviet thought, she concludes that in our attempts at “overcoming the dichotomy of individual and communal ends, more than a few Russian concepts of personality have a lot to offer.”

The contributions by J. Eugene Clay and Sergei Shtyrkov are more focused on the post-Soviet Russian Federation, but in both cases the role of history and memory is crucial. Clay provides us with a thorough summary of the controversial post-Soviet project aimed at integrating education about religion into Russia’s public schools, along with this project’s social resonances. Known as the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics*, the program is meant to allow parents to choose among a range of options that are appropriate for a multicultural, secular state. Implementation of the project, however, has been less than perfect. Clay’s article provides a wealth of detail, and its most original contribution lies in its examination of this current controversy within the broader context of Russian history.

Finally, Sergei Shtyrkov takes us to the post-Soviet Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, where, drawing on ethnographic observations

and local media, he explores competing attempts by advocates of the ancient Alanian faith and of Russian Orthodox Christianity to lay claim to Ossetian heritage — and thereby to represent the legitimate bearer of Ossetian identity today. In a context in which ethnic and religious identity is often elided, disputes rage around an array of issues, such as the Christian or pagan identity of Ossetian shrines (*dzuars*). Shtyrkov pays particular attention to the missionary strategies of the representatives of Orthodox Christianity in this context, drawing parallels to similar dynamics in other regions in which the imperial legacy causes many to associate Christianity with Russification.

As usual, in this issue of SRC we include several book reviews originally published in Russian, thereby providing a window into some of the major tendencies within religious studies in Russia. Finally, we would like to take the opportunity to remind our readers that submissions of original manuscripts to SRC may be sent to one of the following addresses: cstroop@gmail.com or religion@rane.ru. We will also be happy to receive readers' comments or questions and will do our best to respond.

*With warm regards,
The Editors*



PAUL W. WERTH

Religious Freedom as a Marker of Modernity: The Imperial Bequest

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Representing a translation of the keynote address delivered at the international conference “The Varieties of Russian Modernity II: Religion, State, and Approaches to Pluralism in Russian Contexts,” this article relates some of the key findings of Werth’s recent monograph, The Tsar’s Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia (Oxford University Press, 2014). It posits that religious freedom represents one major marker of modernity and goes on to recount the complex process by which religious freedom appeared in the years leading up to World War I. The presentation first briefly considers the Muscovite inheritance and the conception of religious toleration that resulted from that historical experience. It then discusses toleration in the imperial period, treating it as a matter of both practice and ideology. It finally examines the difficult and incomplete transition in Russia from “religious toleration” to “freedom of conscience.” The presentation demonstrates that just as modernity itself appeared gradually and with much contradiction, so too the development of religious freedom in Russia was beset by tensions and competing imperatives that complicated its progress.

Keywords: modernity, religious toleration, freedom of conscience, secularism, empire.

THE goal of our conference, as I understand it, is to explore the relationship between a series of key concepts: religion, secularism, and modernity. There are many ways to approach such an exploration, something clearly underscored by the diversity of the papers on offer. I myself would like to approach it through a consideration of the problem of religious freedom in Russia, a problem central to my most recently published book. I propose that the scope and extent of religious freedom in a given society represents an important marker of modernity — not the only marker, of course, but an important one.

In developing this proposition, I find it worthwhile to make two points immediately. First, in my view the very idea of modernity is in some sense connected with the principle of secularism. Of course, I do not wish to be too categorical in making this point. Recent scholarship has amply demonstrated that religion does not disappear in a modern society, but to a substantial degree adapts to the conditions of modernity. Faith and veneration are often transformed rather than eliminated as a result of urbanization and the emergence of more complex social structures. Believers have proved perfectly capable of deploying particular aspects of modernity (technology, improved mobility, etc.) for the strengthening of their faith. I do not deny any of this, and the conference's papers suggest that these connections will be among our topics of conversation in the days ahead. Yet for all that, I propose that we can connect "modernity" to a certain "exit" of religion from the historical stage, in the sense that in the conditions of modernity religion does not occupy the same critical place that it did earlier as a foundation for politics, social organization, personal status, and the definition of collective identity; and in the sense that the supernatural, even as it remains important for some people, nonetheless no longer provides an all-encompassing explanation of the world.

Second, as I see it "modernity" also features a certain triumph of the individual over the collective. To simplify (perhaps too radically), the premodern person is deeply embedded in the community; his or her individuality is dissolved in the collective and to some degree is perhaps even negated. To a much greater degree the modern person has the possibility of self-definition, to depart from the collective (both literally and figuratively), to create an identity for him- or herself distinct from ancestors and relatives, and to defy ascription to one or another collective group. I am quite aware that this is a very simplified picture, but I do believe that if we speak in grand and general terms it is defensible.

So how does all of this relate to the issue of religious freedom? For one, religious freedom becomes more possible when (or to the extent that) religion no longer becomes a fundamental condition for determining the organization of society, the character of the state, the way of conceptualizing human diversity, and the determination of laws pertaining to marriage, inheritance, and so on. Secondly, religious freedom creates a certain crucial foundation for manifesting individuality. In its fullest form, it authorizes each person to identify her or his own relationship to God — or to reject the existence of the latter entirely — without any consequences for his or her civil life or legal status.

All of these considerations impel me to consider the path by which religious freedom appeared over the course of the imperial period of Russia's history. My supposition is not that *complete* religious freedom had appeared in Russia by the end of the tsarist period. Aside from the difficulty of defining what “complete” religious freedom would actually look like, it is clear that even on the eve of the Great War there were significant restrictions on religious life in imperial Russia. I should also clarify that for the most part my discussion here does not address the sectarian tradition within Orthodoxy (e.g., Old Believers and similar religious dissenters), but rather Russia's so-called “foreign faiths”—the country's various recognized non-Orthodox religions, whose adherents constituted roughly 30 percent of the empire's population by the imperial census of 1897.

My presentation will proceed in the following fashion. I will first say a few words about the Muscovite inheritance and about the conception of religious toleration that resulted from that historical experience. I will then discuss religious toleration in the imperial period, as a matter of both practice and ideology. Thereafter I will discuss the difficult and incomplete transition in Russia from “religious toleration” (*veroterpimost'*) to “freedom of conscience” (*svoboda sovesti*). This account will demonstrate, I think, that just as modernity itself appeared gradually and with much contradiction, so too the development of religious freedom in Russia was beset by tensions and competing imperatives that complicated its progress.

The Muscovite Inheritance

On the Muscovite period one could in fact say a great deal, but I would like to offer the fairly straightforward thesis that a distinct tradition of religious toleration appeared in Muscovy and the early stages of the empire. It is of course true that one can point to various examples of

religious intolerance and even violence rooted in religious difference: the xenophobic statements of certain Orthodox bishops; mass conversions secured by elements of violence and coercion; the refusal to allow Jews into the country or the determination to expel them from it, and so on. Yet at the same time the very fact of Muscovy's considerable religious diversity (especially in the eastern and southeastern borderlands) created the conditions for a distinct kind of religious toleration in practice. To the extent that there was no effort in Muscovy, as far as I am aware, actually to develop a clear concept of religious toleration as such, one may even speak about the presence of religious toleration without a specific consciousness of it. For example, most people at the time seem to have accepted the basic proposition that every people (*narod*) had its own faith that was entirely appropriate to it. One can see this even in the way that religions were sometimes named: the "Tatar faith" (Islam), the "Russian faith" (Orthodoxy), the "German faith" (Lutheranism), and so on. Even in the nineteenth century one encounters references to the idea of the "natural faith" (*prirodnaiia vera*) of one or another community. I would venture to say that Muscovite authorities were more concerned about — and more hostile towards — "heresy" within the Orthodox community than they were about the adherents of other confessions.

Beyond this, two important circumstances eventually compelled state authorities not only to effectuate religious toleration in practice (as it were, unconsciously), but also to articulate that ideal more explicitly. In the first instance, I have in mind efforts of the tsarist autocracy to attract foreigners to Russia in light of their knowledge and expertise. Such foreigners, whether technical experts or farmers, demanded certain guarantees for the inviolability of their faith before resettling to Russia. And despite some resistance from the Orthodox Church, state authorities in many cases proved willing to oblige. An excellent example of this is the decree of Peter I in 1702, designed to attract foreigners with expertise to Russia. Among other things the decree declared: "By the power given to Us by the Almighty, We have no desire to compel the human conscience, and We readily grant to each Christian the responsibility of caring for his soul's bliss" (Preobrazhenskii 1997: 536). I will add here that "mixed marriages" involving an Orthodox spouse marrying a non-Orthodox one also became legal at about the same time for essentially the same reason.

The second circumstance leading to more explicit statements about toleration concerns the annexation of new territories where the population was primarily non-Orthodox. The late Muscovite and early im-

perial period were of course times of tremendous territorial expansion, and to a growing degree the annexations in question involved populations that confessed non-Orthodox religions. Such annexations were a good deal easier to effectuate and were less likely to produce strife when the tsarist state openly granted new subjects the right to confess their historical faiths and refrained from the application of coercion to their spiritual affairs. Thus in declarations announcing the annexation of many territories — the Baltic provinces, partitioned Poland, Crimea, and so on — one encounters explicit recognition of non-Orthodox faiths and promises not to encroach on their beliefs.

These practical considerations — the need to recruit foreigners and imperial expansion — were reinforced by a series of ideological developments in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth. These included cameralism (the ideal of the *Polizeistaat*), the Enlightenment, the “mysticism” and ecumenism that characterized the reign of Alexander I, and finally the famous triad of Minister of Education Sergei Uvarov. (Even the final of these — Orthodoxy, autocracy, nationality [*Pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'*] — actually placed its emphasis more on *traditional* religion than on Orthodoxy as such; the concern was that a religion — it did not matter so fundamentally which one from the standpoint of doctrine — had deep historical roots in a given community.) These, then, were the ingredients of the tradition of religious toleration that developed in early modern Russia — initially without much consciousness about the matter, and later in a more explicitly articulated fashion.

I will turn in a moment to the issue of religious toleration as an ideology of the tsarist regime, but before doing so, I would like to make three points about the situation that I just described and that formed a crucial element of life in Russia until the middle of the nineteenth century. First, the toleration of which I speak did not constitute full religious freedom by any stretch. There remained numerous restrictions on non-Orthodox proselytism, certain forms of marriage, conversion from one religion to another, and so on. One could say that religious toleration in that early modern sense granted a certain degree of freedom to entire faiths and churches, but not to individual believers as such. On the contrary, in the best traditions of the *Polizeistaat*, tsarist religious toleration presumed the subordination of each imperial subject to clerical authority, which was itself in turn recognized by the autocracy and regulated by its laws and decrees. In short, there is little basis here to speak of the right of subjects to determine their own religious identity. Second, this religious toleration by no means signified

the equality of all religions in Russia. On the contrary, aside from a brief period during the so-called Dual Ministry (1817–24), the Orthodox Church consistently retained its “ruling and predominant” status, which otherwise remained unquestioned. Finally, in my view the early modern Russian tradition of religious toleration was based on practical considerations to a much greater degree than it was on moral ones. One is indeed struck by the largely utilitarian character of proclamations of even prominent figures of the European Enlightenment. Consider Montesquieu, who at one point wrote “[t]hat it is not so much the Truth or Falsity of a Doctrine which renders it useful or pernicious to Men in civil Government, as the Use or Abuse of it” (Montesquieu 1949: 38). In this regard Russian tsars and tsarinas were excellent students of the *philosophes*. In other words, religious toleration was at this point not so much a value or principle in its own right as it was an instrument of rule.

Toleration as Practice and Ideology

The last observation leads, in turn, to two others. First, precisely because toleration represented an instrument for ruling the country, its contours remained vague. Its precise meaning depended a good deal on the concrete situation at hand, and there was little effort to provide a concrete articulation of its nature. To my knowledge, the expression did not appear in the empire’s Fundamental Law (*Osnovnoi zakon*) or even in the statutes on the foreign confessions in the Law Digest (*Svod zakonov*), though there were a few references to it elsewhere in the Digest. In effect, the presumption seems to have been that the meaning of religious toleration was somehow self-evident or could be derived from the specific situation to which it might apply.

And yet at the same time — and this is the second point — this concept gradually became part of the identity of the tsarist regime. By this I mean that tsarist statesmen and their allies in the public convinced themselves that “religious toleration” was a core characteristic of Russia and its history; and that Russia granted its non-Orthodox confessions an appropriate degree of religious freedom — that is, liberty consistent with the historical conditions that had appeared over the decades and centuries. In this context I cannot resist citing an example of the term’s usage from the 1806 *Dictionary of the Academy of Sciences*: “Before all others, Russia alone may boast of its religious toleration” (*Slovar’ Akademii* 1806: 1046). Many commentators likewise insisted that religious toleration had a long history in Russia. Thus one author

remarked in 1826, “Russia has always distinguished itself before all states by its sensible and prudent religious toleration” (A. L. 1826: 260, 263). Officials in general tried to prevent situations that would produce “justified censure” (*spravedlivye narekaniia*) in response to the government’s violation of toleration. And in specific situations non-Orthodox subjects themselves referred to this principle in their attempts to secure the expansion of religious freedom on their behalf. To take just one example, in 1875 two dissident Mennonites in Saratov province wrote to the governor with a request that they be exempted from military service with the following appeal: “We dare to think that Your Excellency, as a representative of our enlightened age, will stand up for the idea of religious toleration” (GASO f. 1, op. 1, d. 2429, ll. 73–73 ob., petitions of Wilhelm Weber and Johannes Permlauer, 07.02.1878). In short, “religious toleration” became an important element in the dialogue between the state and its non-Orthodox subjects.

In this sense, we may say that toleration became a part of the ideology of the tsarist regime. It became a principle that lent the regime greater legitimacy (at the very least in its own eyes) and that distinguished Russia from Western countries, which had experienced a good deal more religious conflict in their history than had Russia. Thus if “religious toleration” initially served primarily as an *instrument* of rule, with time it did gradually acquire the status of a principle that guided the regime in its actions — not always and not consistently, to be sure, but nonetheless at times.

Two brief examples may illustrate this last point. In 1856, when the governor of Tauride Province proposed the imposition of restrictions on the right of Crimean Tatars to perform pilgrimage to Mecca, the Ministry of State Properties responded that the Hajj represented “one of the most important religious rituals” for Muslims and that “any limitation in this regard would not be in accord with the spirit of religious toleration, by which the Russian government has always distinguished itself” (RGIA, f. 383, op. 19, d. 24874, l. 5, minister of state properties V. A. Sheremet’ev to interior ministry, 07.11.1856). In another example, Orthodox missionaries in the Volga region sought to destroy structures erected for pagan veneration on the grounds that some of the local population was formally Orthodox. But the Ministry of Interior remarked that attempts to prevent Pagans — that is, non-Russians who had not been formally baptized into Orthodoxy — from performing their religious rites were “in some measure inconsistent with our rules on religious toleration” (GAKO, f. 237, op. 151, d. 2064, l. 34, interior ministry as recounted by local bishop, ca. 1849). To an extent at least, then, the

principle of religious toleration did restrain the regime from certain violations of the religious freedom of its subjects. To be sure, toleration did not constitute full religious freedom. Commentators frequently underscored various limits of toleration, while officials sometimes emphasized that one or another non-Orthodox faith was “merely” (*lish*) tolerated, in this way emphasizing the limited character of its freedom and its subordination to Orthodoxy in the empire’s hierarchy of confessions. For confessions that had previously been predominant in a given territory — for example Lutheranism in the Baltic provinces and Catholicism in the Kingdom of Poland — recognition as only a “tolerated” faith represented a downgrading of sorts.

Moreover, in time the degree of religious freedom in Russia began to look inadequate in comparison to what obtained in other countries of Europe. True, the situation in those other European countries was far from ideal, and the process by which religious freedom expanded there was complicated and involved backtracking as well as movement forward. The *Kulturkampf* in Germany, the position of non-Catholic communities in Spain, France’s Islamic policy in Algeria, the position of Orthodox believers in Hapsburg Transylvania — all of these cases show that Europe was not a paradise of religious liberty. But for all that, if there were deviations and a degree of atavism, nonetheless European countries managed gradually in the nineteenth century to expand religious freedom and to eliminate various restrictions and forms of discrimination based on confessional difference. Moreover, the concept of “religious toleration” in Europe gradually gave way to the idea of “freedom of conscience,” according to which religious freedom represented not a privilege bestowed by the state but rather a natural right existing independently of it. From this standpoint, the state represented not the *source* of religious freedom but rather its *guarantor*. And the freedom in question pertained not so much to entire churches or communities but rather to individual subjects or citizens. Against this background, the degree of religious freedom in Russia appeared less impressive.

From “Religious Toleration” to “Freedom of Conscience” (An Incomplete Transition)

How, then, should we describe that development of religious freedom in the last half-century or so of the tsarist regime? In my view, we may identify two contrasting tendencies that simultaneously drew Russia in different directions — one backward and one forward. The first ten-

dency was defined by those factors that imposed further restrictions on religious life in Russia or at least prevented the expansion of religious freedom; the second tendency involved those factors that promoted such expansion. At least until 1905, and to a degree after that as well, these two tendencies coexisted in a rough equilibrium, which brought Russia to an impasse in its religious policy by the early twentieth century. It was only the revolutionary crisis of 1905 that broke this impasse. Let us consider each of these tendencies in greater detail.

In the case of the first tendency, the principal factor in question was the national question. One of the main “limits on religious toleration,” about which statesmen and commentators spoke with some frequency, was the proposition that under no circumstances should toleration extend to any “political” manifestation of religion. This included any intrusion of clergy into the “politics” (the governing of the country), any forms of piety that supposedly pursued “political” goals, any actions of spiritual institutions that could be regarded as an encroachment on the prerogatives of the emperor and his bureaucracy. Officials regarded such instances as a kind of blasphemy — a perversion of spiritual values — and as an assault on autocratic power. From this perspective the government not only had the right to deny the sanction of toleration to such actions, but also the duty to interfere in the affairs of that church or community in order to set things right. Of course the autocracy itself used religion for its own political goals (though it rarely spoke of its actions in those terms), but after all it did have, by its own conception, a monopoly on the legitimate right to engage in politics. Clergies certainly did not have that right.

But if in one sense this principle — the non-interference of religious institutions in “politics” — was fairly straightforward, the situation became a good deal more complicated in the context of rising nationalism. The concept of “natural faith” — the tight connection between faith and ethnicity — meant that religious rituals, confessional institutions, the actions of clergies, and so on, acquired “political” significance with ever greater frequency as nationalist aspirations grew. Likewise, the autocracy’s own efforts to deal with the national question in Russia, for example by promoting “Russification” (*obrusenie*), compelled it to intrude with ever greater frequency into the spiritual affairs of the “foreign confessions,” for example by imposing regulations on parish schools and requiring the use of Russian in confessional administration. The January Insurrection of 1863 in the Kingdom of Poland and the western provinces occupied a particular place in this process, but the dynamic in question appeared in other cases as well — in

the Volga region, in relations with the Armenian Church, and so on. In other words, in the context of rising nationalism the close connection between faith and ethnicity could not fail to affect the conception of religious freedom. The principle of “religious toleration” instructed the government not to interfere in the spiritual affairs of its subjects; but in the context of rising national consciousness — non-Russian and Russian alike — the autocracy could afford such an approach only if it was willing to ignore the interests of the Russian nationality. The essence of the matter was clearly articulated by Aleksei Vladimirov, an active participant in the introduction of the Russian language into Catholic religious services in the western provinces in the 1870s–80s. As he wrote in 1881, sensing an approaching declaration of “freedom of conscience” in Russia (something that happened only in 1905), “The state cannot grant freedom of conscience — that is, the right of each person to transfer by his own will from one church to another, and the right of each church to engage in propaganda, to acquire for itself as many new members as it can — in such a place where millions of subjects are alienated from their nationality by an *alien liturgical language* and where, consequently, each new member acquired by that church will be a direct loss for the state’s core nationality” (Vladimirov 1881: 371–72). Thus separating faith from nationalism was essentially impossible and, as a result, the question of religious freedom was constantly under the influence of attempts to define and defend national interests, the result frequently being the limitation of the religious rights of non-Orthodox believers. In short, the development of nationalism combined with the concept of “natural faiths” to serve as a brake on the expansion of religious freedom in Russia.

But as already noted, there was also a second tendency, one that pulled Russia in a different direction. Here I would point to three principal factors serving to produce this tendency. The first took the form of growing activism on the part of believers in Russia, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox. True, some people in Russia began to incline towards unbelief and even atheism, but others now aspired to more conscious and active participation in the confession of the faith of their ancestors, while still others engaged in various forms of religious innovation. Some adopted confessions that were non-traditional to Russia — the Baptist faith, Methodism, and so on. Others transferred to other recognized confessions, thus repudiating the faith of their ancestors, and in some cases people even created new religions in order to satisfy their spiritual longings. In all these cases, believers sought to define their relationship to God more consciously. (This was

even true, albeit in a negative sense, in the case of unbelief and atheism.) The question accordingly arose: Was Russia's confessional system — based as it was on suppositions about “natural” faiths, on the custodial role of the state over religious affairs, and on the absence of any mechanism for the recognition of new faiths — really in a position to deal with this dynamic religious situation? And was it not possible that the existing limitations on the religious life of non-Orthodox believers (and even Orthodox ones) constituted a reason for the appearance of unbelief and atheism, since many subjects found it impossible to satisfy their spiritual longings fully? What really was worse: heterodoxy or atheism? As the twentieth century approached, the tsarist regime was compelled to grapple with these questions.

The second factor pushing the regime to expand religious freedom was an intellectual one and concerned the appearance and development of more robust conceptions of religious freedom. We noted already that in Europe “religious toleration” was giving way gradually to the ideal of “freedom of conscience.” The latter idea also began to occupy its place in Russian discourse, first in the 1860s and then again, with even greater force, on the eve of the Revolution of 1905. Most strikingly, by the early twentieth century this ideal was being invoked not only by the liberal intelligentsia but also by conservative circles and by defenders of the regime.

A third factor, finally, was the problem of chronic “apostasy” from Orthodoxy. By the end of the nineteenth century there were various groups of people who had been converted to Orthodoxy in the past but now sought to return to the religion of their ancestors. These were Tatar converts from the eighteenth century whose descendants aspired to confess Islam legally; former Greek Catholics (“Uniates”) who had been forcibly “reunited” with Orthodoxy (especially the communities in the Kingdom of Poland, “reunited” in 1875) and now wished to be Roman Catholics; and finally Latvians and Estonians in the Baltic provinces who had abandoned Lutheranism in the 1840s for material incentives and now desired to return to that faith. By the laws of the empire, neither the converts themselves (if they were still alive) nor their descendants could leave Orthodoxy legally. The presence of such large numbers of “apostates” and “recalcitrants” — they numbered in the tens if not hundreds of thousands — created all kinds of practical complications and eventually a certain moral malaise among administrators. On both practical and ethical grounds, then, there were good reasons to embark on a reform of Russia's religious order.

Conclusion

Such a reform indeed began in 1905, when “freedom of conscience” appeared in the October Manifesto and became the touchstone for debates about this issue in the era of the State Duma. Russia’s religious order was substantially liberalized, and yet even so significant contradictions within it remained. In its last decade the autocracy proved unable to decide whether it preferred to close ranks with all traditional religions for the purposes of combatting liberalism and radicalism, or whether it made more sense to close ranks with the Orthodox Church and the forces of Russian nationalism against heterodoxy and non-Russians. Unable to choose definitely between the two, the tsarist regime hesitated and wavered in its last decade. This wavering, I would propose, was itself a reflection of the fact that modernity, far from providing a coherent list of measures and projects to be implemented, placed uneven pressures on old regimes like the tsarist one and in fact pushed them in different directions at once. Even today, these tensions seem still only partially resolved, and post-Soviet Russia’s embrace of certain attributes of the old tsarist confessional order signals the continued need to study the imperial past.

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REGULA M. ZWAHLEN

The Lack of Moral Autonomy in the Russian Concept of Personality: A Case of Continuity across the Pre-Revolutionary, Soviet and Post-Soviet Periods?¹

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The Soviet Union experienced its revival of the notion of personality (lichnost') in Soviet academic discourse in the 1960s. Due to the fact that all these changes were embedded within the Soviet discourse of the scientific-technological revolution, this article takes a closer look at the specific twist the context might have given to the idea of the 'all-round developed personality.' The Soviet concept of the person is torn between an ardent faith in the creative individuality of the 'new man' and a deep mistrust of man's ability to rise up to this expectation, let alone by autonomous initiative. Therefore Zwahlen argues that the Soviet concept of personality lacked neither concepts of individuality nor creativity, but rather a concept of 'moral autonomy' of the type associated with Kantian philosophy. Moreover, the lack of a concept of moral au-

1. An earlier version of this paper was given at the 45th Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, Boston, November 21–24, 2013, as part of the panel “The Scientific-Technological Revolution: More than Technology? Social and Moral Thought in the Late Soviet Union.” A version of the paper was also presented in absentia at the international conference “The Varieties of Russian Modernity II: Religion, State, and Approaches to Pluralism in Russian Contexts” held at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in Moscow on May 14–16, 2014. I thank Elena Aronova, Stefan Guth, Christopher Stroop, and the two anonymous reviewers for *State, Religion and Church* for helpful comments that contributed to improving this article.

tonomy can be observed not only in the Soviet, but also in the Russian notion of personality in general. The article concludes with brief reflection on some consequences of this diagnosis for Russian contexts today.

Keywords: personality, *lichnost'*, Russian philosophy, Soviet academic discourse, scientific-technological revolution, moral autonomy, Nikolai Berdyaev, Karl Marx, Immanuel Kant, enlightenment.

