AN ANALYSIS OF
THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE
IN THE SOVIET UNION FROM 1943 TO 1967

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On September 4, 1943, Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili--Joseph Stalin--the Premier of the Soviet Union, summoned three Metropolitans of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Kremlin in Moscow. This was the first time that the head of the Russian State had met formally with the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church since before the 1917 Revolution. It marked an important turning point in the relations between the Soviet State and the Russian Orthodox Church, though the roots of that relationship went back much further into Russian history. Out of this meeting between Metropolitans Sergei, Alexis, and Nickolai, and Premier Stalin, however, developed a paradoxical relationship between the Church and the State that has confused many observers.

The paradox in regard to the State policy vis-a-vis the Church can be illustrated as follows: On one hand, the official Communist Party ideology, which serves as the guiding philosophy of the State, has consistently regarded religion as inimical to a mature socialist society and therefore an enemy of the Soviet State. Karl Marx spoke of religion as the "opium of the people"[1] and Vladimir Ilich Lenin expanded this idea to include "all contemporary religion and churches, all and every kind of religious organization."[2] On the other hand, the

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[1]John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State, 1917-1950 (Boston: Little Brown, 1953), p. 44.

[2]Vladimir Gsovski, Church and State Behind the Iron Curtain (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), p. xii.

Soviet government issued a decree in 1918 which declared that freedom of conscience would be upheld, and the State would be separated from the Church. The 1936 Constitution also states, "In order to insure to citizens freedom of conscience, the Church in the U.S.S.R. is separated from the State, and the school from the Church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of antireligious propaganda is recognized for all citizens."[3] In 1945 the State-appointed representative to the government agency established to handle Church--State relations, G. G. Karpov, stated,

> The relations established between the Church and the State are quite normal, owing to the non-intervention of the Church in the political life of the State and, on the other hand, to the non-interference of the State in the internal affairs of the Church.[4]

In regard to the contradiction in Church policy vis-a-vis the State, we find on one hand reliable reports of churches being closed, monks harrassed and turned out of monasteries, and of severe restrictions being imposed on voluntary religious education, all caused by various levels of State authority. On the other hand, we find Church leaders, such as Metropolitan Sergei who became Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia in 1943, writing in his book, *The Truth About Religion in Russia;* "The Constitution guaranteeing full freedom of religious worship, definitely in no way restricts the religious life of the faithful and the life of the Church in general."[5]

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[3]Alexis, Patriarch of Moscow, (ed.), The Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow: The Moscow Patriarchate, 1957), p. 23.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 16.

[5]*Ibid.*, p. 23.

It is the purpose of this paper to explore in some depth these paradoxical and contradictory reports and statements regarding the relations between the Church and the State in the Soviet Union in the period between 1943 and 1967, and to show that the explanation of the paradox does not lie in the simple truth or falsehood of one side of the issue or the other, but lies rather in an understanding of those ideological and pragmatic factors that have determined the policy of both the Church and the State during this period.

While the institutions of the Church and the State in the Soviet Union claim to be ruled and motivated primarily by ideological considerations and commitments, it is the hypothesis of this paper that ideological factors have played a secondary and supportive rather than a primary and leading role in the policy of both the Church and the State in Russia in the period under consideration. Ideology has not been unimportant to either the Church or the State, but ideological consistency has been maintained largely through semantic manipulation and re-interpretation. This has been necessary because ideology has increasingly become an a posteriori rather than an a priori element in relation to the policy of the respective institutions. While ideology is used to support the respective policies of both the Church and the State, those policies are directed at the very pragmatic goals of securing the position in society which each institution holds and of insuring the continuity of each institution.

An examination of the ideological and pragmatic factors involved in the creation of the relations between the Church and the State in the U.S.S.R. between 1943 and 1967 will require a knowledge

of how the Church and the State have been related in the past and what common traditions have developed prior to the period under consideration. It is to history, then, that the attention of the second chapter of this paper is given.

The importance of history, even ancient history, to an accurate understanding of Church and State relations in modern Russia cannot be discounted. If one were to accept the statements of the Soviet leaders at face value, it would appear unnecessary to search further in history than the philosophical writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and in Russian history, the "great Russian Revolutionary-Democratic writers and critics--Belinsky, Dobrobubov, Chernyshensky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, . . . Plekhanov,"[6] and V. I. Lenin, for an understanding of everything in contemporary Russia. However, many of the traditions of the Russian people go far beyond the Revolutionary Period and, as the Soviet leaders have ruefully discovered, they are not easily forgotten or dismissed. The Communist regime in Russia is only fifty years old and while it has done a remarkable job of social, economic, and political transformation, the roots of Russian culture in the past continue to show their influence in the contemporary foliage of social life and attitude. Chapter two, then, will look at the Russian past and trace in broad but hopefully precise strokes, the developing relationship between the Church and the State. There were five easily discernible periods in Russian

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[6]From a Report to the Lenningrad Branch of the Union of Soviet Writers and the Lenningrad City Committee of the Communist Party, August 21, 1946, in Robert V. Daniels' A Documentary History of Communism (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 148.

history: The Russia dominated by Kiev (900 - 1200), the Russia of the Tartar Period (1200 - 1480), the Russia of the Moscow period (1480 - 1680), the Imperial Russia of Peter and his successors (1680 - 1917), and finally, the New Soviet Russia.[7] We will necessarily deal with the first four of these periods in a cursory manner, leaving more space for a fuller development of the Soviet period up to 1943 in Chapters four and five. Chapter two will attempt to show that both the institutions of the Church and the State in modern Russia have inherited a common national tradition of popular patriotism. Both the Church and the State have had to take this into account and have used it to the advantage of their respective institutional goals with varying degrees of success.

A second important criterion for understanding phenomena in the Soviet Union is the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which lies behind all official State actions or is used to explain them. While Soviet officialdom does not claim to create new ideology or to depart from Marxist-Leninism, it does continually interpret the standard ideology in the light of new political, social, economic, and technical developments, and one can speak of an evolving Soviet political ideology which remains at least semantically true to its revolutionary origins. Contemporary Church--State relations in Russia cannot be understood or evaluated without a knowledge of the Communist ideology and its major interpretations by Party leaders. There are two separate aspects of

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[7]Nicolas Berdyaev, <u>The Origins of Russian Communism</u> (London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1955), p. 7.

Soviet State ideology which will be discussed in chapter three. The first is that having to do with the concept of the State itself. The changing concept of the State in Soviet ideology illustrates very well the changing policy of the State vis-a-vis the Church; from hostility to tolerant ambivalence, to coexistence, and back again to tolerant ambivalence.

The second aspect of Soviet ideology to be discussed will be that which relates to religion and its institutions. When one takes into account the early tension between ideology and strategy concerning religion which can be found in the writings of Marx and Engels and which is later reflected by Lenin, one can more easily understand the apparent two-sided State policy. The Soviet State in modern times has taken advantage of this ideological ambivalence to bolster a State policy of convenience regarding its support or lack of support for the Church.

Chapter three will likewise be concerned with ideology from the point of view of the Church. Like the State, the Church has the advantage of an ambivalent ideological heritage upon which it can draw to support now one policy and now another, at times pursuing both simultaneously in different areas and using contradictory ideological justification for its action or lack of it.

When these considerations of history and ideology have received fair treatment, the author will then give attention to a review of the significant events that have occurred and the statements that have been made by the leaders of the Church and State in the period of Soviet history from 1917 to 1943. Chapter four will analyze the policy of

the Soviet State toward the Church during this first twenty-five years of Communist rule. Then, chapter five will examine the way in which the Church responded to this new State policy during the same period. These events and statements, some of which will appear to contradict each other, should be more understandable in view of the historic and ideological factors discussed in previous chapters.

Chapter six will discuss several non-ideological factors which have significantly influenced the policy of both the State and the Church in the period from 1943 to 1967. The three factors influencing State policy that will be discussed are: (1) the new ruling class, (2) Russian nationalism, and (3) personnel changes in the Russian political hierarchy. Similarly three non-ideological factors influencing the policy of the Church will be analyzed. They are: (1) religious nationalism, (2) institutional self preservation, and (3) personnel changes in the Church hierarchy. It is the author's contention that these and other non-ideological factors have played a more important role in directly influencing both Church and State policy than the traditional ideologies to which each institution pays allegiance.

Chapter seven, the final substantive chapter, will be concerned with the history of the period under consideration, 1943 to 1967. The events and statements coming out of this period will form the evidence which considered in the light of previous history and tradition will either substantiate or vitiate the author's hypothesis.

The conclusion of the study will summarize the findings of the previous chapters and indicate whether the original hypothesis concerning the secondary and the supportive role of ideology has been substantiated or not.

Literature on the Church--State relationship in the Soviet Union in the period from 1943 to 1967 is not plentiful and there are no exhaustive works on the subject. There are, however, many brief, scattered reports and references which if gathered together offer a fairly consistent and reasonably accurate history.

The topic of this thesis was undertaken primarily because of the author's interest in the general area of politics and religion and in the significance that the relationship between the institutions of religion and the institutions of government has had upon human society throughout history. The fact that these two sets of institutions were theoretically set in opposition in the modern Russian society, together with the fact that this particular society has assumed a vitality and influence almost unsurpassed in the modern world, was sufficient inducement to look at the subject closely. Both churchmen and political scientists should find this topic one that yields important insights for the future ordering of society in which strong ideologies vie with pragmatic factors in the struggle to shape that society. Regardless of one's value considerations, the Church--State struggle in the Soviet Union provides a living laboratory in which it is possible to observe the artful struggle of two forces whose traditional or orthodox ideologies set them in opposition to each other but whose sensitivity to pragmatic goals, institutional preservation needs, and traditional popular forces has driven them to seek a *modus vivendi*. How permanent this "living together" will be may well depend upon the relative rigidity or flexibility of the respective institutional ideologies in the face of changing times and circumstances.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FROM 989 TO 1917 OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE IN THE SOVIET UNION

I INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to ascertain the principal factors which yield an accurate understanding of the relations between the Russian Church and the Russian State in the years from 1943 to 1967. While the ideological or philosophical dogmas of the State and the Church played a significant role in this relationship, it is the contention of the author that the role of ideology was secondary and supportive of the respective policies of the Church and the State and that other more pragmatic factors were primarily determinative of those policies and therefore of the relationship between the Church and the State.

One cannot, however, discuss Church--State relations in modern Russia without at least a general knowledge of how these two institutions developed in Russian history and of the kinds of traditions that surrounded them and their relations with each other and with the Russian people as a whole. It is to this task that this chapter is dedicated.

Four major periods of Russian history will be briefly examined to determine the major trends and developments in the relationship between the Church and the State. These four historical periods are: (1) The Russia dominated by Kiev (900 - 1200), (2) The Russia of the Tartar period (1200 - 1480), (3) The Russia of the Moscow period (1480 -

1680), (4) The Imperial Russia of Peter and his successors (1680 - 1917). This historical examination will then produce some conclusions about the past relationship between the Church and the State in Russia that will have an important bearing on that same relationship in the period from 1943 to 1967. The importance of this chapter rests on the assumption that in spite of the major changes in political and social life that have come about in Russia since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, there are several social, psychological and cultural factors which are deeply rooted in the Russian national character and which continue to influence Russian institutions of both a political and religious nature in the modern period.

II HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the year A.D. 989 Prince Vladimir of Kiev listened to the testimony of spokesmen of the world's great religions, and after sending emissaries to the various religious centers, selected Greek Christianity as the faith most befitting himself and his people. The religious "conversion" of Vladimir, who later was designated as one of the great saints of the Russian Orthodox Church, marked the beginning of the Church in Russia. It began with an official endorsement from the head of State and rapidly became the religion of the Kievan people. From this time until 1037, the Church in Kiev had an independent though quasi-official tie to the Patriarch in Constantinople, who was the head of the parent Church. In 1037, the Patriarch sent Metropolitan Theopemptus to Kiev and from that time on the Kievan Church was a semi-autocephalous organization under the titular headship of the Byzantine

Patriarch.

From a local point of view, the Church in the Kievan period was a kind of "state within a state,"[1] in that it ruled a segment of the population by a set of laws that were strange to the Slavs. At the same time it was an important factor in the development of the Russian State. To an extent, the Church administration, based on principles of strict subordination, served as a model for strengthening the princely administration. The Church also spread Byzantine law. Russia's first written codes of jurisprudence came from the Church. The *Russkaia Pravda*, a code of law which first applied only to that section of the Russian community subject to ecclesiastical authority in non-ecclesiastical matters, was later accepted by the princes and judges as "a guide for the princely courts;" an aid to the elucidation of the existing civil law or custom.[2] The Church hierarchy worked not so much through persons as through the rules and principles which it inculcated and not so much upon the political order of the land as upon the private relations. Thus without directly shattering rooted customs and prejudices, the Church sought to instill into the native conditions of life her ideas and relations. In this way she continued to insinuate herself into the moral and juridical conceptions of the community and to pave the way for the reception of new legal forms designed to alter the standard of Russian life.

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[1]George Vernadsky, Kievan Russia (Vol. II of A History of Russia. 4 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 204.

[2]Vasilii Osipovich Kluchevsky, A History of Russia (Vol. I, trans. C. J. Hogarth. New York:Russell and Russell, 1960), p. 136.

In 1054 a split erupted, after a long and bitter doctrinal and power struggle, between the Roman and the Byzantine bishops. This occurrence put the Russian Church almost automatically in the Eastern Orthodox camp, ruled over by the Byzantine Patriarch. The Slavic peoples had been intermittently at war with the Germanic groups in the West since the time of Clovis in the sixth century and since the latter were under the ecclesiastical rule of Rome, the Church schism deepened the hostility. Russian Churchmen implied that Roman Catholics were not Christians when they spoke of Russians as Christians and Westerners as "Latins,"[3] and they did not hesitate to support wars between Russia and the West as Holy Crusades.

Contact with the main stream of Christianity was broken off, however, by the invasion of the Golden Horde. Final subjugation occurred in 1240 under the leadership of Batu, nephew of Jenghiz Khan. The Russians, seeking to escape the force of Mongol oppression, migrated North. One important development for the Church as a result of the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century and the Mongol Empire for two hundred years, was the isolation of the Church from Byzantium and the necessity for the Russian Church to replace the Greeks in Church leadership with native Russians. According to at least one noted historian whose opinion is shared by many, "perhaps the strongest element which bound the Russian peoples together from the Kievan period through the

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[3]Melvin C. Wren, The Course of Russian History (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 115.

period of the Tartar domination into the new Russia under Moscow's leadership, was the Church."[4]

During the 240 years of Tartar dominance over the Russian princes, the Church leaders continued to administer to the needs of the faithful and to aid the rulers of the new State, the principality of Muscovy, in their hopes of securing freedom from the Khans. In this period of history the seeds of "Holy Russia" were sown; seeds to germinate in an undying conviction of the Russian people that God had called Russia to a messianic task.[5]

One of the important incidents of this period which pointed out the early ripening of this messianic idea was the response of Muscovy to the results of the Council of Ferrara in Florence in 1438. The delegates of the Eastern Orthodox Church, in hope of obtaining Western aid against the Turks, had accepted a proposed union with Rome. However, Metropolitan Isidore of Moscow, on returning home, was dismissed from office by Vasili II, the Grand Duke of Moscow, who thus became the champion of those Orthodox who viewed Rome as heretical and saw Moscow as the new leader of the continuing Faith.

In 1480, Ivan III (the Great) was able to halt payments of tribute to the Golden Horde and through an alliance achieved independence for a new Russia. Ivan also consolidated an alliance between the Church and the State. Ten years before Ivan III had taken the throne, in 1453,

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[4] _Ibid._, p. 118.

[5] Dimitri Stremooukhoff, "Moscow the Third Rome," _Speculum_, XXVIII, No. 1, (January, 1953), p. 87.

the Ottoman Turks had conquered Constantinople and brought the Byzantine Empire to an end. Ivan took the Byzantine title of "autocrat" and in 1472 married Sofia, niece of the last of the Caesars, Constantine Paleologus, who was killed at the conquest of Constantinople. Thus, Muscovy assumed the heirship of Byzantium. Then in 1489, Ivan III rejected the offer of a crown from Emperor Maximillan and thereby refused to recognize the Western Empire as the Christian Empire. In the new calendar, begun in 1492, Zosimius, Metropolitan of Moscow, stated "Constantine the Great founded the new Rome, Saint Vladimir baptized Russia, and now Ivan III is the new Emperor Constantine of the new Constantinople--Moscow."[6]

This was an expression of the theory of the "Third Rome" which had first been clearly articulated in a letter written by a Russian Monk, Philotheus of Pskov to Bazil III, Ivan III's successor. In his letter, Philotheus interpreted the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, which contains the image of the woman dressed in the sun, as the Church, fleeing ancient Rome because of heresy, fleeing the new Rome--Constantinople--because at Florence the Greeks joined with the Latins, and fleeing into the third Rome, which is "the great new Russia."[7] "In all the world," wrote Philotheus, "there is only one true Christian Tzar--the ruler of all Russia."[8] The development of the theory of the Third Rome exalted Russian piety and national sentiment, tending toward a

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[6]Ibid., p. 91. [7]Ibid., p. 98.

[8]Alexander V. Soloviev, Holy Russia, The History of a Religious-Social Idea (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1959), p. 19.

national and religious particularism. The Third Rome idea gave ideological form to and justified the existence of, a strong central State, and it formed the core of the opinions developed by the Muscovites about their fatherland as a "Holy Russia."

The Church and the State tended to reinforce each other during this period in the direction of increasing separation from all ties to the outside world and the development of a suspicion of all foreigners along with a messianic self-understanding. The material standing of the Church was greatly increased by the victory of Joseph, Prior of the Monastery of Valokolamsk, over his rival, Nil Sorsky. The former represented the idea of the Church gaining wealth and power to control the affairs of the world and to aid the needy. The latter represented the idea of renouncing the world and wealth and using only the power of prayer to extend the influence of the Church. A schism occurred with the dissident group turned out of the Church to become the "Old Believers."

In the year 1549 Ivan IV (the Terrible) came to the throne, took to himself the title "Tsar," and began to exemplify the empire-building years of Muscovy and its close ties to the Church. In 1552, for example, bearing the cross of Dmitri Donskai, he led a hundred thousand men to the storming of Kazan. He then erected the fantastic church of St. Basil which still stands in Red Square, to celebrate the victory. Letters from Ivan IV reveal how the Tsar saw himself not only as the protector of the Church but as having a partnership in the essentially spiritual task of ruling subjects who were possessors of the Orthodox faith. The relations between the Church and State became more sharply

defined by the middle of the seventeenth century when Patriarch Nikon attempted to assert the supremacy of the Church over the State. He was defrocked and imprisoned by Tsar Alexis for his theocratic pretensions. Shortly after, a Church Council was called in 1667, which went on record as "solemnly confirming the concept of the Church as a function of the State organism."[9] Subjugation of the Church was the price paid for unity of action, for the Council had specified, "the Tsar has power to rule the patriarch and all other priests, for there must not be two heads in one autocratic State, but the royal power should be supreme."[10]

Results of the complete submission of the Church to the State began to show themselves from this point on. For example, the official attitude of the Church toward the outside world remained hostile and closed, while the secular world began to recognize the advantages to be gained from a closer association with the West. At the beginning of Peter the Great's reign, the Church--State relationship was in jeopardy. Tsar Peter drew the logical conclusions from the Council of 1667 in his statement of the theory of Caesaro-papism. "It pleased God that I should rule the citizenry and the clergy. I am to both their Lord and Patriarch."[11] Peter abolished the patriarchate, substituted at the head of the Church a Holy Synod, and appointed his personal "procurator" to oversee it. In accurately assessing the situation in retrospect Schuman, A Russian historian, quoted an Old Believer who stated, "the so-called Orthodox faith is an appurtenance of the Crown

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[9]Ibid., p. 37. [10]Ibid., p. 36.

[11]Ibid., p. 38.

and Treasury, an official badge. It rests on no basis of real life or sincere convictions, but merely does its duty as a government weapon for the defense of the order."[12]

Peter thoroughly removed from the Church any control over secular affairs and the Church never regained its power or independence until the Revolution and then it recovered only a legal form of the latter. While the Tsar remained technically head of the Church, he was no longer concerned for spiritual affairs. The "Third Rome" rapidly deteriorated under the impact of Peter's reforms and also under Catherine the Great's enlightenment. The religious sects, which were an outgrowth of a mixture of Christianity and paganism that had been rejected by the established Church, arose precisely at the time when the cultured Russian elite turned away from the Church. Russian monasticism, harshly rejected by the State, retired within its walls. Religious communities were subject to severe laws and their activities restricted. A growing minority of people found no solace in the established Church and turned to the sects.

It was also in this period of the Empire that a tragic estrangement began to develop between the ruling class and the people. The nobles and intellectuals considered the people victims of obscurantism. This was partly due to the breadth and variety of the liturgical practices which had developed in the Orthodox Church. Originally intended as teaching devices, the elaborate forms of religious expression

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[12]Frederick L. Schuman, Russia Since 1917 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 60.

expression became at times ends in themselves and did not always convey the unity of doctrine originally intended. However, the mystery of the Christian doctrines of the atonement and resurrection lay at the heart of these liturgical forms and consequently gave them deep significance to the peasants for whom life often had few other compensations.

The level of tolerance which the State showed to the Church varied from ruler to ruler, but by the twentieth century the Church, completely dependent on and patronized by the Tsarist government, had reached a low level of spiritual influence among the people. M. T. Florynsky, discussing the end of the Russian Empire, writes,

> the Church can hardly be reckoned among the constructive forces in Russian history. It developed an aggressive and intolerant attitude toward other religious denominations, especially toward the Roman Catholic Church, the reformed churches and the Jews. By creating innumerable vexations and feudal conflicts with other denominations, the Russian Church undoubtedly made its contribution to those forces which worked for the disintegration of the Empire.[13]

The concept of "Holy Russia" has been mentioned as an important cultural and moral development which began in the Kievan period. It continued to find expression down to the time of the Revolution, and was a useful tool of the Soviet government within their own purposes. The "Holy Russia" concept became rooted in the moral culture of the Russian peasants and while its interpretation varied from time to time among the Church hierarchy and the intelligentsia, the deep messianic and mystic sense of national mission remained deeply rooted in the

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[13]Boleslaw Szezesniak, (ed.), The Russian Revolution and Religion (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959) p. 6, citing M. T. Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire (New Haven: 1937), p. 20.

peasant tradition. This peasant tradition viewed the national mission more in inward spiritual terms than in outward acts of involvement with the larger world beyond. But the emphasis on salvation in the Russian Orthodox tradition did not take the individualistic direction that is common in the west. God met man primarily when he was participating in the community of persons and of faith. The identification of the head of State with the role of the divinely appointed protector of the people helped to establish this sense of corporate or national mission. Even when the head of State failed to exemplify the role of a divinely chosen leader, the people clung to this concept and found excuses for the lapse. Thus, when Ivan the Terrible temporarily abdicated the throne after a period of brutal acts toward his opponents, thousands of men and women flocked to the gates of the monastery where he had gone, and on their knees they implored Ivan to come back.[14]

For a time, during the period of the Muscovy rise to power, the spirit of a "Holy Russia" was projected largely into the political realm and the Tsar ruled by divine right. The Church, concerned over its own place in the kingdom of God on earth, was somewhat ambivalent over the divine role which the secular ruler assumed, but on the whole tended to find the rationale to support the State in its combination of the secular and sacred leadership into one office. By the end of the reign of Ivan IV (the Terrible), however, the brutal acts of the Tsar began to strain the concept of the ruler as embodying divine as well as human

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[14] Helene Iswolsky, Christ In Russia, The History, Tradition, and Life of the Russian Church (Milwaukee; The Bruce Publishing Company, 1960), p. 86.

authority. From Peter the Great onward the concept of "Holy Russia" became increasingly disassociated with the political role of the State and was given a more spiritual and apocalyptic context. The Church found this combination much safer and more profitable since it no longer had to answer for all of the actions of the State and yet could claim God's leadership in those political acts and proclamations which agreed with and accommodated to its own ideology. In bad times, with which Russia seemed to be most frequently visited, the Church emphasized that "freedom in Christ does not coincide with natural, political or social freedom. The process of renovation or moral resurrection takes place in the heart."[15]

While the idea of "Holy Russia" might be regarded as more of an ecclesiastical projection, the same idea in a secular vocabulary has been expressed in the concept of "Mother Russia." As one secular historian has put it,

> the concept of "Mother Russia," as a land meriting love and respect of its people quite apart from the administration or the prince who ruled over it, goes back to Kievan times. The loyalty to territory and to people or nation, proved to be more abiding than loyalty to State. Even in times of the nation's worst trials, when corrupt governments have lost all popular respect, loyalty to the land and to the nation has never wavered.[16]

Two important movements which gave further expression to the "Holy Russia" and "Mother Russia" concepts were Slavophilism and

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[15] Serge A. Zenkovsky, Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 49.

[16] Wren, The Course of Russian History, pp. 87-88.

Panslavism. Both of these movements grew out of the period of the Empire (1680 - 1917) and testified to the cultural depths of Russian Orthodox national feeling. Both of these movements emphasized the radical, cultural, linguistic, and religious unity of all Slavic peoples. Both identified Russia as the chosen nation, destined to fulfill some great mission. Slavophilism, basing its historical and philosophical ideas on the teaching of Russian Orthodoxy, emphasized personal and collective spiritual freedom as a unique Slavic heritage.[17]

Russian Panslavism was a by-product of the Slavophile movement, drawing on its ideology and sharing its representatives, but it developed in the middle of the nineteenth century a more political program aiming at the creation of a Slavic union under the direction of Russia.[18] Russian Panslavism rather presumptuously believed that the smaller Slavic nations would be prepared to voluntarily sacrifice their cultural identity and political independence in favor of a Russian-dominated union. However, prior to Stalin, Panslavism never played a decisive role in the determination of Russian foreign policy. It remained but a part of the Russian messianic character.

The Slavophiles were impressed by the ethical and social importance of Christianity but they were in a definite minority among the new intellectuals of nineteenth century Russia. Most of the intelligentsia of the latter half of the nineteenth century were inclined to

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[17]Iswolsky, Christ In Russia, pp. 126-127.

[18]Michael B. Petrovich. The Emergence of Russian Panslavism, 1856-1870 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), p. 78.

regard religion as a "medieval survival."[19]

The intellectual fervor of the revolutionary period in Russian history grew strong during the nineteenth century but the Church was tied closely and blindly to the imperial government and continued thus until the fall of tsardom. The last four tsars were devoted Orthodox believers and considered themselves protectors of the Church which they governed through the lay Overprocurator. Pobedonostsev served as the Overprocurator from 1880 until 1905. He played a decisive role in the appointment of bishops and exercised a supervisory control over the Holy Synod. Each diocese had a bishop and a "consistory" dominated by a secretary who was appointed by the Synod but nominated by the Overprocurator to whom he was responsible.

While it is an overstatement to say, as did one Russian historian, that "in tsarist Russia freedom of conscience did not exist,"[20] it is true that the Orthodox Faith was recognized as the State religion and at times, changing from the Orthodox Church to another religion was a punishable offense. The Orthodox Church was supported by the State financially. In 1900, for example, forty thousand Orthodox parish churches received ten million rubles from the State treasury.[21]

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[19]Sergei Germanovich Pushkarev, The Emergence of Modern Russia, 1801-1917 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 335.

[20]Nicholas Mikhailov, The Russian Story (New York: Sheridan House, 1945), p. 166.

[21]Pushkarev, The Emergence of Modern Russia, p. 333.

It is estimated that in 1900, seventy percent of the total population of Russia belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church.[22] However, the laity had little part in the life of the Church other than attending services and making pilgrimages to holy places such as the famous Kievan monastery of the caves. Higher church government was entirely in the hands of the monastic clergy and the priests were appointed by the bishops. Until 1905 the laity elected only a "church elder" who assisted the local priest in conducting parochial affairs. After 1905 a decree provided for the election of parochial councils of laity, but these were optional, with little power and became important only long after the October Revolution.

After the Revolution of 1905 the question of Church reform was raised. Many clergy and laity demanded the convening of a national Church Council (Sobor), the re-establishment of the Patriarchate and a limitation of the power of the secular government over the Church. In January, 1906, Tsar Nicholas II yielded to the request of the Holy Synod and in a single decree granted religious tolerance to all religions and appointed a pre-Sobor conference consisting of ten bishops and twenty professors. The conference met periodically and discussed the national Sobor but nothing occurred until March, 1917.

The Romanov Dynasty came to an end on March 2, 1917, and with it the Russian Empire. A provisional government was set up and the Procurator of the Holy Synod V. Luov set in motion the long laid plans for the general Council of the Church. Parishes and dioceses were given

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[22] _Ibid._, p. 335.

representative rights and elections were held. The Council met in August, 1917, in Moscow with four hundred elected delegates and 164 appointed delegates.[23] It was the first representative national Church Council in over two hundred years and was to be the last for at least twenty-five years. The Council voted to restore the Patriarchate on October 28th, the same day that the Bolsheviks occupied the Kremlin. The details of the Church's relations with the State during the revolutionary period will be discussed in a later chapter.

III CONCLUSION

In summary, the history of Church--State relations in Russia from the Kievan period to the Revolution of 1917 suggests several important characteristics of those relations which have had an influence on the subsequent history of Church--State relations. The first of these characteristics is the development of a kind of "religious nationalism" in the soul of the Russian peasant mass. This has been referred to as the concept of "Holy Russia" or "Mother Russia." In spite of times of adversity, persecution or disregard by religious or national leaders, the Russian people developed a strong loyalty to religion and to country and have usually accommodated to the existing Church and State.

Second, the Russian State created a brand of autocracy which was almost absolute, almost totalitarian in its dimensions. As one

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[23] Michael Bourdeaux, Opium of the People (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. 45.

historian has pointed out, the "single dominant element" in Russian history from the middle ages to the present time would be the "unlimited power of the ruler. The Russian Tsar was an autocrat in a measure unparalleled in European countries."[24]

Third, the Russian Church was both closely identified with the autocratic power of the State and always submissive to it. At no time was there a Church power independent of the State such as developed in Medieval Europe. Nor was there ever a lasting desire on the part of either the Church or the State for formal or legal separation.