THE title of this paper recalls the Western stereotype that the prominent Russian philosopher Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdyaev often complained about: “There are tropes that are constantly repeated and seem to be convincing. Such a trope exists for Western people about Russia as a country in which there is no personality or only a weakly developed one. Russia appears to be the faceless East” (Berdiaev 1996: 235). This article is not meant to be another argument in this vein. Most contemporary scholars in Russian philosophy subscribe to the view that “philosophical reflection concerning the person has been at the heart of the history of ideas in Russia” (Plotnikov 2012: 270).² Even the Soviet Union experienced its revival of the notion of personality (*lichnost'*) in academic discourse in the 1960s. This phenomenon has been commented upon by several scholars. Some of them tend to see this and even Gorbachev’s later revival of the “human factor” as merely formal changes in ideology: “Doubts whether Gorbachev’s ‘changes’ are genuinely revolutionary, i.e., are changing something essential in the system, derive from the fact that appeals similar to Gorbachev’s and actions, projects, and promises of a similar nature have been repeated before so many times” (Heller 1988: xvii). But more recent studies speak of a “creative development” of Soviet Marxism-Leninism that derived mainly from the attempt to integrate a new concept of person into the social concept of socialism, that is, to develop a “personalized sociocentrism” that would become a “sociocentric personalism” later (Świdorski 2011: 153–54, 163; see also Buchholz 1961; Larson 1981; Bikbov 2014; Gerovitch 2007). In his latest book, Alexander Bikbov develops a historical sociology of notions

2. See also the following assertion by the editors of the recent volume *A History of Russian Philosophy, 1830–1930: Faith, Reason, and the Defense of Human Dignity*: “We would claim that Russian philosophy as a whole constitutes an extended dialogue on human dignity, with many philosophers defending it against those political institutions and ideas that were not adverse to reducing human beings to mere instruments, that is, to means for achieving large political or social objectives” (Hamburg and Poole 2010: 4).

“that change our reality.” He dedicates a whole chapter to the development of the notion of personality and how it changed Soviet social reality, especially in the late 1970s: “The growing value of the ‘person’ within the conceptual grid of the late Soviet period provides evidence that such changes were a far cry from a mere rhetorical veneer over a hard orthodox core. [...] The political history and the critical sociology of the notion of the ‘person’ again testifies that the Soviet regime was not a monolith, but a complex of alternatives and competing projects” (Bikbov 2014: 395, 404).

Due to the fact that all these changes were embedded within the Soviet discourse of the scientific-technological revolution, I would like to take a closer look at the specific twist this context might have given to the idea of the “all-round developed personality” put forth in the Third Party Program of the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961. At this time, the German scholar Arnold Buchholz assumed that the more Marxist ideology — ethics, sociology, psychology, and so on — focused on the “all-round developed person,” the more complex anthropological questions would emerge and the more paradoxes within communist ideology would come to light (Buchholz 1961: 32, 191). I would agree that indeed, the concept pushed communist ideology to its limits, “because a more substantial concept of the person cannot comply with a one-sided ‘collectivist’ concept of social reality” (Świdorski 2011: 158).

According to the common stereotype, the reason for this lay in the fact that the Soviet notion of personality lacked concepts of *individuality*, *creativity* and *ethics*: “In Marxism the priority of labor conditions a *collectivist* disposition. On the contrary, the predominant priority of man in non-Marxist thought has as a consequence an *individualistic* tendency. From these essentially different prior commitments, opposing consequences follow: whereas non-Marxist thought proceeds from an originary *autonomy* of the person, in Marxism it is a derivative of *communality* — more exactly of society which lacking an ethic is not necessarily a community” (Dahm 1982: 45, my italics). However, by juxtaposing individualism and collectivism, Dahm implies that the notions of individualism and autonomy are mostly synonymous, which limits the vision for the central problem concerning the differences between “Western” and “Russian” concepts of personality. In my view, the Soviet concept of personality lacked neither concepts of individuality nor creativity.³ What it did lack though, first and

3. Nor did it lack “subjectivity” — see the debate among historians about Jochen Hellbeck and Igal Halfin’s concept of “Soviet subjectivity” in the Stalin era: Nathans 2013: 177;

foremost, was the concept of “moral autonomy” associated with Kantian philosophy: “Not the single individual as such is at stake but the individual as capable of realizing universal practical norms (according to Kant, ‘humanity proper to your person as well as of each and every other person’). The personality of the person is thus the capacity of the human individual to act as a ‘rational being’” (Plotnikov 2012: 274).

The Soviet concept of the person is torn between an ardent faith in the creative individuality (*tvorcheskaia lichnost'*) of the “new man” and a deep mistrust with regard to man’s ability to rise up to this expectation, let alone by autonomous initiative. As Slava Gerovitch has argued, Soviet ideological discourse after Stalinism preserved its fundamental ambivalence with regard to man by promoting a kind of “disciplined initiative”: “The new man had to be both an active agent of change and a disciplined member of the collective” (Gerovitch 2007: 138, 155). Erich Solov'ev speaks of a “personalism cum grano salis” among the Soviet philosophers during the Thaw: “a personalism within the limits of the Marxian claim about the human being as an ‘ensemble of social relations’” (Świdorski 2011: 152–53).

Hence, despite some “creative development” of Soviet thought, there is a certain continuity with regard to an ambivalent concept of personality within earlier and later Soviet ideological discourse. While this assumption may seem obvious, I would like to go even further and argue, first, that the lack of a concept of moral autonomy can be observed not only in the Soviet, but also in the Russian notion of personality in general. Second, I will argue that the lack of such a concept of moral autonomy becomes apparent in the late Soviet concept of the “all-round developed personality” because of the special emphasis that was laid on human creativity enhanced by the scientific-technological revolution. Third, I will reflect on some consequences of this diagnosis for Russian contexts today: if pluralism is a condition fundamental to modernity, then the moral concept of autonomy is a condition fundamental to pluralism.

One may question what is to be gained by dwelling on the lack of a concept of moral autonomy in late Soviet official discourse, where such a lack may seem obvious. In my opinion, this is nevertheless intriguing, because one can trace the roots of this discourse back to pre-revolutionary Russian thought and at the same time expose Russian thought’s confrontation with the conditions of modernity, includ-

Ab Imperio 3 (2002): 213–408; Naiman 2001; Etkind 2005. About Soviet individuality, see Kharkhordin 1999.

ing autonomy as one of modernity's central features. Distrust of the concept of autonomy is more intuitively associated with anti-modern stances focusing on "traditional values" than with the "pro-modern" stance taken by the Soviet Union through its urgent striving to play a vanguard role within modernity (by "catching up and overtaking the West") and by promoting the scientific-technological revolution for the sake of human progress.⁴ Last but not least, late Soviet discourse is the direct ancestor of today's Russian discourse, which is marked by the defense of "traditional values."

Moral Autonomy as a Key Concept of Modernity

My somewhat provocative argument is based on one of the conclusions of a recent German-Russian research project on the conceptual history of the Russian concept of personality: it concludes that this notion lacks one of the typical aspects of the semantics of "personhood" as conceptualized in the West, namely "autonomy" as a "general property of man (that is, every rational being) to be the subject of his/her actions" (Plotnikov 2012: 274). Considering the importance of this concept in Western discourse — and the fact of its being not without controversy in the West only underlines its importance — I suggest that the notion of autonomy and its interpretations represents a fruitful starting point for a discussion of the conditions of pluralism in Russian contexts. Without a concept of "moral autonomy" and respect for the humanity and sovereignty of each person, pluralism is not possible. In other words, if the diagnosis of a lack of a concept of autonomy in Russian culture is true, this would be a rather serious issue to be addressed, not only with regard to Russian but to Western discourse as well, because the "emergence of Russian philosophical terminology in the 1830s–1840s was influenced by the reception of German Idealism as well as the Romantic movement" (Plotnikov 2012: 277). Idealism and Romanticism remain strong pillars of West European concepts of the person and as such still influence a wide variety of interpretations of the concept of human dignity in Western discourse as well (Bielefeldt 2011: 75–76). According to Kant, "the capacity to give moral principles through one's will is the basis of human dignity" (Reath 1998: 2). But if dignity is linked to some traditional hierarchy or to a certain personal performance needed in order to *gain* dignity

4. See Stefan Guth (2015) on the gulf between aspiration and reality with regard to the social consequences of the scientific-technological revolution.

(for which Friedrich Schiller's "On Grace and Dignity" is an example [see Bielefeldt 2011: 74]), then we are not speaking about human dignity as a universal attribute or a capacity inherent to every person. As already mentioned, I suggest that many misunderstandings with regard to the notion of human dignity are due to a lack of differentiation between the notions of autonomy and individuality. According to Tzvetan Todorov, *individualism* is about asserting "the rights of the personal will without worrying about the inherently social life of men." It is a striving for independence, while (*moral*) *autonomy* in the Kantian sense recognizes society, because it recognizes the moral autonomy of other persons: "Autonomy is a liberty contained by fraternity and equality" (Todorov 2002: 228–29, 232).

I will not provide evidence for the main assertion that "autonomy" "occurs in Russian conceptual history only as subordinate moment" (Plotnikov 2012: 275).⁵ I will concentrate on the concept of personal-ity in the official academic discourse of the late Soviet period, in which a certain diversification of society took place (Bikbov 2014: 404; Guth 2015), and, concomitantly, the need for a concept of autonomy became urgent, because in modern Soviet society it was becoming more and more difficult to emphasize concepts of individuality and creativity without an assumption of moral autonomy.

But first, I will have to clarify the notion of "moral autonomy" itself. I will treat the concept fairly broadly, assuming that *moral* autonomy as a "capacity for self-governance or self-determination" may be viewed as the basis of most other descriptive notions of *personal* autonomy, such as the "actual condition of self-governance" and the notions of "personal ideal," "right," and "social value" (Reath 1998: 3). If social institutions do not respect each person's *capacity to act on basic desires and values that they have critically assessed and endorsed*, that is, on moral autonomy, then personal autonomy, as the *right* to act on one's own judgment without interference by others, will not be granted at all. It seems to me that Kant's famous answer to the question "What is Enlightenment?" includes both moral and personal autonomy:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage. Nonage is the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. This nonage is self-imposed if its cause lies not in lack of un-

5. Berdiaev would likely have agreed: "What Fichte and men like him did for the Germans has yet to be accomplished for the Russians: effective ideas of responsibility, self-discipline, and spiritual autonomy have still to be given to them" (Berdyaev 1936: 222).

derstanding but in indecision and lack of courage to use one's own mind without another's guidance. Dare to know! (*Sapere aude.*) 'Have the courage to use your own understanding,' is therefore the motto of the enlightenment." (Kant 1784)⁶

In the following, I draw on Andrew Reath's assessment of the concept of autonomy, that the opportunity to guide one's actions by exercise of one's capacity for critical reflection is considerably more complex than simply acting on one's own desires. Hence "any values are consistent with autonomy, as long as one accepts them on one's own. [...] The capacity for autonomy is so central to agency that respect for persons is plausibly construed as respect for the exercise of this capacity" (Reath 1998: 1–4). This concept of autonomy neither means that the value of autonomy is inconsistent with other values or commitments, nor that it necessarily leads to an overestimation of one's abilities — on the contrary, Kant himself pointed out that autonomy was a "disagreeable business," because men were too lazy and too cowardly to think for themselves (Kant 1784). What is meant by moral autonomy is the capacity for critical reflection on natural, social and other factors that influence one's agency. Awareness of one's own and others' moral autonomy may actually lead to a more modest attitude with regard to our own judgment (Bielefeldt 2011: 91), and it does not preclude "agents from [...] concluding that certain commitments and ties are inescapable because constitutive of who they are" (Reath 1998: 4).

Hence, in the wake of the Enlightenment, modern thought put "moral weight on an individual's ability to govern herself, independent of her place in a metaphysical order or her role in social structures and political institutions" (Christman 2011: 1). But while Soviet scholars claimed that the Soviet ideal of the "all-round developed personality" had emerged out of the Enlightenment and would experience a rebirth on a new socio-economic, socialist basis (Buslov 1978: 268), the Soviet concept lacked this one main feature of the Enlightenment, that is, autonomy, even if it was mentioned in Soviet treatises. Such is the conclusion of Jon Erik Larson's work about the Soviet

6. Formosa rejects the claim that personal autonomy has no legitimate role in Kant's ethical framework, which is usually associated only with moral autonomy (Formosa 2013: 209): "Kant's conception of autonomy amounts to a *unified* theory of moral and personal autonomy, since you exercise your autonomy both when you do your moral duty on condition that respecting the dignity of others is your primary motive — call this *moral* autonomy — and when you adopt merely permissible ends in accordance with your own personal conception of happiness on the limiting condition that your will has normative authority for all rational agents — call this *personal* autonomy."

concept of the person: “The Soviets never say what autonomy is. Kon suggests that each of a person’s actions is determined but autonomous in the sense that it does not depend causally on any single factor. Rezvitskii and Sabirov suggest that the actions of an autonomous person are not determined. They do not suggest, however, how the actions of an autonomous person occur. They need such a theory” (Larson 1981: 218). As a matter of fact, the lack of autonomy within the Soviet concept of the person becomes particularly obvious when it is associated with the tradition of the Enlightenment, modernity and the building of a new society. According to Shmuel Eisenstadt, the emphasis on the autonomy of man is central to the cultural program of modernity: “In the continuous expansion of the realm of personal and institutional freedom and activity, such autonomy implied, first, *reflexivity and exploration*; second, *active construction and mastery of nature*, including human nature. This project of modernity entailed a very strong emphasis on the *autonomous participation* of members of society in the constitution of the social and political order” (Eisenstadt 2002: 4–5, my italics). However, since we assume a multiplicity of modernities, the notion of “autonomy” is not central to the cultural program of *every* modernity, and especially not to the Soviet project, even if most elements from the above definition — exploration, construction, mastery of nature, and especially the participation of members in the constitution of the social and political order — are key elements of the Soviet project. Soviet state power *did* create new forms of self-identification and historical agency, but, as David L. Hoffmann argues, “it is not the agency of free-thinking, self-made individuals” (Hoffmann 2002: 273–74). The project of Soviet modernity entailed a very strong emphasis not on the autonomous participation, but on the *disciplined* participation of members of society in building communism.⁷ I share Hoffman’s view that even non-democratic “modern systems were based on the ideal of popular sovereignty, in which all citizens were to play an active part in politics. [...] The Soviet system shared an emphasis on its citizens’ sense of self with other modern political systems, but at the same time distinguished itself by the type of self it sought to cultivate” (Hoffmann 2002: 275). But while Hoffmann argues that the Soviet type of self (in the Stalin period) was not to be individualistic like the “liberal self” in Western societies, I again

7. Jochen Hellbeck has argued that “rather than seeking to repress or obliterate people’s sense of self, Soviet institutions and propaganda were intended to foster conscious citizens, who would voluntarily participate in the building of socialism and derive their sense of self from doing so” (Hoffmann 2002: 274).

argue that the sole focus on individuality is missing the point. Individuality is about a special set of *unique* traits, distinguishing an individual from other persons in a given social context. Autonomy is about a moral capacity of *every* person. What is at stake with regard to building a social structure is not only the possibility of individual distinction from other persons, but, above all, the *form* and the *ethics* of individual interaction and participation in the constitution of a political order. In modern Western societies (after World War II and the Declaration of Human Rights), the ideal form of social participation is based on the presupposition of the subject's moral autonomy (even if reality did and does not always correspond to the ideal).

By promoting the “all-round developed personality,” the Soviet Party Program of 1961 introduced something of a Trojan horse into Soviet ideology: the more personal traits are developed, the more the individual will ask for the possibility to govern herself and, in following the call to participate in the social order, to claim interests in social life; she will develop her own perspective and question the prescribed top-down political approach.⁸ Hence, as the Soviet project of the scientific-technological revolution was supposed to unleash an explosion of human creativity, because machines, automation and computers would take over all the boring work and provide more time to think (“sapere aude!”), the lack of a concept of moral autonomy caused some serious problems within the Soviet discourse of personality.

The Russian and Soviet Concept of Personality as “Creative Individuality”

Let us move forward with some reflections about the Russian concept of personality in general. As already mentioned, I share the conclusions of a recent German-Russian research project on the conceptual history of the Russian notion of personality that, in comparison to Western concepts, “took on a distinctive, different form” (Plotnikov 2012: 270). I would underline that this otherness of the Russian discourse of personality “does not depend on some essentialist or ideologically conceived Russian ‘otherness,’ but on the genealogy of the concept in the history of the language and ideas” (Plotnikov 2012: 270). Recently,

8. See Stefan Guth (2015) on elements of “reflexive modernity” that entered the mindset of the Soviet technical intelligentsia from the late 1960s onwards. Even scientists “now started to admit that science could not substitute for value-based decisions and moral discussions. In the absence of a democratic sphere, they largely relegated these functions to literature.”

Mark Lipovetsky added another puzzle piece to the argument, claiming that even contemporary Russian “liberal discourse” is based on a “concept of freedom and personality [that], having originated in [...] Soviet ideological constructs, had little in common with what was known as liberalism outside the USSR” (Lipovetsky 2013: 113).

According to the research project’s conclusions, in the Russian concept of the person, two fundamental constitutive factors of Western concepts, that is, Roman law and Christian theology, were absent. The typical aspects of the semantics of personhood in the Western concept are *autonomy* as a general property of man (Kant), *identity* as continuity in time (Locke), and *individuality* as uniqueness of the individual (Leibniz), the latter being largely influenced by the German Romantic tradition. It has been found that in Russia the concept of the person is tied almost exclusively to the aspect of *individuality*. That “brings to light a paradox that was characteristic of the semantics of romantic individuality: *the creative personality turns out not to be autonomous*. In her existence, this personality is dependent on her opposite, the anonymous social milieu, in which she seeks recognition of her irreducible uniqueness” (Plotnikov 2012: 274–76, my italics). Within the history of ideas in Russia, the person’s “capacity for free self-forming is always connected to *something inaccessible* (be it divine transcendence, social relations or a dialogical relationship), which as such enters into the determination of her individual existence. This connection between free self-determination and irreducible outer determination constitutes what is personal about the person in her own individuality, which is not the product of her rational will but the very mode of man’s existence” (Plotnikov 2012: 294, my italics).

Alongside the aspect of individuality, I would like to add another important notion, namely *creativity*. Nikolai Berdiaev — who, by the way, is referred to quite often in Soviet literature about the scientific-technological revolution as a negative example of bourgeois Russian philosophy — discussed creativity as follows: “The basic theme of Russian thought [is] the theme of the divine in man, of the creative vocation of man and the meaning of culture” (Berdyaev 1948: 245; Zwahlen 2010: 24f). Although in pre-revolutionary Russia, ideas of personal rights and autonomy were developed, at the same time they were supplanted by Nietzsche’s idea of a “creative individuality” (Plotnikov 2012: 283).⁹ In short, the notion of creativity was not linked to the

9. Nikolai Berdiaev’s thinking is an example of this supplanting of the notion of “autonomy” with “creativity” (Zwahlen 2010: 259; see also Zwahlen 2012: 198).

moral concept of autonomy but to individuality, which is not a moral concept as such and is unthinkable without a counterpart in community or society. One of the main features of the very stable Russian discourse of personhood as “creative individuality” is the status of the concept of the person as a “project”:

Neither a factual given, nor a normative requirement, the person is rather a “task”: one becomes a person. As of 1900 and thereafter throughout the entire Soviet period this discourse of the person gave rise to countless imperatives requiring personality to “develop,” to “educate” herself, to “struggle,” to “find” herself. [...] This is the reason why there is so much emphasis in this discourse on pedagogy, educational psychology, and in particular aesthetic education for the sake of the “integral,” “harmonious,” and, once again, “creative personality” (Plotnikov 2012: 283–84).¹⁰

When the operative concept of personality is dependent on “something inaccessible,” there are always intermediaries somehow closer to the “inaccessible,” ready to guide and teach people how to live.

The Soviet discourse on personality is no exception to the Russian concept of “creative individuality,” because the “all-round developed personality,” one of the prominent new notions of the Third Party Program of the Twenty-Second Party Congress of 1961 (Dahm 1982: 38), was not supposed to act autonomously and contemplate its continuous identity in time but was urged to change and invest all its power in the building of the future society, of communism. Individual personality was not supposed to be an autonomous creation “from within” the person (Świdorski 1993: 215), but a useful part of a whole.

According to Marx the single individual is “in its reality [...] the ensemble of the social relations” and it is wrong “to abstract from the historical process [...] and to presuppose an abstract — isolated — human individual” (Marx 1969: vi). Hence, the development of a personality was to be fully determined “from without” and dependent on social reality. One of the best-known Soviet materialist philosophers of the time, Evald Ilyenkov, made this quite clear: “In this sense, the origination process of personality is a process of transformation of biologi-

10. See Vladimir Putin’s presidential address to the Federal Assembly on December 4th, 2014: “Every child and teenager in our country should be able to find something to do outside the classroom. Any curtailment of extracurricular, supplemental education is unacceptable. Art, technology and music centres help create *well-rounded people* [eto ogromnyi resurs garmonichnogo razvitiia lichnosti]” (Putin 2014).

cally given matter by the power of social reality, that exists before, outside and completely independently from this matter” (Il’nikov 2012: 304). Il’nikov underlines that “not a single human action emerges ‘from within,’” and “that a personality or individuality only emerges as soon as an individual is no longer a mere object, but begins to interact with social reality” (Il’nikov 2012: 305). In this concept, autonomy is a capacity created by interaction with social reality and not a universal moral category in the Kantian sense. In Soviet theory, autonomy did not have to be provided or protected, but it had to be created. In other words, autonomy was a project that had to be brought forth by building the right social relations in order to generate the new man. That corresponds to the “quasi-teleological, ‘constructivist’ vision of Soviet theory, that deprived people of qualities which they would possibly get only tomorrow” (Świderski 2011: 157).

The problem is that in the Soviet Union the autonomous, creative personality never seemed to emerge at all, not even under “actually existing socialism.” This was mentioned by Alexander Zipko, Gorbachev’s main philosopher of perestroika, in 1989:

Total state control of production drastically constrains the possibilities of unfolding creativity, of democratic commitment and intellectual development of the personality. Meanwhile it has become perfectly clear that the main social goal of socialism — *paving the way to creative work and self-realization* — cannot be achieved by a state-driven command system. The total control of the producer excludes the development of an all-round and harmonic personality” (Zipko 1989: 208, my italics).

At the root of a system of state control of production one finds a concept of personality that lacked a universal notion of moral autonomy, even if it intended to develop such a notion.¹¹ But a universal moral concept cannot be postponed, and I argue that especially the Russian and Soviet emphasis on creativity (*tvorchestvo*) caused several Soviet thinkers to trip over the lack of autonomy in their concepts of personality. In the following I will discuss some characteristics of the discourse on the scientific-technological revolution, which might have shaped, if not subverted, the late Soviet notion of personality.

11. As an aside, Sergei Bulgakov’s *Philosophy of Economy* is a critique of all modern economic systems that are based on materialism and the lack of a notion of a creative, autonomous man. That is why, in his opinion, “in practice, all economists are Marxists, even if they hate Marxism” (Bulgakov 2000: 41).

The Problem of Personality within the Scientific-Technological Revolution

Many Soviet scholars emphasized “man as the key problem of today.” Indeed, as the editor of the 1986 volume *The Scientific-Technological Revolution and the Spiritual Development of the Person* put it, “the question of man would become the most important criterion to evaluate the course and results of the competition of two systems, which under the conditions of the Scientific-Technological Revolution will show the superiority of real socialism in comparison with declining capitalism” (Kas’ian 1986: 40). Rosalind Marsh observed that “by the 1970s, probably as a result of the growing awareness of popular indifference or skepticism towards science, it had become official policy to emphasize that science and technology must be used for the benefit of man” (Marsh 1986: 167). In contrast to the enduring capitalist exploitation of human labor, the scientific-technological revolution was supposed to foster a “fundamental change of the human personality,” as Genrich Volkov put it:

The revolution in science and technology, which is moving in parallel with social changes, will also result in *fundamental change of the human personality*. The ideal man of communist society is a *harmoniously developed personality*, a *creator* for whom labour is the very first vital requirement and the greatest pleasure, a man whose *free development serves as a condition for the development of society as whole*, and society in its turn makes ‘*an aim in itself of this integral development*, i.e., development of all human powers as such without relating them to any preset scale’” (Volkov 1975: 95, my italics; Marx quoted in Volkov).

In the following analysis I will focus on the concepts laid out by Volkov as well as on the new quality of the Soviet personality as a consumer, which added a new dimension to the Soviet concept of personality.

1. The Problem of the Fundamental Change of the Human Personality

By the end of the 1960s, one debate in the early Soviet philosophy of the person was already more or less decided: after 1966, most Soviet thinkers rejected the so-called “empty concept theories” (*tabula rasa*) that were in general directed against Western philosophers with their assertion of the abstract, eternal, ahistorical nature of the person. Jon

Erik Larson has shown that after 1968 the existence of a general concept of the person with universal content was accepted without question (Larson 1981: 45, 48). For example, the Soviet scholar Alexander Drozdov argued that universal traits are necessary for the purposes of comparison and in order to be able to make judgments about the progress of the person (Larson 1981: 34, 36). According to Drozdov, “among the universal traits of a person are the capacity to be a subject, the bearer of social relations, reason, the presence of ideals and the capacity for their purposeful implementation, etc.” (quoted in Larson 1981: 31). One could say that the capacity to be a subject accompanied by ‘reason’ comes close to what we mean by the notion of “autonomy.” This is worth noting because the problem of Soviet philosophy with “universal traits” was that they cannot be changed — not even by or within the “new man.” The more “universal traits” are seen as a general human condition, the less a “fundamental change of the human personality” seems to be possible, and moreover such characteristics as immorality or religiosity could also be regarded as universal traits (Buchholz 1961: 20). This perspective was underlined by the serious problem that “by the 1970s it had become clear in the Soviet Union that *crime* [conceived as a transient phenomenon under capitalism] was not on its way to extinction” (Graham 1993: 248). With regard to *religion*, the survival of religiosity was explained by the fact that the information flow of the scientific-technological revolution threatened the authenticity of human contacts, which caused a deficit of emotional communication — a need that small informal, often religious groups could fill easily, if a person’s atheistic *Weltanschauung* was not yet fully developed (Bukin 1982: 17–18).¹²

From a different perspective, the so called nature-nurture debate was based on growing doubts about the actual influence of social reality on human behavior; the “naturalists” were looking for other causes of human behavior, including hereditary factors (Graham 1993: 226–27). But the attempt to explain human behavior in terms of innate characteristics or genetics was still considered illegitimate, as a bourgeois (and fascist) approach to medical problems that perpetuated class inequality by insisting on the “unchangeable nature” and the “inertia” of man (Graham 1993: 221). Hence, hereditary factors, innate characteristics, physical preconditions and universal traits, like, for example, moral autonomy, had to be seen as threats to the possi-

12. See Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock (2014) on the spiritual crisis of late Soviet atheism.

bility of social “human engineering” and the Marxian concept of man as an ‘ensemble of social relations.’