Fourth, the Church, while developing ever closer and dependent ties with the Tsarist regime, tended to become, in direct proportion to those ties, more distant from both the peasant masses and later the intelligentsia. Church administration was developed on the same basis as secular affairs and a gulf developed between the bureaucratic Church hierarchy and the daily concerns of the people. The development of a highly complicated liturgy, an elaborate system of canon law and a mystical and other-worldly dogma filled the gap between Church leaders and the people.

Fifth, related to the religious nationalism of the Russian people was the recurring messianic theme or feeling which affected the leaders of both the Russian Church and the State and contributed to the expansionist and the isolationist policies of both. This was an early factor in Russian history but was perhaps most articulately expressed by

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[24]William Henry Chamberlin, "The Soviet Union Cannot Escape Russian History," The Soviet Crucible, Samuel Hendel, editor (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959), p. 14.

the Slavophiles of the nineteenth century who attacked the west as decadent and hailed Slavdom as strong and vigorous and endowed with a messianic destiny of redeeming the world.

These characteristics of Russian history played a significant role in the relations between the Church and the State between the years 1943 and 1967 even though both times and circumstances were significantly altered.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE STATE IN THE SOVIET UNION

It is the purpose of this thesis to determine the significant factors which have influenced the relations between the Church and the State in the Soviet Union in the period from 1943 to 1967, and to discover whether, in fact, the theoretical or ideological doctrines and goals of the Soviet State and the Russian Orthodox Church play a secondary and supportive role in the policy of each institution, or whether these ideologies are primary in determining the actual relations between these two institutions of Soviet society.

It hardly needs to be said that in the pursuit of this purpose it would be necessary to have a thorough understanding of the theory or doctrine of the State which serves as the ideological reference point for the current Soviet regime. Likewise, it is clear that Communist teachings about religion and its institutions must be known if one is to evaluate properly the role of ideology in its influence on State policy regarding the Russian Orthodox Church. Also, an understanding of the teaching of the Russian Church regarding the nature and role of the State would be essential for an accurate analysis of the role that ideology has played in determining the policy of the Russian Orthodox Church vis-a-vis the Soviet State.

This chapter will attempt to set out these background theoretical, or ideological considerations. The author will begin with the Communist

ideology regarding the State itself. The use which is made of Communist doctrine concerning the State tends to reveal the political goals, motivation, and strategy which have been and are yet being employed by the Soviet political leaders. Following this, the Communist doctrine regarding religion and the Church will be discussed. Finally, the author will examine the ideological heritage of the Russian Orthodox Church regarding the nature and function of the State and the Church.

As this paper has used the words "ideology," "doctrine," and "theory," as though they were interchangeable, an effort at definition is in order for clarity. For this purpose the definition of ideology offered by Zbigniew K. Brzezinski is helpful:

> It is essentially an action program suited for mass consumption, derived from certain doctrinal assumptions about the general nature of the dynamics of social reality, and combining some assertions about the inadequacies of the past and/or present with some explicit guides to action for improving the situation and some notions of the desired eventual state of affairs.[1]

Ideology, in this sense, is a continuing, dynamic element in social life which attempts to reconcile certain fixed doctrinal assumptions of the past with the observable, changing present. It should be said that it is of the very nature of a totalitarian state that ideology will play a much more important role than in a more pluralistic or genuinely democratic state.[2] The policies of the latter tend to be both more pragmatic and more reactive than in a state where the political

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[1]Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), pp. 4-5.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

power is permanently invested in one organized party, as is true in the Soviet Union. It is for this reason that many observers of the Soviet political scene have assumed that ideology has been the dominant and primary factor influencing the policy decisions of the State. However, while ideology has influenced the thinking and behavior of the leaders in Russia since 1917 more than it has tended to influence the thinking and behavior of western leaders, it has still remained an instrument of policy which in the author's judgment has been carefully manipulated by the leaders of the Soviet Union to assist in the implementation of their program at home and abroad. The determination of the degree of its influence is the problem yet to be solved.

The roots of Soviet ideology in all respects go back to certain "doctrinal assumptions" which can be found in the writings of three men; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir I. Ulyanov--V. I. Lenin. Lenin was the leader of the Bolshevik Movement, which overthrew the provisional government in Russia in 1917 and established the Communist regime which has remained in power since that time. But it was Marx and Engels, a pair of German theorists who, in the middle of the 19th century, laid the doctrinal groundwork upon which the Russian revolutionary and political leaders built.

At the time when Marx and Engels were thinking and writing about revolution and the social order, it was generally assumed by those concerned with social change that the State was "an external power set over its subjects, and not an agency which represented them,"[3] which it could

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[3]Robert N. Carew Hunt, Marxism Past and Present (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 104.

hardly be said to do in any European country at that time. Marx developed a basically hostile and negative attitude toward the State which he regarded as a development of the bourgeois or capitalist class which used it as an instrument for exploiting the workers or proletariat. As he wrote in the *German Ideology*, "it [the State] is nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopts, both for internal and external purposes for the guarantee of its property and interest."[4] The fullest expression of the theory of the State, however, is found in Engel's essays, "Anti Dühring" (1878) and "The Origins of the Family, Private Property and State" (1884).[5] Both works can be considered a collaboration of the two men and therefore express the views of Marx as well as Engels.

In the "Origins of the Family," the State is referred to as having a brief existence as a stage in "primitive Communism," but it is not understood as a natural institution. It "has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it that had no conception of the state and state power."[6] Marx and Engels understood the State to be a product of society which arose at a particular stage in the development of society when class antagonisms forced one class to seize power and create order by dominating the other classes. As a product of class antagonism, they argued, the State will logically

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works (Vol. II, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1949).

[6]Ibid., p. 292.

disappear when there are no more classes. This point is spelled out in one of the most well-known passages of Marxian thought:

> *The proletariat seizes political power, and turns the means of production in the first instance into state property.*
>
> But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the State as State. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the State, that is, of an organization of the particular class, which was pro tempore the exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and therefore, especially, for the purpose of forceably keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, surfdom, wage-labor). The State was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only insofar as it was the State of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: in ancient times, the State of slave-owning citizens; in the middle ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule, in the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the State really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society--the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society--this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then withers away of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of the process of production. The state is not "abolished," *it withers away.*[7]

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[7]Frederick Engels, Anti Dühring (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p. 386-387.

Contained in this lengthy passage are the key ideas which have been repeated, interpreted, and reinterpreted by the dominant leaders of the Soviet Union, Lenin, Stalin, and more recently Khrushchev. The State is the product of class antagonism and the tool of the exploiting class. In "The State and Revolution," Lenin wrote that "the State is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The State arises when, where, and to the extent that class antagonisms cannot be objectively reconciled."[8] Stalin declared "the State arose because society split into antagonistic classes. It arose in order to keep in restraint the exploited majority in the interests of the exploiting minority."[9] And again: ". . . the State is primarily a weapon of one class against other classes, and it is self-evident that if there are no classes there cannot be a State."[10]

The Soviet leaders, like Marx and Engels, saw the State as a necessary evil in the natural evolution of society. Acording to Marx, when the proletariat inherits this evil as a result of its revolution and successful overthrow of the bourgeois ruling class, it must "'lop off' the worst sides . . . at once as much as possible until such time as a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to throw the

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[8]V. I. Lenin, Selected Works (Vol. VII, New York: International Publishers, 1943), p. 8.

[9]Joseph Stalin, Leninism (London: Lawrence and Wishart, LTD., 1940), p. 660.

[10]J. V. Stalin, "Report to the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I., Nov. 22 - Dec. 16, 1926," Works (Vol. IX, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), p. 134.

entire lumber of the State on the scrapheap."[11] Here once again the evil nature of the State is emphasized along with the declaration of its eventual dissolution. But included is the reservation that the State cannot immediately be dispensed with once the proletariat come to power. The proletariat must eliminate its "worst sides," presumably the oppression of the majority by the minority, but it will require the raising of a "new generation," free of the old bourgeois traditions, to allow the final demise of the State to take place.

This interim period following the proletarian revolution and prior to the final "withering away" of the State, was referred to as the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Marx theorized that the revolution would "break up" the machinery of the bourgeois State and transfer it to the proletariat where it would be "democratized" or express the will of the workers and people. The democratized State of the proletariat would eventually wither away as the need for a ruling class became unnecessary and all bourgeois elements in society were abolished.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, in the eyes of Marx and Engels, then, had the double task of eliminating all bourgeois elements through converting property from private to public ownership and of insuring against a bourgeois counter-revolution. It was assumed that once this was accomplished the various political organizations of bourgeois society; a legislature, an executive, a judiciary, a State maintained army, etc., would become unnecessary and would be discarded.[12]

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[11]Marx, Selected Works (Vol. I), p. 440.

[12]Henry B. Mayo, Introduction to Marxist Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 165-166.

Neither Marx nor Engels tried to spell out the process of this change nor the amount of time it would take, except for the single reference to a "new generation" free of the bourgeois influence and tradition.

It should be understood that the theories of the State developed by Marx and Engels arose in the context of a well-developed philosophy of historical or "dialectical" materialism which viewed man and his social development as merely a part of the inevitable process which was governed by certain inexorable laws, basically economic which governed man's social development. Thus man's social and political order and development were seen as determined by objective economic forces. The will of man could not change the course of these forces, it could only enter in and assist them as man became aware of and adopted the "class consciousness," which was necessary to participate fully in the natural process. In this way, Marx reinforced a closed, absolute system in which the future development of man's social order could be known in general outline and its ultimate end fixed with certainty. At the same time he provided for and indeed called for, with great fervor, the exercise of the individual will of man to participate in the inevitable class antagonisms of society. For the proletariat, to whom the *Communist Manifesto*, was specifically directed, this meant revolutionary activity against the bourgeois class and its oppressive state superstructure.[13]

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[13]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, (ed.) Samuel H. Beer (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955).

Lenin, building on Marx and Engels, adopted their basic philosophy, including their theory regarding the State, and added his own interpretations, while claiming for these interpretations complete consistency with the writings of his mentors. Lenin wrote that following the Revolution the powers of the State must continue to be exercised in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat over "a whole epoch."[14] While this was merely an expansion of the Marxian teaching of the "interim" period of State control called by Marx "the dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin went much further in his *Can The Bolsheviks Retain State Power* (1917), to suggest that the Marxian objections to the State as a necessary evil but temporary stage in social development, no longer applied after the proletarian takeover.

> The State is an organ or machine for the exercise of force by one class against another. As long as it is a machine for the exercise of force by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the only slogan for the proletariat must be to *smash* that State. But when the State becomes proletarian, when it becomes a machine for the exercise of force by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, then we shall be fully and unreservedly in favor of a strong state power and centralism.[15]

However, the idealism involved in the Marxian doctrine of proletarian rule continued to mold Lenin's theory. No official was to receive more than "workers' wages" and all were to be subject to recall. The need for management and organization were to be temporary. In time, wrote Lenin, the morals of the people will improve so that even individual "excesses will inevitably begin to 'wither away.' We do not know

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[14]Hunt, Marxism, p. 14.

[15]Lenin, Selected Works (Vol. VI), pp. 276-277.

how quickly and in what succession, but we know that they will wither away. With their withering away, the State will also *wither away*."[16]

The circumstances of history, however, forced Lenin to alter his understanding of the role of the State. When the authors of the Revolution found themselves confronted with famine, civil war, and foreign intervention, they were forced to shelve any pursuit of theory which called for the destruction of the organization of the bourgeois State and the democratization of proletarian rule, in favor of a strong central government with power to restore and maintain some semblance of order. Thus the greater part of the bourgeois State bureaucracy had to be maintained using Tsarist officials who alone were competent to run it.

In this period, immediately following the Revolution, it became apparent to Lenin that everything must be done in order to save the Revolution and the only reliable tool he had was the Bolshevik Party which he led. Thus it was that the Party and the State became identified and have, for all practical purposes, remained so from that time on. At the Tenth Party Congress in 1921, Lenin declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat, which was to be understood as the heart of Marx's teaching, was the only genuine form of democracy, though it must be exercised through the Party.[17] Stalin was later to reinforce the identity of the Party as the vanguard of the proletarian State in "The Problems of Leninism" (1926):

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[16] V. I. Lenin, Marx Engels Marxism (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1951), p. 404.

[17] Hunt, Marxism, p. 117.

> The Party is the main guiding force in the system of the dictatorship of the Proletariat . . . . The highest expression of the leading role of the Party, here, in the Soviet Union, in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for example, is the fact that not a single important political or organizational question is decided by our Soviet and other mass organizations without guiding directions from the party. In this sense, it could be said that the dictatorship of the proletariat is in essence the "dictatorship" of its vanguard, the "dictatorship" of its Party, as the main guiding force of the proletariat.[18]

Stalin assigned to the Party the power and driving function that Lenin had called for only for the work of accomplishing the Revolution. All the organizational rules that Lenin had advanced for the success of the Revolution, Stalin now applied to the administration of the State and the conduct of political life. The model of the disciplined Party became of decisive importance in shaping the character of the Soviet regime.

It was also left to Stalin to deal with the growing inconsistency between the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the temporary or provisional nature of the proletarian State, and the increasing centralization of its organization and the power it assumed. In his report to the Sixteenth Congress in 1930, Stalin officially modified the Marxian "withering away" doctrine in the name of Marxist Dialectics:

> We stand for the withering away of the state. At the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the mightiest and strongest state power that has ever existed. The highest development of state power with the object of preparing the conditions for the withering away of state power--such is the Marxist formula. Is this "contradictory?" Yes, it is "contradictory."

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[18]Stalin, Leninism, pp. 134-135.

> But this contradiction is bound up with life, and it fully reflects Marx's dialectics.[19]

Subsequent to this tenet which firmly established the Soviet ideology along the lines of support for a continuing strong central State until "conditions" ripen for its "dying out," several additional ideological justifications have arisen from time to time to further support the "contradiction" to which Stalin referred.

In 1924, Stalin propounded the idea of "socialism in one country" and sharpened a quarrel between his own faction and a faction led by Leon Trotsky which insisted on the Marxian doctrine of "continuous international revolution." Again the circumstances of the times forced an alteration in the interpretation of ideology. Post-revolutionary Russia had a Marxist regime trying to use its power to create the economic base which was supposed to be mature before such a Marxist regime could exist. Facing immense difficulties at home and needing a respite from foreign interference or hostility, Stalin insisted that Marxist-Leninist doctrine allowed for a socialist State to develop in one country at a time. In order to maintain his power and to claim ideological correctness, Stalin was forced to expel Trotsky's Left opposition from the party in 1929.[20]

In 1934 Stalin completely upset the Marxian emphasis on the objective role of historical materialism in determining the rise of a Communist society, by stating a reinterpretation of priorities: "There

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[19] J. V. Stalin, Works (Vol. XII, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), p. 381.

[20] Ibid., pp. 152-163.

can be no justification for references to so-called objective conditions . . . . The part played by so-called objective conditions has been reduced to a minimum; whereas the part played by our organizations and their leaders has become decisive, exceptional."[21] Stalin was attempting here to justify the totalitarian methods of the Party leaders in their effort to achieve power, political stability and economic growth in a society which was theoretically experiencing the inevitable and uncontrollable consequences of "objective" historical materialism. "Revolution from above" was a phrase used to characterize this particular rationalization.

Stalin also condemned at this time the expectations of the "withering away" of the State in the forseeable future as "unhealthy sentiments."[22] Still later, in 1950, Stalin wrote of the state:

> The superstructure is a product of the base , . . . but no sooner does it arise than it becomes an exceedingly active force . . . . Now in the period of the gradual transition from socialism to communism, there comes into view in full power and energy the role of the Soviet State as the chief instrument for the building up of communism.[23]

Instead of the temporary political "superstructure arising out of and being guided by the "base" of production forces Stalin was arguing that once the "superstructure" came into being it assumed control of the direction of the Revolution and one could no longer appeal to Marxian theory to question any policy which the political regime---"the

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[21] Ibid., p. 529.

[22] Ibid., p. 518.

[23] J. V. Stalin, Marxism and Linguistics (New York: International Publishers, 1951), pp. 27-28.

superstructure"--had instigated.

Three additional lines of defense have become part of the standard Soviet political ideology in regard to the continuing power and control of the Party and State. All of these were expressed in some form in Stalin's Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B) in 1939. Stalin explained first that the State was a necessary institution because of "capitalist encirclement." But beyond this, he also declared that the State would continue to exist even into the final stage of Communism as long as the "capitalist encirclement" remained. "Will our State remain in the period of Communism also? Yes, it will, unless the capitalist encirclement is liquidated, and unless the danger of foreign military attack has disappeared."[24] In this statement Stalin considerably eased the pressure on his successors for further justification of the State structure.

The second reason Stalin gave for the State's continuance was the evolution of the function of revolution. From the overthrow of the Bourgeoise the function of revolution evolved into the function of protection against counter-revolution and the remaining elements of bourgeois culture.

> The function of military suppression inside the country [for the purpose of] the elimination of the capitalist elements in town and country . . . ceased, died away; for the exploitation had been abolished, there were no more exploiters left, and so there was no one to suppress. In place of this function of suppression the State acquired the function of protecting Socialist property from thieves and pilferers of the people's property.[25]

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[24]Stalin, Leninism, p. 662.

[25]Ibid.

In 1934, the Second Five-Year Plan was inaugurated by the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. In his report to the Seventeenth Congress, Stalin stated that "one of the fundamental tasks in connection with the fulfillment of the second five-year plan was to over-come the survivals of capitalism in economic life and in the minds of the people."[26]

Apparently it was recognized at the end of the Second Five-Year Plan that not all the elements of bourgeois culture had been stamped out, for the third reason given for the continuance of the State in 1939 was to perform the function of "economic organization and cultural education." This, wrote Stalin, is "the main task of our State inside the country."[27]

These three interpretations of Stalin along with the basic doctrines of Marx, Engels, and Lenin have formed the basic theory for the development of ideology regarding the State by Stalin and his successors in the post-war period from 1943 to 1967.

It is from these same writers and theorists that Soviet theory and ideology regarding religion and the Church has come. Once again it is to Marx and Engels that one must turn for the basic theory regarding religion which has served as the philosophical background and standard of orthodoxy for Soviet ideology. It is perhaps an irony of history that Karl Marx (1818-1883) was born a Jew, and his family joined the Lutheran Church in Germany while he was still a boy. However, Marx became a militant atheist and an ardent materialist while he

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[26]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 517.

[27]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 662.

was a student at the University of Berlin.[28] He shared with Friedrich Engels a common hostility toward religion and the Church.

This hostility was not primarily the product of personal prejudice or malice, however, but rather the fruit of the conviction that religion and its organizational forms were the products of the economic relations among social classes and that these religious ideas and forms served to retard the progress of society toward the inevitable but nevertheless much to be desired final stage of classless social harmony. In an expression of complete confidence in their philosophical assumptions of historical materialism and the fixed stages of economic development, Engels wrote,

> If our juridical, philosophical, and religious ideas are the more or less remote offshoots of the economical [sic] relations prevailing in a given society, such ideas cannot, in the long run, withstand the effects of a complete change in these relations. And unless we believe in supernatural revelation, we must admit that no religious tenets will ever suffice to prop up a tottering society.[29]

Needless to say, neither Marx nor Engels believed in "supernatural revelation." In fact, in several of their writings[30] Marx and Engels pointed out that the roots of religion in primitive societies arose from man's helplessness in the struggle with the forces of nature. Later, under the antagonisms of class society, the social oppression of the working masses and their apparent helplessness in the struggle

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[28]Mayo, Introduction, pp. 3-7.

[29]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, On Religion (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957), pp. 310-311.

[30]Ibid., "Capital," pp. 134-140, "Anti Dühring," pp. 144-150. "Thesis on Feuerbach," pp. 64-72.

against their exploiters gave birth to and fostered religion, the belief in a better life hereafter, and the alleged reward for suffering on earth. In a section of a long and systematic attack on the social philosophy of a certain Herr Dühring, Engels wrote,

> all religion . . . is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces. In the beginning of history it was the forces of nature that were at first so reflected . . . later, social forces began to be active.[31]

Marx and Engels believed that the rise of science and the method of scientific or inductive inquiry signified the approach of the history of class exploitation as men began to gain insight into and control over nature. They viewed religion, and especially the Church, as the great inhibitor to the progress of science. However, in his essay "On the History of Early Christianity,"[32] Engels attempted to show that Christianity arose as the outlook of utterly despairing people after the numerous revolts of slaves, indigent peoples and enslaved nationalities against the yoke of the Roman Empire had been subdued.

"The early history of Christianity has many characteristic points of contact with the present labor movement," wrote Engels. "Both Christianity and the worker's socialism preach forthcoming salvation from bondage and misery."[33] But Engels saw the key difference between Christianity and Socialism in the other-worldliness of Christianity.

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[31]Engels, Anti-Dühring, p. 435.

[32]Marx, On Religion, pp. 313-344.

[33]Ibid., p. 313.

However, according to Engels, the early roots of Christianity in the working and oppressed classes were soon cut off and Christianity became a tool of the ruling class.[34]

While Engels tended to be more philosophical about the role of religion, Marx was more existential in his reaction to religion. Speaking of the "blue laws," in England which closed all the shops and beer houses on Sunday, Marx wrote,

> In the 18th Century the French aristocracy said: For us, Voltaire; for the people, the mass and the tithes. In the 19th Century the English aristocracy says: For us, pious phrases; for the people, Christian practice. The classical saint of Christianity mortified *his* body for the salvation of the souls of the masses; the modern, educated saint mortified *the bodies of the masses* for the salvation of his own soul.[35]

This bit of sarcasm revealed Marx's personal bitterness toward what he observed of the religious hypocrisy of his day. But like Engels, his commitment to historical materialism as expressed in the development of economic relations formed the basis for his attitude toward religion and the Church. "The great international center of feudalism was the Roman Catholic Church," wrote Marx.

> It united the whole of feudalized western Europe into one grand political system . . . . It surrounded feudal institutions with the halo of divine consecration. It had organized its own hierarchy on the feudal model, and lastly it was itself by far the most powerful feudal lord . . . . Before profane feudalism could be successfully attacked in each country and in detail, this, its sacred central organization had to be destroyed.[36]

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[34]Marx, Selected Works (Vol. II), pp. 57-59.

[35]Ibid., p. 127.

[36]Ibid., p. 95.

Thus Marx directly linked the Church with the feudal stage of economic relations and demanded that both had to be destroyed for progress to take place.

Marx is famous, of course, for his often quoted phrase written in 1844, "Religion is the opiate of the People." This theme is expounded in a number of the writings of Marx and Engels.[37] Atheism, they believed, was typical of the progressive classes, but religion was always used by the dominant class to control the classes they were oppressing. In "The Holy Family or A Critique of Critical Criticism," they argued that the English and French proletariat atheists were the ideologists of the rising bourgeoisie. But no sooner had the bourgeoisie achieved domination and the class antagonisms between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie become acute, than the bourgeoisie renounced its former free-thinking and began to make use of religion as an opiate for the popular masses.[38] Marx had made his own position as an atheist quite clear in the foreward of his doctoral Thesis. Quoting Prometheus, "In sooth, all gods I hate," from *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus, Marx agreed that, "there must be no god on a level with" the consciousness of man which is "the supreme divinity."[39]

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[37]Marx, On Religion, "German Ideology," pp. 73-80, "The Communism of Rheinischer Beobachter," pp. 81-86,"The Manifesto of the Communist Party," pp. 87-88, "The Holy Family or a Critique of Critical Criticism," pp. 59-68.

[38]Marx, On Religion, pp. 59-68.

[39]Ibid., p. 15.

In their efforts to describe how religion and its organizations should be dealt with by the Communist, they made several points which proved useful to their ideological successors in the Soviet Union. In "the Leading Article of No. 179 of Kolnische Zeitung,"[40] Marx argued that religion and the State had to be completely separate because if religion, even religion in general, became related to the State, the rights of conscience would be violated. It was their fear that it would be to religion and its organizations and not to the rational State that allegiance would be given. As Marx put it,

> The Byzantine State was the properly religious state, for there dogmas were matters of state but the Byzantine state was worst of all states. The states of the *ancien regime* were the most Christian states, nonetheless they were states of "the will of court."[41]

Here, the principle of separation of Church and State is set out, but not in terms of a typically western understanding. Basic to an American understanding of the separation of Church and State is the preservation of freedom of conscience. When Marx wrote of freedom of conscience, however, he had his materialistic presuppositions in the background. "The bourgeois 'freedom of conscience,'" wrote Marx, "is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience, and that for its part [the workers party] it endeavors rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion."[42]

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[40] Ibid., p. 37 ff.

[41] Ibid., p. 37.

[42] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Critique of the Gotha Programme (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p. 35.

For all of their dislike of religion and the Church, however, Marx and Engels took a cautious attitude toward forcing its demise. They denied the use of coercive methods against it as these simply produced martyrs. ". . . Persecution is the best means of promoting undesirable convictions!" wrote Engels. "This much is sure: the only service that can be rendered to God today is to declare atheism a compulsory article of faith and to outdo Bismark's Kerchenkulturkampf laws by prohibiting religion generally."[43]

Religion cannot be eliminated, they further argued, until the social and political conditions which foster it are eliminated--that is, class domination of proletariat by bourgeoisie. Then, when the revolution has overthrown the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must free itself of religious views and superstition by education.

A final point concerning the religious doctrine of Marx and Engels concerns morality. Morality for them was the rationalization of the interests of the ruling class in any given historical period. Since there was historic progression in class antagonism and resolution, so there was progression in morals. And there was at least a suggestion that the final stage of social development will produce an ideal morality, though neither Marx or Engels was willing to offer any predicted patterns.

> . . . men consciously or unconsciously, derive their ethical ideals in the last resort from the practical relation on which their class position is based--from the economic relations in which they carry on production and exchange . . . .

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[43]Marx, On Religion, p. 142.

> We therefore reject every attempt to impose on us any moral dogma whatsoever as an eternal, ultimate and forever immutable ethical law on the pretext that the moral world, too, has its permanent principles which stand above history and the differences between nations. We maintain on the contrary that all moral theories have been hitherto the product, in the last analysis, of the economic conditions of society obtaining at that time. And as society has hitherto moved in class antagonisms, morality has always been class morality; it has either justified the domination of the interests of the ruling class, or, ever since the oppressed class became powerful enough, it has represented its indignation against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed. That in this process there has on the whole been progress in morality, as in all other branches of human knowledge, no one will doubt. But we have not yet passed beyond class morality.[44]

As the chief spokesman of Marxist thought to the "Social democrats" of prerevolutionary Russia, V.I. Lenin echoed the Marxian philosophy with fervor and added his own practical advice. In an essay on "The Attitude of the Workers' Party Toward Religion,"[45] Lenin wrote:

> Social-Democracy bases its whole world outlook on scientific Socialism, i.e., Marxism. The philosophical basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectical materialism, . . . a materialism which is absolutely atheistic and resolutely hostile to all religion.[46]

And again:

> Religion is the opium of the people--this dictum of Marx's is the cornerstone of the whole Marxist view on religion. Marxism has always regarded all modern religions and churches and all religious organizations as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to drug the working class.[47]

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[44]Engels, Anti Dühring, pp. 130-132.

[45]Lenin, Marx, pp. 273-286.

[46]Ibid., p. 273.

[47]Ibid., p. 274.

However, while repeatedly stressing the philosophical hostility of Marxism to all religion, Lenin pointed out that Marxism must go far beyond simply preaching or arguing against religion from an atheistic point of view. "We must know how to combat religion," wrote Lenin,

> and in order to do so we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses *materialistically*. The fight must be linked up with the concrete practical work of the class movement, which aims at eliminating the social roots of religion.[48]

At this point, Lenin's antireligious bias became distinctively Marxian as he launched into the class basis of religion which was itself a development of the economic relations among men.

> The deepest root of religion today is the socially oppressed condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in the face of the blind forces of capitalism.[49]

Because religion is inexplicably linked to the inevitable class conditions of society, Lenin argued that no amount of atheistic education could eradicate religion from the minds of the masses, regardless of its logic or effectiveness. Was Lenin, therefore, against atheistic education? Not in the least. His point was simply that, "Social Democracy's atheistic propaganda must be subordinated to its basic task--the development of the class struggle of the exploited masses against the exploiters."[50]

This emphasis on priorities is important to an understanding of both Lenin's attitude to religion and of the relations of the Soviet

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[48] Ibid., p. 277. [49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., p. 278.

Party-State to the Church in the years following the October Revolution. If the educational campaign to eradicate religion was secondary to the task of completing the Revolution, then the tactics of the revolutionary Party-State toward religion and its organizations could vary considerably as the pressure to exterminate religion was contingent upon the amount of time and effort needed to bring the class struggle to a successful conclusion. Indeed, as Lenin indicated, one could not expect to be very successful in an antireligious campaign until the economic and political conditions were right to make such a campaign fruitful.

So it was that while Lenin fully endorsed Marx's dictum about religion being the opium of the people, he called for an elastic and opportunistic attitude toward the Church and religious believers. For one example of this "tactical dialectic," Lenin raised the question of whether a priest could become a member of the Social-Democratic Party. After indicating in a side comment that the possibility was almost out of the question due to the "historical conditions . . . in Russia," he answered the question with a "yea-nay."

> We must not declare once and for all that priests cannot be members of the Social-Democratic Party; but neither must we once and for all affirm the contrary rule. If a priest comes to us to take part in our common political work and conscientiously performs party duties, and does not come out against the program of the party, he may be allowed to join the ranks of the Social-Democrats; . . . But of course, such a case . . . in Russia . . . is altogether improbable.[51]

In another example he suggested that during a strike taking place in an area where religious sentiment was very strong, the party workers

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[51] <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 280-281.

should not preach atheism.

> It is the duty of a Marxist to place the success of the strike movement above everything else, to vigorously resist the division of the workers in this struggle into atheists and Christians, . . . Atheistic propaganda under such circumstances may be both unnecessary and harmful, . . . from consideration for the real progress of the class struggle, which in the conditions of modern capitalist society is a hundred times better calculated to convert Christian workers to Social-Democracy and to atheism than bold atheistic preaching.[52]

Lenin also argued for recruiting religious believers as members of the Party ". . . in order to educate them in the spirit of our program . . . ."[53] But it must be remembered that these words were written several years before the October Revolution when the Party was not yet in power and indeed was struggling hard for survival against the more moderate democratic groups and the Tsarist regime.