2. The Moral Superiority of the Soviet Consumer

According to Alexander Bikbov, one of the most important symbolic revolutions of the 1960s was the semantic link of the “personality of workers” with the notion of prosperity (*blagosostoianie*) — personality had quietly become synonymous with the consumer (Bikbov 2014: 196, 210; Kapranov and Fomina 1982: 69). According to Volkov and others, “the conversion of labor into the highest human pleasure is only possible when the rapid growth of the people’s prosperity is guaranteed” (Volkov 1975, 98). Obviously, people’s prosperity could not yet be guaranteed in the Soviet Union, and the acknowledged “greater capability and economic strength of capitalism” had to be explained. Volkov did it in the following way: “[the economic strength of capitalism] can be achieved only at the expense of the greatest harm to the development of every individual” (Dahm 1982: 41–42). Boris Parygin put it plainly: “Under the conditions of today’s capitalist society, the Scientific-Technological Revolution exhibits a depersonifying, deforming influence on man. Under the conditions of socialism the opposite tendency is taking place — the personification of the person” (Parygin 1978: 101). Hence, in the name of the development of every individual, socialist prosperity would grow more *slowly* (Dahm 1982: 42).¹³ The difference between the capitalist and the Soviet consumer consisted in the fact that the first will always remain an object within a world of things, while the latter will, sooner or later, become a subject and creator of the world of things (cf. Rikhta 1970: 66) as a result of his moral superiority and his ability to distinguish needs from wants (Rogov 1978: 116).¹⁴

13. For example, simply for humane reasons, conveyer belts would run more slowly: “Socialism brings principal changes to the interaction of man and technology: technology appears not to be an enemy, but an assistant, a support for the development of the person. [...] A normal, science-based level of work intensity will be guaranteed. That, in particular, will be achieved by a low speed of the conveyer belt’s movement (at the automobile factory at Volzhsk for example, the speed of the conveyer belt’s movement is one and a half times slower than at the factories of the same type of the Italian company “Fiat”), by the introduction of periodic interruptions for passive rest, as well as for active rest with physical exercises” (Buslov 1978: 57).
14. For example: “Whereas the desire to have your own swimming pool in your home can be seen as a caprice, there is nothing unreasonable in the need for regularly using a public swimming pool, which, obviously, should be provided in each neighborhood for anyone who wishes to use it” (Rogov 1978: 101–2).

Was it moral autonomy they were talking about? No, because in order to be able to properly enjoy the new material and spiritual goods created by the scientific-technological revolution, the country needed a goal-oriented “education of needs,” to be achieved by appropriate tactics and propaganda (Rogov 1978: 105, 111, 114). Thus, each person had to be treated as an object of education in order to “form in the soul the free decision in favor of its own development” (Rikhta 1970: 65). Obviously, a need for “free decisions” had been stated, but a Soviet consumer and person did not need to choose or act autonomously by virtue of her capacity to act on critically assessed basic desires and values, but by virtue of the values and needs taught by Soviet ideology.

3. The Harmoniously Developed Person as an “End-in-Itself”

The Soviet notion of the “all-round developed person” is based on Marx’s concept of the “absolute working-out of [man’s] creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e., the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a *predetermined yardstick*” (Marx 1973: 488). As already mentioned above, Soviet “society in its turn makes ‘an aim in itself of this integral development [of man], i.e., development of all human powers as such without relating them to any preset scale’” (Volkov 1975: 95; Marx quoted in Volkov). But obviously, “presuppositions” and “predetermined yardsticks” were inherent to Soviet ideology, and Marx’s reference to Kant’s definition of the person as an “end-in-itself” seems to have been a special problem for some Soviet thinkers. Instead of dwelling on its meaning, they were more keen to discuss the question of what the “working-out of man’s creative potentialities” really meant. According to I. M. Rogov, well-roundedness was not to be understood literally, in the sense that every person would become a universal genius (Richta 1969: 127; Buslov 1978: 140), but, according to the conclusions of a Soviet academic conference from 1975, “development presupposes a *choice between possibilities* given by culture, that is, the building of individuality” (Rogov 1978, 138). Hence, the person would choose between possibilities – but this choice was pre-conditioned by the desire for some form of “harmony” that had to be achieved. Rogov created a model (fig. 1) defining this ideal of the ‘all-round developed personality’:



Figure 1

According to Rogov's model, the main elements of a person's life are work, community, social commitment and knowledge. Pursuing these goals will engender spiritual wealth, physical perfection, moral purity and civic spirit; and the pursuit of these goals will be enhanced by occupational, ideological-political and moral education. Nevertheless, the concept of *choice* and arrangement of different possibilities called for some kind of agent in the middle, for "a robust notion of the human subject uniting 'from within' the characteristics that Soviet philosophy usually ascribed to individuals ['from without']" (Świdorski 1993: 215). In other words: it called for a concept of moral autonomy, for a rational subject as an "end-in-itself" capable of critical reflection.

4. Man as a Creator

In fostering the scientific-technological revolution, "for the first time in history, socialism created the real possibility for an exceeding development of the creative principle in man" (Rogov 1978: 81). According to the definition of many Soviet authors, creativity is the capacity to generate something *new* (Rogov 1978: 80; Buslov 1978: 75). Great expectations were fueled by the scientific-technological revolution because it would call forth a "radical change in [...] the cardinal productive force — the human being, the creator of all material and spiritual wealth" (Buslov 1978: 76). The greatest hopes were pinned on automation, because it "will transform the labor of ordinary citizens into a source of delight, inspiration and creativity [...] it favors the all-round development of the personality" (Volkov 1975: 43–44). "In the future automation and new, more effective technology will eliminate monotonous physical labour" and make

“interesting work the property of each member of society” (Volkov 1975: 51, 98). Furthermore, computers would enable man to concentrate on creative thought and help him to develop his spiritual potential (Rogov 1978: 154). Finally, every person would establish her own goals, and each individual would *conceive of these goals as her own* (Rogov 1978: 81). The need for autonomous choice of action was thus stated as a fact, but it was still projected into the future. Using the example of the ambiguous role of the cosmonaut between “active agency” and being a part of a “technological” system, Gerovitch put it simply: “[T]he main problem was not that the human was not capable; the main problem was that the human was not fully predictable” (Gerovitch 2007: 60, 138).

What about Today? (Further Questions)

I would like to conclude with some observations on the contemporary situation in Russia. What has happened to the Russian concept of personality, now that Soviet ideology has been abandoned? Anna Krylova has criticized the tendency of American, and probably most Western schools of Soviet studies to present the history of the Soviet personality in terms of the “death of the liberal subject, its partial rebirth as a corrupt self-centered egoist [a consumer], and its triumph as a resisting liberal spirit” (Krylova 2000: 120, 145). As the above-mentioned research project on the Russian notion of personality and I here would argue, such a “liberal subject,” always ready to resist totalitarian invasion of its self, never existed in the mainstream of Russian concepts of personality. Of course it could also be contested that such a fully autonomous subject exists at all — but there are crucial differences between a society in which moral (and personal) autonomy is held as an important universal value and one in which such an ideal has long been lacking. Russia is a striking case, considering the overwhelming amount of thought that has been devoted to problems of personality, individuality and creativity in Russian and even late Soviet philosophical literature, even prior to perestroika. Even today the “moral discourse and ethical practice of work on the self [is] perhaps the most powerful moral concept in contemporary Russia” (Zigon 2011: 5).¹⁵

15. For example, Oleg Kharkhordin (1999) demonstrates that Party rituals — which forced each Communist to reflect intensely and repeatedly on his or her “self,” “had their antecedents in the Orthodox Christian practices of doing penance in the public gaze. Individualization in Soviet Russia occurred through the intensification of these public penitential practices rather than the private confessional practices that are characteristic of Western Christianity.”

One conclusion to be drawn from my argument seems to be quite obvious. A concept of personal autonomy will not simply emerge in Russian thought, neither of itself nor from the ashes — it has to be developed. Some other conclusions lead to further research questions deserving closer attention. First, the lack of a concept of moral autonomy in Russian thought seems to account for the fact that there is not a vast dichotomy between “traditional Orthodox” and “modern Soviet” worldviews. Hence, focusing on the lack of autonomy in the dominant Russian concept of personality might help to explain the “surprising continuity between Soviet and present-day religious moralities” (Agadjanian 2011: 19), for example, why the list of “traditional Russian values” promoted by some representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2011 can easily be compared with the “Moral Code of the Builder of Communism” from 1961 (Gumanova 2011; De George 1969), or why the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, as well as Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Rus, have both emphasized the importance of Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights about “duties to the community” (Kirill 2009: 133; Brezhnev 1977: 21), while both condemned “rotten liberalism” (*gniloi liberalizm*).

Second, the question of whether a concept of “moral autonomy” can be found in recent Russian thought should be posed. According to Mark Lipovetsky, even contemporary Russian “liberal discourse” reflects a paradoxical coexistence of liberalism and anti-democratic, hence not pluralistic, attitudes toward the concept of moral autonomy (Lipovetsky 2013b: 110). Lipovetsky argues that the “liberal” concept of freedom and personality in today’s Russia is inherited from the discourse of the Soviet technical intelligentsia of the 1960s and is based on “the old positions of knowledge power and the ensuing superiority complex toward the ‘subalterns,’ who again will have to be enlightened at any cost” (Lipovetsky 2013a: 218). Hence, the Russian intelligentsia would still follow an essentialist program of modernity without instruments to handle conflicting views. Lipovetsky’s “restrained optimism with regard to the transformability of the Russian cultural discourse” stems from a recent change in the dominant intelligentsia’s discourse, which Maxim Waldstein has noted since 2012: “It became harder to speak about ‘traditional values’ and their ‘eternity’ in a matter-of-fact way, without thinking about the meaning of these words. One felt the need to explicate his or her statements, even if the form of these explications was dogmatic and xenophobic” (quoted in Lipovetsky 2013a, 217–18; Val’dshstein 2013: 154–55). Could this “need to explicate his statements,” the need to con-

vince others by argument, be seen as evidence of a growing notion of and respect for the moral autonomy of others?

Third, it would be interesting to examine today's Russian Orthodox thinking with regard to the concept of moral autonomy. The Russian Orthodox Church's "Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights" (2008) can be taken as an example of the continuity of the Russian emphasis on the notions of *individuality* in terms of agency (e.g., as "work on the self" or "theosis") and *responsibility*, while common Western concepts of personality (supported by Western Christianity, at least in the aftermath of World War II) are linked to individual *autonomy*, *self-determination* and *rights*. The difference between these concepts is not to be found in their "individualistic" or "collectivist" outlooks, but in their attitude to autonomy, which is negative and positive, respectively. Without a concept of moral autonomy, the Russian "Romantic" concept of "creative individuality" does not allow that individuals can create "from within," and it is not strong enough to resist control and governance "from without." Furthermore, a concept of individual responsibility is not conceivable without a notion of moral autonomy. For example, in order to reconcile juridical and religious notions of human dignity, Heiner Bielefeldt, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, created the notion of a "responsible subject endowed with reason" (*vernunftbegabtes Verantwortungssubjekt*) that underlies the arguments of both those who claim rights and those who appeal to duty to the community (Bielefeldt 2011: 28–30, 157).¹⁶

But if the increasing focus on personality was something of a Trojan horse in Soviet ideology, Orthodox Christian thought is not doomed to the same paradoxes, but is perfectly able to develop a notion of moral autonomy, because "nothing in the conceptions of autonomy [...] precludes agents from deciding as a result of critical reflection to take on binding obligations or to affirm attachments to others" (Reath 1998: 4). And indeed, one can find traces of autonomy in recent documents of the Russian Orthodox Church. Quoting St. Irenaeus of Lyon, the "Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights" (2008) and the "Basic Social Concept" (2000) both speak of the need "to preserve for the individual a certain autonomous space [*nekuiu avtonomnuiu sferu*] where his conscience remains the absolute master, for it is on the free will that salvation or death, the way towards Christ or away from Christ will ultimately depend" (Russian Orthodox Church 2008:

16. See also Philip Pettit (2001: 20f) on the "advantages of conceptualizing freedom as fitness to be held responsible.

sect. 4, art. 3). The question remains whether the individual choice between salvation or death is tantamount to the notion of moral autonomy in the Kantian sense. Apparently it is not by chance that the “Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights” shows a “striking absence of juridical rights” as “the Doctrine does not mention the right to fair trial and equal access to law,” and “it largely ignores the function of human rights as protective rights” meant to defend the rights of autonomous individuals against arbitrary state interference (Stoeckl 2014: 84–86). But if today’s Russian Orthodox Church leadership seems to try to avoid confrontation with state institutions for political reasons, that does not mean at all that there is no potential to develop a concept of moral autonomy within Orthodox theology.¹⁷

However, as the diagnosis of a “lack of autonomy” obviously comes from a Western point of view, a fourth, self-reflexive question must be asked: What happened to the Western concepts of autonomy during the twentieth century, especially in relation to their employment in strong opposition to “Soviet collectivism”? In his reflections about the legacy of the Enlightenment, Tzvetan Todorov spoke of a “hypertrophy of the notion of individual autonomy” in the West that is “not content with recognizing the individual as a *necessary* entity, [but] declaring him to be a totally *self-sufficient* one” (Todorov 1989: 12), which detaches the notion of autonomy from a constructive attitude toward community. Do Western (liberal) concepts today tend to make the same mistake as the Soviet ones in the past by focusing more on individuality (and independence) than on autonomy and solidarity, and hence lose their power to build social bonds? Could this be the reason why in the West “rights talk is becoming banal,” as Andrew Clapham illustrates with reference to an essay by Milan Kundera about the fight for human rights “becoming a kind of universal stance of everyone towards everything, a kind of energy that turns all human desires into rights” (Clapham 2007: 17). It is not individualism (or liberalism) that underlies the very idea of human rights, but rather moral autonomy.

17. Sergei Bulgakov represents a rare historical example. According to Bulgakov, the idea of man as God’s image and likeness is the ontological basis for conceiving of every human being as an “end-in-itself.” In his view, moral autonomy is a God-given fact and a part of the human condition. It is not an individual attitude, but a moral faculty of each person, which enables anyone to create and to be part of interpersonal relations (Zwahlen 2012a: 198–200; Zwahlen 2012b). See also Randall A. Poole on Vladimir Solov’ev’s philosophical anthropology (Hamburg and Poole 2010: 131–49), and Aristotle Papanikolaou (2012) for a contemporary Orthodox case for the modern liberal principles of freedom of religion, the protection of human rights, and church-state separation.

In his paper “What Is Enlightenment?” Michel Foucault argues that “the deliberate attitude of modernity is tied to an indispensable asceticism. [...] The thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is [...] the permanent reactivation of an attitude — that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era” (Foucault 1984: 7–8). If we want to critically develop concepts of autonomy within pluralistic societies, both Russian and Western concepts should be regarded in terms of the variety of modern experience. Following Todorov, their dialectic should be taken as an appeal to reconsider the modern legacy of the concept of autonomy. Kant’s concept of moral autonomy is not about ruthless individualism, but about commonly established values and “intersubjective consent” (Todorov 2006: 34–35). Sir Isaiah Berlin likewise argued that modern history “has permanently shaken the faith [...] in the possibility of a perfect and harmonious society,” that “not all ultimate human ends are necessarily compatible,” and that “active solidarity in the pursuit of common objectives, may be the best that human beings can be expected to achieve” (Berlin 1992: 235–37). When it comes to overcoming the dichotomy of individual and communal ends, more than a few Russian concepts of personality have a lot to offer (see Hamburg and Poole 2010; Stoeckl 2008; Zwahlen 2010).

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EUGENE CLAY

Multiculturalism and Religious Education in the Russian Federation: The *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics*

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Over the last decade, the Russian Federation has turned sharply away from the secular foundations of its 1993 constitution and moved toward the model of a confessional state — a model that strikingly resembles the state-sponsored hierarchy of religions in the nineteenth-century Russian Empire. Increasingly, the Russian state actively cooperates with certain favored religious organizations, labeled “traditional,” to achieve its social and political goals. One of the clearest manifestations of this developing relationship between the state and “traditional” religious institutions is the Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics, a new national program of spiritual and moral education for the public schools. Since September 2012, all pupils in fourth and fifth grades must take a total of 34 hours of the Fundamentals, designed to promote religious tolerance, patriotism and morality. In their current form, the Fundamentals represent a compromise between advocates of confessionalization, who argue for the benefits of greater religious influence on the state, and strict secularists.

Keywords: religious education, *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics*, secularism, confessionalization.

OVER the last decade, the Russian Federation has turned sharply away from the secular foundations of its 1993 constitution and moved toward the model of a confessional state — a model that strikingly resembles the state-sponsored hierarchy of religions in the nineteenth-century Russian Empire. Increasingly, the Russian state actively cooperates with certain favored religious organizations, labeled “traditional,” to achieve its social and political goals. As in the Russian Empire, which recognized a select number of denominations that enjoyed special privileges (including the right to teach religion to primary school children), the contemporary Russian government grants special status to those religions it deems to be “traditional” — those religions that “comprise an integral part of the historical heritage

of the peoples of Russia,” in the words of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations (Russian Federation 1997; Butler and Henderson 1998: 117). Although the modern Russian Federation is certainly far more secular than its imperial predecessor, which had to rely on religious institutions to keep track of vital statistics and to regulate marriage, in the last fifteen years, the Russian state has gradually departed from its constitutional commitment to treat all religions equally (Article 14) and instead increasingly has partnered with “traditional” religious associations to advance social welfare and other projects of national importance. One of the clearest manifestations of this developing relationship between the state and “traditional” religious institutions is the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics*, a new national program of spiritual and moral education for the public schools. A highly controversial, complex course, the *Fundamentals* were introduced as a pilot program in 2009 by President Dmitry Medvedev and became a required part of the national curriculum three years later. The *Fundamentals* have emerged from the Russian Federation’s unique past as the heir to both the Soviet Union — the first officially atheist state in history — and the multiconfessional Russian Empire, which reserved a leading role for the Orthodox Church. The *Fundamentals*, and the debates that have surrounded their implementation, offer a valuable perspective on the evolution of Russia’s constitutional secularism and the growing role of religion in public life. In their current form, the *Fundamentals* represent a compromise between advocates of confessionalization, who argue for the benefits of greater religious influence on the state, and strict secularists, who regard such influence with deep suspicion. Without question, however, the *Fundamentals* demonstrate a historic shift away from strict secularism toward a prerevolutionary model favoring certain religious organizations.

With its secular constitution and enormous demographic diversity, Russia faces great challenges in developing a universal program of spiritual and moral education. In a delicate balancing act, the Russian educational establishment has sought to draw on the rich spiritual and cultural resources of Russia’s “traditional” religions while at the same time maintaining, in some sense, Russia’s constitutional commitments to secular governance and secular education. Since September 2012, all pupils in fourth and fifth grades must take a total of 34 hours of the *Fundamentals*, designed to promote religious tolerance, patriotism and morality. Beginning in the second semester of the fourth grade, the *Fundamentals* are offered for an hour each week. Significantly, the *Fundamentals* provide parents a choice among six different modules that their grade-school children can study: a course in secular ethics, a world religions survey, or a course in one of the four “traditional” religions of Russia (as suggested by the preamble to the 1997 Law

on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations) — Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, or Islam. The Ministry of Education and Science has invested millions of rubles into training a cadre of teachers to implement the new curriculum; many of the approved textbooks are available online, and educational authorities have established websites, Twitter accounts, and YouTube channels devoted to the new course.¹

By introducing this new program, the Russian Federation has asserted the state's vested interest in ensuring the moral and spiritual development of its citizens; bad religion (such as "totalitarian cults" or Islamic extremism) threatens the security of Russian society. This concern about "totalitarian cults" (a term borrowed from the Western anti-cult movement) arose as early as May 1994 when an international seminar of Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic leaders met on the campus of the Russian Academy of Administration to discuss the danger of non-traditional religion for post-Soviet Russia ("Poniatie totalitarnoi sekty" 1994; Kholmogorov 1994; "Itogovoe zaiavlenie" 1994). Orthodox heresiologists continue to employ the term against new religious movements (Egortsev 1997; Novopashin 2005; Shvechikov and Moroz 2005; *Sovremennye netraditsionnye religii* 2006; Osipov 2007; Kovalenko and Usanov 2009; Dvorkin 2012). By strengthening the "traditional" religions of Russia, the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* is designed to reinforce Russia's "spiritual security," a subject of great interest to many scholars, military officers, and law enforcement officials (Chizhik 2000; Tykva 2008; Khvyliia-Olinter 2008; Bepalenko 2009; Tonkonogov 2009; Viktorov 2009; Syrovatkin 2013; Rybakov 2013). The new program has also federalized the standards for spiritual and moral education, taking them out of the hands of regions and individual school directors and making them part of a uniform curriculum across the federation (Ministerstvo obrazovaniia i nauki 2012). The new curriculum recognizes the multiconfessional nature of Russian society. At the same time, it favors particular religious institutions and communities that are officially recognized as "traditional." Just as the Russian state had chosen the winners in the privatization of state assets in the mid-1990s by selling valuable firms at favorable rates to well-connected oligarchs, so, too, did it seek to choose the winners in the religious field, by a policy of favoring "traditional" religions (on the privatization, see Freeland 2000; McFaul 2001; Goldman, 2003; for a different view, see Leonard and Pitt-Watson 2013).

As in the prerevolutionary classroom, religious education is designed to produce moral people. According to one teacher's guide, "the goal of the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* is to

1. For example, <http://www.orkce.org>; <https://twitter.com/orkce>.

motivate pupils toward moral behavior that is based on the knowledge of and respect for the cultural and religious traditions of the multinational people of Russia and toward dialogue with the representatives of other cultures and worldviews” (Pokasov 2013). The guide makes clear, however, that the course is not intended to teach religious doctrine; unlike the prerevolutionary courses, the *Fundamentals* are not meant to make good Muslims or good Orthodox believers: “*The Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* does not include the teaching of religion. The phrase ‘the teaching of religion’ signifies the teaching of religious doctrine” (Pokasov 2013). At the same time, the *Fundamentals* favor “traditional” religions, whose clergy are to serve on the coordinating council and have a voice in training teachers. Within legal limits, municipal organs must cooperate with “traditional” local religious organizations, whose representatives should be part of the coordinating council. Likewise, local “traditional” religious communities must have a voice in the training of teachers and the methods of teaching.

Religious Instruction in the Russian Empire

The new curricular program draws on Russia’s prerevolutionary experience in moral education without simply repeating it. In the Russian Empire, which never instituted a system of universal public education, moral and religious instruction was an essential part of the primary school curriculum. Moreover, most primary schooling was in the hands of religious communities, from Buddhist monasteries (*datsans*) near Lake Baikal to Muslim maktabas on the middle Volga to the Russian Orthodox church-parish schools across the empire (Dowler 2001; Sartikova 2009; Snapkovskaia 2011; Kefeli 2014). Although the Orthodox church was established, the empire included many religious minorities, and religion played an essential social and legal role that it lost after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Every imperial subject had to have a religion, an attribute that was usually determined by birth and was recorded in one’s passport (Steinwedel 2001: 67–92; Baiburin 2009: 140–54). Religious communities kept vital records and determined much of family law; Muslim males, for example, could marry up to four wives, as permitted by the shariah, even though Orthodox men had to be satisfied with monogamy. Civil marriage did not exist in the empire (Wagner 1994). The Russian legal code, systematized in the mid-nineteenth century, established a hierarchy of a handful of recognized religions that could play these important social functions. At the top of this hierarchy was the established Orthodox Church, the required religion for the imperial family. Just below Orthodoxy were the rec-

ognized heterodox Christian confessions (*inoslavie*), including the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (the faith of the Finns and most of the Baltic and Volga Germans), and the Roman Catholic Church (dominant among the Lithuanians and Poles). On the third rung of the hierarchy stood *inoverie*, the recognized non-Christian religions of Judaism (especially prominent in Poland and western Ukraine) and Islam (the faith of many millions in Central Asia and the Caucasus), and Tibetan Buddhism, the religion of the Buriats and Kalmyks. Paganism (the catch-all term for the traditional ethnic religions of indigenous peoples as varied as the Tungus, Cheremis [Mari], Chukchi, and Yakuts) remained at the bottom of the hierarchy. The emperor or his representative appointed the spiritual leaders of these officially recognized religious communities.

In a society in which religion played such a vital legal role (determining whom one could marry, where one could live, or whether one's children were legitimate) religious instruction had to be an essential part of all primary education. In the extensive public school system established by the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment in the last decades of the ancien regime, religious instruction took up nine of the total 24 weekly hours of school time (Eklof 1986: 487). Pupils who belonged to one of the recognized religious minority faiths, such as Islam or Lutheranism, studied their own faith during the hours devoted to the Law of God (*Zakon Bozhii*). Significantly, the state sought to inculcate religious faith through education — and not simply the established faith, but the faith of the pupil's religious community, whether Buddhist, Muslim, or Armenian. No effort was made to provide education *about* religion; primary schools did not offer objective surveys in world religions, but normative instruction on the doctrines, practices, and ethics of a single faith.

Soviet Moral Education

This system of religious instruction came to an end with the Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent Soviet decree of January 1918 that separated church from state and school from church. In the 1920s, the Soviet Union introduced compulsory universal, militantly secular, public primary education that was part of the broader Marxist-Leninist project to create a new civilization and a new kind of human being, the new Soviet man (Fitzpatrick 1970). Not content to separate education from religion, the Soviet Union closed, confiscated, or physically destroyed the vast religious infrastructure that had provided a substantial portion of the primary education in the empire. The cultural revolution that accompanied the First Five-Year Plan (1929–32) resulted in the arrest and execution of thousands of clerics, mul-

lahs, lamas, and other religious specialists who had, in the past, taken responsibility for the moral instruction of the next generation. For example, religious persecution reduced the number of Orthodox clerics from 66,140 in 1917 to 6,367 in 1940 — a loss of over 90 percent (Dickinson 2000: 332). In 1929, a new law on religious associations — which remained in effect for the next six decades — drastically curtailed freedom of conscience and placed strict state controls on religious life. In the same year, the Congress of Soviets amended the constitution to deprive believers of the right to conduct religious propaganda while assuring all citizens the right to engage in anti-religious propaganda. For Soviet authorities, religion had no place in the moral education of children, and their brutal, state-sponsored destruction of believers and religious institutions had a deep and long-lasting impact on those religious communities that survived the Soviet period. As a legacy of this persecution, some religious believers are deeply suspicious of secular approaches to spiritual education or to the study of religion. To allay such suspicions, the post-Soviet Russian Ministry of Education and Science has on some occasions explicitly noted that “secular” (*svetskii*) is not synonymous with “atheistic” or “anti-religious” (Ministerstvo obrazovaniia 1999).