At that time Lenin endorsed the principle of separation of Church and State on the basis that the "state should declare religion a private matter." Since his Party was not yet in power he could speak at that time of a double standard, i.e., the State should regard religion as a private matter and not attempt to violate a person's conscience, but the Party, which was committed to historical materialism could not regard "the fight against the opium of the people, the fight against religious superstition, etc., as a 'private matter'."[54]

Later when the Soviet State became the handmaid of the Communist Party, this bit of theory became useful ideology for an opportunistic

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[52]Ibid., p. 279. [53]Ibid., p. 282.

[54]Ibid.

and pragmatic political policy regarding the Church.

Much of the ideology of the Russian Orthodox Church regarding the State, its role in society and its relation to the ecclesiastical authority, has been discussed in the chapter on the history of the development of Church--State relations in Russia. The core of that ideology is found in the concept of "Moscow the Third Rome," which was fully articulated during the reign of Bazil III (1505 - 1549) in the Muscovy period of Russian history. This concept was essentially an expression of theocracy as a political concept of the Church and of Russian messianism as a religio-cultural concept of the people. Its ideological roots go back into Biblical history to the Hebrew understanding and expression of religious nationalism in a theocratic State.

Biblically oriented Christians and Jews have normally believed that the whole created world has come from and belongs to God. They have never separated life into two separate categories with one belonging to God and one belonging to Man. At the same time they accepted the demonic explanation of evil and attributed any social or political development which was not consistent with the Biblical teaching of moral principles, to the rebellious nature of Man as a result of this evil principle. But early Christian theologians argued that the spiritual aspect of life was fundamental and unalterable and must finally rule over all that changes.

The supremacy of the early Church of Rome and later of Byzantium arose when the Church assumed all of the gifts of grace; that is, it claimed the power to know the divine will and to control the means of dispensing divine power and blessing. Without this power, it was

believed men could not be delivered from eternal punishment nor could they achieve eternal reward. The political efforts of men could contribute toward achievement of the divine intention only if they were blessed by the Church and were consistent with the Church's effort to gather all men into one true faith-community. In the West, a State--Church developed with such power over the political processes and authority that a contest for supremacy developed between the Church and the State which yielded a doctrine of "the two swords"--the Church and the State--ruling side-by-side under divine approval.

No such concept of the separation of the ecclesiastical and political power ever developed in Russia prior to the Revolution even though in the time of Peter the Great such a separation did actually come into existence. The Russian Church drew its theory and practice from the Byzantine or Eastern Church and was largely isolated from the West until the time of Peter. From Byzantium came the concept of *una sanctus* and nowhere in the Christian world had this concept been more deeply ingrained in the culture of the people than in Russia.

Within this concept of "Holy Unity" the Church and the State were understood to be "called into being" by God and to operate together to express the unity of God's will. The former was to serve as a channel for God's blessing and an instrument for propagating the truth about life's meaning. The latter was to serve as an instrument for maintaining civil order and to protect the rights of the Church, if it did not directly assist it to perform its sacred tasks.

When Byzantium fell to the Turks in 1453, the Russian Church, which was a child of the Byzantium Patriarchate, conferred on the

Russian State the prerogatives of carrying on the true faith for all mankind, within the theocratic political framework of the Tsar. The Russian Muscovite State had indeed risen to power with the theocratic concept as its base. Now the universal mission of the Church was assigned to the Russian State, a mission inherited from Byzantium.

It was at this point that the theory of Moscow as the "Third Rome" became prominent and was accepted in spirit by the State, the Church and the people. The doctrine of Moscow as the "Third Rome" inspired a messianic consciousness which has strongly influenced the Church--State relations in Russia. As Berdyaev has said, "The search for true, ideal kingship was characteristic of the Russian people throughout its whole history. Profession of the true, the Orthodox Faith, was the test of belonging to the Russian kingdom."[55]

Again, the words of Philotheus, the monk of Pskov, directed to Bazil III are instructive:

> . . . of the third Rome . . . of all kingdoms in the world, it is in thy royal domain that the holy Apostolic Church shines more brightly than the sun. And let thy Majesty take note, O religious and gracious Tsar, that all kingdoms of the Orthodox Christian Faith are merged into thy kingdom. Thou alone, in all that is under heaven, art a Christian Tsar. And take note, O religious and gracious Tsar, that all Christian kingdoms are merged into thine alone, that two Romes have fallen, but the third stands, and there will be no fourth. Thy Christian kingdom shall not fall to the lot of another.[56]

Behind this bold declaration of the messianic role of the political autocrat lay the theory of the State as part of God's temporal

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[55]Nicolas Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism (London: Geoffrey Bles Ltd., 1955), p. 10.

[56]Ibid.

order instituted to carry out theexpansion of the kingdom of God on earth as interpreted through the Orthodox Church.

It must also be understood, however, that this apparent equation of the purpose of the State with the mission of the Church was made at a time when the fulfillment of such an ideal seemed quite likely and plausible. In the event that the State might depart from this purpose, which later proved to be the case, the theology of Orthodoxy always had the doctrine of evil as an explanation. This proved necessary and useful early in the Soviet period, when the State separated itself and set itself in opposition to the Church and its mission.

However, even when the State and the Church were not working harmoniously together and the "normal" relations became strained or even hostile, the church did not think in terms of separation of purpose. Indeed it could not do so and remain true to its understanding of the role of both institutions in human society. Consequently, when Peter the Great subjugated the Church to the position of an ecclesiastical department of state, refused to allow the election of a Patriarch following Adrian's death in 1700, and instead established a Synod with a state-approved procurator to carry out ecclesiastical administrative functions, the Church continued to "crown and anoint the Tsars as in the days of Ivan and Alexis."[57]

The Tsardom did not live up to the realization of the Third Rome. But the messianic ideal of the people and the Church remained; that of the former tended more and more to transform itself into

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[57]Helene Iswolsky, Christ In Russia (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1960), p. 114.

revolutionary directions while the latter became more apocalyptic in emphasis.[58] The State was still held as the authority instituted by God to assist the divine mission, even though it might temporarily be unaware of this purpose or apparently predisposed against it. The Church's patient forebearance was guided by its adherence to the Biblical instruction, "man meant it for evil but God meant it for Good."[59]

From the mother church in Byzantium, Russian Orthodoxy inherited the habit of using the liturgy to express, not only an exalted form of worship, but also the dogma. It was a medium to illustrate theology and catechism. Hence it was not difficult for the Church to appear to retire from the sphere of public debate while it actually continued to exercise its influence through the celebration of the rich and mystical liturgy. The liturgy at its heart, expressed the central doctrine of the rule of God over all of life. If the Church did not endorse the State, it was thereby, without further protestation, declaring the State outside the economy of God; a thing to patiently endure until in God's own time it would be replaced by a political regime which the Church could bless and the faithful follow.

In Summary it can be said that the communist ideology regarding the State saw the State as a necessary evil stage in society's political development growing out of the inevitable class antagonism of a world governed by iron laws of dialectical materialism. However, as a stage, the State was transitory and would ultimately "wither away" when

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[58]Berdyaev, The Origin, p. 144.

[59]Genesis 50:20.

the working class achieved political supremacy and ushered in the new age of communism with its classless, self-governing society. Since no specific plans for working out the details of this self-governing communist society were given by Marx or Engels, the Soviet leaders were able to expand this interim period of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and postpone the "withering away" of the State indefinitely and even argue for the strengthening of State centralism while maintaining the inerrancy of the Marxian dogma of a future stateless society.

With regard to religion, the Marxian dogmas of materialism and determinism rejected all other religious faiths and their organizations as the devices of man's need to explain the unknown and to maintain and justify a society of economically and politically unequal classes. Marxian dogma saw a direct link between the oppressor class and the religious establishment of any age. Thus the overthrow of the oppressing class must be accompanied, inevitably, by an overthrow of the religious establishment. This could then be followed by a thorough atheistic educational campaign to eradicate the mental and emotional remnants of bourgeois religion from the lives of the people.

On the other hand the dogmas of the Church viewed both the Church and the State as temporal organizations under a single divine economy which had ordained both entities for specific functions in the world of men. The function of the Church was to convey the gifts of God to the world of men. These included the truth about the eternal nature of life, which allowed for both a place of reward and a place of punishment, and the means to attain the former of these two alternative locations. The means called for adherence to a prescribed belief and to a degree

conformity to a prescribed set of values, including moral and ethical standards. The Russian Church translated much of this dogma and moral theology into forms of ritual and liturgy which came, therefore, to play a central role in the life of the faithful.

The State in the eyes of the Church was also called by God to function as the protector of the faithful and the ordering authority in society which, ideally, accepted the basic moral and ethical standards of the Church as its frame of reference. These latter standards included the imperative to confront all men with the message of God's truth. This placed upon the State the messianic-like assignment of bringing all men into the household of faith. While at its best this meant the Christian Church Universal, it not infrequently came to mean the Russian Orthodox Church exclusively, under the strong influence of Russian nationalism. It was possible, however, for the State to err and reject its divine calling. It was never made clear how the faithful were to respond to the State if it were to reject its divine calling. In fact as was noted in chapter one, the Church split in the Seventeenth century partly over this question and the subjugation of the Church by Peter the Great deepened the ideological split. The Schismatics, termed "Old Believers," withdrew from active participation in state affairs and many rejected the Tsar as the "Anti-Christ." The hierarchy of the Church, however, required continued obedience to the State in spite of its repressive measures, and a doctrine of patience and passive submission became the rule.

As Mayo has written:

The Russian Church deriving its faith from Byzantium, has always had an otherworldly . . . mystical outlook. It has been very little given to social services and has taken more seriously the view that all authority is of God. If it has no policy on political or social matters, the Russian Orthodox Church is easily accommodated to a harmonious modus vivendi with whatever type state exists.[60]

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[60]Mayo, Introduction, p. 261.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLICY OF THE SOVIET STATE VIS-A-VIS THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH FROM 1917 TO 1943

One cannot arrive at a clear interpretation of the factors which determine the relations between the Church and the State in the Soviet Union in the last twenty-five years (1943-1967) without a knowledge of the actual policy which these two institutions carried out in relation to each other in the first twenty-five years of the Soviet State's existence. This chapter, therefore, will examine the policy of the Soviet State vis-a-vis the Church from the time of the October Revolution until the summoning of the ecclesiastical leaders to the Kremlin by Premier Stalin in September, 1943. In dealing with Soviet State policy one encounters the immediate problem of determining the relationship between the State organization and the organization of the Communist Party. In the previous chapter it was suggested that the two have become indistinguishable in practical terms even though there is a clear demarcation between them in organizational structure. It will be necessary in this chapter to substantiate this evaluation since the disposition of the Party regarding religion and the Church will be a major consideration if it can be demonstrated that the Soviet State is essentially an administrative organ for Party policy.

This examination of the internal relationship between the Party and the State will then be followed by an examination of the development of Soviet law as it relates specifically to the Church and its adherents. Included in this discussion, of necessity, will be some of the early

"decrees" of the revolutionary leaders, subsequent Constitutional articles having to do with religion and citizenships rights, and legislative acts and their interpretation by the Soviet courts. Because of the large number of decrees, laws and interpretations in the various Soviet republics, it will be necessary to limit our discussion to a selection of these, tracing their development in chronological order.

Tied to these legal enactments, of course, are extra-legal reports, both governmental and non-governmental, of specific acts by State officials toward the Church hierarchy and its lower clergy and congregations, which can best be evaluated alongside the discussion of the more formal, legal acts of the government. Some of these actions are supportive of the Church while most are repressive and they do not always correlate positively with the legislative stance of the government existing at a particular period.

A final factor to be considered in this chapter on State policy is the antireligious campaign waged by the Party organs specifically designated for this purpose. While this Party and State activity tended to express the Communist ideological religious hostility in its most unadulterated form, it is instructive to note the vacillations which have taken place in this campaign and which reveal the shift in ideology from pure Marxian orthodoxy to a Soviet mixture of Marxism-Leninism and practical expediency.

The chapter will then conclude with a brief summary of the notable shifts in State policy vis-a-vis the Church which have taken place during this first twenty-five year period.

I THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY TO THE SOVIET STATE

The relationship of the Communist Party to the Soviet State might best be ascertained by a brief examination of the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics which was formally consummated on December 30, 1922. The process which led to this historic date began prior to the October Revolution of 1917 when the argument over the role of the Bolshevik Party in the revolution was being debated within the Party itself. In the summer of 1917, Lenin stepped up the intensity of his argument for the Party to take over by armed insurrection the shaky Provisional government. Even though he was in hiding in Finland his arguments prevailed over the opposition point of view supported by Kamenev and Zinoviev that the time was not ripe for an armed takeover and that the Provisional government should be supported. By October, the nation, suffering severe losses in the war with Germany and bitter suffering and famine among the peasant masses, was in a state of near anarchy. A military coup under the leadership of Kornilov had failed but had badly shaken the Kerensky government and with it, the left wing Social Democrats and Mensheviks who were supporting it. On October 16th, Lenin called for the Bolshevik Party to exercise its leadership on behalf of the masses and seize power rather than wait for a democratic assembly to achieve it.

> The position is clear. Either a Kornilov dictatorship or a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry. We cannot be guided by the mood of the masses: That is changeable and unaccountable. We must be guided by an objective analysis and estimate of the revolution. The masses have given their confidence to the Bolsheviks

and ask from them not words, but deeds.[1]

In fact the masses got both, but the deeds proved much more significant than the words. On October 25th, the city of Petrograd fell to the military-revolutionary committee of the Petrograd Soviet which was composed entirely of Bolshevik Party members. On November 7th, they elected a governmental body called a Sovnarkom, which was to govern until a Constituent Assembly could be held. On November 8th, the Bolsheviks occupied the Kremlin in Moscow. One week later on November 15th, they consolidated their victory by achieving the surrender of the Committee on Public Safety--the defense arm of the Provisional government.

Before their armed takeover, the Bolsheviks had attacked the Provisional Government verbally because of its delay in calling a Constituent Assembly. Now their criticism of the Provisional government was turned against them as Lenin postponed the scheduled Assembly from December 11th to January 18th because the popular elections on November 25th had proven so unfavorable to the Bolsheviks. In the interim period the Bolshevik Party strengthened its control on the existing machinery of state and organized the Cheka, a secret police force, to fight counter-revolution.

The Constituent Assembly met for one day and then was dissolved by the Bolsheviks on the following day. In its place they called a congress of workers and soldiers deputies which met until January 31st. The delegates to this congress numbered 942 active members, most of whom

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[1]Edward Hallett Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923 (Vol. I, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 95.

were Bolshevik Party members or sympathetic with the Bolsheviks. It had only fifty-four opposition members.[2] The congress ratified the acts of the Sovnarkom, passed the decree on land socialization, and adopted a Provisional Constitution for the Federation of Soviet Republics.

At this point the Bolshevik Party was in control of the government but it was not unopposed. In fact, by dissolving the Constituent Assembly it had completely alienated itself from the more moderate socialists, many of whom began a concerted effort to topple the Bolshevik dictatorship. On March 3, 1918, the Bolshevik-controlled government signed the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany which ended the threat of imminent conquest from the outside. This gave the Bolshevik Party time to turn its attention to the opposition forces within the country. The Third Congress of Soviets closed on January 31, 1918, with the Bolsheviks proclaiming the establishment of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic. However, they were in actual control of only a small fragment of the former Tsarist Empire. In the next four years the task of consolidation of the major land and population regions of Russia was accomplished through an amazing sequence of events and political manipulations during which Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin exercised the principle leadership of the Party and the State.

The strategy which the Communist Party leaders used to

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[2]James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1918 Documents and Materials (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 389.

consolidate under their own control the diverse nationality groups in Russia was two fold. First, it publically advocated the principle of federalism or national self-determination. Then it proceeded to construct political organizations that would yield themselves to state centralism.

In the early months of the revolutionary regime, the Sovnarkom, which also became known as the Council of Peoples Commissars, became increasingly powerful. It conferred legislative powers on itself by decree and this was later sustained in the "All Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) in November, 1917.[3] The leaders of both the Council of Peoples Commissars and the Communist Party were in fact the same persons. As Richard Pipes in his study on the formation of the Soviet Union has pointed out,

> . . . the intertwining of the personnel and activities of the state and party institutions was so intimate that the process of the integration of the Soviet territory occurred not on one but two levels. The evolution of Soviet federalism, therefore, cannot be studied merely from the point of view of the changing relations between the central and provincial institutions of the state; it must be approached, first of all, from the point of view of the relations between the central and provincial institutions of the Communist Party.[4]

In March, 1919, when the Communist Party drew up its first Party program, the relationship between the Party and the State was stated as follows:

> The Communist Party assigns itself the task of winning decisive influence and complete leadership in all

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[3]Carr, Revolution, p. 147.

[4]Richard Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union, Communism and Nationalism 1917-1923 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), pp. 242-43.

> organizations of the laboring class: the trade unions, the cooperatives, the village communes, etc. The Communist Party strives particularly for the realization of its program and for the full mastery of contemporary political organization such as the Soviets . . . .
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> The Russian Communist Party must win for itself undivided political mastery in the Soviets and de facto control of all their work through practical, daily, dedicated work in the Soviets, [and] the advancement of its most stalwart and devoted members to all Soviet positions.[5]

Thus the political power which theoretically resided in the Soviets was in reality controlled by the parallel Party organizations from the local level to the Council of Peoples Commissars on the highest level.

As far as the question of regional autonomy or central control in the Party was concerned, Lenin's insistent demand for close and inflexible Party centralism prevailed from the very beginning. It is understandable, therefore, that in spite of the verbiage devoted to state federalism which came from the Communist Party-State in Moscow, the process of integration into a single centralized State of all the regions and republics continued unabated under the control of the Party.

Because of the political forces inside the country which were opposed to the Communist dictatorship, the Communists accomplished the extension of their authority in a circuitous manner. Many of the border regions and republics had declared their autonomous status following the fall of the Tsarist Empire. The Communists, in order to establish firm political ties with all of these regions, established

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[5] Ibid., p. 242, quoted from "Program of the Russian Communist Party" (1919), in TsK,RKP (b), Rossiiskaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bol'shevikov) v rezoliutsiiakh ee s' ezdov i konferentsii (1898-1922 gg.) (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923), pp. 255-56.

seventeen autonomous regions and republics between 1920 and 1923 through a proclaimed State policy of federation. But even while these "autonomous states" related to the RSFSR (Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic) were being established and their support of the central government was being secured through the promise of self-determination, the Commissariat of Nationality Affairs was at work on the administrative structure which would eventually consolidate the State apparatus of all these autonomous states under the control of the central government.

Stalin was chairman of this Commissariat and through its expansion of power over the nationalities and within the central State structure, Stalin enhanced his own position of power. Agencies of the Commissariat were opened in all of the territories and by decree given the right to participate in the central executive committees of these autonomous national minorities. They were also given the right to participate in all budgetary matters and the authority to direct the education of the non-Russian Party and State cadres. The Central Commissariat claimed that it had the right to supervise the other Commissariats of the Soviet Russian government (RSFSR) whenever their activities affected the national minorities.[6] All of the structural and legislative changed necessary to bring about the consolidation of the Soviet republics and autonomous regions into one federated State under the control of the Communist Party's Central Committee were accomplished under the guidance of the Communist Party units operating within each of their

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[6] Ibid., pp. 248-49.

separate nationalities.

A variety of means was used to gain the cooperation of the leaders of the different nationalities to the administrative changes which related them in a subordinate position to the central government, but in all cases the end result was the same. The Communist Party leaders were aware that a supranational Soviet Union was essential once the Revolution had been achieved and the world-wide uprising of the proletariat had not materialized. A long-range international struggle which seemed now apparent, had to be faced with full diplomatic unity and internal support.

The final phase of the consolidation of the Soviet State was engineered by Stalin. By 1932 control over the supreme organs of the Russian Communist Party was tantamount to control over the supreme political apparatus of the Soviet Union. By the time of the 10th Congress of the RSFSR in December, 1922, which brought the USSR into formal existence, Stalin was Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (RKP) a member of its Politburo and Orgburo, as well as chairman of the Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection. The latter Commissariat enjoyed special rights of control in regard to the entire Party apparatus. By virtue of his status in the Central Committee of the RKP, he also at various times had been a member of the Central Committee of the Ukraine, and of the Central Bureau of Moslem Organizations of the RKP. He arranged to have close personal friends head similar Party and State organizations in most of the nationalities.[7]

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[7]Ibid., p. 266.

On October 6, 1922, Stalin was named chairman of a commission to prepare a draft agreement merging the four Soviet Republics--RSFSR, the Ukrainian, the Transcaucasian, and the Byelorussian Republics. When the USSR came into being in December, ninety-five per cent of the deputies of the uniting Congress were members of the Communist Party and consequently were required to vote for the resolutions passed by the Central Committee.[8]

It is clear from this brief description of events leading to this Congress that Party and State in the Soviet Union cannot be clearly distinguished in terms of policy. Indeed, quite the contrary is true. That to which the Communist Party is committed has inevitably been translated into State policy regardless of Constitutional provisions which might normally prevent a specific policy. The dictatorship of the proletariat is essentially a dictatorship of the Party exercised through the State apparatus, and the implications of this fact are apparent in the relations between the State and the Church

II THE POLICY OF THE STATE TOWARD THE CHURCH

Turning to an examination of the policy of the State toward the Church, one can begin with the revolutionary decrees issued by the Bolshevik-dominated Second Congress of Soviets which met on November 8, 1917, in Smolny. The Land Decree issued at that time was not directed specifically at the Church but it included and affected it. Article 2 reads:

> All landlords' estates, all lands, udel, monastery and church--with all their livestock and inventory, and all

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 267.

> buildings with all their accessories are transferred to the Volast [village] land committees and the uezd [district] Soviets of Peasants' Deputies until the Constituent Assembly meets.[9]

Article 1 of an accompanying decree entitled "*Concerning the Land*" reads as follows:

> The right of private ownership of land is abolished forever. Land cannot be sold, bought, leased, morgaged, or alienated in any manner whatsoever. All lands--state, udel, cabinet, monastery, church, possessional, seigniorial, private communal, peasant, etc.--are alienated without compensation, become the property of the people, and are turned over for the use of those who will till them.[10]

This decree on land affected most severely the monastaries, some of which had large holdings.

The same Congress which issued the "Land Decree" set up a Commissariat of Education which on November 24th issued a decree of its own regarding Church schools, which made it clear that they were no longer under ecclesiastical control:

> Owing to lack of clarity in the regulations of the former ministries [of Education] on the question of the transfer of the control over church-parochial schools to the Ministry of Education, . . . the Commissariat of Education . . . having reconsidered this question, resolved: to transfer to the control of the Commissariat of Peoples' Education all church-parochial elementary schools, teacher's colleges, ecclesiastical schools and colleges, parochial schools for girls, missionary schools and academies, and other institutions . . . which formerly were under the control of the Ecclesiastical Department. Together with them passed to the Commissariat of Education their personel, grants, movable and immovable property . . . .

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[9]Bunyan, Revolution, p. 129.

[10]Ibid., pp. 129-30.

> The question concerning the chapels of these institutions will be settled by the decree on separation of Church and state.[11]

The contents of the January 23rd decree on separation of Church and State were anticipated in these decrees on land and school and other revolutionary decrees such as the following one on divorce laws issued on December 30, 1917, which eliminated a long-standing ecclesiastical jurisdiction:

> 1. Marriage is annulled by the petition of both parties or even one of them.
> 2. The above petition is submitted, according to the rules of local jurisdiction, to the local court
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> . . . .
>
> 10. Suits for adjudging marriages illegal or invalid belong henceforth to the jurisdiction of the local court.
> 11. The operation of this law extends to all citizens of the Russian Republic irrespective of their adherence to this or that religious cult.
> 12. All suits for annulment of marriage which are now tried in ecclesiastical consistories of the department of Greek--Catholic and other denominations, in the governing synod and all other institutions of the Christian and non-Christian religions, and by officials in charge of ecclesiastical affairs of all denominations, and in which no decisions have been rendered or the decisions already rendered have not become legally effective, are declared by reason of this law null and void, and are subject to immediate transfer to the local district courts for safe-keeping, with all archives in the possession of the above--enumerated institutions and persons having jurisdiction in divorce courts . . . .[12]

The above decree, signed by V. I. Lenin, was recorded as part of the RSFSR laws, 1917-1918.

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[11]*Ibid.*, pp. 302-3.

[12]Boleslaw Szezesniak, (ed.), *The Russian Revolution and Religion (1917-1925)* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), pp. 29-31.

A similar decree issued on the same date stated that marriage, like divorce, would henceforth be valid only if recognized and legalized by the civil authority. "Church marriage is a private affair of those contracting it, while civil marriage is obligatory," stated the decree.[13] The same decree secularized birth and death registration, forbade any burial discrimination on religious or other grounds and required the transfer of all registration books containing records of marriages, births, and deaths which were in Church hands to the "respective municipal, district, rural, and *zemstvo* administrations."[14]

Then on January 23, 1918, the regime published its decree concerning the separation of Church and State, and of the school from the Church, which repeated and expanded the ideas expressed in the previous revolutionary decrees. This decree, in spirit and in letter established the Church--State relationships quite contrary to the resolution on this relationship issued by the Conference of Orthodox Clergy and Laymen in June, 1917, and completely destroyed the established and favored position which the Russian Orthodox Church had held under the Tsarist government. On one hand several articles of the decree have the appearance of merely separating the institutions of the Church and the State in terms of their function and creating a neutral position for each in regard to the affairs of the other. In actuality, however, the "separation" clauses were qualified by other clauses to make clear that the purpose of the separation was to prevent any interference from the

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[13] Ibid., p. 31.

[14] Ibid., p. 33.

Church in any State affairs or functions, to eliminate any preferred position which the Russian Orthodox Church had previously held in relation to other religious groups, to limit Church function and activity to a circumscribed area of cultic activities and to place the Church in a position inferior to that of the average Soviet citizen in terms of its rights under the law.[15] This latter status was accomplished by depriving the Church of the rights of juridical persons. It could own no property and was granted free use of buildings and objects of worship "by resolution of the local or central state authorities."[16]

On January 29, 1918, the military chaplain service was abolished though the military committees were given the right to retain clergymen if they so desired. All property and bonds which were previously held and administered by the clerical department were to be surrendered to the military committees.

These decrees came as a stunning blow to the Church whose hostile reaction will be described in the following chapter. But the Soviet government was not in a position in these early months of its existence to execute these decrees in full. The government was able to eliminate immediately all religious ceremonies and objects from State life and ended State payments to the Church and its theological schools. The parochial schools of the Church had already been taken under the Ministry of Education of the Provisional government. The Soviet government eliminated the religious teaching in the schools while the State

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[15] Ibid., p. 34; see appendix A for the text of the decree.

[16] Ibid., p. 35.

confiscation of the banks and the repudiation of the State debt and private securities cancelled most of the financial resources of the Church. But the Soviet government did not have enough popular support or personnel to take over immediately the registration of births, deaths and marriages, and the nationalization of church buildings came about only gradually.

On June 10, 1918, the Fifth Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR adopted a Constitution which embodied the decree on the separation of Church and State and the school from the Church, and established the basis for the development of an antireligious legal system.[17] Section 12 of the Constitution stated the provision of separation in its most liberal terms:

> To secure for the toilers real freedom of conscience, the Church is separated from the state, and the schools from the Church, and freedom of religion and antireligious propaganda is recognized as the right of every citizen.[18]

This somewhat liberal tone was not borne out, however, in the other articles of the Constitution which affected the Church. For example, the Constitution also provided for the disfranchisement of the clergy and denied them the right to be elected to public office. This had a more serious effect than one might suppose for the relegation of the clergy to second-class citizenship had the practical effect of denying them any secular employment, preventing ther from securing food ration cards as well as housing, and excluding their children from

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[17] Ibid., p. 9.

[18] John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State 1917-1950 (Boston: Little Brown, 1953), p. 61.

higher educational institutions. This clearly demonstrated the government's hostility to the Church and its intention to hamper and even eliminate its leadership as much as possible.

In this same spirit the People's Commissariat of Justice issued a long Instruction on August 24, 1918, for implementing the decree on the separation of Church from State and the school from the Church. A large part of the Instruction dealt with the proceedure for nationalizing church buildings and property. The church buildings used for religious ceremonies were to be turned over to the local Soviets which were to return the property after taking inventory, but only if twenty persons were willing to sign a petition assuming responsibility for the property and its upkeep. This later provision became part of Soviet law and has remained in force until the present time. All funds and investments were to be confiscated within a two-week period and the nationalization of the churches was to be completed inside of two months.[19]

A report from Moscow dated October, 1919, stated that 534 different groups of citizens had received church property for their use along with the religious articles in them. It was also reported that over thirty million rubles in securities and cash had been confiscated.[20]

On June 13, 1921, the government issued a decree which forbade any sort of "religious instructions for persons under the age of 18."[21]

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[19]*Ibid.*, p. 62.

[20]*Ibid.*, p. 73.

[21]Vladimir Gsovski, *Church and State Behind The Iron Curtain* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), p. xvi.

This ruling had been somewhat anticipated by a previous statement issued by the Commissariat of Public Education which had, on April 23, 1921, directed that "the teaching of religion to children may not be permitted either in schools or in church buildings."[22]

Civil law as a body of written rules of law, did not come into effect in the Soviet Union until 1922. Prior to that time the law consisted of a series of overlapping decrees including those mentioned above. In 1922, the New Economic Policy was instigated which began a seven-year period of compromise in economic policy. Private rights were allowed for the purpose of keeping the economy alive while being rejected in theory. Soviet law reflected this contradiction of elements operating within the country. During this period religious restrictions increased. This was illustrated by the Instruction of the Commissariat for the Interior and for Education issued on December 22, 1923, which prohibited any private religious instruction of children in groups comprising over three children.[23] Thus all teaching of religion to children was expressly forbidden except by parents to their own children.

In the summer of 1922, the government finally took steps to imprison the Patriarch of the Church who had repeatedly condemned the regime for its antireligious and anti-Church action. Patriarch Tikhon had opposed the government's confiscation of Church valuables which were essential to the liturgy and had issued a proclamation ordering the

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[22]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 76, cited from P. V. Geduleanov and P. Krasikox (eds.), Tserkov i Gosudarstvo po Zakonodatel' stvv RSFSR p. 27.

[23]Gsovski, Church, p. xvi.

clergy not to obey the government order which demanded their surrender for famine relief. Tikhon was persuaded to give up his authority by a group of pro-Soviet clergy and was placed under house arrest on May 10th. In August he was imprisoned for a year. Metropolitan Agafangel, whom Tikhon had appointed as his successor, was likewise arrested for violating article 12 of the new criminal code. The Soviet government always claimed impartiality in religious matters, asserting that its punishment of churchmen was for counter-revolutionary activities, not for religious loyalty.

It is impossible to verify the claims of the enemies of the regime concerning persecution of clergy because of the absence of any official Soviet trial records. However, the ranks of the clergy were considerably reduced during this period. Russian historian Melvin C. Wren estimates that between 1918 and 1922, twenty-eight bishops and a thousand priests were executed and others exiled or imprisoned.[24] Professor Gsovski cites a Soviet writer named Brekshev, who in his book *Patriarch Tikhon and His Church*, tabulated fifty-five tribunals of clergy, thirty-three executions and five hundred eighty-five convictions. These did not include executions by the secret police, the Cheka and the G.P.U. (state political administration).[25] Other estimates of clergy persecutions ran much higher.

When Patriarch Tikhon died in April, 1925, the government forbad the election of a new patriarch. They did allow the nomination of

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[24]Wren, Course of Russian History, p. 638.

[25]Gsovski, Church, p. xxi.

a "locum tenens," or deputy to the Patriarchal office. Metropolitan Sergei of Nighny Novgorod was nominated "locum tenens" and remained in this office until 1943.

In terms of property, the effect of State interference can be documented with a greater degree of reliability. The People's Commissariat for Justice report to the 9th All-Russian Congress of Soviets, records that 722 monasteries were closed in the RSFSR alone.[26] In 1927, some 134 churches were reported closed.[27] In 1928, nearly 600 churches were closed[28] and in 1929, 1450.[29]

In 1929, 248,000 persons were reported as disfranchised because of their status as "unproductive workers" or clergy and members of religious orders. In 1931, this number had been reduced to 161,000. The decrease was explained as "the natural decrease in numbers of ministers."[30]

The government was not able to keep the pressure on the Church at a constant level, however. The records of the League of Militant Godless contain many reports of public resistance to church closings and religious restrictions. In 1925 the Commissariat of Internal Affairs found it necessary to issue a circular paper stating that "the performance of religious ceremonies in churches, is permitted without

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[26] Ibid., p. xix.

[27] Ibid., p. xix, cited from Izvestia, Dec. 29, 1936.

[28] Ibid., p. xix, cited from Izvestia, Mar. 22, 1929.

[29] Ibid., p. xix, cited from Antireligious, No. 3, 1930.

[30] Ibid., pp. xix, cited from Elections to the Soviets and the Composition of Agencies of the Government, 1931, p. 35.

hindrance, without special permission."[31] Public ceremonies however, continued to require special permission. Such cautions from the central authorities to the overzealous local Party and Soviet leaders were the exception rather than the rule, however.

On April 1, 1927, a new law spelled out in detail the restrictions intended by previous legislation in prohibiting all but "cultic" activity by the Church.

> [Churches] may not organize for children, young people and women's, special prayer or other meetings, or, generally meetings, groups, circles, or departments for biblical or literary study, sewing, working, or the teaching of religion . . . only books necessary for the purpose of the cult [hymnbooks, prayer books] may be kept in the buildings and premises used for worship.[32]

This anticipated the Constitutional change in 1929 which deleted the clause in the article dealing with religion that permitted religious propaganda.

Many in the Church, recognizing the futility of fighting the regime, determined to continue to operate in secret. In an effort to counteract this clandestine activity the government of the RSFSR issued a law on April 8, 1929, requiring the registration of "religious organizations of every kind." Those not registered were denied every activity.[33] On the positive side this same law granted legal recognition to the local and central organizations of the Church. Since the Russian

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[31]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 192.

[32]Gsovski, Church, p. xvi.

[33]Joseph M. Bochenski and Gerhart Niemeyer (eds.), Handbook on Communism (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), p. 522.

Orthodox Church had recently undergone an internal cleavage and struggle for control, this recognition by the State of Metropolitan Sergei as the "locum tenens" officially established his leadership in the Church.

A number of government measures which were primarily economic in intent affected the Church adversely. One such law, issued in 1929, introduced the uninterrupted working week which abolished Sunday as the universal day of rest.[34] In the cities this strongly deterred religious observances but had little effect in the rural villages. Teeth were added to this law when on November 15, 1932, a decree was issued which declared that one day's unauthorized absence from work was punishable with deprivation of the right to ration cards for food and other articles.[35] In 1940, however, the Sunday rest day was universally restored. Whether the wartime change in the government's attitude toward the Church was responsible is not known. It is entirely likely, however, that the State's appeal for patriotic support of the war effort played an important part in influencing this concession as it did in other areas of Church--State relationships.

The League of Militant Atheists was formed in 1926 for the purpose of eliminating the "superstition" of religious belief from the minds of the masses and of inculcating them with the truth of scientific atheism. This was also the year when the State arrested Metropolitan Sergei (December 26th) for three months, an episode which received very

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[34]Walter Kolarz, Religion In The Soviet Union (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1961), p. 31.

[35]Curtiss, The Russian Church, pp. 254-55.

little publicity and is not even mentioned in his official biography. The imprisonment apparently had its intended "corrective" influence, for on his release he showed what one writer has called an "unexpected sycophantic loyalty toward the regime."[36]

This support of the regime by Sergei continued uninterrupted until his death in May, 1944. As a reward for his published support of the regime and his denial of any State persecution or hindrance of the Church, Sergei was permitted to move into the Patriarchate headquarters in Moscow in 1927 and to begin republication, for a brief time,of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.[37] The State had indicated its willingness to grant some concessions to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church when it released Patriarch Tikhon from prison in 1923, following his published "confession" of error in opposing the State. Now once again a pattern began to appear of granting special concessions to the head of the Church while exerting pressure at other levels in a calculated attempt to eliminate the Church as an active social influence. The experience of the Autocephelous Church in Byelorussia between 1928 and 1938 would appear to illustrate the ultimate aim of the Soviet State regarding the Church in other areas of the Republic. All three bishops of the Church in Byelorussia, Filaret of Bobruisk, Mikhail of Slutsk, and Ioann of Mozyr were arrested and died in prisons or concentration camps. All the more prominent priests, including all signatories of the Minsk statement which set up the Autocephalous Church, were arrested.

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[36]Bourdeaux, Opium, p. 55.

[37]Kolarz, Religion, p. 43.

By 1937 not a single priest continued to lead worship in Byelorussia and not a single church remained open.[38]

In 1934 an RSFSR statute on secondary schools spelled out the State position regarding religion in the schools:

> 13. The teaching of any form of religious worship, as well as the performance of any rites or rituals of a faith, and any other form of religious influence upon the growing generation shall be prohibited and prosecuted under the criminal law. The primary schools and secondary schools shall secure an anti-religious upbringing of the students and shall build instruction and educational work upon the basis of an active fight against religion and its influence upon the student and adult population.[39]

While the government avoided any statements that could be taken as supporting a position other than its proclaimed "neutrality" regarding the Church and freedom of conscience, the State-licensed and partly State-subsidized antireligious propaganda agencies made the situation very clear to the Russian public. In a publication entitled *Antireligious Movement in the USSR and Abroad,* the Central Institute for Antireligious Correspondences Courses printed the following interpretation of government legal actions:

> It is necessary to emphasize that the Soviet Decree concerning the Separation of Church from State and the School from the Church, was from the beginning against religion. In the question of religion, the Soviet Government never carried a double-dealing policy of equal cooperation with religion and atheism. It would be wrong to represent the whole matter as if our government kept away from the problems of religion, washed its hands and left the matter to its natural course . . . . Therefore this decree cannot be

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[38]Ibid., p. 125.

[39]Gsovski, Church, p. xviii.

> considered otherwise than as a measure deliberately directed against religion. The advocates of "non-religious" education in the schools . . . opinion that the Soviet Government is neither for nor against religion. No, this is not true. Soviet power fights against religion . . . . If the capitalistic separation of Church and State leads to the free and highest development of religion, the Soviet separation of Church and State leads to the free and final death of religion.[40]

In 1936 a new Constitution was adopted. Chapters X and XI set out the Constitutional rights of Soviet citizens. However, section 124, following the 1929 restrictive precedent, merely recognized the "freedom of performance of religious cults and freedom of antireligious propaganda."[41] But, a major change in the citizenship status of the clergy was granted when the distinction between "productive" and "non-productive" workers was dropped and the clergy were reenfranchised. This was in line with the general tone of the 1936 Constitution which reshaped the whole administrative scheme of the central government to resemble more closely that of a democratic State. The vote was made universal. However, there were no competing political parties and no free electoral campaigning. The Constitution granted to the Communist Party a monopoly on all political activities and secured to it the complete control of the nomination of all candidates.[42] This guaranteed to the Party the complete control of the State, a function which the Party had exercised, in fact, up to that time.

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[40] Ibid., p. xvii.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Vladimir Gsovski and Kazimierz Grzybowski, Government, Law and Courts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Vol. I, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), p. 25.

The early thirties had witnessed a slowdown in the general antireligious campaign. However, in 1937 the efforts were renewed. The program of the Communist Party was rewritten in 1936, with more emphasis on "the organization of antireligious propaganda which will aid the actual liberation of the working masses from religious prejudices . . . ."[43]

The political purges which began in late 1937, and included the famous treason trials involving many noted figures of the Soviet regime such as Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Rykov, created a highly suspicious and frenzied atmosphere. It was not surprising that many ecclesiastical leaders who had opposed the Soviet regime were caught up in the persecutions.

In 1937 the NKVD uncovered numerous "plots against the state" involving clergymen. In Orel, for example, Bishop Innokentii Nikiforov was accused of leading a clerico-fascist organization in which sixteen priests and deacons were said to be implicated. Similar accusations and numerous arrests were made in various parts of the country which frequently involved clergy who had been critical of the government or of the Patriarchate's "collaboration."[44] In this way the government continued to "weed out" segments of Church leadership which might not fully cooperate with government policy.

However, nowhere was there even a hint that Metropolitan Sergei was involved in the "counter-revolutionary" activity. In fact, the

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[43]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 276, citing Yaroslavskii, Razvermitym Frontom, p. 15.

[44]Kolarz, Religion, pp. 46-7.

Russian Orthodox Clergy who were loyal to the regime fared better than most sectors of Soviet society during these hectic days. When the purges came to an end late in 1938, a distinct policy of moderation was adopted by the State toward the Church. The strength of the Russian Orthodox Church had been broken and the regime had little to fear from the organized Church. The remaining opposition within the country identified with no specific organization. Religious belief was by no means dead but the Church leadership had long since chosen the path of closing its eyes to the State's antireligious policy and of supporting the State whenever it could find an occasion to do so. Such a stance did not go unrewarded. Stalin himself declared that it was no longer necessary to deprive the clergy and similar groups of full rights since many were no longer hostile, and those that remained as enemies were no longer dangerous.[45]

In 1938 *Izvestia* printed a long article by a Professor Bakhrushkin which stressed the contribution which early Christianity had made to the new Russian State founded by Grand Prince Vladmir.[46] Later a Professor Ranovich read a paper before the Academy of Sciences and before the Central Committee of the Association of Militant Atheists which repeated the same commendable evaluation regarding Christianity in the Kievan period of Russian history, and further stated that early Christians had a marked similarity to the proletariat in that they belonged to the toiling masses and repudiated racial and national discrimination,

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[45]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 273.

[46]Ibid., p. 274, citing Izvestia, No. 75, March 30, 1938.

proclaiming the equality of slave and free, male and female, rich and poor.[47] The Association of Militant Atheists reportedly soon after printed a pamphlet which asserted that Christianity and Capitalism were not to be confused and that the former had made many noble contributions to society and family relations.[48]

In June 1940, the seven-day week came back into official use with Sunday as the day of rest. This was most likely done for the purpose of economic efficiency but it nevertheless was helpful to the Church and was taken by the Church as a favorable act of the State toward the Church.

When Germany broke its pact with Russia and invaded in June, 1941, the uneasy "truce" between Church and State took on a radical change. It was the Church which responded first with repeated patriotic appeals to the people and finally with direct praise and adulation of the State and its leaders. In response to this clear and unmistakable demonstration of loyalty on the part of the Church, the Soviet State immediately quieted the antireligious propaganda and pressured the League of Militant Godless to cease publications in the fall of 1941. Its antireligious museums were either transformed into museums of Church history or closed.[49]

The new attitude of the State toward the Church was not articulated but it was demonstrated in other ways. The curfew in Moscow was

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[47]Matthew Spinka, The Church in Soviet Russia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 81.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 292.

lifted on Easter, 1942, in order that the worshippers might attend midnight services.[50] Metropolitan Nickolai of Kiev was named to the Extraordinary State Committee for investigating crimes committed by the invaders. This was the first time a Churchman had been named by the Government to an official body since the Revolution. But the crowning act of the Government which declared the beginning of a new era of Church--State relationships was the invitation extended by Premier Stalin to Metropolitan Sergei, Metropolitan Alexis of Leningrad and Metropolitan Nickolai of Kiev, to an audience with himself and Molotov in the Kremlin on September 4, 1943. According to *Izvestia*, at this meeting Sergei informed Stalin of his desire to hold a general Church Council (Sobor) for the election of a Patriarch. Stalin, it is reported, expressed his approval both of the Church's patriotic activity and of the request for the election.[51]

It is the period from the date of this historic meeting to the present (1967) which is the focus of concern of this paper. The examination of the preceeding twenty-five years, however, has given some clear indications of the direction of State policy toward the Church and the various factors which seem to have influenced it. It is clear that the ideology of the Communist Party played a very important and probably primary role in determining the policy of the Soviet State toward religion, especially in the early years immediately following the Revolution. This is axiomatic since the State was shaped by the

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[50]<u>Ibid</u>.

[51]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 293, citing <u>Izvestia</u>, No. 210, September 5, 1943.

leaders of the Party and these leaders formed their political policy, at least their long-range policy, on the basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

A second important factor influencing the State policy regarding the Church was expediency in the quest for power; a factor built into every successful political regime to one degree or another. The importance of this factor can perhaps be observed nowhere better than in the changes or tactical shifts made in government policy toward the Church from time to time. It must be understood that it is impossible at all times to distinguish sharply between ideology and expediency as factors influencing State policy. This is true simply because of the nature of ideology itself which is dynamic and capable of changing as the general doctrines of the past are placed in juxtaposition to the specific situations of the present. It is possible, however, to make tentative judgments about the continuity and strength of ideology for a given regime over a period of time, and the shifts of policy offer the best clue to accuracy in making those judgments.

From the time of the October Revolution until the Constitution of 1936, the legal enactments of the Soviet Government, whether they were decrees, legislation or instructions issued by the commissariats, clearly demonstrated the ideological hostility of the regime to religion and the Church. The policy of enforcement of these legal acts, however, varied according to the strength of the regime at home and abroad at particular times, the degree of resistance to these measures by the Church and general public, and the discovery by the State of the usefulness of the Church itself in assisting the secular policies of the government.

In the first few years of its existence the government pursued an "armed neutrality" policy with the Church during which time it gradually put into effect its confiscatory decrees. The hostility of the Church increased and when it boiled into defiance during the great famine of 1921 the government attempted to split the Church and siphon off the power of the hierarchy by lending its support to a liberal faction of clergy known as the "Renovationists." In July, 1922, the government officially recognized the organization of this group which was known as the "Living Church," and at the same time imprisoned Patriarch Tikhon. However, when the people refused to honor the leadership of the Renovationists and Tikhon had been persuaded to "confess" his errors, the government released Tikhon in June, 1923, and dropped its support of the "Living Church." This, however, achieved the government's aim of breaking the power of the Church, which rested in the hierarchy. The life of the Church in the local parishes, however, was another matter. The general disfranchisement of the clergy with its consequent deprivations which have been cited earlier, lasted until 1936. The pressure which was placed upon the Church in its local parishes and leadership varied both in location and time. A wide variety of means was used to hinder the Church in its continuance and to a large degree, the particular determination of a given parish rested in the hands of the leaders of the local Soviet and the Party cell. When the complaints reaching Moscow of injustices in the treatment of local parishes by local authorities reached a serious proportion, the central authorities would send instructions to slow the antireligious campaign or to grant a greater degree of respect to the local populace regarding Church

closings or confiscations of Church property.[52]

The years 1922-1923 and 1929-1930 seem to be marked with the most severe suppression of churches and churchmen.[53] The first period immediately followed the end of the Civil War and probably reflected the fact that the government felt more secure and also felt a greater need to pursue its domestic policy than ever before. It therefore could afford to put more pressure on the Church in its long-range policy of eliminating the Church as an active social force. The second period beginning in 1929 came early in Stalin's First Five-Year Plan which was a shift back to a purer economic policy in terms of Communist ideology. The accompanying emphasis on eradicating religion would reflect consistency in ideology where religion and capitalistic economics were regarded as handmaids in the camp of the enemy.

The period between 1923-1929 was the period of Stalin's New Economic Policy which was begun in 1921 by Lenin. During this period Stalin attempted to shore up the sagging economy through encouragement of private initiative and foreign loans. Religious persecution was lessened during this period also and the office of the Patriarch was cultivated to support the regime in its domestic program. Following Tikhon's death in 1925, the government's long and short-range policies did not change. In the long-range plan it continued to work for the diminishing of the Church's influence and the eradication of religious sentiment. In the short-range plan it continued to seek a public

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[52]Ibid., pp. 149, 193, 243.

[53]Gsovski, Church, p. xv.

modus vivendi with the hierarchy. Patriarch Sergei was convinced in 1926, after a three-month imprisonment, that the support of the government was the only way to preserve the Church and his leadership in it. The government found it wise to reciprocate with its support, or at least non-interference with Sergei and his bishops from that time on. It continued to exert pressure on the monasteries and local parishes but found that if this were done discretely, without the express direction of the central government and indeed with an occasional caution from that quarter regarding excessive persecution, it would enjoy the public support of the Church hierarchy. This proved to be important when the government was seeking loans from the West or seeking to consolidate new territories with an Orthodox population. It also proved to be very helpful to the government during the war with Germany.

With exception of the years of the Party purge (1937-1938) the government policy toward the Church since 1936 was one of increasing toleration. Numerous instances of reduction in government anti-Church pressure occurred between 1936 and 1943. In 1937, Yaroslavsky, the head of the League of Militant Godless, reported a shift in policy by stating that persecution was useless in the fight against religion and only propaganda and education would be used henceforth.[54] During the early forties even propaganda was reduced. The two leading antireligious publications, *Bezbozhnik v stanka* and *Antreligioznik* were curtailed.[55]

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[54]Iswolsky, Christ in Russia, p. 132.

[55]Alex Inkeles, "Family and Church in the Post War USSR," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCLXIII (1949) p. 38.

Stalin had proclaimed a major ideological shift from an international to a national focus by his "socialism in one country" doctrine in 1928. This allowed for a great wave of patriotism during the Nazi invasion. The Church took a leading role in this patriotic war effort and this produced a greater move toward toleration on the part of the State. It is instructive, however, to note that it was not until 1929 that all believers were expelled from the Party. Since then, joining the Church has continued to serve as grounds for expulsion. Similarly, in 1943, at the height of the Church--State cooperation, President Kalinin reiterated that "religion was a misguided institution" and promised that the State would continue to fight it through education.[56]

By the summer of 1943 the Soviet State had established a relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious groups which could not have been predicted on the basis of its ideological position since the relationship appeared to be contrary to Marxism-Leninism. According to its ideology, the Communist State could regard the Church only as a tool of the bourgeois class, and as such it was the enemy of the proletarian State. Under the necessities of political reality, however, all of that was at least temporarily forgotten. The lapse was so complete that Moscow radio warned that Hitler's advancing armies were "menacing the very existence of Christianity and seeking the overthrow of Christ the King."[57] Here was a resurgence of the age old sentiment of "Holy Russia" being used by the Communist State.

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[56]Wren, Course of Russian History, p. 641.

[57]Ibid.

In summary it can be said that in this period of Soviet Russian history, the policy of the State was dictated by the Communist Party. There can be no suggestion of two separate policies of the Party and the State. Any contradiction or apparent dualism of policy can only be understood as the result of shifts within the Communist Party. These shifts were the result of a number of intentional and unintentional factors such as a change in Party leadership or a need to improve the economy by any means. The importance of Party control over every phase of government was of major importance during this period and as time went on the leadership of the Party began to center increasingly around one person--first Lenin and then Stalin.

The State policy toward the Church in general followed the Marxist-Leninist ideology, which viewed the Church as inimical to a Socialist society. However, there was considerable fluctuation in this policy and the fluctuation was clearly due to practical considerations. Outright persecution of the Church varied from time to time depending partly on the preoccupation of the Party leaders with other matters and partly on the Church's willingness to cooperate with State interests. The Church hierarchy was apparently useful to the State for it was not destroyed and in fact it served as a kind of screen, or front behind which the government carried out its activities against religion and the Church on the parochial level.

Another important factor which affected the State's policy toward the Church was the reaction of the people. The State on several occasions had to retreat in its active antireligious and anti-Church efforts because of popular opposition. However, when it became apparent to the

Party leaders that the Church would offer no further resistance to its domestic or foreign policy and indeed might be useful in implementing that policy, they eased the antireligious efforts, and at the time of the war with Germany, abandoned them altogether.

There is a clear relation between the policy of the State toward the Church and the way in which pragmatic factors tended to replace Marxist-Leninist ideology in the Party's thinking and action. In 1934 Stalin had minimized the importance of the "objective factors" of historical determinism and stressed the importance of Party initiative and decision in determining the course of Socialism in the Soviet Union. The ideological goal however, remained the same though it was determined that it could be achieved much more rapidly if those committed to it acted decisively and unswervingly. Thus the end tended to justify the means. It is not surprising therefore, that the quite unorthodox modus vivendi between the Church and the State came about under wartime conditions. Ideological and pragmatic considerations were vying for preeminence in State policy and the social conditions were emerging that would indicate the role each was to play in the years ahead.

CHAPTER V

THE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TOWARD THE STATE FROM 1917 TO 1943

In order to deal fairly with the subject of this thesis--the relations between the Church and the State in the Soviet Union from 1943 to 1967--the policy which the Church followed toward the State in the previous twenty-five years must be reviewed in the same way that the State policy toward the Church was reviewed in chapter four. This chapter, therefore, will examine the policy of the Russian Orthodox Church toward the Soviet State from 1917 to 1943 for the purpose of discovering the background, emphasis and possible trends of the respective roles played by ideology and pragmatism in the relations between the Church and State in recent years.

Since this thesis is limited in its consideration of the "Church" to the Russian Orthodox Church, and that, primarily in its official, organizational and institutional, rather than popular or "spiritual" expression, the wider consideration of religion or religious policy in the Soviet Union will be referred to only briefly to indicate popular acceptance or nonacceptance of the policy of the hierarchy. Other religious organizations, Moslems, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Baptist, etc., will not be considered here.

Walter Kolarz, in his extensive study of religion in the Soviet Union, cites Tsarist statistics which put the Russian Orthodox population in 1914 at nearly 70% of the 163 million population, or 114

million.[1] Thus, even though this study is limited to the Russian Orthodox Church, it nevertheless deals with by far the major religious faith group which existed in the Soviet Union at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. While the Church population has been sharply reduced over the years, every indication suggests that the Russian Orthodox Church has remained the dominant faith group to the present time.

This chapter will follow a simple chronological order of events from pre-revolutionary times until September, 1943. The statements and actions of the recognized leaders of the Church will serve as the major content of that chronology.

The Russian Orthodox Church is highly centralized in its organization. Consequently, the words and actions of the hierarchy do represent the policies of the Church in a way that is not true of more democratically oriented churches. This authority is modified only by the action of the All-Russian Church Council (Sobor) which, however, met only two times during the period under consideration, once at the beginning of the period in 1917 to elect a Patriarch, and again in 1943, at the end of the period, also to elect a Patriarch. A "rump" Church council was called in 1923 by a dissident group of liberal churchmen who for a time received the recognition of the State authorities as the rightful leaders of the Church. But this meeting and its consequences were soon disavowed by Church and State alike and its decisions never acquired canonical status.

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[1]Walter Kolarz, Religion In the Soviet Union (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1961), p. 37.

Prior to the Revolution of 1917 which brought the Bolshevik or Communist Party leaders to power, the Church had been emerging from a long night of suppression and manipulation at the hands of Tsarist-appointed lay procurators, one of the most reactionary of whom was Pobedonastsev who served in this capacity from 1880 until 1907.[2] The Church had been without a properly chosen head since the time of Peter the Great. Its bishops were largely chosen and moved by the will of the procurator, and the governing apparatus of the Holy Synod was limited in its functions to liturgical and minor administrative matters.[3]

The Revolution and new Constitution of 1906 came as a breath of fresh air and a promise of new life to the Church. A pre-Sobor conference was set up to arrange for an all-Church conference at which a number of reforms was expected to be instituted. The planning bogged down, however, partly due to a new wave of reaction in the government. The emphasis on reform revived only with the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the provisional government in March, 1917. The new Church procurator, V. Luov, forced many of the old reactionary Church leaders into retirement and led in the convening of the representative All-Church Council in August, 1917.

The elections for representatives to this Sobor were held in mid-July when the attitudes of most Orthodox churchmen were turning again to political conservatism. The country was experiencing growing

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[2]Konstatin Pobedonastsev, Reflections of a Russian Statesman (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), pp. v-x.

[3]Michael Bourdeaux, Opium of the People (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1966), p. 44.

disorder especially among the peasants who were beginning to heed the cry of the revolutionary socialists to seize the land. The churchmen viewed this as excessive and felt that the Church should exercise a calming influence. During the early weeks of the conference, numerous speeches were made and resolutions offered calling for a return to law and order for the purpose of "reuniting the sundered and ruined greatness of the fatherland."[4]

In June, 1917, the Preparatory Assembly for the Sobor prepared a series of resolutions which the Sobor later adopted as its own position. Included was a number of provisions indicating the position the Church expected to take in relation to the State. In essence, this position was a reactionary one, a retreat to the position which the Church held under the Tsarist government, with two exceptions. The first exception was that it demanded a favored position over other religious groups. The second was that it rejected the State's interference and control which the State had previously exercised through its procurator. "In the Russian state," began the Preparatory Assembly's resolution,

> the Orthodox Church must hold, among other religious confessions, a place of priority, most favored in government and in public rights, as is fitting to her as the supreme sacred object of the people . . . . The Orthodox Church in Russia, in matters concerning its structure, legislation, administration, courts, teaching of the faith and morality, services of worship, internal church discipline, and external relationships with other churches--is independent of

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[4]John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State 1917-1950 (Boston: Little Brown, 1953), p. 28.

government authority (autonomous).[5]

Other important provisions in this resolution which set out the position of the emerging Church in the revolutionary period included demands that the canonical hierarchy and structure of the Church be recognized by the State as legal institutions; that clergy be exempt from military service and other civic duties; that marriage in the Orthodox Church have legal validity if one of the partners be Orthodox; that Church actions on annulling marriage, and registration of birth and deaths be recognized as legally valid; that the State guarantee freedom of conscience and religious propaganda for the Orthodox; that all Orthodox Church feasts including Sundays be regarded as days of rest; that the head of the State as well as the State official responsible for religious affairs, be Orthodox; that all religious ceremonies during State holidays be performed by Orthodox clergy; that religious schools be granted the same rights as State schools; that religious instruction in the State schools be compulsory; that the Church have the rights of juridical persons including property ownership and that this property be tax exempt; and that the Church be supported by State subsidies.[6]

The Church was looking back to the days prior to Peter the Great when she held a highly favored position in the State with a double standard of remaining autonomous from the State in regard to the Church's internal affairs while at the same time demanding a role of considerable

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[5]Boleslaw Szezesniak (ed.), The Russian Revolution and Religion (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), p. 27.

[6]Ibid., pp. 27-28.

influence in the internal affairs of the State. This position was not acceptable to the provisional government and was almost totally rejected by the Bolsheviks. Nevertheless, the All-Church Sobor proceeded to establish itself on the basis of these resolutions and moved ahead with the election of a new Church Patriarch--an action clearly symbolizing the Church's intention to recover something of the power and autonomy from State control which it held in early Tsarist times.

On November 5, 1917, the Sobor elected Metropolitan Tikhon (Vasilii Ivanovich Belavin), Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. Two days later the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin took control of the government. The hostility of the Church Sobor toward the Bolsheviks was expressed in speeches and prayers throughout the meeting, even after the Provisional government fell to the Bolsheviks. As if it expected the Bolshevik government to be but a passing phase of political upheaval, the Sobor, on November 17th, voted that the members should distribute a proclamation concerning the elections to the Constituent Assembly. It also reproduced the resolutions concerning the Church and the State which it had adopted from the Preparatory Assembly, which declared the favored position that the Orthodox Church was expected to hold in relation to the State. This was, of course, obviously contrary to the well known antireligious and anticlerical position of the Bolshevik Party.

On this same day the Sobor further illustrated its contempt for the new regime by issuing a statement on peace which repudiated the Soviet's efforts to talk peace with the Germans. It referred to the Soviet leaders as "persons (who) had not been elected, and were not

empowered to make peace."[7]

These expressions of hostility by the Church Sobor apparently had little effect on the Soviet leaders who were no doubt too preoccupied with more pressing matters. On November 21st, for example, just a few days after the above proclamation, the Moscow Soviet permitted the installation of the Patriarch to take place in Uspenskii Cathederal in the Kremlin.

Until this time only one official action of the new Soviet government had affected the Church adversely and that was the Declaration of the Land Decree on November 8th, which abolished all private land ownership. This was not directed specifically at the Church, however, and was not immediately enforced. On December 31st, however, came a series of laws on divorce, marriage, and birth and death registration. On January 23rd, the decree concerning separation of Church and State and of school and Church was promulgated, and on January 29th a decree was issued which released all chaplains from the military service and transferred Church funds and property of military chaplains to the general military budget.