Soviet pedagogues sought to develop methods of moral education that did not rely on religious instruction. Anton Semenovich Makarenko (1888–1939), who emerged as a leading theorist in the 1930s, worked out his ideas in labor colonies for orphans (*besprizorniki*) (Stevens 1982: 242–64; Stolee 1988: 64–83; Goldman 1993; Ball 1994; Stone 2012). Highly suspicious of the Western emphasis on individual autonomy, he encouraged his pupils to love the collective, the ultimate source of moral authority. Only in the collective could the individual personality flourish (Makarenko 1950–52; Lilge 1958; Bowen 1962; Gritsenko 2013: 97–102). The challenge of the Second World War intensified the efforts of Soviet pedagogues to instill love for the collective and for the motherland in their young charges (Kuznetsova 2006: 95–102; Shchegolev 2007: 76–85; Gordina 2011: 58–71). Soviet education was designed to develop character both through formal instruction in particular subjects as well as through extracurricular activities, such as involvement in the Young Pioneers and the Communist Youth League. All elements of Soviet education were supposed to help inculcate the “moral code of the builder of Communism,” as the 22nd Party Congress put it in 1961 (“Programma Kommunisticheskoi partii” 1961). This moral code included devotion to the communist cause, love of the socialist motherland, a collectivist attitude, honesty, mutual respect, moral purity, and modesty (Malkova 1964). A biology textbook published in the 1980s, for example, argued that science education, which had to be systematically atheistic, helped

to build character by “exposing the antiscientific character” of religious belief and convincing pupils of the correctness of scientific materialism (Muckle 1987: 1–22). Although formally voluntary, the Octobrists, Young Pioneers, and the Communist Youth League (*Komsomol*) were effectively compulsory for most Soviet children and youth; only the most devout and uncompromising religious believers prevented their children from joining these explicitly anti-religious organizations, and they often suffered public excoriation for their refusal (Vigilianskii 2004; Livschiz 2007; Baran 2014: 43, 130, 181). These organizations provided most of the camping, sporting, and other extracurricular group activities available to Soviet pupils; as part of their mission, they sought to promote “socially useful labor” and to instill socialist values into their members (Muckle 1987: 1–22).

Religion in Post-Soviet Russian Classroom, 1992–1997

In the post-Soviet period, the collapse of the Communist Party (and the moral system that it represented) left many former Soviet citizens concerned about a moral vacuum. For most former Soviets, devotion to the Communist cause, the main pillar of the “moral code of the builder of Communism,” could not be defended in light of Marxism-Leninism’s many ethical and practical failures. But what could take its place? And how could moral training be institutionalized in the school system?

The legislation and educational policy of the early 1990s affirmed the separation of religion and state. In 1990, both the USSR and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic passed laws that reversed decades of Soviet anti-religious policy for a wide-ranging religious freedom. One section of the Russian law explicitly permitted teaching about religion in public schools: “The teaching of religion in an academic or epistemological framework [...] not accompanied by rites and ceremonies and informative in nature, may be included in the educational program of state institutions” (Russian Federation 1990 [1995]). On this legal basis, some regions — and even individual school principals — introduced elective courses on religion. As early as 1991, for example, the Smolensk region formally introduced the study of Orthodox Christian culture as an elective course in state schools (Divnogortseva 2011: 57).

Initially, the newly independent Russian republic affirmed secularism as a principle of public instruction (Dneprov 1991). A new law on education passed in 1992 specifically excluded political parties and religious organizations from state schools (Russian Federation 1992). Education was to be democratic, pluralistic, and secular. At the same time, the law called for the promotion of values “common to all human-

ity”: citizenship, respect for human rights and freedom, and love for one’s family and homeland. The law also recognized the multinational character of the Russian Federation, guaranteeing education in national cultures and regional cultural traditions. For many teachers and school directors, religion formed an integral part of national culture, and many schools across the country introduced courses that included the study of local religious traditions. In the Republic of Tatarstan, for example, the numbers of public schools teaching Tatar language and culture rapidly increased in the 1990s; these schools necessarily also taught about Muslim doctrines, customs, and rituals that played an important role in Tatar history and literature (Koroleva et al. 2012).

One of the earliest (and in hindsight doomed) efforts to reintroduce a formal system of moral education into post-Soviet Russian schools was the Co-Mission, a joint effort of the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the US-based Campus Crusade for Christ. In this program, Campus Crusade created voluntary training sessions on morals and ethics that public school teachers could attend. Campus Crusade also developed curricular tools that teachers could draw upon in developing their moral lessons. From 1992, when the program formally began, to 1997, when it ended, over 1500 missionary educators were involved in the project. Over the long run, however, the long-term goals of Campus Crusade (to win Russian converts to Evangelical Christianity and to plant Protestant churches) and those of the Ministry of Education and Science (to halt Russia’s perceived moral decline) proved to be too different for the program to continue. More importantly, the resurgent Russian Orthodox Church, highly suspicious of Campus Crusade’s Protestant worldview, developed its own program of moral and religious education, the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture*, which it sought to introduce into the schools (Glanzer 2002).

By the time the five-year Co-Mission program ended, the legal landscape in Russia had significantly changed. In September 1997, with the strong support of the Russian Orthodox Church, the State Duma passed a more restrictive law on religion designed to favor the “traditional” faiths of the peoples of Russia. The Russian constitution remained a self-consciously secular document that articulated the principle of equality of all religions before the law: Article 14 states that “the Russian Federation shall be a secular state. No religion may be instituted as state-sponsored or mandatory religion. Religious associations shall be separated from the state, and shall be equal before the law” (Butler and Henderson 1998: 7). At the same time, the 1997 legislation suggested that there was, in fact, a hierarchy of religions based on their historical and cultural contribution to the various ethnic groups

that made up the Russian Federation. In this respect, the 1997 law envisions religion as an important part of the social fabric, not simply a matter of private choice that each citizen is free to exercise.

The process of registration was particularly important for putting this hierarchical system into practice. The law divided religious organizations into three categories: (1) unregistered “religious groups” that had no rights of juridical personhood but might seek registration; (2) registered “local religious organizations”; and (3) “centralized religious organizations” that included at least three “local organizations” as members. To enjoy the full benefits of juridical personhood, registered individual congregations had either to have been in existence for fifteen years or to belong to a national “centralized religious organization.” These restrictions clearly favored the handful of religious organizations that had had a legal existence in 1982, including, of course, the four religions specifically enumerated in the 1997 preamble: the Orthodox Church, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism.

“Traditional” Religions and the Russian Classroom, 1997–2009

With this major victory in reshaping the Russian religious marketplace, the Russian Orthodox Church sought to extend its influence into public education and found a willing partner among many politicians at the regional and national level. After the passage of the law on religious associations, several regional governments provided financial support for religious education in high schools. These courses were offered under a variety of different names, used different textbooks, and followed diverse programs of study. Belgorod Oblast offered the “Fundamentals and Values of Orthodoxy”; students in Kursk could take the “Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture”; schools in the Voronezh and Kaliningrad Oblasts offered the “Law of God” as an elective; and the “Foundation of Orthodox Culture and Morality” was introduced in Novosibirsk and Smolensk (Mitrokhin 2004). At the same time, some ethnic republics introduced the study of the dominant regional religious traditions in their public schools. For example, from 1998, by government decree, schools in Ingushetia taught the “Fundamentals of Religion” — a course on Islamic culture — to students in fifth through eleventh grades for two hours per week (Obshchestvennaia palata 2007).

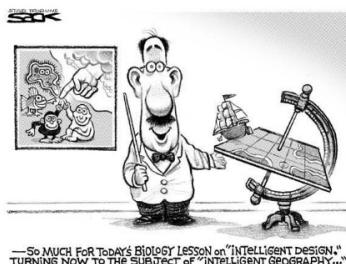
As the largest and most influential religious body, the Orthodox church played the most important role in encouraging the introduction of religious education into the public school system, and in the late 1990s it found a sympathetic ally in the Federal Ministry of Education and Science. Early in

1999, the minister of education, Vladimir Mikhailovich Filippov, called for the creation of a commission designed to free state educational standards, academic programs, textbooks and teaching aids from “manifestations of militant atheism.” In June, he issued instructions explaining how parents could request that their schools offer space to local Orthodox churches for optional courses in religion outside the framework of the educational program (Ministerstvo obrazovaniia 1999). A new Coordinating Council for Cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Russian Orthodox Church, created in July 1999, began to develop curricula that could be used in state schools (Metlik 2010; Dneprov 2011). Later that summer, the Ministry of Education and Science signed an agreement with the Moscow Patriarchate to implement joint programs to enhance spirituality in the development of education (Filippov 2001: 11). At the end of the year, Patriarch Alexy II formally urged his diocesan bishops to take full advantage of the provisions in the 1997 law that allowed for the teaching of religion in public schools (Aleksii 1999; Shakhnovich 2014). The church’s efforts bore fruit; by 2002, the Coordinating Council had produced a model curriculum for the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* that included 364 classroom hours and provided lesson plans for every grade in primary and secondary schools. Filippov made this model curriculum available as an option to the regions of the Russian Federation, which increasingly began to introduce courses on Orthodox culture (Vaganov and Filippov 2002; Metlik 2010).

Although presented as an optional program, the model curriculum provoked a storm of controversy. Prominent intellectuals warned that it was a form of religious indoctrination that represented the “clericalization” of Russian society (Mitrokhin 2004). Alla Borodina’s *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture*, the textbook officially approved by the Coordinating Council, was criticized as unscholarly and anti-Semitic, in part because it blamed Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus. Lev Ponomarev, a human rights activist, formally requested that the Moscow prosecutor initiate a case against the leaders of the Ministry of Education and Science for inciting national and religious enmity by promoting the work (Ponomarev 2002). In later editions, Borodina revised her textbook and removed some of the most inflammatory material; pedagogical critics still find that her book promotes a naïve faith rather than a scholarly approach to the study of Orthodox culture (Willems 2007; Shnirelman 2012; Iziumskii 2013). Other prominent public figures called for Filippov’s resignation and for new courses on religious tolerance that could be offered as an alternative to the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* (Papkova 2009). Members of religious minorities expressed concern that the new educational policy favored Orthodoxy and threatened the secular nature of the Russian state (Korobov 2007). On the eve of the March

2004 presidential election, President Vladimir Putin fired Filippov (along with other members of his cabinet) and replaced him with Andrei Aleksandrovich Fursenko (Basil 2007). The new minister, who championed a secular course in world religions, approached the issue of religious education cautiously, requesting advice and information from the newly created Civic Chamber (Obshchestvennaia palata 2006; Obshchestvennaia palata 2007).

Debate over the role of religion in education took on a transnational character as secular opponents of the new Orthodox course adapted some of the tactics used against the “intelligent design” curriculum, which “holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection” (Center for Science and Culture n.d.), in US schools. The controversy over intelligent design reached its denouement in the United States in 2005 when a federal judge banned the new curriculum as a violation of the First Amendment (*Kitzmiller et al. v. Dover Area School District* 2005). To ridicule the new course on Orthodox culture, Russian secularists adapted Minneapolis *Star Tribune* cartoonist Steve Sack’s 2005 caricature directed against intelligent design. In the original cartoon, the teacher, who stands in front of a creationist poster depicting the hand of God creating different animal species, gestures toward a flat-earth “globe” (complete with a ship falling off the edge of the world) and declares, “So much for the biology lesson on ‘Intelligent Design.’ Turning now to the subject of ‘Intelligent Geography’...” (Sack 2005). Leaving the drawing unchanged, the Russian adapters titled the cartoon “The Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture: A Great Way to Fuck Up School” and altered the captions to read, “The lesson on Orthodox biology is finished. Let us now turn to the lesson on Orthodox geography” (“Osnovy pravoslavnoi kul’tury” n.d.).



Despite such criticisms, more and more regional authorities began introducing some form of religious education into public schools. The 1992 law on education had provided for both a regional and a school component to each school’s curriculum; 75 percent of curricular hours were determined by

the federal government, 15 percent by the regions, and 10 percent by each school. Until 2009, religious education courses were offered as part of the local (regional or school) component of the curriculum. As a result, courses on religion varied widely throughout the federation, and shared no common plan, philosophy or textbook: in some regions, no religious education was offered in public schools, while in others, it was required. By 2006, at least 15 oblasts had incorporated the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* into the regional component of the curriculum; four of these oblasts (Belgorod, Bryansk, Kaluga, and Smolensk) had made it a required course (Divnogortseva 2011) — although parents who objected could petition to have their children excused (Obshchestvennaia palata 2007). Ingushetia, which included the study of Islam in its regional curricular component, provided an alternative, the *Fundamentals of Ethics*, for those parents who preferred a more secular course. On the other hand, Chechnya, which also required the study of Islam, offered no alternative. In other regions, individual schools included religious education as part of the school component of the curriculum. In December 2006, 11,184 Russian schools in 35 oblasts were offering some form of the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* (Divnogortseva 2011). A survey conducted in 2007 by the Civic Chamber found that the number of students studying religion in public schools was increasing rapidly; from the previous academic year, that number had jumped by at least 15 percent. Only ten federal subjects offered no religious education at all. In the remaining federal subjects, over 500,000 students formally studied Orthodox culture, another 150,000 to 200,000 studied Islam, and 50,000 took courses on the history and philosophy of world religions. Smaller numbers studied Judaism, Buddhism, or the traditional religions of the ethnic groups in Russia's northern regions. Altogether, the Chamber concluded, 700,000 to 800,000 students were taking formal courses in or about religion in Russian public schools during the 2006–2007 academic year (Obshchestvennaia Palata 2007). To ensure parental choice and to improve the quality of the courses offered, the report called for the development and clarification of federal standards. Soon after the report, the Russian Duma began to federalize the curriculum by gradually phasing out the regional component — the vehicle by which religious education had been offered (Papkova 2009). In the summer of 2009, the government announced a new approach to moral education.

The Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics

On July 21, 2009, President Dmitry Medvedev expressed his support for a more comprehensive course in religious culture and secular eth-

ics in the schools (Medvedev et al. 2009). Although the president emphasized the secular nature of the course, which would be taught by trained public school teachers rather than clergy, he announced at the same time the introduction of Orthodox chaplains in the Russian armed forces, a clear victory for the Orthodox Church, which had long sought to establish an official presence in the nation's military. The new educational policy also clearly aimed to please the Church without alienating religious minorities, including the substantial minority of atheists. The curriculum sought to address an ongoing concern about the "the spiritual consolidation of the multi-ethnic people of Russia into one political nation," one of the chief goals of the *Concept of the National Educational Policy of the Russian Federation* adopted by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science in 2006 (Ministerstvo obrazovaniia 2006). To achieve this goal, the ministry drew on the recommendations of a team of experts including Alexander Iaroslavovich Daniliuk, the editor of the scholarly journal *Pedagogika*, Alexander Mikhailovich Kondakov (b. 1958), the head of the Prosveshchenie (Enlightenment) textbook publishing company, and Valery Aleksandrovich Tishkov (b. 1941), the director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who authored *The Concept of Spiritual-Moral Development and Education of the Personality of a Citizen of Russia*, published in 2009. The three scholars contend that the traditional religions of Russia are national resources that provide a moral foundation for the nation (Daniliuk, Kondakov and Tishkov 2009; Daniliuk, Kondakov and Tishkov 2009a).

When the new curriculum was introduced, parents were given a choice of six different modules that their grade-school children could study. Parents could decide to have their children study one of the so-called traditional religions of Russia: Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, or Islam. If none of these options were satisfactory, parents could also choose to have their children study a course in secular ethics or a survey course in world religions. The program did not and does not provide modules for non-Orthodox Christians. Although several million Russian citizens are Protestants, there is no "Fundamentals of Protestant Culture" offered as an option for Russian parents. Likewise, Russian Catholics, who number approximately one million, and Armenian Apostolic Christians, who number 1.5 million, cannot choose to have their children study their own religious cultures. By contrast, the smaller Buddhist community, which includes only 900,000 members by the most generous estimates, and Jews, who numbered 156,801 in the 2010 census, each have a module devoted to their faiths.

The program was launched experimentally in 19 regions of Russia in the 2009–2010 academic year; two more regions (the Mari Republic and Yaroslavl Oblast) were added in the next year, so that 21 regions participated in the trial, which included 240,000 pupils in over 10,000 schools (Gogin 2012; Romanova 2013). The entire course engages students for one hour per week for 34 weeks. State authorities quickly declared the experiment a success. In February 2012, the deputy minister of education reported that 98 percent of the teachers regarded the new course positively, 81 percent of the pupils wanted to continue their studies, and “more than half of the parents surveyed were certain that the study of this subject had a positive influence on the morals of their children, and nurtured a culture of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional fellowship as well as a relationship of respect for the cultural and religious traditions of the peoples of Russia” (Orlova 2012). Although parents were somewhat less appreciative of the new course than were their children’s teachers, Russian politicians continued to strongly support the new curriculum. In a meeting at the Danilov Monastery with Patriarch Kirill (Gundiaev) and other leaders of the “traditional” religions of Russia, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin declared that he had not heard a single negative assessment about the new program, which Russian society as a whole had fully accepted. “We have achieved very good results,” he concluded (“Stenogramma” 2012).

Despite this enthusiasm, other observers noted two serious practical problems (Kozyrev 2012: 73–74). First, providing the full panoply of six options in every school proved difficult. For example, one mother in Koroлев, a town near Moscow, complained that she was simply informed that her child would be enrolled in a course on secular ethics — in clear violation of the rules: “No one asked me whether or not I wanted my child to study this subject. In the general course of things, they had me sign a paper that I was informed that my daughter would study this subject (17 hours in fourth grade and 17 hours in fifth grade) and that I had chosen the module ‘Fundamentals of Secular Ethics.’ And they explained that, because of the lack of teachers, a choice of modules would be possible only in the distant future, so for the time being the school had to choose the most neutral option” (Ziganshina 2011).

Secondly, many teachers complained about a lack of adequate training (Willems 2012). As Fedor Kozyrev, professor at the St. Petersburg Christian Academy of the Humanities, has remarked, the short training courses provided by federal and local experts could not compensate for “the profound lack of religious knowledge in those who graduated from state schools and universities where religion was never taught” (Kozyrev 2012: 74). To help teachers discuss and over-

come difficulties, the Ministry of Education and Science created a web site, <http://www.orkce.org>, where educators can post questions and responses. The resulting dialogue reveals many of their concerns and contradictory conceptions of the course. For example, writing in September 2012, one teacher confessed the fear that possessed her at the beginning of the year as she anticipated teaching the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* (tatyana_g 2012). Another teacher happily described her experience in designing an educational program on Orthodox culture for her second-graders only to be rebuked for her arrogance by one of her peers: “Respected colleague! To create one’s own program on the Fundamentals of O[rthodox] C[ulture], one must have a theological education at the very least! Aren’t you TERRIFIED to independently explain ORTHODOX CULTURE to children without any worldly experience?” (Irina.Sirotkina237 2013). Against this reproach, a third teacher responded, “This is a course in cultural studies. It is not at all necessary to have theological education, as you claim. I think that our colleague relied on many methodological recommendations when she created her program” (gromadyuk 2013). Sergei Korsun’s 2010 cartoon “The New Teacher” illustrated the anxiety that many teachers felt when they had to represent a variety of religions to their students. Dressed in turban and a suit that sports the symbols of several different religions, a new teacher, smiling nervously, introduces himself to his class.



Beyond these two practical difficulties, the new curriculum faces an even more basic challenge: there seems to be no common or shared understanding of its goals. Is it primarily patriotic education whose purpose is to make children love their Motherland? All of the modules emphasize the remarkable nature of the Russian Federation and the patriotism it should inspire. For others, the *Fundamentals* are primarily a means of moral education supported by traditional religious values; the main goal

of the new curriculum is to create decent human beings and citizens who will fulfill their civic obligations and live in peace with one another. Still others see the *Fundamentals* as a way to promote religion, and especially Russian Orthodoxy. For example, Governor of Belgorod Oblast Evgenii Savchenko believes that children of his oblast should be brought into the Church and that half of the lessons in the required course should take place in churches or on missionary field trips (Gogin 2012). When he first announced the course in 2009, President Medvedev argued for a purely secular, cultural studies approach to the *Fundamentals*, which should be taught by regular teachers: “The choice of the pupils and their parents, of course, must be absolutely voluntary — this is a very important matter. Any coercion on this question is not only illegal but absolutely counter-productive. Secular pedagogues will teach these subjects” (Medvedev et al. 2009). In his response, Patriarch Kirill agreed: “I think that is important and correct that secular pedagogues, the secular school, should teach these disciplines — this is the principle of the separation of the church from the state” (Medvedev et al. 2009). At the same time, the patriarch characterized the program as a compromise, and the church continues to lobby for greater influence over the approval of teachers, textbooks and methodologies — with some significant successes. For example, in a meeting with religious leaders in 2012, Medvedev’s prime minister, Vladimir Putin, insisted that theologians and priests should teach the *Fundamentals*: “It is important that this subject in the future does not turn into a formality, and so to teach such disciplines we must have well-prepared people — either theologians or priests” (“Stenogramma” 2012).

During the two-year trial, most parents preferred the course in secular ethics rather than one of the four modules designed to teach a “traditional” religion of Russia. In the first year, about two-thirds of all pupils in the 19 regions chose one of the secular options: secular ethics (47 percent) or world religions (20 percent). Almost a quarter of all students opted to study Orthodox culture. In the second year, with 21 regions participating, the popularity of secular ethics declined slightly to 42 percent, while 40 percent of parents selected one of the religious options. Three out of ten pupils chose Orthodox culture, and 9 percent studied Islam (Nikitin 2011).

The trial also demonstrated wide variations among regions (Table 1). In both years of the experiment, almost all of the pupils in Chechnya opted to study Islamic culture. Likewise, in the traditionally Muslim Karachai-Cherkess Republic, large proportions of parents selected Islamic culture for their children in both 2009–10 (39 percent) and 2010–11 (25 percent). In Kalmykia, the home of the Sajin Lama where

Buddhist institutions had been completely repressed for fifty years under the Soviets, significant numbers of pupils studied Buddhist culture. On the other hand, parents in Siberia tended to select more secular options. For example, in the first year of the trial in Tomsk Oblast, out of 9,140 pupils, most had chosen the world religions or the secular ethics course rather than the explicitly religious options (Table 2; Shitikova 2010). In the following year, nearly 80 percent of parents in the Tomsk region had selected one of the two more secular choices (Table 3).

When the program expanded to the entire nation, secular ethics, Orthodox culture, and world religions again proved to be the most popular choices. In September 2012, the Ministry of Education and Science reported that a plurality, 42.7 percent, of parents throughout Russia, had chosen the course in secular ethics for their fourth-graders (Table 4). St. Petersburg proved to be especially secular; most parents chose the module in secular ethics, and only 9 percent elected to have their children study the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* (Table 5). The course in secular ethics was also the overwhelming choice of parents in the Southern (74 percent), Ural (73 percent), and Northwestern (62 percent) Federal Districts (Orlova 2012). Some parents objected to a course on religion in school. A mother in Omsk declared that “religious education is a family affair,” and another said, “I don’t want my family’s religion to become public property” (Iakovleva 2012).

Statistics from the ethnic republics often — but not always — reflected the religious heritage of their citizens. For example, in the predominantly Muslim republics of Chechnya and Ingushetia, nearly all parents in 2012 selected the course in the *Fundamentals of Islamic Culture*. Likewise, 70 percent of the parents in Tuva chose to have their children study the *Fundamentals of Buddhist Culture* (“Religioznye kul’tury” 2012). On the other hand, in 2012 all of the parents in the Republic of Tatarstan, a traditionally Muslim region, chose either the course in secular ethics (61.3 percent) or world religious cultures (38.7 percent) (Orlova 2012).

Some parents, however, have complained that they had no choice; the school administration provided them a single option. The practical difficulties of providing six different modules in moral education has proven too much for many elementary schools throughout Russia. In Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, the regional chief of elementary education, Viktor Nikolaevich Shmelev, admitted that many school principals “found it much easier to offer a single module than two, three, or all six” (Makhlina 2014). Parents are often simply told which module their child will study (Plys 2013). In Miassa, Chelyabinsk Oblast, a group of parents sued their school for forcing their children to take the course in the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* (Orlova 2013,

April 6). In other cases, schools have insisted that parents choose the course in secular ethics (Ziganshina 2011). One Orthodox priest in Rostov-on-Don expressed his frustration that parents were often not allowed to choose the Orthodox course: “According to the law, the parents should choose what their children will study. But that’s according to the law. In most Russian schools, this question is decided by the school administration, and no one bothers to ask the parents. As a result, beginning in September, most schools will probably teach only secular ethics” (Matsan 2012). The Orthodox clergy has been especially troubled by the relatively low numbers of parents choosing to have their children study Orthodox culture (Moshkin 2013). Patriarch Kirill himself has objected to the lack of choice afforded to parents (Chinkova 2013). Metropolitan Merkurii (Ivanov) of Rostov and Novocherkassk, the head of the department of religious education and catechization, has expressed his incredulity at the low percentage of pupils studying Orthodox culture (Orlova 2013, March 20: 3). In an effort to ensure that parents have the opportunity to choose the *Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture* for their children, priests are seeking to address the parent-school meetings where the decisions are made. In addition, some churches advertise for the course and encourage parents to report those cases in which school officials refuse to allow them to choose the Orthodox module (Khram Zhivonachal’noi Troitsy v Chertanove 2014). In an effort to address these concerns, the new law on education, adopted in 2012, affirmed parents’ right to choose the module that their children will study (Russian Federation 2012).

The successful implementation of the new course has not ended the debate over the nature of religious education in the public school system. Some strict secularists attack the new program as a form of religious indoctrination that violates the constitution (Ozhiganova 2014). Other secular scholars defend the program, arguing that knowledge of religion and religious practices can help children to develop empathy and respect for others in a pluralistic society (Murav’ev and Shakhnovich 2012; Shakhnovich 2014). By contrast, for some Orthodox educators, especially those in St. Tikhon’s University, this limited program does not go far enough; for the moral regeneration of the nation, substantial state investment in an Orthodox educational system is needed (Metlik 2010).

Conclusion

The *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* represent an important rejection of the strictly secular beginnings of the independ-

ent Russian republic and a move toward a prerevolutionary model in which the state cooperated with certain favored religious organizations to achieve important social goals. Although the 1993 constitution contains a strong affirmation of secularism and the equality of all religions before the law, Russian politicians have gradually adopted a policy that recognizes Russia's religious diversity but seeks to strengthen "traditional" religions. The 1997 law on religious associations in its preamble expressly favored those religions that had a historic role in shaping the cultures of the peoples of Russia, but did not provide a definitive list; the law recognizes the contributions of non-Orthodox Christianity and of unspecified "other religions" that had been important for Russia. Later policy-makers, however, limited the number of traditional religions to the four specifically mentioned in the 1997 law: Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism.