In response to these State actions, Patriarch Tikhon issued a pastoral letter on February 1, 1918, in which he anathematized the Soviet regime, referred to the leaders as "monsters of the human race," "open and concealed enemies of the truth of Christ," and "madmen!" He specifically denounced the government's interference in the Church's prerogatives concerning birth and marriage and the destruction and

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[7]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 42.

looting of churches and monasteries as well as the abolition or confiscation of Church schools.[8]

This was followed on February 4th, by a resolution of the Church Sobor calling on churchmen to resist the efforts to confiscate Church property. Parochial priests, parishioners, monasteries and their pilgrims were instructed:

> 1. Not to surrender voluntarily any belongings of the Holy Church . . . .
> 2. When the demand for the surrender of the church or monastery property is accompanied by threats of violence the Father Superior must refuse the demand and address the violators, calling them to reason.
>
> . . . .
>
> 6. To organize Orthodox brotherhoods in connection with churches and monasteries for the defense of church and monastery property.
> 7. In their sermons priests shall . . . try to interpret the meaning of passing events from the christian point of view.[9]

The last article in this resolution is especially interesting in that it suggests the continuing belief by the Church that the Communist regime was a thing of temporary duration and should be regarded from this perspective.

Then on February 28, 1918, the Patriarchate office issued a lengthy set of instructions to priests and "organizations of the Church," containing thirty-three articles giving details and information concerning how the Orthodox Church should respond to the government acts. The intent of the instructions was to circumvent the law which declared all

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[8]James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1918 Documents and Materials (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965), pp. 587-88.

[9]Ibid., pp. 589-590.

Church property to be the property of the State. The basic strategy was to organize "united societies whose primary duty [was] to defend all sacred things and other church property against violation."[10] Parishioners were cautioned not to call the societies "either church or religious societies, as all church and religious societies are by virtue of a decree deprived of all legal rights."[11] Likewise, the parents of pupils in Church educational institutions were to form these "united societies, for the protection of educational societies from seizure and the guarantee of their future activity for the benefit of the Church and the well being of the Orthodox people."[12] Other articles dealt with the course to follow if Church property were seized, the excommunication of persons guilty of collaborating with the Communists against members of the clergy, and the need to continue the practice of recording births, marriages, and deaths in the usual manner while making these records available to the civil authorities.[13]

Earlier in February the Sobor had issued a general response to the Soviet decree on separation of the Church from the State in which open defiance of the decree was strongly suggested.

> The decree issued by the Council of Peoples' Commissars concerning the separation of the church from the state is, under the guise of a law for freedom of conscience, a malicious attack upon all the structure of the life of the Orthodox church and an act of open

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[10]Sezesniak, <u>The Russian Revolution</u>, p. 38.

[11]<u>Ibid</u>.

[12]<u>Ibid</u>.

[13]<u>Ibid</u>., p. 39.

oppression against it.

> All participation both in publishing this legislation hostile to the church, and likewise in attempts to put it into affect, is incompatible with adherence to the Orthodox church and will draw upon the guilty persons penalities up to excommunication from the church . . . .
>
> The Sobor calls upon all the Orthodox people now as of old, to unite around the churches and monastic cloisters for defense of the outraged holy things . . . .[14]

Throughout the rest of the year 1918, the Church continued to oppose the Soviet regime openly and bitterly. Religious processions and special celebrations were held in opposition to the policies of the regime. When the Tsar and his family were killed in July, 1918, the Patriarch proclaimed to the crowd in Kazan Cathedral that "the killing of the sovereign without a trial was the very greatest of crimes, and . . . those who do not condemn this crime will be guilty of his blood."[15] A requiem for the deceased was performed shortly thereafter with the Patriarch and members of the Sobor participating.

Unfortunately for the Church, the Soviet regime did not collapse and the masses did not rise against it in spite of numberous suggestions and at times direct appeals from the monarchist oriented clergy to do so. In December of 1918, the Soviet leaders finally restricted Patriarch Tikhon to his quarters, a move that many in the Church had expected to occur much earlier. Following this, he no longer opposed the regime openly and directly, but the struggle continued throughout the years of the Civil War.

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[14]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 52.

[15]Ibid., p. 69.

Tikhon's arrest in December was prompted by his message of October 13, 1918, in which he condemned the Council of Peoples' Commissars. In the harshest language he accused them of injustice and inhumanity. He described their rule as a time of "ferocious civil strife and class hatred" during which the country was "running with blood."[16] It was a message, almost completely political in character and challenged the rulers to right their wrongs or "with the sword will perish you who have taken up the sword (Matt. 26:52)."[17]

In the months that followed the Bolsheviks arrested many of the clergy who were most outspoken in their opposition to the Soviet regime. The arrests were usually made on charges of counter-revolution. However, the bulk of the clergy was not interferred with and only a few churches were closed. The government assigned the task of enforcing the decree on Separation of Church and State to the Eighth Division of the Peoples' Commissariat of Justice. The chief tactics that were used to prevent the Church from organizing a counter-revolutionary force were to strip the Church of its economic power and remove it from its position of influence in the schools. There was considerable popular resentment against the wealth and power of the Church which carried over from Tsarist times and which aided in inhibiting any groundswell of resentment when the government reduced the Church's functions to cultic ones and provided for free use of Church buildings for those purposes. Hence, in spite of official Church condemnation of the regime and even the detainment of the Patriarch within his own quarters, the Orthodox people

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., p. 65.

did not support the Church's strong antigovernment policy except in isolated instances. However, numberous instances of people opposing local authorities who attempted to move too rapidly in inventorying Church property and monasteries could be cited. Indeed, according to John Curtiss, an antireligious Soviet publication later cited that there were 687 victims killed in religious riots in the period from February to May, 1918.[18] But these demonstrations of concern failed to alter the growing strength of the government or the increasing subjugation of the Church to Soviet authority.

Patriarch Tikhon issued no more proclamations or manifestoes against the government and failed to provide a rallying point for those engaged in the Civil war against the Soviet regime. In fact, in late 1918, according to Prince G. N. Trubetskai, Patriarch Tikhon refused to send his blessing to General Denikin, leader of the forces fighting against the Soviets.[19] On the other hand, the Soviet press charged that Tikhon was secretely supporting the "white" forces. It is a fact, however, that by late 1919, Tikhon had published a message to the Russian clergy urging them to refrain from involving themselves in politics.

> Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man (I Peter 2:13), give no grounds to justify the suspicion of the Soviet Power, submit also to its demands, insofar as they do not contravene faith and reverence, for to God, according to the Apostolic instruction, we must hearken rather than unto man (Acts 4:19; Gal. 1:10).[20]

This was a marked turn in attitude from the message a year earlier issued to the Council of Peoples Commissars with its vindictive

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[18] Ibid., p. 57. [19] Ibid., p. 91.

[20] Ibid., p. 94, (cited from Izvestia No. 236, Octo. 22, 1919).

and condemnatory tone. It was in effect a declaration of neutrality if nothing more. Strong opposition to the Soviet regime continued, however, among many of the Orthodox clergy in those border areas where the white forces remained in control. An example of such a situation occurred in Tomsk on November 14, 1918, when thirteen bishops issued a statement to the Orthodox people of Siberia in which they spoke of the Bolsheviks as "blood-thirsty plunderers," and urged their followers to sympathize with "Moscow and all central Russia which continue to experience the horrors of that rule."[21] Wherever the Soviet strength was weak the Orthodox Church's opposition was expressed in inverse proportion to the weakness of the regime. This obvious opposition of the Church to the Soviet rule was of course, noted by the people. Thus, when the Soviets gained strength, the populace was faced with a decision of loyalty. Increasingly the Church lost support as the Civil War drew to a close. Evidence of widespread Church attendance and observance of Church rites at weddings and other traditional religious occasions, however, indicates that while the Church was losing nearly all of its political and economic power, the religious life of the Russian people remained strong.

It was the famine of 1921-22 which broke the Church's position of neutrality toward the State and led to a worsening of the position of the Church in relation to the people. The famine, resulting from drought and war destruction, was terrible and widespread. The government solicited all the aid it could but the economic condition of the country was in such chaos that it had insufficient resources to meet the

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[21] _Ibid._, p. 95.

need. The Church had appealed for help to the other Orthodox Patriarchs, the Pope of Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury. At first the government demanded that the Church turn over its collections to the centralized State relief administration. But as the situation became catastrophic, the government, sensing that greater amounts might be contributed from abroad if the Church were permitted to participate in the distribution, conceded to this arrangement. It also requested that the Church draw on its own treasury of silver, gold and precious stones to purchase relief supplies. When the Church failed to respond to this suggestion and a council of émigré churchmen appealed for relief in the name of the Patriarch and at the same time issued a strong condemnation of the Soviet regime, the government, in growing suspicion that the Church was using its relief administration to muster support against the Soviet authorities, demanded that the Church surrender its wealth to the government for famine relief.[22] On February 16, 1921, the government announced its decision to remove the Church valuables "as far as the removal would not interfer with the cultus itself."[23] On February 19th the Patriarch issued instructions to the clergy permitting them to donate adornments given for ikons (rings, chains, bracelets and necklaces) and of broken pieces of gold and silver.[24] On February 24th *Izvestia* published a notice indicating that the Central

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[22]Ibid., p. 95.

[23]Matthew Spinka, The Church in Soviet Russia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 27.

[24]Ibid.

Executive Committee had resolved to order the local Soviets to remove the valuables from the churches.[25] In response the Patriarch issued a message recounting the Church's efforts to provide aid to the people and condemning the government's decree for permitting the confiscation of sacred vessels and other articles used in divine service.

> We cannot approve the taking away from the churches, even voluntary donation, of consecrated articles, whose use for purposes other than divine service is forbidden by the canons of the church universal and is punished by it as a sacrilege . . . .[26]

In defense of the government's action Soviet writers pointed out that churchmen in the past had proposed giving up treasures to the Imperial government in time of war. According to Dr. Spinka, the canons of the Church do not expressly forbid the use of Church treasures for secular use but rather forbid the diversion of these treasures to personal use--something quite different from using them for national emergency during a time of disaster.

The attitude of the Patriarch plus the harsh condemnation of the Soviet regime coming from the Karlovatskii Sobor of émigrée churchmen antagonized the Soviet authorities. It did not, however, force them into a general all-out attack upon the Church. Instead the regime invited several liberal clergymen who had supported the government, to join the government relief commission as representatives of the Church and then proceeded to remove the Church valuables wherever it did not encounter popular opposition to this move. Thus the Church became

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[25]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 111.

[26]*Ibid.*, p. 112.

divided in three ways. The liberal churchmen who supported the Soviet regime were separated from the Patriarchal group on the left and the monarchist clergy represented mainly by the emigre Karlovatskii Sobor became separated from the Patriarchal group on the right. The Patriarch could not openly endorse either group without seeming to submit totally to the regime on the one hand or to place itself in total opposition to the regime on the other.

With the pressure from the government increasing, Patriarch Tikhon on May 5, 1922, ruled that the Higher Russian Church Administration Abroad which had called the Karlovatskii Sobor, had no legal or ecclesiastical significance and was declared dissolved. This was, however, short of the government's demand that all members of the abortive Sobor be excommunicated.[27]

During this time of conflict between the Church and the government officials over the confiscation of Church valuables which resulted in at least 1,414 bloody incidents recorded in the Soviet press,[28] many prominent Church leaders were arrested and brought to trial. The trials normally ended in an indictment of the clergy for counter-revolutionary activity and the charge that the Patriarch was responsible for inciting the insurrectionists. Most of these trials were held before Revolutionary Tribunals which until June 1, 1922, were not bound by any rules of statutory criminal law or procedure. At least forty-five executions

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[27]Ibid., p. 117.

[28]Vladimir Gsovski, Church and State Behind the Iron Curtain (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), p. xxi.

and over five hundred imprisonments were pronounced.[29]

On May 9, 1922, Patriarch Tikhon, who had just testified at the trial of fifty-four churchmen was himself indicted and placed under arrest. This gave opportunity to the group of liberal churchmen referred to as reformers or "innovators" to move boldly in their attempt to take over the administration of the Church. On May 12th a group of these churchmen led by the priests Kalinovskii, Krasnitskii and Vvedenskii, met with the Patriarch, charged him with the responsibility of the chaos in the Church and secured from him a signed renunciation of his authority which he turned over to another hierarch, Metropolitan Agafangel.[30] Agafangel, however, was not a member of this liberal group, but his leadership was effectively subverted by the Soviet leaders who placed him under house arrest. In the absence of any specifically named successor to the Patriarch, the Church administration was therefore taken over by the "Temporary Higher Church Administration" composed of liberal clergy. This administration became known as the "Living Church."

The leaders of the Living Church received the support of the Soviet government in turn for statements strongly supporting the Soviet regime. On August 6, 1922, for example, the Council of the Living Church, referring to the Communist Party, issued the following statement:

> The Council affirms that every honorable Christian should take his place among these warriors for humanitarian truth

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[29]Ibid., (In Patriarch Tikhon and His Church, Brekchev, a Communist writer, hostile to the Church, tabulated 55 tribunals, 33 executions and 585 convictions, which do not include executions by secret police, Cheka and G.P.U.).

[30]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 131.

and use all means to realize in life the grand principles of the October Revolution.[31]

The Living Church group, however, faced strong opposition from the outset among the peasant masses who remained loyal to the Patriarchal Church leadership. Hostility was often openly expressed toward priests who followed the Living Church leaders. At the same time, followers of Tikhon who lived in more remote regions, formed autocephalic dioceses hostile to the Living Church leaders.

Patriarch Tikhon was scheduled for trial in the spring of 1923. The trial was postponed, however, and on June 27th, the Soviet Press published a statement which Tikhon was reported to have made to the Supreme Court of the RSFSR on June 16th. It was in essence a confession of his hostility toward the Soviet government as well as of his overt acts of opposition such as "the proclamation on the subject of the Peace of Brest in 1918; the anathematization of the government in the same year and, finally, the appeal against the removal of church valuables in 1922."[32] The statement went on to express the Patriarch's repentance of these actions against the State along with a request for pardon. On June 25th the Trial Collegium for Criminal Affairs of the Supreme Court ruled, "To accede to the request of citizen Belavin, [Patriarch Tikhon], and in accordance with Articles 161 and 242 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, to discontinue the measure of detention applied in respect of him, and to release him from custody."[33]

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[31]Bordeaux, Opium, p. 54.

[32]Curtiss, The Russian Church, pp. 159-160.

[33]Szezesniak, The Russian Revolution, p. 178.

Reports and allegations concerning the reason and circumstances behind the Patriarch's statement ranged widely from "forced confession" to "reasoned conclusion." There is no evidence, however, to prove that the statement of the Patriarch was a forced one beyond that of his own conclusions regarding his imprisonment and its bearing on the state of the Church. He clearly recognized that the Patriarchate was very likely not to recover from the combined efforts of the Living Church administration which was committed to its replacement and the State which was committed to the weakening of the Church's influence if not its total abolition. It is reasonable to suppose that Patriarch Tikhon recognized that his submission to the State was the only avenue open to him if he wanted to preserve the traditional Church structure from destruction.

Upon his release Tikhon issued a message to all of the faithful in which he strongly condemned the 1923 Church Sobor called by the Living Church faction, calling it illegal. He also admitted his guilt of early opposition to the Soviet regime but stated in unequivocal terms that he no longer opposed the Soviet Government and that his only present opposition was toward the Living Church. Tikhon instructed the priests and faithful of the Orthodox Church to understand that "henceforth the church had set itself apart from counter-revolution and stands on the side of the Soviet Power."[34]

The State authorities granted Tikhon a large degree of freedom in reorganizing the administration of the Church. The State did not, however, release the large number of clergymen who had been arrested and

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[34]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 164.

imprisoned on charges of hiding Church treasury during the famine and of other antigovernmental activities.

Throughout the rest of 1923 and the following year, a battle for supremacy within the Russian Orthodox Church raged between the Patriarchal churchmen under Tikhon's leadership and the followers of the Living Church faction. The Soviet authorities who had strongly supported the Living Church group during Tikhon's imprisonment, now seemed quite willing to approve the Patriarchal Church and legalize it, if it continued to give evidence of loyal support to the regime. At first the government supported an attempted merger between the two groups. When this failed and bitter division replaced friendly overtures, the State waited to see what would develop. Gradually the Patriarchal Church gained the support of the masses as both those hostile to the political regime as well as those loyal to the traditional Church sought a refuge in the Patriarchal Church. The turning point came in the Spring of 1925 with the death of Patriarch Tikhon.

The Soviet press published a "will" or "testament" which Patriarch Tikhon was reported to have signed on the day of his death, April 7, 1925. In it Tikhon pledged again his personal loyalty to the Soviet regime, denounced its enemies and called upon all members of the Orthodox faithful "to become convinced that the Soviet government is actually the government of workers and peasants, and hence durable and stable."[35] He also strongly condemned both the right and left political factions within the Church and concluded by rejecting any suggestion that he

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[35]Spinka, The Church, p. 43.

was not completely free of governmental control to think and speak according to his conscience.

Tikhon had named several persons to take over the administrative responsibility of the Church in case of his death. Only one of these, Metropolitan Peter Krutitskii was free to accept this responsibility. He was proclaimed head of the Church before a gathering of sixty bishops until a Sobor could be called for a formal election of a new patriarch. The Sobor never met, however, and Peter, who gave evidence of favoring the more reactionary clergy for his support, was accused of antigovernment activities, and arrested on December 23, 1925. The government never published its case against him although it unofficially let it be known that it had gathered proof of his support of monarchist organizations abroad and that he had confessed to the crime.[36]

Peter had taken the precaution of appointing three alternate successors to himself. Two of these, Metropolitan Mikhail of the Ukraine and Metropolitan Joseph of Rostov had been arrested and exiled. Thus the responsibility of *Deputy Locum Tenens* to the Patriarchal throne devolved upon Metropolitan Sergei of Nizhni Novgorod.

The death of Tikhon had set loose a whole new round of efforts by various groups of Church leaders to achieve control of the Church and recognition by the government. Sergei's claim as the rightful leader of the Church, therefore, was in serious doubt for nearly two years. During that time, Sergei was placed under arrest twice, once early in 1926 and again in December of 1926. The first time his

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[36]Ibid., pp. 58-59.

detention by the government was of short duration. He was released in a matter of weeks with the authorities apparently deciding that he was not immediately dangerous, though the Soviet press indicated that he was regarded as the leader of the right wing of the Patriarchal Church.[37] During Sergei's second imprisonment late in 1926, the vitality of the Orthodox Church reached its lowest ebb. Ten of the eleven hierarchs who had been named as *Locum Tenens* to the Patriarchate were in prison or in exile.[38] The émigré press reported that one hundred-seventeen bishops were exiled at this time and the whereabouts of forty others were unknown.[39]

All official records are silent about the cause of Sergei's second arrest which lasted for three and a half months. But an appeal which Sergei sent to the government in the Summer of 1926 indicated a political position of neutrality toward the government. This position stood in contrast to a strongly pro-Soviet declaration which Sergei published after his imprisonment. While the text of his message to the government in the Summer of 1926 is not available, he indicated its contents in a letter to the Orthodox clergy. In it he stated that the Church would not "find itself involved in any political adventure whatsoever," though he frankly acknowledged that contradictions existed between the believers and the communists.[40] In maintaining a neutral position politically, Sergei insisted that while the Church would not contradict the government it would also refuse to "enter into any special

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[37]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 182. [38]Ibid., p. 183.

[39]Spinka, The Church, p. 64. [40]Ibid., p. 62.

engagement [with the authorities] to prove" the Church loyalty. Nor would he, as head of the Church, take the responsibility for or watch over the political tendencies of other clergy.[41] He, therefore, claimed the right of not being a policeman on behalf of the State over the political views of individual churchmen.

This interpretation of separation between the Church and the State was apparently not satisfactory to the Soviet authorities. Émigré Church sources reported that Sergei was given a government ultimatum to dissolve the Church Synod abroad which was openly hostile to the Soviet government, to unfrock and anathematize the hierarchs connected with it and to adopt the Gregorian calendar.[42] When he refused he was arrested.

Three and a half months after his arrest, Sergei was released from prison on March 30, 1927, in a surprise move by the government. On June 29th he issued his famous "Declaration" to the "pastors and flock" of the Church. The probability that the substance of the "Declaration" was agreed upon while he was in prison appears likely due to the government's support of his efforts following his release. Shortly after his release he summoned a conference of bishops and organized a Temporary Patriarchal Synod to assist him in his effort to secure the legalization of his Church administration by the Soviet government. This effort was rewarded almost immediately. The Temporary Patriarchal Synod which Sergei organized received permission to begin its functions in May and was shortly thereafter registered by the

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 183.

government as a legal entity.[43]

This was a major step toward "normalization" in Church--State relations since the 1918 Law of Separation of Church and State had made provision for legal registration of only local parishes. The Patriarch and his successors were heretofore technically not recognized by the State as administrators of the Church. This successful recognition which Sergei gained in 1927 was a major achievement not only in terms of the Church's relation to the State, but perhaps more importantly in practical terms, of its victory over the Living Church faction which had nearly gained complete control of the Church only a year or so earlier. Obviously, the government had decided that its support of Sergei and the Patriarchal faction was in its own best interests.

In his famous "Declaration" issued in June, Metropolitan Sergei called upon the Church to express its "gratitude" to the Soviet government for the "interest it was showing in all the religious needs of the Orthodox."[44] He then went on to identify the interests of the Church with the interests of the government.

> At the same time let us assure the government that we will not abuse the confidence it has shown toward us . . . . We want to be Orthodox and at the same time to recognize the Soviet Union as our fatherland whose joys and successes are our joys and successes and whose setbacks are our setbacks. Every attack directed against the USSR . . . is resented as being directed against ourselves.[45]

In subsequent interviews with the Soviet press, and in letters and

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[43] Ibid., p. 185.

[44] Bourdeaux, Opium, p. 56.

[45] Ibid.

reports to the faithful, Sergei continued to stress loyalty to the established regime. He maintained that Patriarch Tikhon would have followed a similar policy had he lived a little longer. In an interview with an *Izvestia* reporter, he stated that he not only condemned hostility to the Soviets but that under his leadership the Church was establishing working relationships with the government and none of the clergy should do anything that would undermine the Soviets.[46] He also declared that the Soviet government was guiltless of any injustice toward the Church. Its "distrust of all Church functionaries [was] just."[47]

Sergei's strong pro-government stance did not go unchallenged. The clergy in Leningrad, for example, led by Metropolitan Joseph, strongly opposed his "Declaration." Sergei sent young bishop Nickolai Yarushevick to fight the Josephite schism and there is some evidence that the Soviet secret police assisted the young bishop in regaining the allegiance of the clergy by silencing most of the anti-Sergei group.[48] Metropolitan Peter, who had been named by Tikhon as the Guardian of The Patriarchal Throne and who had been earlier arrested and exiled, was permitted to return to Moscow in order to place his signature on the Declaration. He refused to do so, however, and was shortly after again arrested and exiled to the Island of Khe. In September of 1927 he wrote, "For the first Bishop, such a declaration is not permissible . . . . I have trusted Metropolitan Sergei, and now I see that I was mistaken."[49]

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[46]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 187.

[47]Spinka, The Church, p. 69.

[48]Kolarz, Religion, p. 44.

[49]Spinka, The Church, p. 71.

The Soviet press expressed a cynical attitude toward Sergei's overenthusiastic support of the government and thereby offered a clue concerning the ambivalence within the government toward the new official Church attitude. The editorial opinion of *Izvestia* declared that Sergei was merely being realistic in terms of the Church's own future in shifting from a former policy of outright opposition to one of governmental support. "The adoption of Soviet coloration compelled by the frame of mind of the workers and the peasants," stated *Izvestia*, "the attempt to delay a full rupture between the people and the church--in this is the basic meaning of the proclamation of the churchmen."[50]

One other important factor which marked the "Declaration" in the Summer of 1927 as a major turning point in the official policy of the Orthodox Church toward the State was its exoneration of the Soviet government from any guilt of oppression or persecution of the Church or churchmen. Since that time there has been no mention in official Church publications of persecution or unwarranted State interference in Church affairs. Rather, all blame for previous trouble between the Church and the State was placed on the émigré clergy and any reference to contemporary discord was imputed to wrong policies of Church leaders. In spite of all provocations and periods of bitter government sponsored antireligious campaigns which frequently resulted in illegal closings of churches and monasteries along with more "legal" acts of religious suppression, the official attitude of the Patriarchal Church was to deny any complicity on the part of the government in these acts. In fact,

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[50]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 187.

one of the most active periods of antireligious activity came in the years 1927-1930, immediately after the Church made its peace with the government. It would appear that the peace making was entirely unilateral. In February, 1930, when Sergei issued a statement asserting that there was full freedom of worship in the USSR and rejecting the protests of the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury against Soviet religious persecution, the Archbishop Toann of Riga stated in an interview that the opinion and attitude of the Metropolitan of Moscow (Sergei) could not be the real views of the spiritual leaders of the Orthodox Church in Russia.[51]

While no over-all statistics are available, some scattered examples indicate that the efforts of the antireligious campaign conducted primarily through the League of Militant Godless had a considerable effect on the Church. Moscow, which had over 460 Orthodox Churches at the time of the Revolution, had only 224 functioning Orthodox Churches by January 1, 1930, even though the city's population had grown by 50 percent. By 1933 the number of Orthodox Churches had been reduced to about one hundred.[52] These figures are taken from *Antireligioznik*, the official publication of the League of Militant Godless, but other sources tend to corroborate this decline. In spite of this decline, however, the Church was far from dead. In February 1930, Metropolitan Sergei claimed about thirty thousand parishes and 163 bishops.[53]

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[51] The New York Times, February 17, 1930.

[52] Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 267.

[53] Ibid., p. 270.

In 1928 the government, on Sergei's request, granted permission to the Church to begin publication of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. Permission was also granted to open a theological school for training clergy in Moscow. Neither of these activities, however, continued for very long. At the same time, the government officially adopted antireligious aims among the objectives of the First Five-Year Plan. Included among these was a tightening up of restrictions on religious education and a revision from "non-religious" education to "antireligious" education in the public schools. Article IV of the Constitution of the RSFSR was changed to read that while freedom of worship and "religious confession" was granted to believers, freedom of "propaganda" was now restricted to antireligious organizations and citizens.[54] In 1929, the Fourteenth Congress of the Soviets made "religious propaganda" a criminal offense.

Metropolitan Sergei continued to demonstrate his loyalty to the regime, however, and his exchange with Metropolitan Evlogy of the west European Archdiocese is a good illustration of this attitude. In 1927 Metropolitan Evlogy had declared himself and his clergy as apolitical and promised Metropolitan Sergei that he would not permit the use of the churches for political purposes. However, in 1930, Evlogy accepted the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury to participate in prayers held in England on behalf of the persecuted Russian Church.[55] While Evlogy took care to make no outright political statements regarding or during his participation in this prayer-conference, he was severely

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[54]Spinka, The Church, p. 93. [55]Ibid., p. 78.

rebuked for his action by Metropolitan Sergei and finally, on July 11, 1930, deprived by Sergei of his post as the administrator of the West European Archdiocese. Evlogy refused to recognize the order and instead placed himself under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Photius II of Constantinople who made him his Exarch.[56] Later in an interview with the official Soviet News Agency *Tass* Sergei was reported to have declared that

> in the Soviet Union no religious persecution has ever occurred nor does it now exist; . . . the churches are closed not by government order but because of the will of the inhabitants; . . . priests themselves are guilty of not making use of the freedom of preaching granted them, . . . the Church itself does not desire to open theological training institutes.[57]

He also stated that the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury for prayer on behalf of the Russian Church was "stinking of Naphtha," an allegation that the Church of England was merely acting as a propaganda agent for the British government in its attempt to control the oil from the Middle East.[58]

During the ten-year period from Sergei's "Declaration" in June 1927, until 1937, while Sergei led the Church to a policy of total and unreserved support of the Soviet government, the antireligious campaign in the Soviet Union reached the height of its fervor and statistical success. The League of Militant Godless which had been organized in 1925 reached a membership of 465,000 in 1929, then jumped to two million in 1930 and by 1932 reported its number as 5,673,000.[59]

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[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid., p. 79.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., p. 76.

At the beginning of this period the government had extended a few small concessions to the Church such as granting the Patriarchate official recognition and allowing a very limited edition of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* to be published. Beyond this the collaboration between the Church and the State appeared to be all one sided with the ironic twist that while the government aided and abetted the antireligious campaign and made it more difficult for the Church to recruit, propagandize or evangelize, the official head of the Church grew more and more eloquent in his praise of the fairness and justice of the government's policy.

By 1936 however, an apparent shift in the government's policy was to be noted in the sharp reduction of the antireligious campaign and the removal of the legal distinction between "working" and "non-working" citizens. This act reenfranchized the clergy and permitted their children to enjoy equal educational rights for the first time since 1918.[60]

A new wave of political purges swept the Soviet Union in the period from 1936 to 1938, and clergymen were among those accused, arrested or executed for various alleged antigovernment activities. However, there was no particular religious purge during this period and the clergy of the Orthodox Church seemed to have fared somewhat better than the general population. It is worth noting in this regard that nowhere was there any suggestion that Metropolitan Sergei was in any way involved in the alleged antigovernment plots.

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[60]Curtiss, The Russian Church, pp. 273-76.