Likewise, the 2012 law on education abandoned the strictly secular approach of the legislators who had crafted Russian educational policy twenty years earlier. Incorporating spiritual education into the national curricular standards, the new law offers centralized religious organizations the possibility of reviewing textbooks and methodologies (Article 87). State policy now encourages active engagement with "traditional" religions, which are regarded as valuable resources for the development of moral, patriotic citizens.

As evidence of this shift, important Russian leaders have vigorously rejected strict secularism as a state policy. In December 2007, when an interviewer from *Time* magazine pointed out that Russia is a secular state — affirmed by Article 14 of the Russian constitution — Putin interrupted, "No, no, that's not true. In our law, it is written that we have four traditional religions, four. Our American partners criticize us for this, but that's what our legislators have decided. These four traditional Russian religions are Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism" (Putin 2007). Similarly, in response to a resolution by the US House of Representatives criticizing Russia for its alleged lack of religious liberty, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs eloquently expressed its rejection of the American church-state model: "The American model of legal regulation of these problems [religious liberty and freedom of conscience] is very exotic, as it is based on the declaration of absolute formal equality among all religions and their practical elimination from public affairs. Such a legal model is not used anywhere in the world but the U.S." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). Even though the Russian constitution affirms the equality of all religions before the law — and the US constitution does not — the ministry chose to present this principle as an exotic American peculiarity. For Russian policy makers, the *Fundamentals of Religious Cultures and Secular Ethics* provide a more fruitful alternative

to strict church-state separation. The new course is part of a broader state strategy to partner with religious communities (especially the Russian Orthodox Church) to accomplish mutually beneficial goals, such as the socialization of children. This partnership necessarily stretches the constitutional definition of Russia as a secular state, but clearly the current Russian leadership believes that the benefits of this alliance outweigh its potential costs.

Nevertheless, the *Fundamentals* have proven to be controversial, with some critics decrying the new curriculum as a form of obscurantism and others blaming the new course for not going far enough in introducing religion in the classroom. By making religion a central part of children's moral education, Russian educators are seeking to transform the "social imaginary" that has excluded or restricted religion's participation in the public sphere. In Charles Taylor's evocative phrase, the modern social imaginary of the West has meant "the freeing of politics from its ontic dependence on religion" and "the end of a certain kind of religion or the divine in public space" (Taylor 2004: 187). But Taylor goes on to argue that the Western social imaginary is but one of "multiple modernities," and the Russian politicians and educators who are implementing the new curriculum see a modernity in which religion is a vital partner with the state in the formation of moral citizens. The confused and somewhat contradictory goals of the course bode ill for its success. Does it seek primarily to teach children about religion as a cultural phenomenon? Or is it designed primarily to instill moral values with the help of religion? Or is it simply a means of promoting religion? The Ministry of Education and Science continues to develop this experiment, which will probably continue to undergo reforms as Russians decide whether and how they want their religions taught in the classroom, leaving behind the strict secularism of their constitution's framers.

Table 1
Parental preferences for moral education modules by region (percentages), 2009-11

Region	2009-10 Secular	2010-11 Secular	2009-10 World	2010-11 World	2009-10 Orthodox	2010-11 Orthodox	2009-10 Islam	2010-11 Islam	2009-10 Buddhist	2010-11 Buddhist	2009-10 Jewish	2010-11 Jewish
Chechnya		0	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0	0	0
Chuvashiya	24	37	43	26	31	36	2	1	0	0	0	0
Jewish Autonomous Oblast	12	21	24	31	61	47	1	0	0	0	2	0
Kaliningrad	61	61	4	8	35	31	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kalmykiya	31	18	37	24	5	15	1	0	27	43	0	0
Kamchatka	55	50	13	17	32	33	0	0	0	0	0	0
Karachay-Cherkess Republic	23	26	20	45	18	4	39	25	0	0	0	0
Krasnoyarsk	58	63	22	24	19	12	1	0	0	0	0	0
Kurgan	60	63	18	17	21	19	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mari-El		36		20		43		2		0		0
Novosibirsk	66	72	16	16	19	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
Penza	62	22	38	18	0	57	0	3	0	0	0	0
Stavropol	23	24	6	12	69	60	3	3	0	0	0	0
Sverdlovsk	55	54	23	26	21	19	1	1	0	0	0	0
Tambov	37	13	7	3	55	84	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tomsk	52	49	26	30	18	20	3	0	0	0	0	0
Tver	13	19	17	8	69	73	1	0	0	0	0	0
Udmurtiya	54	48	29	35	16	16	1	1	0	0	0	0
Vologda	58	57	17	12	25	29	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yaroslavl		40		17		43		0		0		0

Sources: Nikitin 2011; Promezhutochnye rezul'taty 2011. Data for Kostroma, one of the regions in the trial, is not complete and therefore not included here.

Table 2
Parental preferences for moral education modules
Tomsk 2010, n=9140

Subject	Percentage of pupils
Secular Ethics	51.4%
Orthodox Culture	24.0%
World Religious Cultures	22.4%
Islamic Culture	0.83%
Buddhist Culture	0.61%
Jewish Culture	0.95%

Source: (Shitikova 2010)

Table 3
Parental preferences for moral education modules
Tomsk 2011, n=9352

Subject		Percentage of pupils
Secular Ethics	4605	49.24%
World Religious Cultures	2821	30.16%
Orthodox Culture	1871	20.01%
Islamic Culture	49	0.52%
Buddhist Culture	4	0.04%
Jewish Culture	7	0.07%

Source: (Vybor modulia 2011)

Table 4
Parental preferences for moral education modules
in the Russian Federation, September 2012

Subject	Number of pupils	Percentage
Secular Ethics	557 507	42.7
Orthodox Culture	428 955	31.7
World Religious Cultures	286 050	21.2
Islamic Culture	54 275	4.0
Buddhist Culture	4 996	0.4
Jewish Culture	690	0.1

Sources: ("Shkol'niki RF" 2012) ("Religioznye kul'tury 2012)

Table 5
Parental preferences for moral education modules
in Moscow and St. Petersburg, September 2012

Subject	Moscow	Peterburg
Fundamentals of Secular Ethics	27%	52.61%
Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture	47%	9%
Fundamentals of World Religious Cultures	23%	37.74%

Source: ("Religioznye kul'tury" 2012)

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SERGEI SHTYRKOV

Orthodox Traditionalism in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania: The Ethnicization of Religion as the “Internal Mission” of the Russian Orthodox Church

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An especially important concept with which religion has been linked in the public consciousness, and on which it directly depends, remains the concept of tradition. “Traditionalism” is a quality directly related to the characteristics implicitly ascribed to “real” religion: invariability, orderliness, the ability to provide a model of stability to a changing society, which is subject to rapid, painful transformations, and is thus in need of ideal paradigms of guaranteed stability and historical rootedness. The central focus of this article is the information policy of the structures of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. This ‘inculturation’ policy seeks to create an image of the Ossetian people as the natural vessel of an ancient Orthodox culture, inherited from their ancestors, the Alans, who accepted Christianity in the tenth century. This kind of “ethnicization of Orthodoxy” — that is, the effort to overcome the ironclad associative link between the concepts of “Russianness” and “Orthodoxy” in order to present the latter as the “native faith” of non-Russian ethnic groups — represents a marked tendency in some Russian Orthodox eparchies’ religious policy.

Keywords: North Ossetia, inculturation, internal mission, traditionalism, native religion, the Vladikavkaz and Alania Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church.

"We must revive the Alanian Orthodox tradition, created and preserved by our ancestors, which has been established and continues to permeate our culture." — Fr. Igor (Kusov) ("Osetiny dolzhny pochuvstvovat" 2014: 23)

*"Does folk tradition conflict with strict Christian theology? And is there a place in the Orthodox soul for the customs of hoary antiquity?" — from the film *The Alans: A New Testament* (2014).*

TODAY few anthropologists and sociologists of religion will dispute that religion (or what we are accustomed to call religion) in the contemporary world is not doomed necessarily to surrender its claims under the pressure of ideological competitors — secular liberal humanism, positivist modern European science, and nationalism. Religion is proving capable of winning people's minds and hearts, and, what is more, often does so through an alliance with its former opponents. But the semantic content of the concept of religion in the public consciousness has changed in these new circumstances. Under these conditions religious ideas and practices do not simply recover lost ground but change their forms and functions. In the course of the "construction of social reality," religion, acting in concert with other "powerful" concepts of the social imaginary — the nation, the people, spirituality, faith, science, and knowledge — enters into an interdependent relationship with them. And an especially important concept with which religion has been linked in the public consciousness, and on which it directly depends, remains the concept of tradition.

"Tradition" refers not only to the longstanding formula "the traditional religions," a formula absent from Russian legislation but present in the social imaginary of many Russians and directly indicating the special status enjoyed by four confessions in comparison with other religious movements and groups. (I remind the reader that the enumeration of "Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism" in the preamble to the federal law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" of September 26, 1997 [No. 125-F3] concludes with the phrase "and other religions, constituting an inalienable part of the historical inheritance of the peoples of Russia," which renders this list essentially open.) "Traditionalism" is a quality directly related to the characteristics implicitly ascribed to "real" religion: invariability, orderliness, the ability to provide a model of stability to a changing society, which is subject to rapid, painful transformations, and is thus in need of ideal paradigms of guaranteed stability and historical rootedness. Indeed, for the majority of our contemporaries, re-

ligion, in order to bear that title legitimately (in contrast to, say, cults and sects), must correspond to notions of something ancient, unchanging, and conservative, in other words, to certain traditionalist orientations.

I designate as “traditionalism” an ideology that supposes that the most favorable situation for the preservation and development of this or that social group is the affirmation of the way of life that existed in the group’s history. Any external, spontaneous borrowings, unsanctioned by internal experts and, as judged by advocates of traditionalism, not in accord with the spirit of tradition, are regarded as destructive and threatening to the group’s very existence as an independent collective entity with its own interests and trajectory of historical development.

Typically, a traditionalist ideology is characterized by alarmist assertions regarding the contemporary situation of the world in general and especially of the group whose advocates are concerned about its survival. The present practices characteristic of the group appear corrupted through the carelessness of the community’s members, and/or through the ill-intentioned actions of those deemed personally interested in making fundamental change to the community, change that threatens to convulse the foundations of social identity. A less drastic interpretation of the causes of change in the positively valued way of life may be the “natural deterioration” of the mechanisms that support community life and require urgent repair and enhancement. Traditionalism, seeming to be a conservative ideology but functioning as a persuasive means of legitimizing social initiatives, in its concrete forms can become a revolutionary political program, calling for the radical revision of the established social system (even in those cases when it is proposed by or imposed on society by political elites). In the sphere of religious life, leaders of many groups — including reconstituted groups, such as new Protestant churches or congregations, which (re)establish ancient doctrinal and ritual systems — use traditionalism as a basis for social action.¹

1. I am interpreting the term “traditionalism” here somewhat more broadly than does Pavel Nosachev (Nosachev 2013), for example. Nosachev, largely following Mark Sedgwick (Sedgwick 2004), sees in traditionalism a well-defined political and/or religious ideology that can be traced back to the French thinker René Guénon and that has as its proponents Julius Evola, Corneliu Codreanu, and Alexander Dugin. To my thinking, such a complex of views is a variation of a more general strategy of the social construction of reality, based on the essentialization of tradition and the use of this concept for the legitimization of social action. The question of the influence of traditionalism in the narrow sense of this word on the contemporary traditionalist mode of thought and on social activism is exceptionally important and requires special study. Among channels already noted by Sedgwick for the dissemination of Guénon-like traditionalism among academic and near-academic circles, I note the works of Mircea Eliade, which have significantly changed the conventional understanding of the correct way to study religion. (For more detail see Allen 2001.)

The phenomenon of ethnic religious traditionalism is naturally attracting the attention of contemporary social anthropologists, sociologists, scholars of religion, and even political scientists, given the extent to which attempts to embrace ancestral religion in today's hyper-modernized society are so outwardly striking and intellectually provocative. Usually at issue in this context are projects to create or re-establish so-called ethnic religions, which serve simultaneously as the symbol and foundation of nationalist (here and subsequently I use this word in its neutral sense) protest against the hegemony of world religions — Christianity, Buddhism, Islam — and the colonial “empires” standing behind them. Representatives of the “great” institutional religions, however, confronting (or even pre-empting) criticism from religious particularists, find themselves capable of offering society their own versions of what constitutes the genuine religious traditions of this or that ethnic group and/or nation. Such projects require rather serious efforts in the production and distribution of information. And perhaps the most complicated task in this social arena is the creation of an image of a world religion as the natural ally and even guarantor of the preservation and development of ethnic cultures. The solution to this problem entails a quite complex semantic game concerning the concepts employed by ideologists of religious nationalism, understood here both as a political program that promotes the utmost convergence of the ethnic and the confessional, and as the logic of a social imaginary (or of socialization at the grassroots level²) that sees in the so-called traditional religions a salvific means of defense against the expansion of the global information society.

The central focus of the present investigation is the information policy of the official structures of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, now represented by the Vladikavkaz and Alania Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate (ROC MP). This policy seeks to create an image of the Ossetian people as the natural vessel of an ancient Orthodox culture, inherited from their ancestors, the Alans, who accepted Christianity in the tenth century. (About 20 years ago in North Ossetia Archpriest Boris Kaloev had already tried unsuccessfully to establish an ethnically oriented Ossetian Orthodox Church [Mitrokhin 2001].) For a more complete understanding of the current project's social context, I shall show in addition the kind of criticism the project elicits from its natural rivals in the field of ethno-religious initiatives.

2. I understand religious nationalism here as a particular approach to understanding social reality, an approach that asserts that the human being normally acquires religious identity along with ethnicity in the course of initial socialization (for more detail see Shtyrkov 2011: 234).

The Vladikavkaz and Alania Eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow Patriarchate, was established in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania on December 26, 2012, by a decision of the Holy Synod. The new eparchy arose as a result of the division of the Vladikavkaz and Makhachkala Eparchy, created in 2011. This eparchy, in turn, had been constructed from some parts of the Stavropol and Baku Eparchies that had existed before that time. Archbishop Zosima (Ostapenko) heads the eparchy; before his appointment to the Vladikavkaz see, he served more than 25 years in Kalmykia (including 15 years as bishop). At the beginning of 2013, the Vladikavkaz Eparchy encompassed 29 parishes, and the eparchal staff included 52 clergy (15 archpriests, 22 priests, seven hieromonks, two hierodeacons, one protodeacon, and five deacons) (Gagloev 2013: 31).

Amid competition with the ideology of secular ethnic nationalism and given active attempts by groups of Ossetian religious traditionalists to present to society their own understandings of the Ossetian cultural inheritance, Orthodox activists cannot take full advantage of the support shown them by republic-level, much less federal, authorities. Rather, they are disinclined to display the existence of this support openly and consistently as the chief argument justifying their right to spiritual hegemony. Should they do so, they would perforce evoke the image of the contemporary Russian “symphony” between secular and religious authority, an image dominant in the public consciousness. This picture, in turn, would inevitably arouse protest against Orthodoxy as the religion of the ethnic majority, the Russians, who, neighborly though they may be, are nonetheless outsiders. At a minimum they do not care about preserving the local ethnic culture, and at worst they seek to fully homogenize the spiritual life of the country and the world.

The supposed absence of malign intent in the assimilation process does not redeem the situation to any significant extent from the perspective of ethnic traditionalism. The patronizing tendency of the majority’s leaders to dissolve all cultures in their own, even if it is the most beautiful culture, is perceived as an attempt, fraught with the most unfortunate consequences, to suffocate the “little brothers” in a friendly embrace. That said, it is very important to stress that there are no outspoken anti-Russian sentiments in the statements of those who regard the expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church’s presence in Ossetian life cautiously or even with hostility. Moreover, I repeatedly witnessed the lively, sincere protest aroused when Church representatives attributed such views — “The traditionalists think that Christianity is an alien Russian imposition” (Zosima 2011) — to the Church’s critics.

In addition, focus on the supra- and extra-national nature of Christian teachings sometimes turns out to be inappropriate, since such a policy is perceived as covert Russification, and, moreover, it diverges from the main vector of the applied sociology of the ROC MP. This sociology builds on attention to the ethnic diversity of the flock and on ideas about the natural, enduring existence of civilizational constants. Therefore, the predominant direction in the representation of the work of Orthodox eparchal structures asserts that the main activity of the Church in the republic proceeds toward preservation of the ethnic cultural inheritance (linguistic, architectural, literary, folkloric, and so forth), and social programs directed toward all the republic's inhabitants, regardless of their religious confession. Then, too, these Church structures are portrayed as guarantors of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional peace in Ossetia.

Special attention is devoted to the Church's participation in projects aimed directly or indirectly at the conservation of the Ossetian language and the widening of its sphere of use (real and/or symbolic), also including its use in various facets of Orthodox Church life, such as sermons, saints' lives, and hymnography. Briefly characterizing this aspect of the public relations policy of the Vladikavkaz Eparchy, its secretary Fr. Savva Gagloev noted: "The eparchal leadership has in essence announced a new Church missionary strategy, at the basis of which lies the principle of inculturation, that is, the grounding of Orthodoxy in the local culture, and the overcoming of the breach between the Christian religion and the culture of the local population" (Gagloev 2013a: 92). I note, by the way, that "the grounding of Orthodoxy in the local culture" occurs to a significant extent retrospectively — the policy Christianizes not only the Ossetians of today but also their historical and cultural inheritance, that is, the "property" of their ancestors. And this means that their ancestors themselves, who receive a definite identity from their descendants, are Christianized. In other words, a paradoxically inverted process of cultural inheritance is taking place, one that is quite different from our typical understanding of the process. Furthermore, this policy reduces the contemporary "daily plebiscite," that is, the choice of religious confession, cultural identity, and political loyalty made by the residents of Ossetia, to a singular historical event — the acceptance of Christianity — and the choice is located in the distant past. This permits Archbishop Zosima to speak of "the Orthodox faith as the historical choice of the majority of the inhabitants of this ancient land" (Zosima 2013: 5). By the way, as American anthropologist Jonathan Friedman noted: "[W]e may say that history is an imprinting of the present onto the past. In this sense, all history including modern historiography is mythology" (Friedman 1992: 837).

The empirical foundation of the present investigation consists of my observations of church life over many years in the city of Vladikavkaz, which now proceeds within the institutional framework of the reestablished Vladikavkaz Eparchy, and also in two monasteries in the republic — the Alanian Monastery of the Epiphany (a women's monastery) and the Alanian Monastery of the Assumption (a men's monastery). In addition, I bring in materials from my interviews with Orthodox activists and their ideological allies and also with their opponents from the ranks of the religious traditionalists. The most important part of my material consists of the newspaper and television reports concerning events in the cultural life of North Ossetia-Alania, Church and traditional holidays, and recordings of conferences and roundtables conducted by both religious and secular authorities.

One of the most important campaigns in the “Christianization” of the Ossetian cultural heritage evoked especially heated public debate and dramatically heightened the level of religious reflection among the republic's residents regardless of their ethnic and confessional affiliation. The campaign sought to demonstrate that Ossetian village shrines (the so-called *dzuars*) were Christian holy sites (some of them really were ancient churches or chapels) that through different historical circumstances had fallen into disuse but now are being restored by the Orthodox Church. The claim that these structures were erected or reputedly used at one time as Christian churches is the subject of bitter dispute. (See, for example, the detailed refutation of the Christian origin of the famous Nuzal Chapel, one of the major picturesque symbols of Ossetian Orthodoxy [Dzhanaity 2007: 108–13; 130–31].) For the resolution of these questions I rely on the conclusions and observations made in the recent book by Denis Beletsky and Andrei Vinogradov (2011). The history of Christianity in Ossetia, known in one form or another to the main participants in this social arena, determines the specifics of the context of such campaigns.

The particularities of the Ossetian people's history, namely, the acceptance of Christianity by the ancestors of today's Ossetians no later than the tenth century — soon Ossetia will celebrate 1100 years of Alanian Christianity (for the history of Christianity in Alania, see Beletskii and Vinogradov 2011: 15–65) — followed by the “exodus” of the institutional church from Ossetia after several centuries of its presence (this event is often dated to the fifteenth century), shaped the landscape of the people's religious life in subsequent centuries. Left without its pastors, the flock found itself without nourishment for several centuries, that is, it was left to its own devices or, rather, to the care of local elite families. This deprived the Ossetians of more than just the “instructive word,” the spiritual supervision by the institu-

tional Church. In fact, for many years they ceased to be even nominal Christians, in that there was no one to baptize them or to conduct the Eucharist. The spread of Islam among some Ossetians contributed additional facets to the development of the situation.

When the Russian empire began its expansion into the Caucasus, many of its representatives regarded the Ossetians as “natural” allies in the subjugation of the “hostile” Muslim mountain peoples, for the preaching of Islam had achieved very limited success in Ossetia and, to the contrary, in Ossetian culture there were observed easily discernible traces of Eastern Christian heritage. Accordingly, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century, the secular and ecclesiastical authorities strove especially to return Ossetia to the bosom of Orthodoxy, motivated by, among other things, if not mainly, ideas of a political character. The so-called Ossetian Religious Commission was established within the framework of this campaign, followed by a network of church parishes. The campaign also produced the first translations into the Ossetian language of biblical, didactic, and liturgical texts, completed first in the Georgian and then in the Cyrillic scripts, and other items. The active promulgation of Christianity and the inconsistent, but nonetheless stubborn, attempts to introduce elementary religious discipline with respect to catechization and participation in the sacraments did not change the general portrait of the religious life of the mountain Ossetians, however: even well-disposed observers saw the Ossetians as Christians “only in outward appearance,” as the beloved but foolish children of the Mother Church, inclined at any convenient opportunity to return to their ancestral, half-pagan customs. Here is the way one of the proponents of the Christian enlightenment of the Ossetians, the priest Kharlampii (Khadzyrat) Tsomaev, described the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century: “Ossetia was enlightened by Christian teaching very rapidly but not very deeply; it was insufficiently grounded in the truth of the Christian faith. Ossetian hearts and minds did not make the spirit of Christian teaching, so to speak, their own” (Slanov 1999: 10).

One can quite easily find evidence, if desired, that established Orthodox practice had not penetrated very thoroughly, to put it mildly, in segments of Orthodox religious life uncontrolled by the Church. Coverage of the celebration of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God in one of the Ossetian villages serves as a good illustration of this:

It is a joyous holiday. In North Ossetia they are celebrating the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God. In the national tradition they call this holiday *Mady Mairam baragbon*. There are shrines to Mother Mary (*Mady*

Mairam) in every valley of the republic. Hundreds of people come to them on the holiday. The traditional three pies, meat from sacrificed animals, and Ossetian beer. The republic's inhabitants pray for the health and well-being of their families (...). Every valley in both the south and the north of Ossetia has shrines to Mother Mary. Every year on September 21, the day marking the birth of the Holy Mother of God, this holiday is celebrated in all regions of the republic. People ask the saint for success and prosperity for their families. The elder offers a prayer to the Holy Mother of God. On the table there are the three traditional pies, Ossetian beer, and the meat of a sacrificed animal. Every year hundreds of people gather at the shrine in Mairamadag on this holiday. They ask for a blessing on their children.

Rozita Kh., a resident of the village of Mairamadag: "Every year we get together like this. We come here to pray for our children, for peaceful lives for them, so that on the roads they will not, will not die, so that each one that leaves home will return home safe and sound."

Residents from other villages as well come to Mairamadag to pray to the Most Holy Mother of God.

Kaspolat D., a resident of the village Gizel: "Today we came here because we have a woman who is ill. She had an operation and she got better. With the help of doctors, with the help of God. In general everything comes from God. And so we came, to pray to the gods, to pray to the Virgin Mary, so that she will always help not only this sick woman but everyone" ("Prazdnik Mady Mairam" 2013).

We can with a great degree of certainty say that the authors of this material did not try intentionally to emphasize the "non-canonical" aspects of what was going on. Both the text of the report and the video footage — men at prayer with a mug of Ossetian beer or a glass of Ossetian vodka (*arak*) in their hands, children going in a circle around a tree on which numerous votive ribbons hang, and women fastening up these ribbons — give quite a clear picture of contemporary Ossetian holiday culture, in which both the Orthodox icon and the meat from a sacrificial calf play an organic role.

Unsurprisingly, Church and secular analysts can easily point to elements in Ossetians' religious life that correspond to Eastern Christian culture and, most likely, are derived from it, but they also find practices and beliefs which it is very problematic (and for some — undesirable) to trace back to Christianity. Active proponents of the re-establishment of the Orthodox faith among the Ossetians often declare that these "unchristian" practices are external, superficial borrowings or dying vestiges of Paganism, subject to elimination.

One of the most complicated questions debated among eparchal representatives and their opponents is the problem of the confessional provenance of the above-mentioned shrines (*dzuars*), including the shrine of Mother Mary just noted. As has already been mentioned, one can define the shrines as village holy places, whose veneration is expressed through pilgrimages to them, consisting of visiting the shrines during a time set apart on the calendar to do so and/or journeys to them in fulfillment of a vow. In both cases the pilgrimage entails votive offerings and participation in a ritual feast (*kuvde*), set up in immediate proximity to the shrine in a special structure (*kuvandon*). As a variation on this practice one can find the custom of visiting the venerated site with food for a ritual meal (*kuvinag*). The special elements of this meal are three pies, three ribs of an animal brought as a sacrifice in honor of the holiday, and Ossetian beer. This food is blessed in the shrine, after which it is taken home, where the main part of the ritual feast takes place.

In contemporary conditions these pilgrimages have altered certain of their structural and functional characteristics. For example, whereas earlier a group of pilgrims setting off was mainly a family or part of a larger group of relatives, now it is often an association of neighbors who live in one city building or around one courtyard. Moreover, some shrines, previously venerated on the local level of the village or gorge, became in practice national shrines, as happened with the shrines of the Grove of Khetag (*Khetadzhi k'okh*) and of Rekom. I shall allow myself to give one more example of the modernization of these customs. On the holiday at the Dziri Shrine (*Dziri dzuar*) in June 2014 it was decided to revive the ancient tradition of the horse races. And a girl won the race. This fact, reported and celebrated by a local television company, clashes to a certain extent with the traditional delineation of gender roles in Ossetian holiday culture, not to mention that the shrine at which the holiday took place is considered a men's shrine, and women are forbidden to enter it. But in any case, both earlier and now, an important aspect of the veneration of shrines is the observance (or the establishment of the necessity of this observance) of special prohibitions and instructions (a prohibition on taking anything out of a shrine, and, for many holy sites, a ban against women visiting them), as well as a narrative "accompaniment" to the worship: tales about the origin of the holy site, about miraculous aid to those who turned to the shrine, and about the misfortunes that befell those who desecrated the shrines or who simply accidentally violated their sacred status.