After 1939 the Church gained strength both in numbers and in government favor when Russia annexed several western territories such as Byelorussia and Western Ukraine, where the Orthodox Church had a substantial following. The Orthodox Church had always been organizationally and theologically inclined toward centralism within its own life. This tradition accommodated well with the desire of the Soviet government to consolidate the people of its newly acquired territories. An example of this mutual assistance between the Russian Church and the Russian State can be found in their common efforts to incorporate the Russian occupied territory of Poland (Western Ukraine) in 1939. The Russian Orthodox Church by its own act restored its jurisdiction over the churches in Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia which had been lost to the Polish Autocephalous Church in 1924. When the Soviets assumed control of the government, the leaders of the Autocephalous Church were arrested and removed from authority. This cleared the way for the Moscow Patriarchate to exercise its jurisdiction. In so doing, the Church assisted the integration of the conquered territories into the Soviet Union and prevented the emergence of separatist Church organizations such as had arisen in the Ukraine earlier.[61]

A similar kind of Church--State cooperation occurred during the war years in an attempt to preserve the loyalty of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to the Moscow Patriarchate and at the same time insure a resistance movement against the Nazi occupation. The Germans had reestablished an Autocephalous Orthodox Church in the occupied Ukraine

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[61]Kolarz, Religion, p. 114.

and had found an exiled bishop to head it. The Moscow Patriarchate publically condemned the validity of this leadership. Its efforts were assisted by the Kremlin which disseminated the pastoral letters of Metropolitans Sergei and Nickolai through the official Soviet propaganda services. The letters threatened "eternal damnation" to the ecclesiastical leaders of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church. When the Soviet government recaptured the Ukrainian territory, the leaders of the Autocephalous Church disappeared and the Church came once again under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate.[62]

When the Germans violated their treaty with Russia and attacked its borders on June 22, 1941, the situation between the Church and the State in Russia became decidely less ambiguous. The Nazi invasion, which according to German propaganda was for the purpose of liberating the Russian people and Church from the godless oppression of the Bolsheviks, offered an opportunity to the Russian Church leaders to alter their relation to the Soviet Government with some real hope of success. They might have called on the religious faithful to go over to the side of the "invader-liberator," or they could have called for an overthrow of the Soviet leaders. Whether these possibilities were ever entertained by the leaders of the Church is unknown for on the very day that the German armies crossed the Soviet border, Metropolitan Sergei issued an appeal to the faithful urging them to render every possible aid to the Soviet government. Before the government had been consulted and prior to the time that the government press could print his statements, Sergei

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[62] Ibid., p. 116.

began to distribute mimeographed encyclicals against the invaders.[63] The appeal from the Church, which later was imitated by the government, was for the popular defense of "Mother Russia." There can be no doubt that this action by the Church had an important affect on public morale of which the Soviet government was keenly aware. During the course of the war, Sergei issued twenty-three official proclamations and appeals, urging his people to offer any sacrifice in the defense of their country. These proclamations were subsequently published by the government in a book entitled *The Russian Orthodox Church and the Great Patriotic War*.

In 1942 the Moscow Patriarchate published a book edited by Metropolitan Nickolai, Exarch of the Ukraine and third-ranking official in the Russian hierarchy, entitled *The Truth About Religion in Russia*. In it Nickolai disavowed any claim that the Church was at any time under duress by the State. In the preface, however, he acknowledged the antireligious ideology of the Communist Party but stated that the constitutional guarantee of freedom of worship . . . "does not in the slightest obstruct the religious life of the faithful or of the Church generally . . . ."[64]

Of equal importance, however, was the sounding of the traditional note of the identification of the Russian Church with the State in spite of the degree to which it might agree or disagree, accommodate or

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[63]John W. Lawrence, (ed.), Christians and Communists (London: National Peace Council, 1953), p. 277.

[64]Spinka, The Church, p. 84.

oppose what the Church teaches. "It is clear" wrote Nickolai,

> that the Church once for all must identify its fate--for life or death--with the fate of the people . . . . For even when the Church existed under the Tsarist government, its leaders asserted that she prayed for the regime not in the hope of gain, but in fulfilling her duty revealed to us by God's will. Such also is the position of our Patriarchal Russian Church, in which we differ from all schismatics and schismatizings both abroad and at home.[65]

The Church's loyal support of the government was expressed in deeds as well as words. Huge sums of money were collected and donated to the war effort. In 1944 Metropolitan Alexis of Leningrad, second-ranking figure in the Church hierarchy, stated in a letter to Stalin that the church's contributions to the war effort amounted to the enormous total of 150 million rubles.[66] In addition to being a gauge of patriotic fervor this was also an indication of the significant role which the Church continued to play in the life of the people.

On November 7, 1942, Metropolitan Sergei hailed Stalin as "the divinely anointed [sic] leader" of the nation, and on New Year's Day in 1943, he sent greetings which concluded: "In prayer I wish you health for the New Year and success in all your undertakings, for the welfare of the country is entrusted to you."[67]

All of these expressions of loyalty, support and patriotism did not go unrewarded. The antireligious campaign dropped off early in 1942 and almost ceased entirely during the war years. The publications of the League of Militant Godless shut down in 1941 and most of the

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[65]Ibid., pp. 83-84. [66]Ibid., p. 66.

[67]Curtiss, The Russian Church, p. 291.

antireligious museums were either converted into museums of church history or closed. On Easter eve, 1942, the Moscow curfew was lifted in order that the faithful might attend midnight worship. The government named Metropolitan Nickolai to the Extraordinary State Commission for investigating German war crimes and lifted long standing restrictions on the use of certain sacred religious objects such as the Ikon of the Ierian Virgin long confined in the closed Donskai Monastery.[68]

The most important and surprising act of the government toward the Church which revealed the changing government policy, however, was the invitation issued by Premier Stalin to the three leading hierarchs of the Church to a personal audience with himself and Molotov. On September 4th Metropolitans Sergei, Alexis of Leningrad and Nickolai of Kiev met with the two Soviet leaders and established the beginning of a new relationship between the Russian Church and State which was to operate for the next fifteen years. According to *Izvestia*, Stalin expressed his sympathy to a proposal offered by the churchmen to hold an all-Church Sobor in the near future to elect a new Patriarch.[69] Four days later the Sobor met in Moscow. Nineteen bishops proceeded to elect Metropolitan Sergei as the second Russian Patriarch chosen since the days of Peter the Great. His election was unanimous and inevitable since the Sobor decided to dispense with the ancient practice of allowing the most aged of their number to draw the selected name out from among the names of several nominees and instead placed only one name in nomination, that of Metropolitan Sergei. It seems highly likely that

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[68] Ibid., p. 292. [69] Ibid.

this was done to guarantee the election of the man to whom Stalin had given his approval.

The Sobor, beside electing a patriarch, passed a unanimous vote of thanks to the government and excommunicated anyone who "renounced the faith and the fatherland by going over to the enemy."[70] The identification of "faith" and "fatherland" plus the designation of "going over to the enemy" as the criterion of renouncing both was revealing, to say the least. Finally the Sobor elected a permanent Holy Synod replacing the temporary one appointed by Sergei in 1927.

The eighteen bishops who attended and made up the Sobor were by no means all of the bishops then officiating in the Russian Church at that time. They were, however, all pro-Sergei as is clear from the unanimous vote, and probably pro-Stalin. The results of this new rapproachment between Church and State will be discussed in the final chapter of this paper.

In summary it is clear that the policy of the Russian Orthodox Church toward the Soviet State had dramatically changed by 1943 over what it had been in 1917-1918 when the Soviet State was being established. No doubt the ideology of the Church relative to the State was an important factor in this change. But the traditional ideology of the Russian Orthodox Church had to deal with an entirely new kind of situation when the Bolsheviks became the unchallanged rulers of Russia, a situation which Orthodox theology had not previously taken into account. Ordinarily the Orthodox Church had no difficulty, ideologically

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[70]Spinka, The Church, p. 90.

speaking, in rendering practical and political obedience to the State since the State or ruler was regarded as divinely appointed to guard both the sacred and secular phases of life from harm or deterioration. It was assumed that the head of State would espouse the Orthodox faith, at least formally, and guarantee the Church a free and privileged position in terms of control of the spiritual life of the nation. Under these circumstances the Church might criticize the ruler for some specific action or attitude but never could it challenge the political supremacy of the State since it was a divine dispensation.

When the Bolsheviks came to power, however, the Church was faced with an ideologically impossible situation. The government was not only non-Orthodox but it was openly committed to hostility against the ideology of the Church. This was, of course, why the Church opposed the Soviet government so vehemently in the early years. Gradually, however, as hope faded that the Communist government would not last, the Church sought to maintain an apolitical position and thereby wait out the impossible situation by operating in an exclusively spiritual sphere of influence. This relationship might have lasted for sometime had not a third factor inserted itself into the relationship--a dissident schismatic group of "liberal" churchmen who desired to replace the Patriarchal Orthodox hierarchy in both its political and spiritual spheres of influence. This competitive pressure drove the traditional churchmen to resurrect the ancient tradition of Church--State ideological identification and in the process to over-look a host of obstacles to logical consistency. Thus Metropolitan Sergei could refer

to Premier Stalin as the "great Godgiven leader of the Russian people"[71] in spite of the fact that Stalin had in word and deed rejected any notion of the reality of the divine and had led his Party and government in repeated attacks on the falsehood of religion.

There can be no mistaking the fact that the policy of the Church hierarchy toward the Soviet State from the Summer of 1923 onward was one of accommodation and support in the face of government-sponsored and government-espoused ideological opposition and practical discrimination as evidenced in the limitation of citizenship rights imposed on the clergy. The Church, under the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, was literally fighting for its life during part of this period and out of the smoke of the battle emerged a Church with a somewhat modified ideological orientation.

By 1943 the Moscow Patriarchate had publically embraced the concept of the separation of Church and State which limited the role and function of the Church to spiritual and cultic ones. Religion and politics were regarded as quite separate entities with the only relation between them being their respective concerns for the welfare of the people. In practice, however, the Church performed the important social function of sanctifying the political regime for the Orthodox faithful who remained a statistical majority of the population.

This was a factor of considerable political significance and the Church betrayed its confusion and ambivalence by simultaneously pointing to its apolitical stance on one hand and acting out its almost

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[71] _Ibid._, p. 86.

superpatriotic support of the Soviet regime on the other. The traditional Orthodox ideology, in fact, as a determining factor in the Church's relation to the Soviet State, was being more abused than used, and was receding in its importance.

CHAPTER VI

NON-IDEOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHURCH AND THE STATE IN THE SOVIET UNION FROM 1943 TO 1967

The previous chapters of this study have given historical and philosophical background of the events that have taken place in the Soviet Union in the past twenty-five years which bear on the relationship between the Church and the State. The hypothesis posed at the beginning of this thesis was that the role of ideology, while very important to the creation and consolidation of both the institutions of Church and State in the Soviet Union, was not, however, the primary factor in determining the relationship between those two institutions in the most recent quarter century of their existence.

In order to discover the relative importance of ideology in the relations between the Church and the State from 1943 to 1967, it will be necessary first to describe briefly some of the major non-ideological factors that have altered the Soviet political and ecclesiastical institutions since the second World War. Three of these factors affecting the State will be briefly discussed: the rise of a new bureaucratic class out of a revolutionary Party; the development of Soviet nationalism with its attendant imperialistic tendencies; and the shifts in leadership personnel in the Soviet political hierarchy. These factors have been chosen somewhat arbitrarily. Other facts could be added such as the economic consolidation and industrialization of the country or the development and use of propaganda by the State. But the former three relate specifically to the political control of the

Soviet Union and therefore bear most directly on the changes in the policy of the State toward other institutions. They are sufficient to demonstrate that major non-ideological factors have played a decisive role in determining State policy.

This discussion of non-ideological factors which have influenced the Soviet State will be followed by a brief look at the principle non-ideological factors that have influenced the Church and its policy decisions. Three of these will be discussed. They will be the factors of nationalism, institutional self-preservation, and personnel changes. A discussion of these three non-ideological factors affecting the Church should be sufficient to indicate the significance of non-ideological elements at work in the Church--State relationship, and specifically affecting the policy decisions of the Church.

It must be noted at the outset that to describe the role of ideology as "secondary" in the relationship of the Soviet State to the Russian Church does not mean that ideology is unimportant or non-essential in this Church--State relationship. On the contrary, it is very important and absolutely essential. In comparative terms, ideology is a much more influential factor in the policy decisions of the leaders of the Soviet Union, for example, than in the policy decisions of the leaders of the western democracies. R. N. Carew Hunt has pointed out this particular ideological orientation of the Soviet leaders.

> It has become second nature to these men to regard history as a dialectical process - one of incessant conflict between progressive and reactionary forces which can only be resolved by the victory of the former. The division of the world into antagonistic camps, which is an article of faith, is simply the projection onto the international stage of the struggle within capitalistic society between

> the bourgeoisie, which history has condemned, and the proletariat, whose ultimate triumph it has decreed. The leaders seem to be confident that history is on their side, that all roads lead to communism, and that the contradictions of capitalism must create the type of situation which they can turn to their advantage.[1]

To be sure, ideology has been and continues to be an essential factor influencing the policy decision of the Soviet leaders. But it is not the only factor which influences those decisions nor has it been always constant in its vitality or universal in its interpretation and application.

One of the major non-ideological factors which has had a steadily growing influence in Soviet political life is the expanding bureaucracy, or control apparatus used by the Party elite to effect its totalitarian rule over Soviet society. Milovan Djilas, in his analysis of the Communist system, referred to this phenomenon as the rise of a "new class" in Soviet society.[2] The linkage between the Party elite and the State bureaucracy is a key to an understanding of this analysis.

It has been pointed out previously that the Communist Party and the Soviet State are closely identified in policy and personnel even though they are structurally separate institutions. It has also been noted that the Party has maintained a monopoly on the control of power in Soviet society and therefore is responsible for all foreign and

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[1]R. N. Carew Hunt, "The Importance of Doctrine," The Soviet Crucible, Samuel Hendel, editor (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959), p. 54.

[2]Milovan Djilas, The New Class (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957).

domestic policy decisions of the government. These factors, which have been traced historically from Lenin's emphasis on the Party as the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat at the time of the Revolution to Stalin's personal control of the Party apparatus in 1943, have continued to operate within the Soviet government in the years from 1943 to 1967. The interlocking of the Party and the State is made obvious by the fact that almost all leading Party officials have equivalent high government offices. The two organizations have often announced national policy in joint decrees and at certain times, as during Stalin's rule, a single decree was signed by both Party and State officials. The top position in the Party, the First Secretary, and in the State, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, were held simultaneously by both Stalin (1941-53) and Khrushchev (1958-64). This interlocking relation is displayed all down the line - even to the local Soviet and local Party organization level.

It is in view of this fact that Djilas has written:

> In Communism the State machinery is not the instrument which really determines social and property relationships; it is only the instrument by which these relationships are protected. In truth everything is accomplished in the name of the State and through its regulations . . . . But the Communist Party including the professional party bureaucracy stands above the regulations and behind every single one of the State's acts.[3]

Out of this sort of authoritarian political unity has come the bureaucratic ruling class with the Party as its core. A key to an understanding of this "new class" concept is the principle of ownership.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Djilas maintained that the Communist bureaucrats were more than official functionaries of political masters as in a capitalist economy. Rather, they were part of an owning class. "As defined by Roman law," wrote Djilas, "property constitutes the use, enjoyment and disposition of material goods. The Communist political bureaucracy uses, enjoys and disposes of nationalized property."[4] The new class, then, is made up of all those who have special privileges and economic preferences because of the administrative monopoly which they hold. The Communist Party commanded the exclusive right to use, enjoy and distribute the goods of nationalized property. Thus these goods became the property of a discernible stratum of the Party and the bureaucracy gathered around it. In an analysis of the ruling group in the Soviet Union in the early 1960's, Andrew Gyorgy reported that it was composed of three main groups: (1) the ruling elite whose average income was 9000 rubles annually, (2) the managers and technical intelligentsia who averaged 8000 rubles per year, and (3) the non-technical intelligentsia whose average income was 5000 rubles annually. This income level was well above that of the average soviet citizen and was exclusive of other amenities such as state automobiles and summer homes which were also the rewards of membership in the ruling "class."[5]

Djilas was quite careful not to suggest that the members of the ruling class in a Communist system were consciously aware of their

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[4]Ibid., p. 44.

[5]Andrew Gyorgy, Communism In Perspective (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1964), pp. 168-170.

status as an owning and exploiting group.

> The new class is the most deluded and least conscious of itself . . . . A member . . . does not consider himself an owner and does not take into account the special privileges he enjoys. He thinks that he belongs to a group with prescribed ideas, aims, attitudes and roles. This is all he sees. He cannot see that he belongs to a special social category--the *ownership* class.[6]

However, once part of the ownership class, a member is aware that the monopolistic power of the ruling class must be maintained rigidly and without exception.

> Because of its totalitarianism and monopolism, the new class finds itself unavoidably at war with everything which it does not administer or handle and must deliberately aspire to destroy or conquer it.[7]

This is, of course, in line with the peculiar dynamic of totalitarian systems which requires unanimity of both thought and action. In Soviet totalitarianism, this unanimity was based first of all on the correctness of Marxism-Leninism as it was interpreted and embodied in the ruling Party. Gradually as the ruling authoritative body became farther and farther removed from the source of its authority by time and circumstance, the ruling body itself assumed the sacred role of infallibility that was once given only to its ideological masters. Power, which once was used by the revolutionaries to overturn a corrupt and exploitive system, and then defended as necessary to establish the new ideal system, was finally used to perpetuate that system in a position of authority and privilege. The establishment and continuance of ideological unity "from the top" has remained the most essential characteristic of the Communist Party. Once ideological

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[6]Djilas, The New Class, p. 59. [7]Ibid., p. 56.

unity was established it operated powerfully as prejudice. Party members were educated in the idea that ideological unity was the holy of holies and that factionalism in the Party was the greatest of crimes. So, Stalin had to eliminate Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and others since their disagreement delayed his totalitarian control. Later, when the ideological unity of the ruling elite and class was firmly established, the struggle for power among the leaders after Stalin's death was a struggle within the "consensus" of the ruling class and posed no threat to the disruption of the security or authority of that group. Thus Khrushchev won out over Malenkov, Koganovich and Molotov in 1957 and Bulganin in 1958 to secure personal control over the Party and State apparatus in a struggle that could be objectively identified as a disagreement over nothing more than agricultural production tactics, and subjectively identified as a struggle for personal power.[8] Those who lost in the struggle with Khrushchev were not liquidated as were Stalin's opponents, but simply demoted to a lesser position of power in the Party and State bureaucracy.

Ideological discrimination, as indicated above is another key characteristic of the ruling class. This means the rejection of all ideas and theories regarding man and the world that differ from the official "line" of the ruling group. Enough has already been said to establish this point. Djilas agreed that "ideological discrimination is a condition for the continuance of the Communist System," and that

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[8]Robert Conquest, Power and Policy in the USSR (New York: St Martin's Press, 1962), pp. 346-350.

totalitarian ideology is not only the result of certain forms of government and ownership". . . but it aided in their creation and supports them in every way."[9] However, he found ideology secondary among the factors used by the ruling group in its control over society. He identified three factors inherent in Communist totalitarianism for controlling the people. "The first is power, the second ownership, the third ideology . . . ," and power played the most important role of the three.[10] In the early stages of the Soviet regime one could hardly debate the question of the primacy of ideology over power or vice versa since they were both essential and inseparable to the Revolution and the establishment of socialism. This, however, has changed. According to Djilas, "it can be said that ideas no longer play the main predominant role in Communism's control of the people. Communism as an ideology has mainly run its course."[11] What then has replaced ideology? The answer Djilas gives is "power."

> Ideas, philosophical principles and moral considerations, the nation and the people, their history, in part even ownership, all can be changed and sacrificed, but not power. Because this would signify Communism's renunciation of itself, of its own essence. [sic] Individuals can and do this, but the Class, the Party, the oligarchy cannot . . . . Power is almost exclusively an end in Communism because it is both the source and the guarantee of all privileges. By means of and through power the material privileges and ownership of the ruling class over national goods are realized. Power determines the value of ideas and suppresses or permits their expression.[12]

Ideology thus becomes a tool of the ruling class to maintain and

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[9]Djilas, The New Class, p. 145.

[10]Ibid., p. 167.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 170.

perpetuate itself in power. The new class under Khrushchev and the collective leadership no longer needed revolutionaries or internal dogmatists but rather practical men to deal with an increasingly complex, industrial society. But without the charismatic leaders to embody the ideology for the masses, it became necessary to identify the ruling class and the ideology together in the minds of the masses. Hence a greatly expanded propaganda department was given increased influence in the bureaucratic structure.

A final important factor related to the ruling class in the Soviet System is the ubiquity of laws along with their lack of use. On paper the Soviet Union could be described as a nation of laws. The Soviet Constitution, if fully operative, would form the basis for a well ordered and highly democratic system. However, there is a flaw. The legal system is apparently established for two purposes. On the one hand it serves the propaganda purpose of demonstrating to the outside world the existence of democratic safeguards for Soviet citizens. On the other hand, the laws are written in the interests of the "new class." Other citizens enjoy the rights of the laws conditionally; only if they are not "enemies of socialism."[13]

> Legally everyone stands equally before material goods and the formal owner is the state. In reality the new class alone enjoys the rights of ownership. A demand for freedom would force the new class to make concessions to a new force or unmask its own ruling and exploiting characteristics . . . . While promising to abolish social differences, it must always increase them by acquiring the products of the nations' workshops and granting privileges to its adherents.[14]

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[13]*Ibid.*, p. 89.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 66.

Students of Soviet politics are not all in agreement with Djilas concerning his "new class" interpretation of socio-political phenomena in the Soviet Union. E. H. Carr, for example, argues strongly against the use of the term "class" in identifying the ruling group in Soviet society.

> There is no ruling class in Soviet Russia. There is a ruling group which finds its institutional embodiment in a party
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> A class is an economic formation, a party a political formation . . . . In Soviet Russia . . . economics means politics, and the structure of Soviet society must be analyzed in terms not of economic class but of political party.[15]

It would seem to the author that the controversy which Mr. Carr seems to raise is more a matter of semantics than a real issue. His clear academic distinction between "class" and "party" is muddied by his own observation that "in Soviet Russia . . . economics means politics." If by this observation Mr. Carr means that when the Soviet leaders discuss and refer to economic matter they do so in a closed ideological framework which turns the discussion into a concatenation of facts and ideological rationalizations--essentially political in nature, his observation is no doubt correct but irrelevant. The issue under debate is the basis of the ruling group's power - not whether its consideration of economic matters is political in nature. If, on the other hand, by this observation he means that the real economic phenomena in the Soviet Union is so manipulated by societal control

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[15]E. H. Carr, "Who Rules In Soviet Society," The Soviet Crucible, Samuel Hendel, editor (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1959), p. 411.

that it must be interpreted and understood as within the context of Soviet politics, he merely adds substance to Mr. Djilas' case. For Mr. Djilas has argued that the Soviet leaders made use of political power for the purpose of maintaining their position of political control and that complete control and manipulation of the nation's economy which created a new economic class was essential to their political goals.

However, whether one refers to the phenomena described by Djilas as "class," "party" or "ruling group," the following facts stand and must be taken into consideration: an expanding bureaucracy exists which is committed to the absolute correctness of the policy decisions and ideological line coming down from the ruling elite and it is dependent for its own existence upon the monopolistic control of the elite over the means and goods of production. Any institution, therefore, which challenges the authority of the elite or the operation of the bureaucracy is immediately suspect. These facts will have an important bearing on a consideration of the role of the ideology in the relations between the State and the Church.

The second factor which must be briefly examined for a proper assessment of the State's policy toward the Church between 1943 and 1967 is the factor of *nationalism*. In the introduction to the volume entitled *Marxism and the Modern World*, editor Milorad Drachkovitch sounded a note that is frequently heard from political analysts when he wrote "Nationalism--the strongest emotional force of this century--will . . . in all probability determine the fate of communism . . . ."[16] There is

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[16]Milorad M. Drachkovitch (ed.), Marxism in the Modern World (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. xiv.

nothing in the Marxist-Leninist ideology that would give strong support to the development of nationalism in Russia or elsewhere. In fact, the international dimension of the projected revolution and the world fraternity of the proletariat are basic assumptions of Marxism-Leninism. These ideological factors would argue against the creation of strong national loyalties. However, Marx never envisioned and Lenin failed to take fully into account the deep national feelings of the Russian people. It was Stalin who recognized the undeniability of these national traditions and promulgated the doctrine of "Socialism in one country" in 1924, which has become the ideological justification for Soviet nationalistic policy since that time.

The deep national feelings of the Russian people, which have strongly affected Soviet foreign and domestic policy, are, of course, shared by the Russian Orthodox Church with its heritage of slavophilism. "The idea of 'Holy Russia' reflects a broad popular religious feeling about Russia," wrote Zenkovsky in *The Spirit of Russian Orthodoxy*.[17]

> Russians have one unique feature. They believe their country to be inhabited by sanctity. They are the only Christian people who pray for their country as a holy entity . . . . "Holy Russia" conveys a church nationalism --i.e. national dedication to the sacred.[18]

This traditional Russian nationalism, however, is not limited to those Russians who belong to the Russian Orthodox Church. As Bauer, Inkeles and Kluckhohn discovered in their extensive survey of Russian émigrés

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[17]Vasily V. Zenkovsky, "The Spirit of Russian Orthodox," The Russian Review, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (January, 1963), p. 52.

[18]Ibid., pp. 53, 55.

(refugees), "the depth of loyalty to 'the motherland' is an outstanding sentiment in all classes of the population, irrespective of religion, political attitudes and personality structure."[19]

The Soviet leaders under Stalin took particular advantage of this tradition during and following the period of the second World War. The slogans of Marxism-Leninism were largely dropped during the war period. Statements expressing pride in the Russian past, Slav brotherhood and even exaltation of historical heroes including saints of the Russian Orthodox Church if they were also statesmen or military commanders were printed in state news media. For example, Dimitry Donskoy and Alexander Nevsky, well known Russian Churchmen, were lauded for their patriotic contribution to the greatness of the Russian people.[20]

In his exhaustive study of Soviet propaganda, Frederick Barghoorn noted that patriotism is the supreme symbol of Soviet Russian nationalism.

> It [Patriotism] is the most abstract, general and frequently repeated slogan of a system of demands for loyalty to the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It symbolizes the priority of these demands and the values and identifications associated with them over all other social and political relations.[21]

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[19]Raymond A. Bauer, Alex Inkeles and Clyde Kluckhohn, How the Soviet System Works (Vintage Russian Library, New York: Random House Inc., 1956), p. 168.

[20]Walter Kolarz, Religion in the Soviet Union (New York: St Martin's Press, 1961), p. 49.

[21]Frederick C. Barghoorn, Soviet Russian Nationalism (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 9.

The appeal to national patriotism which became almost chauvinistic toward the end of the war, is completely understandable in light of the realities of the political situation in the Soviet Union. As Barghoorn pointed out, "the Soviet Union is in fact the most highly integrated and centralized nation state that has yet existed in the world."[22]

A number of writers in dealing with this mixture of traditional Russian and modern Soviet State nationalism have spoken of Soviet or Russian "messianism" as the term most appropriate in identifying this phenomenon. While this is a term rising out of and identified with a religious dimension of society, it has political application to the expansionist or imperialistic tendencies of totalitarian political systems. Thus the extreme nationalism of Soviet Russia, combined with the international emphasis of Soviet ideology has produced a messianic coloration on Soviet nationalism. The 1961 Draft Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is liberally sprinkled with "messianic" texts. The following statement from that Program is an example.

> The Communist Parties are the vanguard of the world revolutionary movement . . . . The Communist Party of the Soviet Union holds that an uncompromising struggle against all departures from Leninism, is a necessary condition for the further strengthening of the unity of the world Communist movement and for the consolidation of the Socialist camp.[23]

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[22] _Ibid._, p. 4.

[23] Thomas P. Whitney (ed.), _The Communist Blueprint For the Future_ (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1962), pp. 140-141.

In practical terms, the expansionist or imperialist post-war policy of the Soviet Union is well known. As the Russian army drove west in 1944-45 pushing the German forces back, the government used the army to gain political as well as military advantage. For example, it failed to aid General Bor, the Polish leader who led an abortive uprising against the Germans in Warsaw. The Soviet leaders knew that the Polish underground forces were loyal to the exiled Polish government in London and consequently preferred to have the Soviet forces liberate Warsaw. Then they established a government subservient to Moscow.[24]

This Russian nationalism with its messianic overtones has had a significant role to play in the relations between the State and the Russian Orthodox Church since both institutions were, in different ways, heirs to a similar messianic national tradition. Illustrations of this factor in Church--State relationships will be discussed later.

The third and final factor to be discussed which affected the relations between the Church and the State in the past quarter century is the personnel changes which took place in the Soviet power elite and the power struggle involved in those changes. It is common knowledge that Joseph Stalin secured and consolidated the political power of the Soviet Union in his own hands through a careful manipulation of his personal supporters into key positions in the Party and by exercising a tight control over the secret police through which he conducted

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[24]Melvin C. Wren, The Course of Russian History (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), p. 689.

periodic purges of those Party members suspected of challenging his power. The terror tactics of his rule, however, were abandoned and denounced by his successors. Since no one person inherited the dictatorial power which Stalin wielded, a struggle ensued among the top Party leaders for the vacant dominant position.

For a period of five years following Stalin's death the top positions in the Party and the State were held by separate persons. This period, known as the period of "collective leadership," was generally one of relaxation. The tight police control over all of Soviet society was eased, and terror and coercion tactics for securing compliance with government policy were curtailed. In 1956 Party Secretary Khrushchev read a "secret speech" at the Twentieth Party Congress which denounced the dictatorial rule and methods of Stalin as "willful," "capricious" and "brutal," the result of his "persecution mania which reached unbelievable dimensions."[25] Following this speech and the consequent "destalinization" or relaxation of Party control, a struggle for power ensued which eventuated in the election of Nikita Khrushchev as the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, or Premier, in March, 1958. Once again the top State and Party posts were combined under one man after a five-year period of "collective leadership."

In the course of the struggle the twin desires for ideological orthodoxy on the one hand and for continued control of the party-elite over the masses on the other were deeply involved and at times embattled. However, policies advanced by different persons contending for power

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[25]Conquest, Power and Policy, p. 434.

were frequently sponsored less on their merits than on their usefulness in the struggle. For example, in the late twenties Stalin initially came to power by attacking the "left" policies of Trotsky and Zinoviev, then later appropriated those same policies himself. Similarly, Khrushchev's policy choices indicated that he was a flexible tactician with an inflexible drive to power. In 1953-55, the then-Premier Malenkov argued for what has been classified as a "rightist" position when he favored easing the pressure for rapid economic advance and yielding some concessions to the immediate needs and desires of the people. Khrushchev took an opposite or "leftist" position and accused Malenkov of slackening the pace of industrialization in favor of consumer production. Malenkov was replaced in the Premiership by Bulganin in 1955. In 1957, Malenkov was arguing for an increase in heavy industry while Khrushchev had swung to a support of consumer goods production.

At the time of the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, the "right"--"left" dispute continued to focus around the respective poles of "revisionism" and "dogmatism," but the issue was no longer over policies but over procedure. The "right" revisionists did not merely urge milder, less ideologically pure policies on the leadership, they called in question the absolute right of the leadership to formulate policy at all. Khrushchev at this point was firmly committed to the suppression of this kind of "revisionism" and hence could be labelled a "leftist." Yet as Robert Conquest has noted, "his other main moves have not been notably consistent with this."[26]

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[26] Ibid., p. 28.

> The agricultural programme put forward in September, 1953 was on the whole a realistic one of concessions. On the Tito issue, his restoration of relations in 1955 might be taken as also a "rightist" move, as indeed the attack on Stalinism at the XXth Congress also appears to be in some sense. The economic devaluation of 1957, on the other hand, could be argued to be a move to strengthen dogmatic Party control at the expense of conservative State control of the economy . . . . But Stalin and Khrushchev are not alone in this tendency to change policies to suit power exigencies, which is, in fact common to most of the figures [in this period of Soviet history].[27]

It is, of course, impossible to determine the extent to which the Soviet leaders were motivated by ideological considerations, pragmatic considerations or personal ambition. All policies put forward by Soviet leadership must be justified in terms of their ideological consistency, but it is clear that other factors than ideology were playing influencial roles during the power struggle of the 1950's. There is no reason to suppose that similar forces were not at work throughout this period, including the power shift in 1964 which witnessed the resignation of Khrushchev from both of the top political positions. The non-ideological factor associated with this personal struggle for power can be identified as a factor in which communist ideology is used by one Party leader to support a policy position which in turn is taken to counter the position taken by a political opponent. This factor should be given consideration along with the other two non-ideological factors previously discussed--the survival needs of a new bureaucratic "class" and Soviet Russian nationalism--when an evaluation is made concerning the factors determining the relationship between the Soviet State and

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[27] Ibid.

any non-political internal institution such as the Russian Orthodox Church.

One of the major non-ideological factors affecting the Church during the period from 1943 to 1967 was the Russian nationalistic tradition. This factor, which has been extensively discussed previously, became the major justification of the Church leaders for their continued support of State policies. In a larger sense, it became part of their ideological arsenal when they spoke of good citizenship as one of the divine requirements of acceptable churchmanship. In 1957 Patriarch Alexis wrote that the loyalty of the Church to the State was inevitable because of "the unbreakable bonds between the Church and the aspirations and fate of the people," and "because of the Orthodox conviction in the state power being ordained of God."[28]

Institutional self-preservation was another non-ideological factor at work in the policy decisions of the Church leaders. It has been shown that this was a major factor behind the Church's policy change from opposition to the State to support of it in the early 1920s. The Church condemned all vocal or active opposition to the State throughout the period under consideration, even when this opposition was expressed in support of the Church's freedom from State control. In 1966, for example, Patriarch Alexis wrote a letter to all his bishops warning them to "rebuke severely" any priests who "stir up suspicion and distrust in Church authority and the fatherland." Alexis charged two priests who had written a letter critical of the government, with

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[28]Alexis, The Russian Orthodox Church, p. 15.

attempting to "slander the government and trying to jeopardize church--state relations."[29] Had the Church taken an independent and justifiably critical position toward the State, it is probable that it would not have received the favorable attention from the State which it did receive. In view of the totalitarian nature of the government and its ideological hostility to religion, it is quite likely that any policy of the Church which might have been interpreted as hostile to the State would have made the Church's position very insecure indeed.

The changes in personnel in the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church was a third factor of a non-ideological nature which might be regarded as affecting the policy of the Church toward the State in this period from 1943 to 1967. Patriarch Sergei had firmly established the Church's policy toward the State as one of accommodation to the State's domestic policy along with active and uncritical support of its foreign policy and propaganda. His death in 1944 and the election of Alexis to the patriarchal office did little to change that policy. Metropolitan Nickolai of Krutitzy became the head of the Church's foreign office and performed his ecclesiastical function almost as though he were on the foreign service staff of the government. The only other major change in hierarchal personnel came in 1959 when young Bishop Nikodim replaced Nickolai following the latter's resignation and death. Nikodim altered the position of the Church toward other foreign Church bodies by adopting an ecumenical posture. It might appear that the Church personnel change was the cause of this policy

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[29]<u>New York Times</u>, August 26, 1966, p. 8.

change. However, the Church change in policy was a direct reflection of a State foreign policy change from belligerency to co-existence. Since Nickolai had formerly followed the direction of the State foreign policy very closely, the fact that Nikodim had recently come to power in the Church was probably coincidental with the Church's policy change.

In summary, there were several non-ideological factors that played a major role in influencing the policy decisions of both the Soviet regime and the Russian Church from 1943 to 1967. The first that was discussed was the rise of a bureaucratic class based on ownership of the national resourses. This new class was centered around the elite of the Communist Party and became a participant in both the power and the privileges of totalitarian rule. The role of ideology which was consciously used as a guide by the revolutionary leaders who overthrew the old autocracy, gradually became an unconscious tool of the new class for maintaining itself in power. Because of the totalitarian nature of this ruling class, the substance of its ideology could be changed to meet the needs of the times, but under no circumstances could discontinuity or disunity in ideology be admitted. Ideology then became a flexible standard, manipulated by the elite, to maintain unity and control and to eliminate differences and opposition.

A second factor considered was nationalism. The Russian people have a strong national tradition and the Soviet regime appealed to this popular tradition to gain support for its policies. During World War II, appeals to Marxist-Leninist ideology were almost completely replaced by patriotic appeals to Russian nationalism, and

following the War, nationalism and Marxist internationalism were combined to support a "messianic" imperialistic policy.

The non-ideological factor of nationalism was also discussed in terms of its role in influencing Church policy. The Church attempted to identify the Russian nation and its sacred traditions with the Soviet government and thus justify its uncritical support of State policy.

A third factor discussed was the personal power struggle among the Soviet political elite. Stalin and Khrushchev both illustrated the fact that Soviet policy was at times determined, at least partly, by their personal efforts to gain and maintain themselves in power. In this personal struggle, ideology often was used to justify a position taken by one leader in an effort to gain power over another.

There also were several personnel changes in the Church hierarchy in the period under consideration, but only one that seemed to influence a change in Church policy. However, the policy of the State altered at this same time and there is good reason to suppose that the Church changed its policy in reflection of the government policy change rather than because of its own change in clerical personnel.

A final non-ideological factor which affected Church policy specifically was that of institutional self-preservation. The Church early discovered that its life depended on the good favor of the totalitarian State regime. Therefore, the non-ideological factor of institutional self-preservation was a constant influence on its policy decisions.

These non-ideological factors clearly had a decisive influence on the State and the Church. In some cases policy decisions by the leaders of the State and the Church seemed to be guided by these factors while ideology was being used to support and justify those decisions. In other cases ideology, no doubt, played a dominant influential role. A careful look at the relations between the Church and the State from 1943 to 1967 will be necessary to determine whether ideological or non-ideological factors were the primary influence on the policy decisions of these two institutions.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH--STATE RELATIONSHIP IN THE SOVIET UNION FROM 1943 TO 1967

The subject of this study--the relations between the Church and the State in the Soviet Union between 1943 and 1967--comes to focus in this chapter. The hypothesis under consideration is that during this period ideology played a secondary rather than a primary role in its influence on the policy decisions of the Soviet State and the Russian Orthodox Church.

This chapter will attempt to show that while ideology was involved in an important way in the relationship between the Church and the State from 1943 to 1967, the role that it played was considerably modified from that which it played during the revolutionary period. The events, statements, and policy decisions that make up the relationship in this more recent twenty-five year period will reveal that ideology was used more to support and justify this relationship than to guide and control it.

The procedure which will be followed will be a chronological discussion of events from 1943 through 1967 which illustrate the policy of the two institutions concerned. The non-ideological factors which were discussed in the previous chapter as well as the factors of ideology will be noted in the course of the discussion so that conclusions may be drawn based on a comparison of the influence of these two factors on the Church--State relationship.

The account of the events of both the State and the Church will be discussed together in this chapter rather than in two separate chapters as has been done with previous history. This treatment will be used in order to hold repetition to a minimum and to place the acts of the State in immediate juxtaposition to the acts of the Church so that the relationship between them can be more easily observed and understood. It is the author's belief that these events will be sufficient to either substantiate or vitiate the hypothesis of the paper.

The Church--State relationship from 1943 to 1967 was begun with a marked change in the State policy toward the Church. This change, which began during World War II, was made official by the September, 1943, conference between the leaders of the Church and the State. In reporting the conference Moscow radio stated that

> Premier Stalin and Foreign Commissar V. M. Molotoff received Metropolitan Sergei of Moscow, Alexis of Leningrad and Nickolai former Archmetropolitan of the Ukraine, on September 4th. They informed him of their intention to call a council for the election of a Patriarch and to constitute a Holy Synod. To this the Premier agreed.[1]

This meeting between the leaders of the Church and the State was preceded by two years of ardent Church support for the war effort which included both frequent patriotic appeals and material solicitations by the Church. Metropolitan Sergei issued twenty-three messages and proclamations urging the faithful to fight the invaders, and the State published and distributed these widely. This support of the State during the war years was seriously questioned by the émigré Church and other

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[1]New York Times, September 5, 1943, p. 13.

foreign observers as to whether this support was motivated completely by patriotism or also by a desire to buy tolerance and fuller freedom for the future. In response to this questioning, Metropolitan Sergei cited the precedent of nationalism in the history of Russian Orthodoxy.

> Not in the period of feudal principalities, not during the times of the Tartar yoke, not in the times of troubles in the beginning of the 17th century did the Church betray her country to the enemy or take advantage of its weakness for her own interest; on the contrary, She supported, united and strengthened it by all possible means. And the Church cannot change her attitude toward her Country after the October Revolution.[2]

This was a further ideological reinforcement of the policy which the Church adopted in 1927. The Church was implying an identification between the "mother country" and the Soviet political regime. This implication, which was necessary for the Church to be ideologically consistent in its support of the regime was later to be openly stated.

There is no official record of what took place at the September 4th conference between Stalin, Molotoff and the Church leaders, but subsequent events clearly revealed that a new direction in Church--State relations was agreed upon. On September 8th, four days after the historic meeting in the Kremlin, Sergei was elected to the office of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia by a hastily called convocation of eighteen bishops. The official statement of the Church regarding the election reflected the political as well as the ecclesiastical factors which were involved. "Metropolitan Sergei," stated the account, "in

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[2]Patriarch Alexis, (ed.), The Russian Orthodox Church, Organization, Situation, Activity (Moscow: The Moscow Patriarchate, 1957), p. 13.

recognition of his outstanding religious and patriotic activities, was unanimously elected Patriarch . . . ."[3] On September 12th, a permanent Holy Synod was elected and Sergei was enthroned in office. One month later, on October 8th, the government established a new bureau to handle Church affairs called the Department for the Orthodox Church Affairs. It was headed by Georgi Grigorievich Karpov, a former ideological specialist with the secret police. Within a year this new governmental agency had established branch offices in all regions, provinces and republics of the Soviet Union and had acquired over one hundred full time agents. In an interview, G. G. Karpov stated that the work of the department was three fold:

> First, contact between Church and State; second, preparation of laws and regulations regarding Church problems; and third, supervision to insure that all laws relating to the Church are faithfully carried out.[4]

Until the conclusion of the war at least, the Church enjoyed a period of unparalleled freedom from State interference. Even the relentless atheistic propaganda campaign was curtailed. The monthly journal of the Godless Society ceased publication and, as if to dramatically illustrate its change of heart, the government made the printing facilities of the Godless Society available to the Patriarchate. In 1943 Patriarch Sergei issued the first edition of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* since its shutdown in 1936. That Fall he issued a message from the Holy Synod conveying its blessing to the Soviet

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[3] Ibid.

[4] New York Times, August 12, 1944, p. 13.

government and an appeal to Christians throughout the world to unite in the defense of their faith against fascism.[5] The Patriarchal article was reprinted in *Izvestia* as were all of the frequent patriotic and pro-Soviet statements that were issued by the Patriarchate in the years that followed.

On September 18th, the Church announced its decision to excommunicate all priest and laymen who had "cooperated with the enemy." The order was decided upon at the September 8th meeting of bishops and was announced jointly in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* and *Izvestia.* Persons aiding the enemy were denounced as guilty of "Judas treason."[6] In a similar spirit, the *Journal* printed a prayer by the Patriarch which prayed "for our Divinely protected land and for its authorities, headed by its God given leader."[7]

The Church leaders had been supporting the government for some time even in the face of spasmodic administrative pressure on clergy and churches as well as the continual antireligious campaign. The change in government policy was no doubt welcomed by the Church leaders but they made special efforts to show that they did not regard the 1943 situation as new or different. In response to a journalist's question regarding the change in Church--State relations, Patriarch Sergei denied altogether the implication of a changed policy. "If you are

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[5]Ibid., September 18, 1943, p. 9.

[6]Ibid., September 19, 1943, p. 45.

[7]Robert D. Worth, "Faith and Skepticism in the Godless State," The South Atlantic Quarterly, Vol. LX, (1961), pp. 41.

suggesting there has been some change in relations between the Church and the State then I declare that there has been no such change," stated the Patriarch. Those relations, he said, were defined by the decree on freedom of conscience (1918) and by the USSR Constitution (1936).

> Both these documents lay down with sufficient clarity the position and rights of the Church, guaranteeing complete freedom for the celebration of divine rites, and wholly excluding any restrictions on the religious life of Church members and of church life in general.[8]

In the light of these pro-government statements by the Church it is important to note that according to a special Church publication issued in 1942 the number of churches which remained in use in the city of Moscow was seventeen. This stands in sharp contrast to the total of over six hundred churches in use before the Revolution.[9] The Church leaders were obviously closing their eyes to a long and bitter history of State efforts to reduce the Church to non-existence.

One can do no more than speculate on the reason for this attitude on the part of the Church hierarchy which stood in such contradiction to the facts about which the Church leadership could not possibly have been totally unaware. It may have regarded this winking at the facts to be the wisest policy under the circumstances of being subject to a totalitarian State. In any case, the Church continued to pursue this practice in its statements and action and consequently became increasingly a part of the totalitarian State mechanism.

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[8]Alexis, The Russian Orthodox Church, p. 15.

[9]Vladimir Gsovski, Church And State Behind the Iron Curtain (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955), p. xix.

The "no change" in the policy of the Patriarchate was apparently quite acceptable to the Soviet leaders for it was echoed by the Party. In the Party magazine *The War and the Working Class*, an editorial on November 22, 1943, stated that the election of a Patriarch and the establishment of a Holy Synod are "signs of no change in state--church relations." The Constitution "guarantees freedom of religion," stated the editorial. Both events refute the "lies about persecution of religion and the Church and confirm the Church's patriotic support of the war effort against the German invaders."[10] It is clear from this statement that the government was anxious to have the Church support its defense against allegations of Church persecution from the outside world. This the Church was willing to do. Patriotism became the medium for facilitating the new Church--State *modus vivendi*.

On October 5th, Moscow radio reported that the "Supreme Praesidium of the Soviet Union had awarded medals 'for the defense of Leningrad' to Metropolitan Alexei of Leningrad and other members of the Russian Orthodox Church."[11] The Leningrad clergy had helped strengthen the city's defenses and collected funds to finance a Red Army tank column. The next day in a telegram to Stalin, Patriarch Sergei conveyed greetings and prayers to the Premier and stated the Patriarch's action in advising "the clergy and all leaders to contribute to the construction of the Dimitry Donskoy tank column. As a beginning,"

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[10] New York Times, November 22, 1943, p. 8.

[11] Ibid., October 4, 1943, p. 4.

the telegram continued, "the Patriarchy itself contributes 100,000 rubles."[12]

A further development in the fall of 1943 marked the beginning of Church--State cooperation in foreign contacts. Vice Foreign Commissar Ivan M. Maisky made an extensive trip to the Middle East in October which prefaced the Soviet involvement in that area. On October 30th a *New York Times* article noted the visit and reported that

> likewise it is believed that the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Patriarch of Moscow, intends soon to visit this region on a religious pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria to confer with Orthodox Church clerical chiefs. The visit of Maisky and the Patriarch tends to link two traditional Russian tendencies in this region. Under the Tsars, the Russian Orthodox Church considered itself the protector of orthodoxy elsewhere, especially in Greece and the Balkans, and it took an interest in the holy relics in Jerusalem. Now that the Comintern has been abolished [1943] the only two important international bonds the USSR has with the outside world at present are her diplomatic service and the reestablished church whose new position of prominence followed the disestablishment of the international revolutionary organization.[13]

The planned visit of the Patriarch to the Middle East had to be postponed, however, due to the illness of the Patriarch in the winter of 1943-44 and his death in May of 1944. But a year later Alexis, who was elected to the rank of Patriarch in February of 1945, arranged a journey to the Middle East in May and June. The visit of the Patriarch was preceded by an interview with Premier Stalin, and on April 10th his

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[12] Ibid., October 5, 1943, p. 7.

[13] Ibid., October 30, 1943, p. 3.

Foreign minister, V. M. Molotoff, assisted in making arrangements for the trip including the provision of a special government plane.[14]

During the war years the Church leaders had good reason to think that a new era had begun in Church--State relations and that it was largely due to the government's recognition of the valuable role which the Church could play and indeed had been playing in rallying the Russian people to the defense of the mother country. The fact that antireligious propaganda which had practically ceased from 1942 to 1944, began again in 1944 did not seem to alter the strongly supportive policy which the Church hierarchy took toward the government. The fact was, however, that even though the antireligious propaganda campaign was revived, the State policy toward the hierarchy of the Church did not change during Stalin's lifetime. It is possible to describe two quite distinct State policies toward religion developing during the Stalin period. On one hand, the official recognition and preferred status which the State extended toward the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy was manifested in numerous ways, some of which have already been mentioned. On the other hand, the antireligious campaign which was revived in 1944 continued to dominate the State's policy toward the Church on the local level with varying degrees of intensity and destructive effect, and never again totally abated. The unswerving dedication of the Church hierarch to a policy of support for the Soviet government was tied to its ideological moorings in a book entitled *The Russian Orthodox Church*, published by the Moscow Patriarchate in

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[14]Kolarz, Religion, p. 58.

1957. After describing Metropolitan Alexis' pledge of patriotic loyalty to the Soviet State, the following explanation was given:

> Religious life in the country could not take any other direction because of the unbreakable bonds between the Church and the aspirations and fate of the people, and because of the Orthodox conviction in the state power being ordained by God.[15]

This was a true reflection of the spirit of Russian nationalism which existed under the Tsars and which has been described previously by the term, "Holy Russia" or as "Russian messianism." However, the designation of "Holy Russia" is applicable to the Soviet period of Russian history only if one is able to ignore the atheistic ideological commitment of the Soviet government along with its avowed and active program to eradicate religion from the land and only if one can accept as reflecting actual State policy the official propaganda of the government which upheld the separation of Church and State and the freedom of conscience which was promulgated in the Soviet Constitution.

When Patriarch Sergei died on May 15, 1944, Metropolitan Alexis was named *Locum Tenens* or deputy to the Patriarchal throne. Between that time and his election as Patriarch in February, 1945, the Church continued to support the war effort in word and deed. It contributed over 150 million rubles in 1944 alone.[16] A number of churches reopened in Moscow and the Moscow Theological Academy was given permission to renew operations. In November, 1944, a chapel served by the Russian

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[15]Alexis, The Russian Orthodox Church, p. 15.

[16]John Shelton Curtiss, The Russian Church and the Soviet State, 1917-1950 (Boston: Little Brown, 1953), p. 296.

Orthodox Church was opened in the former Soviet Embassy in Istanbul, Turkey. The building containing the chapel served as the summer residence of the Soviet Embassy to Ankara so that the restoration of worship probably meant that permission had been received from Moscow.

The Soviet government received and published a message from the Russian Orthodox Church in the fall of 1944 thanking the government "for its aid to the church."[17] Metropolitan Nickolai had told a reporter the preceding January that the "state was contributing substantially in building materials for the repair of churches."[18] The letter of thanks "for aid" does not specify the kind of aid which was received and probably was intended as a general response of gratitude for government favoritism, including assistance in the rebuilding of Moscow churches.

It is significant also to note the political content of Alexis' letter to Stalin following his appointment as *Locum Tenens* in May, 1944. He addressed Stalin as the "wise leader placed by the Lord over our nation," and pledged his personal loyalty to him in the following words:

> In my future work I will unfailingly keep the principles which characterized the clerical activity of the late Patriarch: to follow the canons of Church regulations on the one side and constant faithfulness to the motherland and the government headed by you on the other . . . . I beg you deeply revered dear Joseph Vessarionovitch, to accept my assurance with the same confidence I feel myself, and trust to the deep feelings of love and gratitude to you with which all ecclesiastical workers under me are inspired.[19]

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[17] New York Times, November 1, 1944, p. 3.

[18] Ibid., January 2, 1944, p. 4. [19] Ibid., May 22, 1944, p. 21.

The farthest position was reached in the government's policy of relaxation of restrictions when in the summer of 1944 G. G. Karpov announced that "the Church enjoys the same legal status as any other private society."[20] According to Soviet law, this was not true. It turned out, however, to be a portent of the future, for the Church was granted the rights of a "juridical person" by statute the following year. However, Karpov went well outside the normal interpretation of the Constitution when he stated that the Church leaders were free to proselyte. "Priests may go to their parishioners and may engage in proselytizing work either in Church or outside without any restriction except those placed on any orderly citizen of the USSR."[21] At this point Karpov seemed to be suggesting that the State felt secure enough to engage the Church in public debate on an equal footing. This was contrary to the constitutional restrictions on religious propaganda, and the Party ideologists were eventually to make this point. But for a time the restrictions were to be lifted. Interestingly enough it was the Baptist and Evangelical Christian groups and not the Russian Orthodox Church which took advantage of this relaxed government policy. The Orthodox Church had never established a system of "Sunday schools," or "youth groups" and had no tradition of evangelical preaching. It appeared to be satisfied to conduct freely the liturgy on Sunday and Holy days and to enjoy the recognition which the State was beginning to give to its hierarchy.

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[20]Ibid., August 18, 1944, p. 6. [21]Ibid.

The antireligious propaganda campaign during this period was aimed strictly at the people, not the institution of the Church. The effort was to instill in the minds of the people, especially the young, a full and satisfying explanation of the universe based on scientific materialism. A 1944 statute regarding teachers colleges stated clearly the goal of the teaching of natural science. "The study of natural sciences must secure the development in the student of a dialectic-materialistic view of nature."[22] It was apparently assumed that if this were accomplished the Church, which had already been greatly reduced and discredited, would survive only for the older generation and eventually die with it. On the administrative level of affairs, however, the State apparently recognized that a cooperative Church hierarchy could serve well the State interests.

A speech by President Kalinin in 1945 ignored the antireligious position of the Party and implied a government plan to include the rebirth of the old "Third Rome" concept in a revitalized pan-slavic movement. "Our government esteems the great public service rendered by your Eminence," Kalinin told Alexis. "But the people expect much more from your Eminence, and the Church. Moscow is already the world centre of international politics. It must also become the spiritual nucleus."[23] Certainly nothing could be clearer than this to illustrate the government's desire that the Russian Orthodox Church should begin

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[22]Gsovski, Church and State, p. xvii.

[23]Edward M. Bennett, "The Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet State, 1946-1956: A Decade of the New Orthodoxy," A Journal of Church and State, Vol. VII, No. 3 (Aug. 1965), p. 425.

a policy of expansion and extension of its influence as far as possible. There is considerable evidence that for the next ten years the Church was deeply engaged in precisely this enterprise with all the support which the State could provide.

On Patriarch Alexis' Middle East trip in May of 1945, one of his many stops was Alexandria where he accepted the local Russian Orthodox colony into communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. He thus inaugurated the policy of taking the Russian Church abroad directly under his own jurisdiction. The official Church account of this event stated that this "signifies the beginning of the penetration of the light of Russian Orthodoxy throughout the world."[24] En route home the Patriarch stopped at Damascus, Syria, the seat of the Patriarchate of Antioch. The Antioch Patriarchate was surrounded by Arabs and prior to the Revolution had received financial support for its schools from the Russian Imperial Palestine Society. When the Tsarist regime fell, this support ceased. There is no record of the conversation between Patriarch Alexis and the Antioch Patriarch Alexander III, but since Alexis' visit, the Soviet regime has provided subsidies to the Antioch Patriarchate.[25]

It is significant to note also, that while the Russian prelate visited every other important ecclesiastical See in the Middle East, and although the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople had been represented at the Church Sobor which elected Alexis to the Patriarchal throne

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[24]Matthew Spinka, The Church In Soviet Russia (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 123.

[25]Ibid.

in Russia, Alexis neither visited him in person nor sent a representative. This omission is significant in that it points to a deliberate attempt by Alexis to demonstrate that Russia and not Constantinople was the center of Orthodox supremacy.

Inside of two years, the Moscow Patriarchate had sent delegations to the Orthodox Churches of Georgia, Bulgaria, Yugoslovia, Romania, the Baltic states of Estonia and Finland and Czechoslovakia and secured from each the recognition of the primacy of the Moscow Patriarchate. It also moved outside the Eastern area and attempted to draw all of the far flung colonies of Orthodoxy in London, Paris, Germany, Prague, Vienna, Harbin, Budapest and the USA under its jurisdiction. In most cases it was successful. The exceptions were the Russian Orthodox Church in America and the Western Archdioceses of the Russian Church under Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, along with the German Church under the leadership of Metropolitan Anastasy of Munich.[26] This "ecclesiastical imperialism" was in accord with the expressed desire of the State to extend Soviet influence through every means.

A clear example of the coercive expansionism of the Russian Church can be seen in its action in 1945 to liquidate the Estonian Autocephalous Church as an independent entity and bring it under the Moscow jurisdiction. The Estonian Autocephalous Church was in existence for nearly twenty-two years during the period between the two wars and throughout most of World War II until 1945. It was founded in 1923 and recognized by the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. The

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[26]Ibid., pp. 23ff.

Soviet policy was against independent Orthodox Churches in the Baltic countries, and so at the time of the first Soviet occupation, the Moscow Metropolitan managed to bring the Estonian Autocephalous Church to an end. The head of the Church, Metropolitan Alexander, under duress, made submission to Moscow in March, 1941. But when the Germans occupied the Balkans a few months later the Church was immediately reestablished. The reoccupation of the country by the Russian Army in 1944 once again opened the Estonian Church to assault by the Moscow Patriarchate and the government.

The Estonian Church was clearly not desirous of being under Moscow's jurisdiction, but it had little choice. The details of its "submission" were recorded in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. The Moscow Patriarchate delegated the task of gaining the submission of the Estonian Church to Archbishop Grigorii of Pskov. He first sent a letter to the Synod of the Estonian Church urging "repentance" and "submission," and then, on March 31, 1945, he went to Tallinn and secured "repentance." The members of the Estonian Synod had to ask for pardon for themselves and for all the clergy and faithful who belonged to the "schismatic church." Their sin was their separateness. The *Journal* admitted that the schism actually ended before the parishes had a chance to express themselves on the matter. No church assembly was called, not even a conference of priests. There was no need to consult the head of the Church, for he, Metropolitan Alexander, together with one third of all the Estonian Orthodox priests, was in exile. The "repentance" and "consent" of five members of the Estonian Synod plus three priests and two laymen were all that was necessary to end

the Estonian Church. Failing such a submission the five could have been accused of collaborating with the Germans as were the leaders of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church at its demise. As it was, they did submit and Archpriest Bolgoyavlensky, a Russian who assisted Grigorii in his mission, became chairman of the Synod of the new Estonian diocese under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1947 Bolgoyavlensky became its bishop.[27]

In most of the negotiations that took place between the Moscow Patriarch and the Church leaders of other states, G. G. Karpov played a ubiquitous role. Since Karpov had himself indicated that the Department of Orthodox affairs was only to perform the liaison responsibility between the government and the Church, it is difficult to explain his role in entertaining foreign church dignitaries and at times accompanying Alexis on his ecclesiastical visits, unless the government was deeply interested and involved in these inter-church affairs.

The final and crowning effort of the Moscow Patriarchate to secure for itself the recognition of all Eastern Orthodoxy as the "first among equals" position long held by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, was the calling of a Pan-Orthodox Council to be held in Moscow in the fall of 1947 to thoroughly re-examine the Church canons. The last such Ecumenical Council had been held in A.D. 787 in Nicaea, and the prerogative to call such a council clearly belonged to the Ecumenical Patriarch. When the Ecumenical Patriarch protested and several others joined him, plans for the conference in 1947 were dropped. But

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[27]Kolarz, Religion, pp. 119-121.

the following year at a celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church which was attended by representatives of all the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Moscow Patriarch invited the ecclesiastics to remain for a conference. However, only the leaders of the churches of the Communist countries attended with the addition of the Patriarch of Antioch.

The conference concluded with a double attack on the Vatican on one hand and on the ecumenical movement on the other. The Vatican was condemned on three grounds: First, because it represented "a purely human invention . . . which has no foundation either in Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition or in the writings of the Fathers." Second, because its "activity is 'directed against' the interests of the workers" and it was the "centre of international Fascism;" and third, because it was "one of the instigators of two imperialistic wars . . ." and " was involved in a political struggle with world democracy."[28] One could hardly call these "theological" arguments. The attack on the papacy was reflective of a similar attack going on in the Soviet press. The Roman Catholic Church with its allegiance to the Vatican was, of course, outside of Moscow's control. Consequently the Soviet policy toward the Roman Catholic Church within the Soviet Union was to exterminate it. By 1943 it was virtually eliminated in the USSR. Severe pressure upon it was also called for in the Soviet satellite countries where the Catholic Church was stronger. An effort to discredit the Catholic Church and brand it as a tool of the capitalist "war mongering" west was the

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[28]Spinka, The Church, p. 139.

substance of Soviet policy during this period. The Russian Orthodox Church joined lustily in the policy of denouncing the Vatican through this Pan-Orthodox Church Council and in its own *Journal*.

The ecumenical movement also came under attack by the Church conclave. It adopted a Resolution which asserted that the World Council of Churches "aims at becoming a politically-oriented, capitalistic Ecumenical Church . . . . This Ecumenical Church is an institution within the State, which is in one way or another tied to it and which possesses secular influence."[29] This Resolution reflected the anti-American propaganda which was filling the Soviet press at the time.