The question of the shrines' origin is an important one in the context of our discussion. The fact is that some (if not many) of these are an-

cient churches and chapels, sometimes very much in ruins. Through the centuries they functioned as village holy places and, accordingly, were not under the institutional Church's care. In this context, there are at a minimum two points that provoke a clash of opinions and interests. The first concerns the reconstruction of the shrines' origins. While regarding some of the shrines it is known that in their history there was definitely a "church" period (whether this was historically prior is another question); one cannot say this about others. But neither can one rule out this possibility. This gives grounds to suspect that nearly all the Ossetian sites now revered by Ossetians were once sites of Christian worship.

In connection with this, the following problem arises: even if a shrine was at one time, say, an Orthodox chapel, to whom should it belong now? To the Orthodox Church, proclaiming its right to inherit the material memory of ancient Alanian Christianity? Or to the local residents, who have piously honored the holy place through the dark (or to some, on the contrary — the enlightened) decades and centuries of its unchurched history? Discussions along these lines have arisen concerning a whole series of shrines: the so-called Nuzal Church (*khram*), the chapels near the village of Kharisdzhin (or, if using a different naming system, the sanctuaries *Tsæzziuy Mairæm*), the shrine (*dzuar*) at Dzivgis, and others. The problem is acute, because the shrines and pilgrimage to them represent the unique quintessence of Ossetian religious life, however one defines its confessional nature. The way in which the shrines embody Ossetian piety and inscribe it on the local landscape, anchoring the people and their faith to their native land, is especially important. The ancient stone (less often, wooden) shrines, erected on the steep slopes of the gorges, are becoming the symbol of Ossetia and its ancient culture.

The words of Archbishop Zosima illustrate well the importance of incorporating the ancient holy sites into the contemporary practice of regular Orthodox life: "Praying in the Nuzal Church [*khram*], [I] feel all the more deeply the rootedness of Christianity in this land, where the Lord has blessed me to fulfill my service" (Archbishop Zosima 2013a). In these circumstances, current attempts to create a coherent image of ancient Ossetian Christian tradition seem a completely logical way not only to legitimize the institutional presence of the Orthodox Church in the republic, but also to win the exclusive right to act as the caretaker for the preservation of the authentic ethnic heritage, especially the shrines. In the opinion of Orthodox activists, one reason among others that one ought to support the idea of the rootedness of Christianity in the Ossetian land is that "historical Alania was the most ancient cradle of Christianity in all of Russia" (Besolov 2013: 40).

Special efforts are being expended on the production of a maximally convincing visual portrait of ancient Alanian Orthodoxy. In public presentations and eparchal publications, the use of images of ancient chapels and major works of folk art containing Christian symbols, especially the sculptures of independent artist Soslanbek Edziev, amid the received portrait of “mountain civilization,” that is, in a series of depictions of native towers and postcard vistas of the gorges, creates in the viewer the assurance that the Orthodox heritage is inseparable from the national (ethnic) heritage. The arguments of confessional traditionalists make wide use of a rhetorical construction built on the idea of the deep engrafting of this or that religion into an ethnic culture, to the extent that it is impossible to isolate the doctrinal elements from the fabric of the people’s life. Here is an Ossetian example: “Ossetians of all confessions assimilated many norms of Christian morality so deeply that these norms are understood as primordially national” (Dzeranov 2013: 144).

Indeed, the visual image of the church inscribed on the national landscape serves as an exceptionally convincing metaphor for the idea of the inseparability of Orthodoxy from the fabric of the people’s life. This trend of traditionalization originated when the literary and visual-arts version of the national landscape — “the little church on the river” — was established in Russian high art (see Ely 2002: 118–21). These images are meant to evoke patriotic rapture in the viewers, the dominant emotional note in their rapture being pious nostalgia. In contemporary culture this method of conveying ideas of the inseparability of religion and landscape to a large extent follows the policy of cultural heritage preservation conducted during the last three decades of the Soviet Union’s existence, and which, in the years preceding perestroika, was imbued with the bright colors of ethnic nationalism and religious revivalism (Kormina and Shtyrkov, forthcoming).

It is especially important that representatives of Vladikavkaz Eparchy, with the (albeit not always consistent) support of the republic’s major mass media organs (which are loyal to the government), produce a portrait of the Orthodox Church as the main, natural purveyor of reliable information to new generations of the republic’s inhabitants about their ancestors’ legacy. Eparchal functionaries’ supervision of the social program “The Heritage of Alania” in the republic, which works with young people, including those in orphanages, is quite illuminating in this regard. In local television programs the directors of the heritage program take on the role of those who acquaint children with their traditions, that is, as if they were actual parents, whose role in the upbringing of new generations of Ossetians receives unfailing emphasis

through praise of families as guardians of traditional religious and national values. Take what was stated in a program on the republic's television channel "Alania" in a news report (November 21, 2013) about a pilgrimage, one of whose major goals was to visit the famous shrine Mady Mairam (or, the Chapel of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God) in the village of Kharisdzhin. (Let me mention again that the shrine's "religious identity" is the subject of bitter dispute):

The Patriotic Education and International Relations Committee of the Youth Parliament of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania continues to implement the program "The Heritage of Alania." The program includes the organization of excursions for young people to sites that commemorate historical Alania. Yesterday, North Ossetian youth visited the ancient churches (*khramy*) of Kurtatin Gorge. (...) Charges of the orphanage "Khury tyn (Sun Ray)" and attendees of the "School of Ossetian Traditions," Youth Parliament deputies, representatives of the republic's media, and university students participated. Having scaled the steep, elevated slopes of Kurtatin Gorge, the excursion participants reached the first stop on their itinerary, the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God. Here they listened with rapt attention to the story told by an experienced tour-guide and researcher with the Institute of History and Archaeology, Felix Kireev, who stressed that the ancient Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God was an especially revered place for all inhabitants of Ossetia. [Pyotr Pavlov, chairman of the Youth Parliament's Patriotic Education and International Relations Committee, Orthodox activist]: "In the children's eyes (...) I don't know (...) we saw what seemed to be a reverent awe before this holy place. When the children learned that this church was basically really the same age as Russian statehood and also a contemporary of Alanian statehood — of course, none of the trip's participants could forget this." According to (...) Pyotr Pavlov, the purpose of the trip was to remind the young people of their religious roots, to socialize the children from the orphanage, and also to attract attention to religious monuments on the territory of Ossetia today, and to unite people regardless of their confession around national shrines. [A teenage girl from the orphanage]: "When we reached the top (...) and when we went into the little church (...) when we went inside, I knelt and prayed to God for health, and so that people (...) well, would not be in need and for children in orphanages — that they would find homes (...) well, families."

In the above quotations, there is much that is revealing — both the representation of a local shrine as pertaining to all Ossetia, and the

declaration of Orthodox holy sites as national ones. But the theme of children seems especially important. Excursions for young people to ancient holy places produce a colorful, evocative surge of traditionalist emotions, material that ideally combines the fundamental semantic units of religious nationalism: the ritual purity of ethnic origins and hope for a bright future for the nation. Such a representational strategy may be called a policy of “soft power,” with its harnessing of powerful images for a singular, indirect influence on the social imagination.

It must be noted that such initiatives do not receive a warm welcome from all the republic’s inhabitants. This is not a matter of the Muslim community, whose leaders seek to avoid conflict with the “dominant” confession. The more consistent critics of the Orthodox redaction of Ossetian culture and spiritual heritage are the advocates of the establishment (or re-establishment) of the particular ethnic religion of the Ossetians, sometimes known as “native faith” advocates (*rodnoveriy*), by analogy with East Slavic religious traditionalists. In the republic itself, though, they are known as “holy faith ones (*uasdinovtsy*),” from the Ossetian “*uas din* (holy faith).” I realize that this term seems artificial to a certain degree, since existing organizations of Ossetian “native faith” advocates have other names and, moreover, many proponents of the idea of Ossetian folk religion act outside defined institutions and prefer to be called simply “Ossetians,” just as many Evangelicals try to avoid terminology that links them to specific Protestant denominations and call themselves simply “Christians.” Therefore I use the term “holy faith-ers (*uasdinovtsy*)” in the absence of an alternative. (I tested its comprehensibility by using it in conversation with twenty people and was convinced that they understood me correctly.)

While on the subject, it is necessary to take into account that in the view of many activists of this project, it is not possible to speak of the creation or even the rebirth of folk religion in this context: “Even the people who participate in this movement are not ‘revivalists’; they are not ‘reviving’ anything. They are trying to preserve what has come down to our day from our forefathers: the culture, customs and morality that are based on traditional beliefs” (Makeev 2013). During our personal exchanges, “holy faith” advocates several times impressed upon me that the use of the “construction” metaphor to define their activity misrepresented their own understanding of this process: they cannot create something that objectively exists.

The native faith advocates, employing an alternative version of religious nationalism that fuses New Age ideology with the European “new right,” direct pointed criticism at Orthodox activists’ attempts to “get

their hands on” Ossetian culture. (The especially significant arguments in this regard concern the religious foundations — Christian or non-Christian — of Ossetians’ veneration of St. George (*Uastyrdzhi* or *Uasgergi*) and, of course, the problem of the rights to the shrines.) “In our day the Church (...) is trying to seize the Ossetian shrines, proclaiming them to be ancient chapels and churches. With outright falsifications they deceive their own parishioners as well as people far from Christianity” (Morgoev 2014: 223). Attempts by Orthodox activists to assert the Christian past of the Grove of Khetag, sacred to all Ossetians, are received especially bitterly:

“It is unacceptable to say in an online conference — publicly and with complete confidence — that there was a Christian chapel in the grove of the saint (...) the Ossetian (!) St. Khetag (...), [that] this is a confirmed historical fact. So they say! (...) This is absolutely not verified from anyone’s point of view — not according to the historians, nor to the archaeologists of Ossetia. So, when this is all put together, it gives a certain impression that there is a targeted campaign of sorts going on to equate with the Russian Orthodox Church something that has simply been influenced by the Christian ... that is, the Russian (...) Orthodoxy of the Ossetian religious system and has seen a gradual merging of personages and some holy places with the Russian Orthodox Church” (Professor Tamerlan Kambolov, *Pogovorim* 2010).

The same reaction arose in response to the claim by an Orthodox priest, Alexander Pikalev: “It is no secret that a chapel stood in the Grove of Khetag before the revolution” (*Pogovorim* 2010).

The native faith advocates see in Christianity in general, and in Orthodoxy in particular, a globalization project entailing the eradication of any ethnic particularities. To explain the spread of Christianity among the Ossetians, and generally among the world’s peoples, some traditionalists often employ conspiracy theories. Texts created by one of the most active leaders of the religious traditionalists, Daurbek Makeev, represent this position most consistently. Their purport in general terms is as follows: in the Bible tasks were formulated and placed before the Israelite people — to seize the lands and property of other peoples — and the methods of achieving these goals were the corruption of the peoples involved through “the discrediting and distortion” of traditional ethnic customs and beliefs. To Makeev, Christianity is the main instrument for the realization of this plan, which has already been set in motion at full power: “And they have already come to us,

to corrupt us” (Makeev 2007: 188). In a later text Makeev adds to a similar version of his understanding of world history the term “biblical project,” taken either directly or through an intermediate source from the essays of the so-called “interior predictor of the USSR” (See, for example, “*Sad*” *rastet sam?* 2009: 53). A similar view of Christianity is widely represented among proponents of the “Ariosophic” school of conspiracy theory (Bezverkhii 1998; Ivanov 1998; Istarkhov 2000); this group sees the Christian religion as a specific product of Jewish social engineering that “was exported to the Aryan world for its enslavement through the preaching of submissiveness and pacifism, and through the profane simplification of ancient knowledge” (Bagdasarian 2000: 23; for Christianity as the product of forces striving for world domination, see Shnirelman 2012: 22–24; 2002: 203).

The “native faith” version of religious traditionalism proposes the purification of everything Ossetian from the “external” veneer of Orthodoxy and the return of Ossetians to their pre-Christian past, to their “Indo-Aryan” spiritual roots, which had predetermined the greatness of contemporary civilization in opposition to Near Eastern religious teachings, with Christianity the most dangerous of the latter in the eyes of Ossetian native faith advocates. Characteristically, one of these traditionalist manifestoes, penned by Khetag Morgoev and published in 2006, has the eye-catching, aggressive title “The True Word against Christians.” Khetag is now a member of the “local religious organization of the traditional faith of the Ossetians,” *Ætsæg Din* (True Faith), an organization registered in 2009. (Morgoev’s article is available on several internet sites, including the site of the religious organization *Atsætæ*, headed by Daurbek Makeev. See Morgoev 2006.)

What eparchal activists regard as the creation of an ethnic version of Christianity, that is, as a unique “Ossetianization (Alanization)” of Orthodoxy, appears to proponents of the restoration of the primordial faith of their fathers as a reworking of ethnic tradition according to the pattern of Abrahamic globalism, bringing the people the prospective loss of the ethno-national culture’s distinctiveness and, moreover, westernization, both of which characterize the logic and rhetoric of contemporary ethno-national eschatology. But it is equally clear to both sides of the debate that one can conduct the argument about the real religion of the Ossetians only in ethno-cultural or even ethno-national terms. It was no accident that the title of the annual eparchal conference held from 2012 places on the same level the following key terms in this conceptual field: “Orthodoxy. Ethnos. Culture.” And a film made in 2013 with the blessing of Zosima, archbishop of

Vladikavkaz and Alania, *Fydæltj fændag* (*The Ancestral Way*, directed by Zita Khautova), and completely in the spirit of ethnic traditionalism, affirmed:

Deserted over the centuries, the riches and vast territories, the towns and populous villages that had vanished, did not result in the erasure of the ancestors' faith, which was preserved in the spiritual life of the people, who as far back as a millennium ago had so exquisitely and harmoniously united their ancient Indo-Iranian traditions with the teachings of Christ. This also became the foundation of our culture — a priceless treasure, passed down by generations of our ancestors, a treasure whose enjoyment is constrained by the short span of human life and the obligation of its future transmission to our descendants. Culture, the holy of holies of any nation in the world, is what with God's blessing distinguishes us from others, what makes us recognizable in this huge, multivarious, and very often hostile world. Culture is that which helps us to preserve ourselves.

The narrator speaks these words while the viewer sees on the screen pictures of the Caucasus mountains, Ossetian shrines, and the traditional holidays observed in them. (As for the film's description of the fusion of Indo-Iranian traditions with Christianity, it is interesting that here it touches on the historical debate about whether the true nature of European culture is "Indo-Aryan" or "Semitic." Arguments over this question, arising in the nineteenth century in academic circles [Olender 1992], took on a sharp political tone in the twentieth century in philippics against Christians by proponents of the idea of the re-birth of ethnic religions [Shtyrkov 2013].)

The head of the eparchy, who openly interprets traditional Ossetian practices at the great ritual feast (*kuvda*) in terms of the Christian divine service, also supports a similar representational approach. Accordingly, in the recently released film *The Alans: A New Testament*, he states: "What struck me (...) or so pleasantly surprised me, when I came to the Vladikavkaz and Makhachkala Eparchy, was the first Ossetian feast. This was not only because the spread was lavish, welcoming, and hospitable, but among all else here it had a liturgical aspect (...) as if it were a continuation of liturgical life. When the elder is seated at the table, he begins to tell not simply some jokes or funny stories there (...) but the person who is the oldest, who is respected, begins with prayer" (*The Alans* 2014. The film was made with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation).

In an interview with the republic's popular information channel *15th Region*, Archbishop Zosima drew this analogy still more decisively: "And the Ossetian feast thoroughly impressed me. Everything was not as it usually is among other peoples. I was astonished — the three pies, the cup ... You might say this was a liturgy! And the main thing is, the feast goes on not with songs and dances but it begins, continues, and ends with prayers. To be sure, because of the tragic history of this region much has been forgotten, much has been lost, but some root has remained! And regardless of who may try to wash it away, the link with Christianity is evident" (Zosima 2013). By the way, the polemical context explains the heat of his assertions. Over the course of the interview, Archbishop Zosima's interlocutors discussed, among other topics, the conflict surrounding one of the shrines, the chapel in the village of Kharisdzhin, located not far from the Alanian Monastery of the Assumption (I mentioned this above in connection with the young people's excursion to Kurtatin Gorge). This conflict turned bitter when, in August 2013, someone threw the icons out of the chapel and smashed a memorial stone. Although the perpetrators' names have not been announced publicly, everyone involved is convinced that they were traditionalists, many of whom react vehemently to the presence of icons in Ossetian shrines. The archbishop himself in the same interview called this incident a "violation of the boundaries" and an attempt "at the seizure of one religion's holy site by representatives of another religion" (Zosima 2013).

It is apparent that the argument between the two versions of religious traditionalism — that of the Orthodox and that of the "holy faith" (*uasdinovskii*) (once again I remind the reader of the complexity of using this term) — assumes that both sides understand the value of tradition and harness the same semantic potential inherent in the concept (stability, predictability, the source of protection against the excesses of headlong modernization, and the like). It seems that only its content changes depending on the person under consideration.

Parenthetically, while the situation described here is indeed unique, it is possible to find definite parallels. One can observe a similar picture to some extent in the Republic of Altai. The religious life of the Altaians has a very dramatic history. Tibetan Lamaism spread among their ancestors the Oirots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but then ties with Tibet were ruptured; and the Altaians remained without the spiritual leadership of a religious institution. There followed not unsuccessful missionaries' attempts to spread Orthodox Christianity in this region, the rise in 1904 of the traditionalist religious movement Burkhanism, and so forth (on Burkhanism see Filatov 2002; Znamenski 2005; Halembe

2006; and Arziutov 2007). Time's effect on the Buddhist heritage of the Altaians is the subject of huge debate. Some affirm that not even a trace remains and that the Altaians practice their "native" faith. Others think that Buddhist traces are quite numerous in Altaian culture and, consequently, it would be easy to revive it. Proponents of this position regard the colorful traditional piety of the Altaians as an idiosyncratic form of Buddhism, somewhat primitivized and tainted with vestiges of paganism (Halemba 2003; Filatov 2006; and Broz 2009: 24–25).

To return to the meaning of "tradition" in the Ossetian case, it seems to me, however, that the distinctive metaphysics of tradition differ essentially for the two sides in this dispute. To the extent that the metaphysics remain unexplicated, the impression is given that in principle the two views of traditionalism are mirror images of each other. But this, in my view, does not precisely reflect the actual state of the matter.

In order to understand the primary difference between the two approaches in question, I turn to the above-cited text by Khetag Morgoev. Arguing against one of those who denounced Ossetian religious "native faith," Morgoev with unconcealed irony asks: "Who then invented the Nart epic poems [*narstkie kadagi*], Ossetian religious hymns (...), who thought up these complex, beautiful acts of worship, replete with multifaceted meaning, and already largely incomprehensible to the layman?" Evidently, Morgoev thinks that answering this question is difficult, since all of this has existed essentially since the beginning of time. And with its primordial status, in its origin all but *une vérité première* (Sedgwick 2004: 23), Ossetian tradition stands in contrast to Christianity: "Who invented Christianity, however, is well known in detail. We know minutely who, when, and why someone invented the Christian holidays and dogmatics and even, moreover, what they ate and drank, who called whom what epithets, and who clashed with whom when debating whether the Son was equal to the Father or not, whether Mary was the mother of God, or whether to leave things as they were" (Morgoev 2014: 214–15). That is, Christianity appears as a historical subject, having arisen at a specific moment in the past, whereas the Ossetians' traditional faith is something extra-historical, in a certain respect eternal and unchanging. To be sure, Morgoev, a credentialed historian, is well-acquainted with academic discursive etiquette, which does not permit him to mystify the reader with universalist claims. But nevertheless, the presumed origins of Ossetian religion run more widely and deeply, in principle, than the Tradition (*traditio*) of Orthodox Christians, which is almost always "junior" in age and status to Scripture: "Our religious culture through its

roots goes out into the vast Indo-European spiritual world; and we are in fact the bearers of this culture” (Morgoev 2014: 217).

Daurbek Makeev describes Ossetian religious tradition in approximately the same words: “Upon attentive study of the Ossetians’ traditional religion one realizes that this is not a local religion; it is not the religion of a single people. The religion of the Ossetians is a little island that has been preserved, part of a global religion that bears a worldview associated with many peoples” (Makeev 2013). And again:

This is not only Ossetian (...). We have preserved something that is all-European. The whole world today has turned its eyes, ears, and heart to Ossetia to discover all of those roots, those values that once united us all. We are such an exceptional people, in that we have preserved these values (the artist Slava Dzhanayev, *Pogovorim* 2010).

And precisely both the reliance on the prehistoric image of the Indo-European spiritual heritage and the argument based on ethnolinguistics, in my view, allow Khetag Morgoev to rhetorically effect a transition to very forceful assertions about the universal nature of Ossetian religion:

Our conceptions about God (as also those about the archetype) point to the absolute universalism of God. This is not the God of the Ossetians or of someone else; this is the God of all and of everyone. The Ossetian word *Khutsau* conveys an idea of God, but this concept is specific only to this word alone. Nothing else can be called *Khutsau* (god). The lack of names attached to the idea *Khutsau* is an indication of its transcendence and of the high degree of development of abstract thought among the bearers of the given culture. The ineffability of a transcendent god in Ossetian religious tradition suggests its universalism. A god without names or material attributes (fetishes) that create, define, and link this image with a defined epoch (and consequently, add historicism to conceptions of this deity), culture, and language, and that reflect qualities characteristic of the epoch, culture, and so forth, is in the Ossetian worldview universal and all-encompassing (Morgoev 2014: 217–18).

Orthodox traditionalists imagine tradition as something historical, subject to change, and, possibly, even as something that must be changed to attain certain other aims more vital than tradition itself. Their view evokes deep suspicion among the ethnic traditionalists-fundamentalists. This suspicion finds support in familiar accusations

of “natural” duplicity directed against Orthodox missionary activity: “The Christian clergy know very well that Ossetian religion and Christianity have nothing in common. But nevertheless, you see, there is this missionary spirit (...) inherent in this religious system, in Christianity (...) it, well, it impels Christian activists to make these sorts of statements (...) that, you see, there is a direct congruence between our religion and Christianity” (Khetag Morgoev, *Pogovorim* 2010). Ethnic traditionalists understand that an instrumental approach to a nation’s cultural patrimony is potentially dangerous for the nation and its heritage. Such an approach is too rational and in this sense impervious to the charisma of genuine tradition, and even opposed to it. And here yet again the circumspect behavior and professionalism of the missionaries is contrasted with the intuition and “wisdom of the blood” of their opponents. (Perhaps the latter group’s inclination to esoteric terminology also reflects this discursive tension.)

The noteworthy Ossetian traditionalist philosopher Zaur Tsoraev in one of his papers commented with alarm upon eparchal initiatives to “inculturate” Orthodoxy in Ossetian culture, as articulated in the above-mentioned presentation by Fr. Savva Gagloev (whom he quotes as an opponent):

“The logic here is the following: ethnos, nation — they are perishing. The individual can be saved from nonexistence by communion with Christ, and therefore it is useless to care about what is doomed to destruction, that is, all other identities (...)” And right there, after reflections about the evanescence and ephemeral nature of ethnicity and nation, it says: “What has been said does not at all mean that Christianity underestimates the significance of culture in the formation and establishment of the individual and society. On the contrary, it is precisely ethnic tradition, it is precisely life in society that is the culturally formative dawn of man; it is the place where his ethos is formed, his habits, his worldview.” What then shall one accept as the primary foundation that defines the individual — communion with Christ or with the culture of the ethnos?

And later he concludes:

Everything that has been said allows one to conclude that they induce the Ossetian ethnos (...) to renounce itself, its own ancient culture (...). The authors of the new missionary policy want to unite Ossetian and Christian religion under the banner of “inculturation.” Moreover, according to Savva the priest, they “must be principled in defense of the

very essence of the faith of Christ, and show ‘economy’ (*ikonomiia*) and flexibility in less essential matters.” Recall that in Christianity the word economy signifies the principle of deciding church questions from a position of mercy, practical advantage, and convenience (Tsoraev 2013).

Paradoxically, these accusations that representatives of the Orthodox Church take a utilitarian approach to ethnic tradition (which, from the perspective of traditionalist fundamentalism, must not be used for purposes understood as more axiologically significant than the very existence of the ethnic unit) have their own inverted parallel. By this I mean the bitter bewilderment of many Orthodox believers who are beginning to understand that, for some guardians of the Orthodox faith, that faith is no more (but also no less) than a national tradition, which must be harnessed effectively for practical, mundane purposes — for example, to revitalize national greatness, or to directly attract material resources that can be put toward the accomplishment of this difficult task. This mirror image speaks volumes about the place Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church occupy in different Russian regions: in national regions the Church’s representatives must seek representational strategies that can legitimize missionary and catechetical activity among the titular majority, as it feels keenly the loss of its ethnic distinctiveness.

It is significant in this respect that Vladikavkaz Eparchy’s ongoing “inculturation” project replaced a completely different idea of the relations between Orthodoxy and Ossetian culture. While we can find similar attempts even before the start of the official campaign for the ethnicization of Orthodoxy, the general relationship of the Orthodox Church in North Ossetia to Ossetian traditional culture has represented a striking contrast to what we find in the speeches and actions of the current eparchal leaders. The statements of the priest Alexander Pikalev, who is responsible for missionary work in the republic (earlier I quoted his statement regarding the dispute over the Grove of Khetag), reflect this approach. Fr. Alexander frequently has to comment publicly, in newspapers and on radio and television, concerning almost all the above-mentioned questions.

It would be untrue to claim that Fr. Alexander consistently fought against the manifestation of Ossetian distinctiveness in the local variation of Orthodox practice. In the eyes of many people (including Orthodox Ossetians), however, he has gained a reputation as the persecutor of everything Ossetian. The reason for this impression lies in his idea of the nature of folk custom in relation to an ideal reli-

gious worldview and ideal religious behavior. With only a cursory look through Fr. Alexander's statements one can see that his discursive practices compel him to speak of folk custom, in this case, Ossetian custom, in terms that contrast it with his genuine religion. With such an approach, popular traditions seem an inevitable but deplorable obstacle to the rectification of ideas and morals that have no relation to the ultimate values of human existence. This is how he interpreted the specifics of local veneration of St. George on the radio program *From the Position of Faith* (*S pozitsii very*), broadcast on November 26, 2010, when Orthodox believers of North Ossetia, with great spiritual elation, received a priceless gift presented to them through the efforts of the head of the republic — a portion of the relics of this very saint. In fact, this veneration was the subject of the program's discussion:

But on the other hand, sometimes such veneration (...) it overflows into completely pagan forms. Now what is paganism? Paganism is not really necessarily polytheism. It is not exactly necessarily faith in many, many gods. The word "paganism" [*iazychestvo*] comes from the Slavonic word "tongue" [*iazyk*]. "Tongue" means "people" [*narod*]. (...) And this is why they say that there are certain particular, some kind of national saints (...) or there is a certain special, a certain national faith — and this is the manifestation of paganism. (...)

"Their god is their stomach," said the Apostle Paul about the pagans. "Their God is their stomach." That is, they do not consider spiritual ideals, moral ideals to be of paramount importance. They value earthly well-being the most. Now, when a man worships a divinity for the sake of his own earthly prosperity, so that he will eat well, sleep well, earn more money, get an apartment, a car, a supermodel for a wife (...). Now, when a man turns to God for these things, and asks for specifically these things and only these things from God, no matter what God he is worshipping, this man is a pagan. And you see, literally (...) well, a year or two ago I happened to be traveling from Alagir to Vladikavkaz on St. George's Day [Dzhourgubu]. Everyone knows that this road runs past the Grove of Khetag. So, I was on my way to Vladikavkaz and on the road I saw three or four car accidents. On this big holiday four car crashes happened. I do not know whether anyone was hurt — we passed by quickly, but the cars, of course, were in horrible condition. What does this tell us? It tells us that people in the Grove of Khetag, celebrating St. Khetag's memory, who is also revered ... by the Ossetian people, were not so much praying as they were loading themselves up with all kinds of strong drinks.

And in this condition they took the wheel. And of course what happened, happened. Completely innocent people suffered. So this is what the veneration of the saint is like — this is paganism, even if it is the veneration of a Christian saint.

A person who regards the traditions of his people affectionately and thinks that he has the right to take into account distinctive ethnic elements when shaping local forms of Orthodox life understands statements such as that above as arrogant and even colonialist, as the stance of a Russian imperial official from the “Spiritual Department.” And the basis for this perception will be a fact Fr. Alexander does not notice — however much he wants to see Orthodoxy as a universal, supra-national phenomenon, in our country Orthodoxy has a distinctly “Russian face,” if not expressly indicated otherwise. In other words, it is Russian by default. I emphasize, Fr. Alexander did not intend to hurt the feelings of his Ossetian listeners. He tends to relate cautiously to any excessively revered traditions. Apparently having felt the necessity to soften somehow the effect of his denunciatory tone toward Ossetian customs, he quickly shifted the discussion to a level more removed from local realities:

[Christ] says: “He who does not hate his father and mother, he cannot be my disciple.” What is meant by this hatred? (...) The holy fathers interpret this excerpt in the following way (...) by “father” one must understand (...) by “father” and “mother” is meant that ethnos and those traditions in which a person finds himself. Because (...) look, picture this. A certain young man became a believer. He became a Christian. He was baptized. And his father was a former NKVD major. And he said to his son: “What are you doing? Why did you get baptized? We spent our lives shooting priests. And you do this. (...) This is not part of our family tradition. How could you betray your family?! How could you abandon your own traditions?” [The young man] said: “Look, if traditions go against Christ, then I reject them.”

But the impression of condemning the Ossetians just for being Ossetians has remained. And there are two reasons for this. Under the conditions of the dominance of Russian culture, ethnic traditions prove more important as symbols of independence for minorities than they otherwise might be. In this respect these minorities are “more ethnic” than the majority, which serves rather as a backdrop for the display of the unique characteristics of the small groups. Thus the “weight” of

folk custom for members of different social groups varies. It is simpler for Fr. Alexander to renounce some tradition in his own life if it hinders his spiritual growth, than, let us say, for his Ossetian brother in the Church, since his Russian culture is reproduced not by folklore ensembles (although it is by them as well) but through new editions of Leo Tolstoy and the concerts of Yuri Shevchuk. The second reason many listeners reject Fr. Alexander's position is that he relates to the phenomenon of ethnic tradition with neutrality at best: it exists, so be it; if it does not get in the way, let it be. But his audience is accustomed to seeing in folk custom an almost exclusively positive aspect of social life. Custom cannot lie about as a needless thing, nor hinder the realization of positive changes in society. From this perspective, folk custom always stands on the side of the good, unless specifically categorized otherwise. In the present case the authors of the inculturation strategy have grasped this mood very sensitively. They strive to demonstrate that everything truly Ossetian is the natural ally of the Orthodox mission in the republic. The best illustration of the new approach to understanding the place of Orthodoxy in Ossetia and of Ossetians in Orthodoxy is the following statement of Fr. Savva Gagloev, from a sermon he gave on the occasion of a very momentous event — the first liturgy in recent history to be conducted in the Ossetian language in the church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Vladikavkaz on November 25, 2014. On that day resounded words that unexpectedly, but for all that persuasively, imbued the project of the ethnicization of Orthodoxy with eschatological significance. And although Fr. Savva began his discourse on the topic of native language, his words were understood in a wider context, as a call to Orthodox Ossetians to take upon themselves the responsibility for preserving the ethnic uniqueness of their nation:

One's native language is a treasure which the Lord has entrusted to us, for us to guard this treasure and to increase it. And at the Last Judgment we will answer for this — how we treated this national attainment, this language, culture, those spiritual customs that we inherited from our ancestors, those rites that make us purer and closer to God — for how we treated this treasure. Did we preserve it? Use it? Increase it? Pass it on to our future descendants, to future generations? Or did we squander it and crush it until there was nothing left? Lest we suffer from the Lord's Last Judgment (and the judgment of people), we must guard our culture, our language. Pray to God in your native language. Who knows, maybe prayers in one's native language reach the throne of God faster?

It is interesting to note that all this was spoken in Russian and had as its emotional climax an obscure quotation from the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, a transcription for the educated Russian reader of the folktale about the fisherman and the fish.

* * *

In conclusion it is perhaps worthwhile to dwell briefly on how the project of the “ethnicization” of Orthodoxy in North Ossetia corresponds to the general practices of the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church among the non-Russian population. Although similar initiatives are relatively new in this context, we can find parallels in the other national republics of Russia.

For example, at the other end of the country, in Yakutia, a somewhat similar situation arose. The Yakuts were baptized into the Orthodox faith around the turn of the nineteenth century, but a distinct ethnic component naturally persisted in their religious life. When at the end of the twentieth century the question arose in the republic of what traditional Yakut faith they ought to revive, a dispute flared up between advocates of the Orthodox version of this plan and those of the idea of reviving the pre-Christian ancient culture (religion). The national intellectual elite took up conflicting positions. Opponents of the Orthodox view accuse its supporters of wanting to Russify the Yakuts. The Orthodox, in turn, defend themselves from these reproaches, putting forward their version of history and their perspectives on the development of Yakut culture. This is how local Archbishop German spoke about this upon the opening of an important republic-level initiative, “Assembly of the Peoples of Yakutia” (1996):

People of different nationalities have lived for centuries on this land. But today echoes of turmoil and disorder, filling a once united state, have found their way into our peaceful region (...) but we shall not return evil (...) and I as the representative of the Orthodox Church, to which the majority of us belong through our roots, that Church which has always united and enlightened but has not Russified the peoples of this region, and in particular has preserved their distinctiveness, their language and culture, I call all of us to responsibility and tolerance” (Burdo and Filatov 2006: 2:246).

One can find yet another example of a similar policy in Khakassia, where Bishop Ionafan, appointed to the Abakan see in 1999, promptly joined actively in the restoration of Orthodoxy among the Kha-

kas. (In the nineteenth century the Minusinsk Tatars, as today's Khakas were then called, underwent a mass baptism; this did not prevent them from retaining those characteristics of their ethnic culture that can be interpreted as vestiges of shamanism.) Bishop Ionafan immediately set up a Khakas church choir, which sang some pieces in Khakas. Moreover, the bishop launched into a debate with local pagan activists who asserted that conversion to Christianity leads to the loss of the national culture; he argued that Orthodoxy will preserve all Khakas traditions, except, of course, for those that are pagan. It is quite significant that, in his view, one must not distinguish between Khakas and Russians in the matter of conversion to Christianity. Both the one and the other have alike wandered from the faith, even if they continue to call themselves Orthodox (Burdo and Filatov 2005: 1:342).

Accordingly, it is possible to consider “the ethnicization of Orthodoxy” a marked tendency in some eparchies’ religious policy — that is, the effort to overcome the ironclad associative link between the concepts of “Russianness” and “Orthodoxy” in order to present the latter as the “native faith” of other ethnic groups. In my view, this new approach follows on the policy of the *folklorization of religion*, about which some anthropologists are writing. These anthropologists analyze the side-effects of the top-down administrative control of religion in the Soviet Union and argue that it is necessary to analyze lasting associations between concepts of religion and ethnic cultural heritage as among these side-effects (Pelkmans 2007; 2009: 6).

Of course, one finds images of folk (*narodnoi*) faith as the quintessence of the people’s (national) spirit in high Russian culture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; many representatives of Russian high culture saw in the religious life of peasants and Old Believers the basis for the nation’s existence. In doing so, they laid the ideological foundations of the current wave of desecularization, which consists of movements to infuse the national culture with religion, that is, to bring down the ghetto walls erected around religion by the social imaginary of European modernity (Kormina and Shtyrkov, forthcoming).

As Orthodox leaders construct their national policy, they tend to think historically, to direct their missionary calls to peoples whose ancestors had already been enlightened by holy baptism in the time of the Russian Empire. They employ a “discourse of continuity” — as do their opponents, advocates of reviving the ancestral, pre-Christian faith — as a legitimating language of interpretation of their activity (Broz 2009: 31). Their opponents, advocates of reviving the ancestral, pre-Christian faith, do likewise. In other words, representatives

of the local Orthodox elite understand their activity more as the restoration of what has fallen into ruin, rather than as the creation “of a new heaven and a new earth,” as Evangelical missionaries do. Evidently, for this reason the revitalization of ancient holy sites is regarded so naturally as a rallying cry of the internal mission of the Russian Orthodox Church not only in the “inner provinces,” but also at the borders of a huge multicultural country.

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Konstantin Kostjuk (2013). *The History of Social-Ethical Thought in the Russian Orthodox Church. (Istoriia sotsial'no-eticheskoi mysli v Russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi)*. Saint Petersburg: Aleteia (in Russian). – 448 pages.

It was already the close of the 1990s when Konstantin Kostjuk began writing about social and political thought in Russian Orthodoxy as well as the social teachings of other Christian confessions, and he was one of the few authors who vigorously responded to the appearance of the document “The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church” in 2000. In 2002, at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, he defended his lengthy German-language dissertation, “The Concept of the Political in the Russian Orthodox Tradition: The Relationship between Church, State, and Society in Russia” (subsequently published as a monograph — Kostjuk 2005). Now, finally, Russian readers have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the results of Kostjuk’s masterful research, which has no real equal among other contemporary works.

After reading Kostjuk’s book, the first thing that comes to mind in terms of a comparison is, naturally, Georges Florovsky’s *Ways of Russian Theology* (Kostjuk, incidentally, cites Florovsky’s work from time to time). In Kostjuk’s case, the range of his work is just as large, but the scope of its coverage of the history of Russian religious thought is even broader.

Of course, the differences are also obvious. They consist not only in the fact that the current volume adopts a carefully considered, detached analytical approach free of the pronounced acerbity and evaluative subjectiveness characteristic of Florovsky’s well-known work. What is central is the subject under investigation itself. Kostjuk set himself the goal of drawing out from the same tradition and the same history of ideas the “social-ethical” dimension, which, “in the history of Orthodox thought, is treat-

ed quite rarely and which as an independent phenomenon hardly ever comes to the surface" (7). For this, there is indeed an objective reason, insofar as social ethics, as Kostjuk recalls, is a relatively new discipline, and the areas it encompasses (man and the state, man and power, man and the social system) were component parts of the system of religious (Christian) thought in the pre-secular epoch. What is more, "the categories of social ethics are derived not only from theological works, but also in general from the structures of traditional society that existed for centuries and the history of a people in its entirety, its makeup and way of life" (9).

The book, which comprises eight chapters, can be more or less divided into three parts. The first (chapters 1–2) is dedicated to "cultural-historical roots": the peculiarities of the Eastern and Western Church traditions, including the Platonic and Aristotelian inheritance in Orthodox theology as well as the fundamental elements of Christian social thought in Byzantium, which subsequently became the essential source of Christian concepts and values for Russian Orthodoxy.

The second, essentially historical, part (chapters 3–6) covers the period from the acceptance of Christianity to the

twentieth century. Kostjuk essays a thorough, detailed investigation of the Muscovite period, on which he writes the following: "Thought associated with the Muscovite state formed the ideal type for Orthodox social thought, which was subsequently treated as a sort of unshakeable constellation of fundamentals true for all periods. While this set of concepts and ideas was only loosely outlined in a theological-theoretical key, it subsequently became mythologized and transformed into a legendary outline for all ecclesiastical thought" (144). In a particular section, Kostjuk, using works of Old Russian literature and the works of Russian historians, describes a "canon of values," which includes such concepts as "orthodoxy" (*pravoverie*); "tsar"; "service; beneficence (*zhertvennost*)"; "patience"; "honor and duty"; "popular assembly (*veche*) and liberty (*volia*)"; "justice (*pravda*);" "mercy"; "order in the state"; "holy Rus"; "antiquity" (*starina*); and "awe or dread (*groza*)" ("the concept of thunder [the literal rendering of *groza* – the editors] was associated with the concept of authority and its power") (144–64).

Kostjuk then considers "social-cultural ideas" in Russian Orthodoxy (chapter 4), that is, those ideas pertaining to jurisprudence, everyday life, the economy, and

education; he also considers the social-prophetic function of the church and, finally, the phenomenon of the social elite's turn away from the church.

The epoch of secularization in Russia begins with Peter the Great. Kostjuk investigates this three-century period by examining the output of Orthodox hierarchs and theologians, state ideologues, and religious philosophers and writers, by tracing "the development of the idea of social Christianity" in the nineteenth century, and by drawing out the social-ethical dimension of Russian Orthodoxy-oriented thought in the later period in various contexts (including the pre-revolutionary, Soviet, and emigrant contexts).

The third part of the study is dedicated to the post-Soviet period, which Kostjuk sees as the most productive in terms of the development of social ideas in the Church (336). In chapter 7, Kostjuk examines the positions of "the Church's intellectual leaders, whose views on questions of faith and society have come to serve as a point of departure, orienting many millions of the faithful" — specifically Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), Archpriest Aleksandr Men, and Metropolitan (now Patriarch) Kirill (Gundiaev), who represent, respectively, right-conservative, liberal, and liberal-conservative tendencies.

The final chapter is dedicated principally to an analysis of the "Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" from 2000, on the publication of which Kostjuk writes: "For the first time, the Church acknowledged its right to have its own views on the proper ordering of society and to communicate them to society itself. After this right had been absent for centuries, such a pronouncement sounded truly revolutionary" (359). Kostjuk analyzes the contents of the Concept, highlighting such topics as "Politics and Political Ethics," "Society and Social Ethics," and "Stance on Life and Bioethics," and he also draws attention to the absence in the document of many elements of Christian social teaching that he considers indispensable.

Attention is additionally paid to two other documents that Kostjuk considers in the context of the development of the social teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church: the "Code of Moral Principles and Rules for Economic Life" (2004) and "The Declaration on Human Rights and Dignity" (2006), which were passed by the World Russian People's Council. Unfortunately, Kostjuk analyzes and discusses the Church's position on the question of human rights exclusively on the basis of the Declaration — which is an exceedingly brief, "thesis-style" text

that does not even have the status of an official Church document. It is certainly an omission that the later document, “Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom, and Rights,” is ignored. Passed by the Council of Bishops in 2008, it is much richer in terms of its ideas and its argumentation, as it was precisely intended to develop the Russian Orthodox Church’s social teaching.

In the course of the book, Kostjuk delivers an overview of political and societal processes as well as brief *précis* of persons, thinkers, and historical actors relevant to the study, so as to analyze the fundamental tendencies of each stage of the Church’s development and to draw general conclusions. Such a strategy is fully justified given the current cultural situation. Recalling these numerous standard figures and events appears appropriate and necessary if one has in mind new generations of readers. In this regard, Kostjuk’s book has didactic significance and could serve as one kind of textbook on Russian history, the religious dimensions of which were either distorted or nearly ignored for so long.

Kostjuk purposefully does not reveal his “ideological” credo, but it is implicitly present in his assessments. One can say that it consists in three elements: scholarly soundness and impartiali-

ty in his handling of the material, historical realism (in the sense of evaluating ideas and conceptions on the basis of their relationship to real social processes), and personal interest — as an Orthodox Christian — in illuminating and elaborating upon the social-ethical position of the Russian Church and its relevance to contemporary processes (this interest from the point of view of an Orthodox Christian becomes fully explicit in the book’s conclusion).

To which general conclusions does Kostjuk come? “Orthodoxy strives, while residing and serving in the world, to turn away from it and not to become absorbed in it (...) The church wishes to be and to remain in the world without being ‘of the world,’ maintaining a stance of reproach (...) It can accept the world only by ‘churchifying’ it (...) Thus, the church sees its ethical mission not in ‘improving’ the laws of this world, but in transforming them eschatologically;” “the centuries did not lead to a working out of a this-worldly ethics: even today, every Orthodox believer is supposed to harmonize his actions not with the laws of this world, but with higher divine law.” “Church life has followed this model for centuries, and what follows from this — the ‘abandonment’ of the world, neglect of everyday life, the institutional weakness of the church and the clergy, and finally a hun-

ger for freedom on the part of the world and even the temptation to persecute the church — for the Church, these are external matters that are not in its power to change” (387).

As a result, a comprehensive social teaching is lacking, and in its place there is merely the possibility for the researcher, as Kostjuk himself says, “to construct a typology of views, which is precisely what was done in this work.” These views pertain to such concepts of differing magnitude as state, tsar, fatherland (*otchizna*), war, service, authority, mercy, justice (*pravda*), and, finally, labor and family. One easily notes that nearly all these archaic concepts derive from the canon of values of Muscovite Rus. Beyond the boundaries of the space described by these concepts “lies contemporary society — not the people, not the fatherland, but a complex aggregation of differing social relations, interactions, and groups. When faced with active lay thought, the church acknowledged it, in the form of conciliarism [*sobornost*].” Kostjuk believes that “conciliarism is practically the church’s sole and simultaneously most expressive social concept describing the state of modernity,” but it too remains undeveloped and unelaborated (392). According to Kostjuk, the same can be said

for the church’s Social Concept, whose drafters were so careful that they preserved nearly all the norms passed down by tradition and merely described but did not prescribe the state of affairs that Christian reason demands (393). In response, Kostjuk identifies five *social-ethical* topics and issues that either are not extant or that remain unformulated not only in tradition, but also at the foundation of social doctrine: the concept of love (“the Gospel’s tidings on love appear not to break through the boundaries of the social,” Kostjuk notes); education and enlightenment; money and property; workers and unions (the discussion of this latter topic revolves around rather broad considerations: “A dynamic, institutionally differentiated society with prospects for the future should stand at the center of Christian social thought. It is not enough simply to speak of an abstract ‘world’ that can be accepted or rejected” — 394); and finally the concept of secular modernity.

This last element is extremely important, especially today, when post-secular tendencies and processes can be observed both in Russia and internationally. This ignoring in the Church’s consciousness of the meaning and problematics of secularization — together with its simultaneous exposure (even though

secularization in Russia began not in 1917, but with Peter the Great [Sinelina 2004]) — is genetically connected with a certain theology of authority (a separate section of the book is dedicated to this): “The theology of authority that took shape in Muscovite Rus was the pathos-filled, culminating expression of the social ontology of the ‘sanctification’ of everyday life, which was concealed in Orthodox consciousness. If in the Byzantine tradition the historical division of authority prevented the seeds of ‘holy authority’ from taking root, in Muscovy’s evolution the tsar’s authority quickly became not simply the center of national political power, but also the foundation and bulwark of *the church’s presence in this world* — a world encircled by foreign, satanic forces” (126). “Owing to the positioning of political authority at the center of its mental universe, Russian Orthodoxy formulated a concept of autocracy that formed the essential specificity of Russian religious culture (...) In the Orthodox Church itself, the figure of the tsar is transformed into an archetype of sorts of heritage and tradition, from the influence, power, and charm of which the church has not been able to free itself to this very day” (149). At the same time, “in the new interpretation [autocracy in its imperial incarnation], Russian rul-

ers succeeded in combining the Protestant conception of the independence of earthly authority with the Orthodox claim to total authority” (224).

In this regard, from a historical perspective the following is key: “At the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, changes occurred in the life of the church that were more significant than at any subsequent time, including times of persecution. The church, which for centuries had been the heart of the life of society, in the course of just a few generations ceased to be included in it. The Christian epoch in Russian society came to an end. The life of the church continued as an institution, but it entailed completely different social functions” — in particular “the social function of *guardianship*, of preservation of the other segments of society in a stable condition,” was entrusted to it by an elite that was, in essence, already secular (200).

As a result, in the nineteenth century, there arose that specific phenomenon of “the official Church,” which beginning in that era, existed over the course of the two following centuries, even in the Soviet period. A constituent element of this arrangement was the careful reproduction from a distance of state political doctrine, distinguished by the coloration of theological language, accompanied by the precise surveying of

both external secular (party) social teachings and internal Christian ideological currents" (236). Social topics were taboo for both church hierarchs and academic theologians, among whom "that same withdrawal into traditional virtue ethics could be observed" (234). "The social was perceived as an external milieu, encircling but by no means entering into the system of Christian life" (247). Connected with this is another aspect noted by Kostjuk (while analyzing the position of the noted hierarch and theologian Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky), the future patriarch of the Soviet era) — a skeptical attitude toward law, which led not only to the belittlement of law's significance in comparison with morality, but also to the devaluing of attempts to transform law into morality" (249).

On the other hand, "at the same time that an adequate language for the analysis of contemporary social processes could not be found in academic theology, this language developed within the framework of religious philosophy." However, the cost of this was the distancing of the Church from these philosophers, since they "only appealed to a limited extent to the authority of the Church, and did so at their own risk" (296). The official Church "generally has not viewed religious philosophy, for

all the richness of its ideas and its flights of theoretical sophistication, as an authentic source of Orthodox thought" (270). Kostjuk notes that "the primary difficulty for theologians and philosophers in the development of social ideas in Orthodoxy was the absence of a basis for philosophizing, a role fulfilled in Catholicism by natural law" (307).

Kostjuk provides a nearly exhaustive survey of the social dimension of the views of the most well-known secular intellectuals, dividing them into "Slavophiles," "conservatives," *littérateurs*, liberal religious philosophers, and twentieth-century emigrants. Together with the survey of church authors and theologians as well as various ideological currents, including even official positions from the Soviet era (and those of several *Zerkalo* members and dissidents), this creates an expansive picture of religious social-ethical ideas and concepts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (let it be noted that the book's bibliography encompasses 45 pages of Russian and foreign works).

However, the book's chief merit, in my view, consists not so much in the scope of its material (which could always be enlarged or always be considered inadequate) as in Kostjuk's ability empathetically to penetrate into the internal logic of religious

consciousness — of a concrete thinker, an ideological tendency, or an entire era. We are dealing, namely, with *logical constructions*, which can be elucidated and described and then assessed thanks to, on the one hand, Kostjuk's non-ideological approach to research and, on the other, a certain logical partiality, that is, the position of an invested Christian intellectual. This is a fruitful (one could say "felicitous") approach that has been successfully implemented, for instance, by Jaroslav Pelikan in his monumental *Christian Tradition*. It is precisely this approach that justifies Kostjuk's brief, occasionally aphoristic, but pithy characterizations (which is also partially true of Florovsky's aforementioned work).

His uncompromising assessments notwithstanding, Kostjuk's position is *critical* in the scholarly, not the polemical-popular, sense. Konstantin Kostjuk's study should thus be considered an essential contribution not only to understanding of religious-social processes in the Russian past and present, but also, let us hope, in the development and refinement of the Russian Orthodox Church's social teaching.

Speaking of the deficits of the publication under consideration, one would rather draw attention not so much to several mistakes and inaccuracies of a factual na-

ture¹ as to the all too negligent approach of the publisher, which displayed little concern not only for stylistic editing, necessary in places, but also simply for quality proofreading. At the same time, these sad manifestations of the general decline in Russian publishing culture notwithstanding, one must thank all those who ensured that this remarkable book, long-awaited by interested readers, would see the light of day.

Alexander Kyrlezhev (Translation by Stephen Scala)

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1. For instance, Kostjuk confuses the Orthodox seminary in Crestwood, which is part of the Orthodox Church in America, and the Seminary of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Jordanville; additionally, N. Afanas'ev was not a professor at an American seminary (330).

Vera Zabotkina (Ed.). (2012). *Russia: The Changing Image of Time through the Prism of Language. The Representation of the Concept of Time in Russian in Comparison with English and German. (Rossiia: Izmeniaiushchii obraz vremeni skvoz' prizmu iazyka; Reprezentatsiia kontsepta vremeni v russkom iazyke v sopostavlenii s angliiskim i nemetskim iazykami)*. Moscow: Rukopisnye pamiatniki dreveni Rusi (in Russian). — 427 pages.

This volume, written by a collective of authors based at the Russian State University of the Humanities, is dedicated to the category of time from the perspective of cognitive research. The focus of attention is on *time* in the Russian linguistic and cultural consciousness, in comparison with its corresponding manifestations in the Anglo-American and German cultures. The book is arranged diachronically: an attempt is made to follow fundamental shifts in the use and interpretation of the category of time, shifts that have occurred over the course of the last centuries. All this is accomplished through technically sophisticated, microscopically calibrated analysis of the three languages by linguists and philologists, with a plethora of linguistic examples taken from texts of different types — from folkloric and artistic literature to political speeches, from economic analysis to netspeak (which is emerging before our eyes).

The themes of the articles are extremely varied, fragmented and

multidirectional — even taking into account that almost all of the authors contributed several such “odds and ends” articles. Let us list at random several texts, so that the reader of this review can imagine the almost focusless heterogeneity of the volume. “Time in the Ancient Russian Vision of the World (Based on the ‘Sermon on Law and Grace’ of Metropolitan Hilarion)”; “Markers of Time in the Early Lyric Poetry of Boris Pasternak”; “The Metaphorization of Time in Contemporary English-Language Social Commentary (Using Material from *The Economist*, 1999–2005)”; “The Concept of the ‘Transitional Period’ in German Social Consciousness, 1989–1990”; “Categories of Time in Russian and American Political Discourse,” and so forth.

Nevertheless, even if the composition of the book seems too fissiparous, my reference to the articles as “odds and ends” is not meant to sound disparaging; several of them shine with an elegant, professional polish and demonstrate a penetration to

the most secret depths of that which can be called “linguo-cognition” (*iazykomyshtlenie*). The introductory part provides a highly detailed analysis of contemporary scientific literature relating to this theme; the authors attack fundamental phenomena lying at the juncture of semantics and cognitive linguistics, such as metaphor and metonymy, with their rational (deliberate, controlled) and emotional effects (see the pieces by V. Zabotkina, M. Konnova, and L. Bondareva in the second section, “The Conceptual Metaphor as a Means of Grasping Time”). Russian, English and German examples abound on many pages; the material offered and organized on the pages of the book is truly massive: here we find standard memes such as “time is money” or “*morgen, morgen, nur nicht heute*” (tomorrow, tomorrow, just not today) as well as more ambitious generalizations linking temporality to space, movement and value. Not all these experiments seem convincing. Of course, this is the opinion of a non-specialist, and I would not venture criticize the methods in each concrete case. It is important that, in the end, we have before us a serious and reflective cerebral onslaught. *Sapere aude!*

I will try nevertheless to unlock the overarching idea of the book. The category of “time” is in and of itself incapable of unifying

this chaotic heterogeneity. “Time” is too much; time surrounds everything and slips into nothing; it is too promiscuous in its definitions. But there are other chains of association on which the design of the book is based. Firstly, as already mentioned, there is its method: the scrupulous, semantic analysis of language; time is “conceptualized”; we are not talking here about “time” in general, but about the sphere of its semantic associations, pulsing in the culture around the idea and sense of time that are expressed in language.

Secondly, the collection is formed around the central idea of a *paradigm shift*, a change in the perception of time, which permeates the book from start to finish, as evinced by the subheading. The question is one of a changing image. In what does this fundamental idea manifest itself, what does this change consist of? This is the most significant point.

Let us consider the structure of the book: part one, which is introductory, is called “Time in Language”; part two, “The Christian Model of Time”; part three, “The Economic Model of Time”; and, lastly, part four, “The Technocentric (Virtual) Model of Time.” The logic of this structure, it would seem, is transparent: the Christian conception of time, traditionally dominant in

European society, gives way to a new, modern conception, which is in the main economic, or, more broadly, profane and secular. Finally, in late modernity, the epoch of mass communication and the “information society,” the modern model is modified again. “Pre-Christian” concepts of time are definitively marked as “mythological and epic” (15–16). The dualism of “Christian versus Post-Christian” functions as the ideational pivot of the book.

If my summary may seem to be an oversimplification, the concept of the book is in fact oversimplified, with its somewhat overstated accent on the “grand narrative” of de-Christianization. I do not at all dispute the fact that several concrete examples convincingly affirm a change in temporal models within the context of a gradual entrance of European cultures into modernity, and this transition has been frequently described precisely in terms of secularization. At the same time, different parts of the book examine how complex the structure of post-Christian time has been — it is enough to trace the evolution from Newtonian unidimensional-undifferentiated-infinite-unidirectional time to the relative time of Einstein and the subjective, existential time of Heidegger (as discussed by L. Bondareva). But we can say the same thing about “Christian

time,” which is not something monolithic and unchanging. In relation to Christian time Bondareva (with reference to another work), with a clear European and Christian focus, and not without an explicit emphasis, also notes: “thanks to Christianity, humanity could conceive of time as a transitory, finite, discrete period, not allowing for revisions, returns or repetitions, which facilitates man’s conceptualization of his personal responsibility for his own life” (15). But is the Christian model so unambiguously linear and irreversible? With regard to Christian thought, we can bring up the more complex building of time into an eschatological outlook, the fusion of linearity and repetition (the regular reproduction of Christ’s sacrifice), and religious mechanisms of “revisions” and “returns” (the idea of purgatory, transfiguration or apostasy, etc.).

Writing about the transition of the Eastern Slavs to a new conception of time after Christianization, G. Berestnev reproduces the well-known schema of pre-Christian mythological time, referencing Carl Gustav Jung, Boris Uspensky, Vladimir Toporov, Mircea Eliade and others. Berestnev then goes on to identify a paradigm shift reflected in the eleventh-century “Sermon” of Metropolitan Hilarion, in which he finds an

already complete “linear model, characteristic for a Judeo-Christian worldview.” Later Berestnev draws the conclusion that a similar model was adopted not only by the outstanding metropolitan, but generally “by the consciousness of the Eastern Slavs in the eleventh century” (that is, approximately half a century after the as yet purely elite “conversion of Rus” (119–20)! Furthermore, comparing the text of Hilarion with Augustine’s famous definition of time in his *Confessions*, Berestnev concludes that in contrast to the subjective time of Augustine, “a modern scholarly understanding of historicism” (120) is closer to the ancient Russian writer, a conclusion for which there is insufficient evidence in the text of the article, apart from the mention of a stereotypical Christian trope opposing the epoch of Old Testament law to the epoch of New Testament grace and truth. (This raises further problems, given that the conclusion contradicts the book’s conception of the opposition of Christian and secular-scientific temporalities.)

In a series of short cases included in the collection, M. Konnova identifies the particularities of a Christian concept of time using different examples. In the “temporal lexicon” of Old Russian she finds frequent usage of the roots *dar-* and *-blag*, reflecting, according to her, the concep-

tion of time as a “gift of God.” In a different place Konnova explores Christian expressions in personal correspondence dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, concluding that, even if in an indirect, fragmented, and accidental manner, they express the “unique spiritual code” of the Russian man (140). Evidence leading to this fundamental conclusion includes, for example, the following (and I provide only the fragments specially underlined by Konnova in several quotations): “I pray to the Most High to preserve your precious health” (from a letter of Potemkin to Catherine the Great); “May God grant you many years of health” (from a letter of Pushkin to I. Dmitriev); “I firmly believe that the Lord will lead Russia along the path He has preordained for her” (from a letter of Stolypin to Nicholas II); and so forth. Konnova suggests that these and other examples represent linguistic testimony of a Christian exaltation of human activity above the everyday, providing this activity with meaning. The selection of examples does not, however, convince me; here it is necessary to attentively examine the context, purpose and meaning of the phrases; otherwise in the vast majority of similar examples you can hardly see anything greater than the reflection of a defined historical linguistic usage.

Later V. Zabotkina and M. Konnova uncover similar concepts of time in English — “Christian concepts of temporality,” among which the most important metaphors are “time is God’s creature” and “time is a gift of God.” L Bondareva, in turn, introduces many examples in German in which the Creator is glorified for giving us, among other things, time. The King James Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, and many English and German poets, writers, musicians and private individuals are cited. Again, it is not clear to what extent the generalizations made according to this choice of citations are fundamental; is it not just a question of acknowledging the definite presence of Christian tropes and a Christian lexicon in European languages, for which basic proofs are not needed? Of course, the authors do not eschew three factors that may well be more important than a simple collection of “Christian fragments”: a) alternative conceptions of time in the epoch of Christian domination; b) the deep irregularity and tension *within* Christian discourse itself; c) a change in conceptual models across more than a millennium of European Christian history.

In the next chapter of the section devoted to Christian time, Konnova beautifully formulates the meaning of the concept of time as not just one of the fundamental categories

of being, but as an axiological, valuable pivot of human life, adding that “linguistic explication” of the category of time “reflects both universal and nationally specific means of conceptualizing reality” (153). Later, the author examines this value construction via examples from Russian and English. In particular, she concentrates on the semantics of “the everyday,” adducing a large quantity of quotations taken from anywhere and everywhere; in fact, the selection is too big to appear intelligibly grounded. Here there is everything — texts from the Oxford English Dictionary, Max Weber, Nikolai Berdyaev, past and current Orthodox hierarchs and priests, and also contemporary authors. All the citations glorify the everyday as a carrier of “system-forming spiritual factors,” “a virtuous life,” and “righteous service,” relating this present-day life to the eternal (158–59).

At a certain point one even gets the impression that the text is slipping from its analytical rails and metamorphosing into an enumeration of basic Christian virtues, for some reason defined as “cognitive particularities of the concept of the ‘service of mercy,’” more precisely: active faith, prayer and work, mercy, love, joy, gratitude, humility, the peace of the soul — with a great many examples from the English letters of the Grand Princess Elizaveta Fedorovna Romanova (162–64). In this and other areas (for example,

in the description of the epistolary language of St. Luka Voino-Yasenetsky), Konnova's text becomes almost hagiographic, and notwithstanding the unequivocal importance of Orthodox men of God, the logic of research becomes displaced by the logic of the deductive assertion of normatively constructed speculation.

Discussions about the grounding in values of the temporal concept of "the workaday," "the everyday," also appear a little schematic. Of course, in language one can discover a huge number of Christian texts that endow the workaday, the everyday, with higher, religious connotations, as containing within themselves a measure of the "eternal"; Konnova provides many such examples. Yet obviously in Christian discourse the everyday can also be viewed negatively, as the concentration of the profane, as a source of sorrow and temptation — do we really have so few examples? Later, the image of the festival (*prazdnik*) as opposed to the everyday, to which Konnova turns in the next chapter, is illustrated only through Christian examples, with references to the Orthodox Easter canon, to the verse of Boris Pasternak, to Ivan Shmelev's novel *The Summer of the Lord*, and the cycles of Whitworth and Milton (respectively) "Time and Death" and "On Time." For Konnova, the "festival" is linked only with Christian associations:

"The history of the establishment of the festival in Russia is in the most intimate way linked with Orthodox traditions" (192). She concludes that "at the basis of an axiological understanding of time lies a Christian perception of being that is key for European culture" (233).

The influence of Christian values and tropes on European civilization is incontestable, and proving this circumstance with a selection of relevant citations seems unnecessary. But is it logical to apply the tropes of a consciously Christian discourse, as in the suggested examples, mechanically to "all of European culture"? After all, the concept of "festival," if considered seriously, is as semantically ambivalent as "the everyday" — it is possible to find various connotations in it, and at the end of the day is it really impossible to find examples of non-Christian, or at least, anti-church, subversive festivity in Russian (and for that matter English) cultural history?

Later the book demonstrates how this highly schematic, entirely constructed and somewhat smoothed over cultural matrix of "Christian time" collapses into a process of unrestrained secularization. The contributors identify the coming together of new, profane meanings in all three languages under consideration; it is asserted, for example, that from the eighteenth through the twentieth cen-

tury a break took place in the cognitive links between categories of the “everyday” and the “eternal”; these categories “undergo mental transformations”; the expression “dull everydayness” appears (172); the understanding of “grace” (*blagodat’*) loses its spiritual meaning and gains different connotations in the words “fortunate” (*blagopoluchnyi*) and favorable (*blagopriiatnyi*) (131), and so forth.

The entire third part of the book is an illustration of this process, about which the authors write with undisguised regret: “the departure of Western Europe from Christianity, beginning with the church schism of 1054 and becoming stronger during the Renaissance, leads to the gradual forgetting of the spiritual value of time as given to man by God. With the departure from Christianity the understanding of the goal of human life gradually changes. The new, egocentric relationship to life offers a temporal “bliss” (*blazhenstvo*), earthly and ephemeral, instead of eternal blessedness (*blazhenstvo*) (270). Here evidence is given, namely a change in the relationship to usury. In the Middle Ages it was prohibited, but later: “with time the thought of Christian charity and mutual assistance gave way to the striving for the increase of profit, and usury was recognized in the law” (272). The modern European model of time is an economic model. Similarly, new “conceptual met-

aphors” are investigated — time is a commodity; time is money; time is lived-in-space; and so on.

The contributors to this volume lay out extensive and varied linguistic material, which is interesting in and of itself. However, it is superfluous to say that the simplified narrative of the “decline” of the West put forth here is hardly academically well-grounded and does not demand refutation in scientific terms, to say nothing of the completely strange identification of the West-East schism of 1054 as the beginning of the “departure from Christianity.” In such moments the text, generously decorated with citations from Christian authors and canons, assumes a shade of Orthodox apologetics. In such a spirit it is demonstrated in detail that the Paschal canon, in its translation from Church Slavonic to (modern!) English, loses its spiritual exaltedness and wholeness, assuming normative neutrality and dryness. The contributors conclude (with reference to Dmitry Likhachev) that it is undesirable to translate liturgical language even into contemporary Russian (200). Not by chance does the call of Patriarch Alexy II echo from the pages of the book at a certain point: “for the maintenance of European cultural identity (...) it is extremely important to retain a moral yardstick, which spiritualizes and ennobles the life of Europeans” (181). Schematic econo-

centrism in the evaluation of the semantic foundations of modernity, linked with an obvious normative agenda — noticeable, at least, in a number of contributions, and also in the general architecture of the book — lowers the scholarly value of this brave onslaught of the

most fine-grained linguistic analysis. Mastery of the highly complex analytical technique of semantic (de)construction demands strict, ascetic restraint.

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Mikhail Smirnov (Ed.). (2012). *Protestantism: Pro et Contra. Russian Authors' Views and Polemics from the Sixteenth through the Early Twenty-First Centuries.* (Protestantizm: pro et contra. Vzgliady i polemika otechestvennykh avtorov v XVI–nachale XXI veka). Saint Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkoi Khristianskoi Gumanitarnoi Akademii (in Russian). – 846 pages.

The religious situation in Russia at the start of the twenty-first century is multifaceted, heterogeneous, and in flux. Public opinion surveys point to a lasting urge for confessional identification among Russians; field studies and official statistics attest to swift growth in the number of religious associations; and political leaders on the federal and regional levels take into account religious considerations both in the creation of national ideologies and in the formulation of concrete social programs and methods for their implementation. The attention of the mass media is principally directed toward the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church, yet other religious organizations also significantly contribute to the religious life of the country.

Protestantism exercises an important influence on the religious situation in Russia, although one that is still weakly reflected in public consciousness. The ecclesiastical, social, economic, and political activities of Protestant communities are intensive and expansive, and they attest, to all appearances, to their great cultural potential. Against this backdrop, the publication of an anthology that sheds light on the history of Protestantism and allows one to comprehend the place of Protestant denominations in Russian culture and to assess Protestantism's presumed role in the further development of the country seems timely. Considerations of present relevance aside, the logic of scholarship itself speaks to the benefit of producing an antholo-

gy of this sort. Integrated consideration of Protestantism in general and Protestantism in Russia in particular represents an enduring task for historians and philosophers of religion. A well-ordered collection of texts of varying character and content, from the Medieval to the contemporary era, represents an intermediate stage of reflection within religious studies on the path to building a fresh conception of Protestantism.

For all its breadth of scope — more than 50 texts — the volume under review does not claim to offer a comprehensive overview on the topic of Protestantism in Russia. According to the volume's compiler, a well-known sociologist of religion and the author of numerous publications on the topic of Protestantism, "the purpose of the present anthology also consists in proffering to the reader a treatment of the topic of Protestantism in Russia precisely by non-Protestant authors, presented in the dynamic framework of its variable and permanent characteristics, in the form of *pro et contra*" (9). Orthodox polemicists, Soviet atheists, and representatives of academic scholarship all number among these non-Protestant authors.

The anthology's texts are divided up into 12 sections, which "encompass the most noteworthy and important," from the compiler's point of view, reactions in polemical and

scholarly thought to Protestantism in Russia in state, social, and religious space" (10). The names of the sections are as follow: I — "The Prerevolutionary Historiography of Protestantism in Russia: The Official View"; II — "The First Century of Protestantism in Russia: Under the Sign of the 'Exposition against the Lutherans'"; III — "The Nineteenth-Century View of Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Russian Anti-Lutheran Polemics"; IV — "From Ivan the Terrible to Peter the Great: The Thorny Path of Adaptation for Protestants in Russia"; V — "The Orthodox Theological Assessment of Lutheran Teachings"; VI — "The Protestant Imprint on Russian Sectarianism"; VII — "One Word — Germans... (On Protestant Influence on Russians)"; VIII — "Communist Ideology and Protestantism in the USSR"; IX — "In the Sights of Scientific Atheism"; X — "Protestantism in Post-Soviet Russia"; XI — "The Phenomenon of Russian Protestantism"; XII — appendices (excerpts from the "Law for the Evangelical-Lutheran Church" of 1832, the text of the currently in-effect "Law for the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia," and the text of "The Social Position of Protestant Churches in Russia").

The compiler provides a more or less comprehensive précis of each section and each author in the introductory article "A Non-Protestant

View of Protestantism in Russia.” In order to avoid repetition, let us diverge from the logic of the account as presented in the anthology and share observations and reflections that arise upon reading the texts.

The anthology *Protestantism: Pro et Contra* is a multicolored kaleidoscope of facts, judgments, and appraisals of Protestantism in Russia. It is an easy and appealing read, and one that is valuable for its broadening of one’s general knowledge of history and religious studies. But what is more important is that these texts brought together under a single cover, in entering into dialogue with each other, draw the reader by degrees into the conversation as well, astonishing her with varied facts and judgments, and eliciting questions relating to abstract theory and to one’s worldview. As the points of view presented in the book multiply, the picture of the ways of life, customs, and beliefs of Protestants in Russia becomes richer and more complex. And the more distinctly and insistently questions on the historical roots and essence of Protestantism, on Protestantism as both a particular ideational system and a peculiar psychological predisposition, stand out, the more powerfully one experiences the human and civic need to discern in it a social and cultural force possessing an internally given vector for action.

The anthology’s authors interpret the emergence of Protestantism in Western Europe in various ways. In this case, the judgments and appraisals espoused by representatives of Orthodox or secular tendencies are, on the whole, as could be expected, yet the tone itself of their statements is of interest, as are the individual stylistic features in which the spirit of the conditions and the age that bore them are exhibited all the more colorfully. Thus, for Maximus the Greek, a contemporary of the Reformation who wrote *Against the Lutherans — Discourse on the Veneration of Holy Icons*, Protestantism, which rejected the veneration of icons, was unquestionably evil, the result of dissoluteness, pridefulness, and intellectual blindness: “Like the blind asp, when it hears the snake-charmer, places one ear to the ground and plugs the other with its tail lest it hear the voice of him who utters the charm, thus these senseless ones, owing to their rebelliousness and idleness, but mainly owing to their envy, do not listen to correction” (55). This tendency in the appraisal of Protestantism, the tendency to explain its rise through the arbitrary actions of individuals as well as the elemental infectiousness of enthusiasm, is also evident in N. D. Terentev’s essay, written four centuries later, “The Lutheran Theological System according to the Symbolic Books of Lutheranism.” Partially

excusing Luther and Melanchthon, “talented and theologically educated individuals who, further, were seized by sincere religious inspiration” (313), the Orthodox polemicist sees in their writings “something of the light, but much more darkness” (308). Initial attempts to elucidate the Reformation rationally were connected with criticism of Medieval Western Christianity. For instance, in I. I. Sokolov’s article “Protestant Propaganda and the Reaction to it in Russia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” the notion that the uprising against the abuses of the Catholic Church was natural was expressed thusly: “Luther merely succeeded in unifying the oppositional movements that arose in the Western church almost immediately following its separation from the Eastern (...) Together with the princes, he was able to impart to all a new form of social and political protest and separatism” (163).

Secular authors’ analyses of the causes of the Reformation go further. Through an objective scholarly approach, religion is stripped of its status as a first principle of human existence that takes on differing forms depending on circumstances, and is transformed into one among multiple cultural forms. Catholicism’s internal crisis, its inability to satisfy the worldview-related demands of broad strata of the population, appears as a conse-

quence of general cultural evolution, while religious processes are placed in a dependent relationship with economic, social, and political ones. In particular, such an understanding is expressed in L. N. Mitrokhin’s text entitled “Our Interest in Protestantism”: “Protestantism’s principal positions were determined by lived experience reflecting individuals’ particular views on the equality, internal freedom, and independence of the person, the individual’s duty and calling, which naturally took shape among persons increasingly implicated in specific bourgeois relations” (452).

The authors in the anthology treat the further history of Protestantism with similarly aggrieved or moderately benign explanations. Some of the authors consider this history to be contingent, others essentially predictable (*zakonomernoi*). Some see in it the machinations of the enemies of church unity; others an unavoidable stage in the development of religious ideology. The anthology devotes special attention to the spread of Protestantism in Russia. The first Lutherans appeared in Russia when the faith’s spiritual leader was still alive. But when exactly did the presence of individual craftsmen, artists, traders, and pharmacists from abroad evolve into a Protestantism firmly rooted in Russian soil? In the middle of the sixteenth

century, when German communities were founded in Moscow, Vladimir, Uglich, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod, Tver, Kazan, and Arkhangelsk? Or in 1575, when Protestants were granted permission to build a place of worship near Moscow? When the act of interpreting the Bible free of established authority enraptured Russian minds and prompted those who had belonged to the Orthodox Church from birth to leave it? Or when the entire state structure underwent reorganization along the West European model and foreigners wound up at the helm of government? Or, perhaps, Protestantism became a fully Russian phenomenon when, under pressure from unsatisfied spiritual needs, forms of religious life outside of the [Orthodox] Church and independent of foreign influence emerged among the people? The question of the periodization of Protestantism in Russia is important for the anthology's authors, a majority of whom approach it either generally or while treating the history of individual communities, be they Lutheran, Shtundist, Baptist, Mennonite, Pentecostal, and so on.

In many texts, the psychology (*dushevnaia organizatsiia*) of Protestants is discussed directly or obliquely. Various observers note the heightened sense of personal dignity characteristic of Protestants. Even those who can

hardly be suspected of harboring sympathies toward Protestantism acknowledge that, "with their piety and strict lifestyle, Protestants very much facilitated the purification of mores among the Orthodox, especially the elevation of social virtues — kindness, charitableness, honesty, diligence" (N. I. Barsov, "Protestantism in Russia," 37). Such moral independence and uncommon fitness for labor are based upon a fundamentally rational attitude toward religious revelation and toward life. The particular consequences of this rationalization of faith included pronounced asceticism in worship, rejection of the rich ritual traditions and complex hierarchies of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and the dream to "realize the kingdom of God on Earth (...) having established love, general contentment, and equality without vice or crime" (K. P. Pobedonostsev, "New Christianity without Christ," 341).

The direction of Russian Protestants' spiritual life changed depending on historical circumstances. In stricter times, their ministry took on strictly professional forms, satisfying "that ideal the Russian government established for itself regarding foreigners" (D. V. Tsvetaev, "The Struggle over Protestant Influence in the Muscovite State before Peter the Great," 180); but when the opportunity presented

itself, they propagated their views in every way possible, and did so quite successfully. Ten years after the start of equal missionary competition, which was guaranteed by the Decree on Religious Toleration of 1905, the Orthodox commentator A. F. Giliarevsky was obliged to acknowledge the Protestants' superiority: "Their nationwide mission is carried out at an unattainable level" ("German Dominance in Russian National-Religious Life," 365).

During the Soviet era, the social-psychological physiognomy of the Protestant was deprived of its expressiveness. For the religious in a godless state, the opportunity for a full-fledged social-religious life was closed off; in a socialist state, the possibility of religious-economic activity disappeared. The social soil undergirding the self-awareness of the sower of the divine Word and the specialist appointed from on high eroded, the support base for implementation of religious norms and values in everyday life vanished, and as a result, "the image of the busy, active person becomes almost entirely lost" (S. N. Savelev, "Protestant Sectarianism in the Light of Atheistic Propaganda," 444).

A side effect of prerevolutionary freedoms followed by the strict religious policies of the USSR was a weakening of national consciousness. Champions of Russian Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century

were still concerned with the question of whether a Russian person's psychological makeup would allow him to be a Protestant, even though Ivan the Terrible, in his response to Ivan Rokita's critique of Church tradition, already made note of the universal, supra-national nature of faith ("our" faith is not given the name Russian, but Christian; 'people' are called Christians, and where they are called by another name, by the name of their land, there is heresy and schism," 80). By the mid-1920s, subsequent to the inroads made by Baptist, Evangelical, Methodist and Pentecostal missionaries among ethnic Russians, the national-religious question lost its urgency. At the start of the twenty-first century, even the ethnic composition of Russian Lutheranism has changed as it transforms, thanks to the heavy influx of Russian converts, "into a Russian patriotic movement" (R. N. Lunkin, "Protestantism in Russia: A New Force in Civil Society," 496).

Russification and conditions favorable to religious freedom have fostered a curious evolution within contemporary Protestantism. The traditional opposition within Protestant consciousness between the spiritual reading of the Bible and the external ritualism of Orthodoxy is becoming less and less sharp in modern Russian history. A. S. Strukova and S. B. Filatov note "the more or less con-

scious striving toward elements of Orthodox ritual characteristic of nearly all active Protestant churches in contemporary Russia," the construction of churches "with grandeur," the adoption of ceremonial pastoral vestments, and a return to the veneration of icons ("From Protestantism in Russia to Russian Protestantism," 545–47). T. K. Nikolskaya additionally points to the increasing adaptation of Protestant language to Orthodox norms and "the spread of an episcopal system of administration in place of a congregational one" ("Russian Protestants in the Twentieth Century," 591).

Educated Russian youth actively participate in the life of Protestant communities, expanding missionary work, religious instruction, and journalism, carrying out social programs, and formulating their political interests more and more clearly. After researching various parameters of the contemporary religious situation in Russia, R. A. Lopatkin arrived at the conclusion that Protestant churches constitute "the most dynamic segment of the country's religious population" ("The Religious Situation in Russia and Protestantism's Place Therein," 462). In this, alongside their practical activities, the Protestant intelligentsia of Russia devotes attention to the formulation of a worldview that might correspond to their current situation. From this springs their interest in

Orthodox theology and the Russian spiritual tradition, in which many find the sources of their religiosity. Thus, O. V. Vasileva (Bokova) observes that "contemporary Russian Protestants identify not with the European Reformation and Western Protestantism, but with that tradition of Evangelical Christianity that they discover in the depths of Russian spiritual culture" ("Contemporary Russian Protestantism: In Search of Itself," 563).

Protestantism is a fact of life in Russia today. How is this fact to be elucidated and which attitude should one adopt toward it? Making no claim to an overview of existing conceptions of Protestantism in Russia that is even remotely complete, one can direct readers interested in the subject to the anthology under consideration here. This book, in full accord with the purposes of a scholarly-didactic publication, contains much interesting and useful information, both in its primary texts and its commentaries on them.

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