In April of 1946, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church established a department of Foreign Church Relations which was responsible for directing the Church life of the Russian Orthodox Church institutions abroad. Metropolitan Nickolai of Krutitzy and Kolomna was appointed chairman of this department. Much of the foreign contact mentioned earlier was carried out under his leadership. Nickolai also led the Church in instigating, promoting, and participating in the various "peace" campaigns in the late forties and early fifties. From 1949 onward the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* was full of "peace" appeals and condemnations of western "war mongers." Nickolai delivered a major address at the first World Congress of the Partisans of Peace held in Paris in April, 1949. At the Stockholm Peace Conference the Russian delegation introduced the first declaration condemning atomic warfare, and Nickolai played a prominent role in the Czechoslovakian

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[29] Ibid., p. 142.

Peace Conference in 1950. In his own diocesan journal Nickolai published a speech which could easily pass for a bit of rhetoric coming directly out of the Soviet propaganda office. Speaking of America, Nickolai wrote:

> Freedom is sung by the sirens beyond the ocean. But only a man of black conscience and beclouded judgment is capable of talking about genuine freedom in a country where people are lynched, where children are kidnapped, where tear bombs are thrown among the workers . . . where bread is burned up before the eyes of the famished . . . where guns are cast so that peaceful valleys of Greece, China, Indonesia, and Vietnam would be laved in human blood! Freedom to steal, to subjugate, to kill--such is their freedom.[30]

Ignorance concerning the outside world and the nature of international affairs is a partial explanation of the Church's imitation of the government's policy and propaganda during this period. But it is also true that the Church's support of expansionist policies of the government was tied to a belief in the messianic nature of the Russian Church. This belief held that the Church, with the help of the God-given State, was to lead mankind from the darkness of false faiths into the light of the true Orthodox Catholic faith. This is the kind of rationale which appeared from time to time in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.[31]

In its efforts on behalf of peace, the Church proved useful to the State by giving the State's peace campaign and propaganda a respectability and credibility, at least at home if not abroad. The

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[30]Ibid., p. 149.

[31]Bennett, The Russian Church, p. 426.

government recognized the Church as an important factor in its new ideological effort to establish an image of itself as the bulwark of international peace. Consequently, a new united front developed between the Church and the State.

While the Church and State mutually pursued the "cold war" ideological line in their foreign policy and propaganda, the antireligious campaign of the government was picking up momentum at home. In June, 1947, the all-Union Society for the Dissemination of Scientific and Political Knowledge was founded for the purpose of publishing "scientific atheism" material. This was not a mass group like the Godless Society had been but rather consisted of a relatively small group of Party elite most of whom could be described as intellectuals. In 1950 the membership was one hundred thirty thousand. Nine years later it had grown to eight hundred fifty thousand. The various Party publications including those especially for youth and the trade union journals frequently contained antireligious articles and editorials calling for more intense efforts on behalf of scientific atheism.

G. G. Karpov's 1944 announcement of the non-restriction on Church proselytization was contradicted by the Soviet encyclopedia of 1947-48 which clarified the Constitution in the following statement:

> The Soviet state proceeds from the propositon that the business of the Church consists only of the performance of the cult. Any kind of activities of a propagandistic, moralizing or educative nature should not belong to the church as a union of believers created and existing only for the performance of the cult.[32]

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[32]Gsovski, Church and State, p. xvii.

This was the standard interpretation prior to the 1943 policy change and was apparently only temporarily shelved if shelved at all, during the war years. Sample statements that filled the Soviet press and Party journals from 1946 to 1954 illustrated the mood of the government toward religion and the Church during this period. For example, the August, 1948, edition of *Red Star*, a Party organ, contained the following statement:

> The survival [of religion] has resulted in great harm to our cause, hampering the triumphal progress toward communism. The struggle [against religion] is the most important task in the struggle for the triumph of Communism in the USSR.[33]

Another example is the following item which appeared in the December, 1948, issue of the *Young Bolshevik:*

> With the triumph of socialism in our country the social roots of religion have been eliminated but religious convictions exist in the form of survivals from the past in the consciousness of the backward . . . .
>
> Although these reminders are withering away they will not disappear by themselves because within the country church leaders are trying to strengthen their religious influence over the backward part of our people and especially over the politically immature youths . . . .[34]

The same article goes on to show resentment against the Church hierarchy's patriotic support of government policy which was undoubtedly having a confusing and corrosive effect upon the antireligious propaganda.

> Meanwhile the top Russian Orthodox hierarchy has become so active in its support of the government that its official

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[33]New York Times, August 19, 1948, p. 3.

[34]Ibid., April 2, 1948, p. 8.

> publications are now engaged in heated attacks on the western powers and definitely mixing in lay politics.[35]

A final example is taken from the official Party newspaper *Pravda* in its July 24, 1954, issue.

> One of the most tenacious and harmful survivals of capitalism in the minds of people are [sic] the religious superstitions. These superstitions poison up to the present time the mind of a part of our people, and hinder their active participation in the building up of Communism.[36]

The fact of the matter was that the new State policy toward the Church hierarchy was having a positive effect on the local level despite the resurging antireligious campaign which was designed to reduce religious practice and church life. The Moscow Patriarch reported that by 1950 the number of open churches in Moscow had grown to fifty-five and across the country twenty-two thousand parishes were in operation. This represented a five-fold increase in eight years though it must be noted that these figures could only be considered as estimates and were probably too high. Even so the figures indicate that the post-war relaxation of administrative pressures on the Church was a considerable factor influencing church growth and religious activity despite the continued antireligious propaganda and educational campaign.

In 1949 Alexis moved one step further in identifying the Church with the regime and one step closer to ignoring the basic ideological difference between the Church and the State. In a statement on August 7th printed in *Izvestia*, Alexis stated that for the Church to

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[35] Ibid. [36] Gsovski, Church and State, p. xiv.

excommunicate communists "would fundamentally contradict the main tenets of the Orthodox Christian faith." Loyalty to the Soviet State and the Russian Orthodox Church created no conflict. In fact, according to the Patriarch, "such a conflict does not exist but also cannot exist if believing people will adhere to the precise meaning of the evangelical commandments and testaments of the apostles."[37] Alexis was apparently alluding to the nationalistic interpretation which the Church had consistently placed on the scriptural advice for Christians to be subject to the governing authorities and not to resist them since they are ordained of God.

In 1950, following the rift between Joseph Stalin and Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, Alexis indicated that the Church also considered Yugoslavia as an enemy of the Russian people by stating that Yugoslavia had gone over to the warmongers. He also returned the Yugoslavian *Order of Peoples Liberation*, an award given to Alexis by the Yugoslavian government in 1948 in recognition of his efforts in behalf of the "Great Patriotic War."[38]

Stalin's death in 1953 brought with it uncertainties but no radical change of policy. Four representatives of the Church including Metropolitan Nickolai and two archbishops were among the guard of honor while Stalin's body was lying in state. From the Patriarch came both approbation and anxiety. "His death is a heavy grief for our fatherland and for all the people who inhabit it," wrote the Patriarch. "The

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[37]New York Times, August 7, 1949, p. 19.

[38]Bennett, Church and State, p. 431.

whole Russian Orthodox Church which will never forget his benevolent attitude to Church needs, feels great sorrow at his death . . . . Our church proclaims eternal memory to him with a special feeling of abiding love."[39]

The period immediately following Stalin's death was one of confusion and uncertainty but also one of liberalization since the new collective leadership of the Soviet Union was too busy with problems of control and procedure to bother with the Church. The antireligious campaign resumed in 1954, however, and a crisis occurred in July when the Soviet press conducted a vicious attack on religion and its institutions which lasted one hundred days. *Pravda* launched the new attack which was apparently carefully planned in high Party circles since it was taken up immediately by all the publications in the country simultaneously. Also, three new books on scientific atheism with specific attacks on the corrupting features of religion were published and widely distributed at this time. On August 9th the Party propaganda journal *Party Line* said frankly that the campaign was necessary because religions were getting stronger in the Soviet Union. Churches are "increasing their activity and strongly disseminating religious ideology among backward elements of the population."[40] The article went on to point out that the churches had beautiful services of worship, reduced costs to parishioners, good choirs, and appealed to the youth. It was noted that this had brought new persons into the churches and that some

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[39]Kolarz, Religion, p. 65.

[40]New York Times, August 10, 1954, pp. 1, 7.

communists had had their children baptized. Part of the consequences of the one hundred days assault on religion by the press was an outbreak of incidents across the country in which church people were abused and churches stoned. In November *Pravda* admitted that an "ill mannered attitude toward clergy"[41] had been displayed by some citizens and it rebuked the guilty for it. G. G. Karpov in June, 1955, admitted receiving complaints from priests and citizens about "interference and roughness."[42]

The one hundred days of vicious antireligious propaganda came to an abrupt end on November 10, 1954, when *Pravda* printed a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, signed by Nikita Khrushchev acknowledging the correctness of atheism but cautioning against "administrative interference" with the conduct of Church affairs and admitting "mistakes in conducting scientific atheistic propaganda."[43] The decree ordered propagandists to stop persecuting and insulting Soviet Churchgoers, and party agents were to confine themselves to "painstaking and systematic atheistic propaganda." It warned over-zealous antireligious workers that "insulting attacks against believers and the clergy can only lead to strengthening and even intensification of religious prejudices among people."[44]

The following day, Premier Georgie Malenkov received Patriarch Alexis in the first meeting between the heads of the Church and the

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[41]Kolarz, Religion, p. 66. [42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid., p. 67.

[44]New York Times, November 11, 1954, p. 12.

State since 1945. The purpose was presumably to emphasize that a policy of tolerance toward the Church was implicit in the decree, although no record of what transpired at this meeting is available. A further and equally important political interpretation of the November events is reflected in the governmental shake up which took place shortly after when Khrushchev managed to oust Malenkov from the top government post in February, 1955. One student of Soviet affairs has suggested that the moderation move was the result of the personal power struggle in the Kremlin. The November decree was the first time Khrushchev alone had signed a document, thus breaking the collective leadership slogan and showing his hand as the Party leader. All government and Party documents in areas associated with Khrushchev's personal leadership that were issued before and immediately following this one were collectively signed. The point was that the subject of religion was never considered one of great importance in high Party circles so that Khrushchev felt fairly sure that none of his competitors would challenge his position. Further, he circumscribed his act by the bland tone of his declaration which echoed similar statements made by Lenin and Stalin, and even such antireligious ideologists as Emelyan Yaraslovsky who headed the League of Militant Godless during all of its pre-war years.

It is quite possible that Malenkov was the instigator or defender of the one hundred days attack, at least his name was linked to it popularly. Khrushchev, therefore, may have been playing the double role of undercutting Malenkov's leadership in a fairly safe area and at the same time winning popular support for himself by calling for

moderation.[45] This plausible interpretation of the facts would illustrate the effect of the non-ideological factor of the personal power struggle upon the State--Church relationship.

From February, 1955, until March, 1958, The Soviet State, under the dual leadership of Premier Bulganin and Party Secretary Khrushchev, conducted a policy of moderation toward the Church on all levels. This period was marked by several events which witnessed to this policy of moderation. In December, 1955, the government allocated paper for the printing of a Russian Bible by the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate. This was the first Russian Bible since 1917. However, when the Bible was published in 1956 only 50,000 copies were printed, or an average of two per parish. Since a large number was sent abroad for purposes of display and for use in foreign libraries, an even smaller number was made available to the Church. Obviously they were not available to the Russian people. This government allocation act thus served as good propaganda but its practical effect was meager.

In 1955 Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople who was in correspondence with Patriarch Alexis, reported several new Russian religious journals issued, four famous Russian Orthodox theological academies reopened, and a total of eighteen theological seminaries in operation including several newly founded ones. He also reported a resurgence of monastic life and increasing church attendance in the Soviet Union. He conceded, however, that the hierarchy was rigidly controlled by the

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[45]William S. Caldwell, "Khrushchev on Religion," Communist Affairs, Vol. I, No. 4 (December, 1962), pp. 5-6.

Soviet regime.[46] In 1955 the estimated number of theological students in all seminaries in Russia was fifteen hundred. In 1960, however, only 155 new graduates of all the theological seminaries and academies became priests according to the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*.[47] This meant that the figures given in 1955 were probably a little high and that pressure on the Church's seminaries had greatly increased by the end of the decade.

In February, 1955, Patriarch Alexis was invited to a State reception of the Council of Ministers. Beginning in June of that same year the Soviet government began inviting representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church to diplomatic receptions. This was a new move inspired by Tito's example which Khrushchev and Bulganin observed on a State visit to Yugoslavia earlier that year. Since that time the Patriarchal representatives have been frequent guests at receptions for foreign statesmen and government delegations.

An interesting occurrence which cast light on the growing relationship between the government leaders and the Church leaders was the diplomatic visits that both groups made to Bulgaria in 1956-57. Apparently both Moscow and the Patriarchate were anxious to reassure the Bulgarians that the rapprochement with Yugoslavia was not carried out at their expense. So, Khrushchev stopped in Sofia after his reconciliation trip to Tito in May-June, 1955, and the Patriarch went to the Bulgarian capital in September, 1957, one month before his Yugoslavian visit with the Serbian Patriarch.[48]

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[47]Kolarz, Religion, p. 90. [48]Ibid., p. 69.

The "peaceful co-existence" theme which grew out of the destalinization mood of the Twentieth Party Congress and which was to increasingly dominate Soviet foreign policy thereafter, was soon to be reflected in the foreign relations of the Church. In the 1940's and early 1950's the World Council of Churches had been castigated by the Russian Orthodox Church along with all western institutions. By 1958 a thaw occurred and a meeting of representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches took place in August. Metropolitan Nickolai indicated that the Russian Church would send observers to future meetings of the Council's Central Committee. He also used the occasion to call for an unconditional halt to the atomic weapons testing by the United States and stated that "satisfying one's religious desires is not being hampered in the Soviet Union and . . . one has the right to teach religion and the Christian Faith."[49] A year later at the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council, Nickolai made an enthusiastic speech and on March 30, 1960, the Russian Orthodox Church made application for membership in the World Council of Churches.

Admission to the Council came at its Third General Assembly at New Delhi in November, 1961. The new Metropolitan Nikodim who had replaced the retired Nickolai, led the Russian delegation. At the New Delhi Conference, Metropolitan Nikodim reiterated in fulsome terms the "freedom" theme of the Church hierarchy.

> The Church is completely free from State interference and it is necessary to say that we are quite independent in our

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[49]New York Times, August 10, 1958, p. 10.

> inner life. Therefore, it is not possible to speak of state approval or disapproval of our Church's action in joining the Council.[50]

When asked what the Russian Orthodox Church would contribute to the World Council of Churches, Nikodim's reply reflected the complete identification of the Church with the Soviet society, including its political ramifications, in the young prelate's mind. Nikodim responded that the Russian Orthodox Church would introduce to western Christians "the social experience they would gain from the Soviet Union. They would have opportunity of seeing an ideal social system at work."[51]

The World Council's Central Committee met in Odessa on the shores of the Black Sea in February, 1964, marking the first meeting of the Council inside the Soviet Union. Thus the outward contacts of the Russian Church with the west continued to go on with full government approval. The Soviet government, of course, received very favorable world publicity by the Russian Church's participation in these ecumenical gatherings.

The relations of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Vatican also presented an interesting comparison of Church and State foreign relations. Throughout the post-war years the government had been at war with the Vatican because of the latter's strong anticommunist position and the resistance of Catholic clergy and laity to Soviet domination, especially in Eastern Europe. While the practical contest was going on at the local level involving schools and churches, priests and

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[50] Michael Bourdeaux, Opium of the People (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. 225.

[51] Ibid., p. 228.

communist officials in a contest of power, a verbal propaganda battle was being waged for world opinion through the press, radio and other channels. The Russian Orthodox Church performed a major task for the State on this level and gave sanctity to the actions of the Soviet government while condemning the Vatican as a "tool of the capitalists" and "warmongers" and accusing it of collaborating with the Germans in the second World War. This joint Church--State propaganda attack continued until the 1960's when the Soviet government found it appropriate to drop the antagonism because of a new policy line of peace and "coexistence" with the West. As late as February, 1961, The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* was publishing attacks on the Pope and several Cardinals as "servants of imperialism."[52] But several things occurred that year to alter this policy.

In the summer of 1961 Metropolitan Nickolai resigned his office and died abruptly in December. He was replaced in the Church's office of foreign affairs by young Archbishop Nikodim who was shortly elevated to the rank of Metropolitan. On the State side of the ledger, G. G. Karpov, head of the State's Department for Orthodox Church affairs, resigned and was replaced by Vladimir Kuroiedov, a much more vigorous official. The emphasis on "Russification" of both the Church and the State came to an end and a new policy of contact with the outside world began. The Kremlin and the Vatican formally exchanged greetings for the first time early in 1962. At the same time the Moscow Patriarch ceased its negative position and began making tentative comments about

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[52] New York Times, February 4, 1961, p. 9.

the proposed Vatican Council, which ranged from cautious to expectant. Then in November, 1962, the Russian Church "broke ranks" with the other Eastern Orthodox Churches and accepted a general invitation issued by the Vatican to send observers to the Council in Rome, In March of 1963, the editor of *Izvestia* Alexei I. Adzhubei, son-in-law of Premier Khrushchev, called for diplomatic ties with the Vatican based on the grounds of the mutual interest in peace between the Kremlin and the Vatican.[53] On August 31st Metropolitan Nikodim lauded Pope John XXIII on the occasion of his death and stated that the Vatican Council had given "a better feeling of brotherhood between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church."[54] Then in September Nikodim paid a "courtesy visit" to the Pope, and has subsequently continued to develop this fraternal attitude as the relationship between the Kremlin and the Vatican has become more cordial. More recently, on November 30, 1965, Metropolitan Nikodim hailed the Vatican Council decrees as most welcome, and said that the Orthodox bodies would call a council following the Vatican Council to "develop their attitudes toward forging closer links" with the Roman Church.[55]

These ecumenical contacts of the Russian Church, which also included the Church of England and extensive exchange delegations with the National Council of Churches in the United States of America largely coincided with the years of Nikita Khrushchev's leadership in the Soviet Union. This would seem to suggest a general relaxation of control and a

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[53]Ibid., March 7, 1963, p. 1. [54]Ibid., August 31, 1963, p. 18.

[55]Ibid., November 30, 1965, p. 17.

general policy of moderation toward the Church and religion under his leadership. However, the internal policy of the Party and the State toward religion and the Church indicated only a continuation of the duplicity in government policy toward the Church which has characterized the Soviet scene since 1943. This policy of duplicity has cleverly manipulated the Church hierarchy to suit the pragmatic purposes of the regime on one hand while it carried out an increasingly sophisticated though by no means always successful policy of religious eradication on the other.

The policy of religious extermination on the level of the people and parish was not always universally consistent in its administration and was repeatedly over-optimistic in its expectations. The Marxist theorists who continually reassured the Party faithful that like other capitalist survivals, religion would "wither away" as the society moved from socialism to communism, had to be continually prodded by the Party activists into acknowledging the necessity for aggressive action to assist the masses in overcoming this bourgeois hangover--religion.

The period of relaxation of restrictions begun in the war years under Stalin and continued under the "collective leadership," proved to be a sufficient enough stimulus to the latent religious aspirations of the people to demonstrate that the Party activists were more nearly correct than the Party theorists. Consequently the Khrushchev years were years of intensive struggle, reassessment and renewed struggle in the State's effort to deal with this persistent and to a degree increasingly troublesome aspect of society, i.e. religion. Until this period the State had been able to handle the Church as an institution

quite well by turning its energies to the service of the State. But in this period there were some signs of new religious life outside the Church which did not respond to the manipulation of the hierarchy and which seemed to be attracting followers. The new freedom enjoyed by the Soviet citizen seemed to be running contrary to the theoretical inevitability of historical materialism. Therefore, new ways of dealing with this cancerous mutation had to be found.

It would appear from the decree calling for moderation in antireligious efforts which Khrushchev signed in 1954 that the State would continue to follow a policy of relaxed restrictions toward the Church during the years of Khrushchev's control. That this was not the case is a further indication that the 1954 moderation decree issued under his signature was more a political ploy used for personal gain than a serious indicator of his attitude toward religion and the Church. In September, 1955, Khrushchev indicated his attitude toward religion in a statement made to the President of the French National Assembly during a visit of French leaders to Moscow. "Communism has not changed its attitude of opposition to religion," he stated. "We are doing everything we can to eliminate the bewitching power of the opium of religion."[56] From the developing intensity of the antireligious campaign from 1958 through 1964 it was apparent that this statement was to be taken at face value.

It could be said that Khrushchev stood as a kind of personal symbol of the Soviet policy of duplicity toward religion and its

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[56]George W. Cronyn, A Primer on Communism (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1960), p. 80.

institutions. On the one hand, his public speeches were liberally sprinkled with references to God and religion which he used as figures of speech and by which he indicated the Russian folk culture that was at least still a part of his language. On the other hand, his private speeches within Party circles always placed religion within the Marxian ideological framework. At the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956 he made only one brief remark about "capitalist survivals," which is a catch-all term for immorality, crime, and religion. He had nothing to say about religion in his speech to the Twenty-first Party Congress in 1959, however, at the Twenty-second Congress in 1961 he turned to the problem of religion and gave it a specific priority within the Party programme.

> Communist education presupposes the emancipation of consciousness from religious prejudices and superstitions, which all the more hinder individual Soviet people from fully developing their creative powers. A thought-out and well proportioned system of scientific atheist propaganda is necessary, which would embrace all strata and groups of inhabitants, which would prevent the spread of religious attitudes, especially among children and juveniles.[57]

He went on to call for such education as a central goal of all organizations.

The antireligious propaganda campaign during the Khrushchev years fluctuated from a bitter, violent and triumphant attack of an intensity surpassing the one hundred days of 1954, to a studied, self-critical reassessment of its own unfulfilled expectations and ineffectiveness. A reorganization of the Godless society took place in May of 1957 following a conference of antireligious propagandists. The

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[57]Caldwell, "Khrushchev on Religion," p. 6.

purpose was to develop a large cadre of volunteers who would distribute literature and give antireligious lectures at meetings of unions and other organizations. Special institutes exclusively for the study of scientific atheism were established by the State for the first time. In 1958 a University of Atheism was established at Ashkabad, Turkmenistan, and another in Leningrad.[58] Large stocks of antireligious books filled the book stores including many new ones designed to update the antireligious arguments in terms of a technological age. The antireligious articles in the newspapers, magazines, Party journals and trade union organs frequently contained not only antireligious arguments but specific methods and illustrations on how to discredit churches and inhibit church attendance. A growing concern in the Party journals was revealed by the numerous admissions that young people were being attracted to the Church and by criticisms and counter criticisms of irresponsibility in dealing with this problem. Inevitably the intensity of the antireligious propaganda campaign spilled over into various kinds of overt interference in religious institutional life. At times this interference was direct and only mildly disguised such as the police harassment of monasteries. Most of the time it was indirect such as the intimidation of worshippers to persuade them not to attend or support a church. The results of these efforts on the institutional life of the Church were very severe.

In December, 1961, a delegation of churchmen from the National Council of Churches in the United States of America which had visited

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[58] Cronyn, A Primer, p. 82.

the Soviet Union reported that fifteen hundred churches had been closed in the Soviet Union in the previous year. At that time the Russian Church claimed thirty thousand priests, twenty thousand parishes and fifty million members, although the last figure could be no more than an estimation. The Russian Church officials who acknowledged the church closings gave two reasons which ostensibly had nothing to do with State interference. First, improved transportation made it unnecessary for each small village to have a church. Second, where believers were declining, the lack of funds apparently forced some local groups to close churches.

However, reports coming out of Europe, which stemmed partly from refugee accounts, indicated that threats of economic or other punishment against church members along with the response to the intensified propaganda were the main causes of church closings.[59] Another statistical report compiled by the Institute for the Study of the USSR in Munich indicated that two thousand churches had been closed in the Soviet Union in the period from 1960 to 1962. The Institute estimated that no more than ten thousand churches were open in the USSR in 1962.[60] The Institute also reported at this time that letters of protest signed by several thousand parishioners and worshippers at Pochayev Monastery in Western Ukraine were sent to Premier Khrushchev and copies to the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. Reports of this letter complaining of severe harassment of monks,

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[59]New York Times, December 29, 1961, p. 4.

[60]Caldwell, "Khrushchev on Religion," p. 12.

pilgrims and local citizens by police, reached the outside through several channels including tourists. The number of monks was reportedly reduced from 140 in 1961 to 36 in September, 1962.

The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in 1962 noted that there were three fewer seminaries in operation than reported in 1960. A Church spokesman confirmed that seminaries in Lutsk, Saratov and Kiev had been closed though no reason was given. It was also reported that applicants to a theological seminary must show a certificate indicating that they had no arrest record. This was apparently a new regulation added by the Church to safeguard itself against accusations of criminal activity being made against divinity students.[61] One government method of cutting down on the number of seminary students was to refuse residence permits if the students were not residents of the city where the seminary was located.

In 1964 a Soviet decree apparently arising out of a judicial case concerning the statutory prohibition against religious education of children under eighteen years of age, prohibited persons under eighteen years from attending church. This proved to be a very difficult law to enforce and apparently no attempt was made to enforce it universally or equitably. But it became an additional weapon in the State's arsenal in its low-keyed war on the Church.

One easily enforceable pressure on churchmen was to exclude them from various Party and trade union organizations. In 1960 *Trud*, the

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[61] New York Times, July 15, 1962, p. 31.

official trade union newspaper, called for unions to expel all clergymen from their ranks since they had "gained admittance illegally to enjoy such benefits as free passes to vacation resorts. Both atheists and those who believe in God can be members of trade union," the article went on, "but this does not mean trade unions are open to idlers who are getting their income through religious deceit."[62]

In 1961 the Constitution of the Russian Orthodox Church was changed so that the priest was no longer a member of his own parish council but an employee of that council who could be dismissed at any time.[63] This not only broke all historic precedent in the Russian Church but cut across the clerical or episcopal tradition in which clerical appointments and elevations were kept under clerical rather than lay control.[64] It would appear, as some have suggested, that this change was made at the request of the government since it made it much easier for the Party workers to control local churches. Under the new ruling the local Party could work to get its nominees on the lay parish council and then remove a troublesome priest or close a church ostensibly at the request of the believers themselves.

By the time of Khrushchev's ouster from the government and Party control in October, 1964, the intensity of the antireligious campaign had seriously reduced the institutional structure of the Church, but it

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[62]Ibid., October 12, 1960, p. 2.

[63]John Lawrence, "Soviet Policy Toward the Russian Churches, 1958-1964," Soviet Studies, Vol. XVI, No. 3 (January, 1965), p. 278.

[64]Alexis, The Russian Orthodox Church, pp. 31-38.

had also stirred considerable reaction among the people. This reaction tended to express itself in two different directions. Among the working class the direction of the reaction was toward an underground religious movement of the house-church variety and a siphoning off of the disaffected Orthodox into the Evangelical-Baptist and Pentecostal sects. The Evangelical-Baptist and Pentecostals were by far the fastest growing religious groups in the Soviet Union during the Soviet period and much of their growth came from former Orthodox ranks. In 1905 there were an estimated 20,000 Baptists in Russia. By 1956 there were nearly 560,000 baptised members claimed by the All Church Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists.[65] In 1964 the total number of baptized and non-baptized adherents was estimated at over three million.[66] The second direction which the reaction took was perceived among the intellectuals, scientists and students who while uninterested in traditional Orthodoxy began to respond with a sense of moral outrage at the official discrimination against religious believers. Some even began to claim a new religious mysticism outside the traditional religious frame of reference.

The Twenty-third Party Congress held in the spring of 1964 called for a total reassessment of the antireligious effort. This formed a background for what took place following the power shake-up which occurred in the Kremlin in the fall of 1964. Khrushchev had pushed the strong antireligious effort which grew in force after 1958. However,

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[65] New York Times, May 19, 1956, p. 11.

[66] Bourdeaux, Opium, p. 153.

there were clear signs that this campaign was not accomplishing the goals that fit in with the place where the Soviet society was supposed to be by this time in its move from Socialism to Communism. Instead of achieving a harmonious atheistic society with an absence of religious ferment, Party leaders found themselves with not just one major church group with which to contend, but with numerous small ones--as though in killing the mighty dragon they had subdivided it into many smaller dragons. In any case, early in 1965 an article appeared in *Kommunist* which gave a rather positive interpretation of Christianity and called for a very liberal attitude toward it. It scolded the Marxist theorists who continued to label anything Christian as "automatically reactionary," and it called for a complete re-evaluation of Christianity.[67] Nothing appeared in the Soviet Press to contradict the article, and this omission was as important as any statement of official endorsement. In April, *Nanka I. Religiya* (Science and Religion) published an open letter from three of its editors to a well known antireligious propagandist, Alla Trubnikova, criticising her attacks on religion as being outdated, moralistic and cliche ridden.[68]

In August, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* attacked the methods that were being employed in the atheism campaign and then stated:

> Today we are deceiving ourselves again that many believers leave the church and religion. Churches and priests are fewer but there are still believers. If not Orthodox, then one of the multitude of sects.[69]

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[67] New York Times, January 18, 1965, pp. 1, 4.

[68] Ibid., April 18, 1965, p. 18. [69] Ibid., March 7, 1966, p. 1.

The reassessment was not all one-sided, however, and a lengthy debate in the various Party journals and newspapers over the wisest approach to the religion problem continued throughout 1966. The State was apparently convinced that it had gone about as far as it could in forcing the dismantling of the Church institutional structure in the country without stirring up a strong underground resistance. It certainly had nothing to fear from the official hierarchy of the Church, and it apparently believed that it could afford some serious academic reappraisal of religion. Liberal changes in State policy regarding the secular sphere of life could be seen in the new emphasis on the pragmatic goals of an increasingly consumer-oriented society and the respect which was given to the stirrings of intellectual freedom on the highest level.

By 1966 there were fewer than 15 monasteries, about 5 theological academies and seminaries and about 10,000 churches with an estimated 25,000,000to 45,000,000 adherents left to compose the Russian Orthodox Church. The 1965 Soviet population was about 230,000,000. These figures have meaning when contrasted with the pre-revolutionary figures of 125,000 monasteries, 4 theological academies, 57 major and 155 minor seminaries, 54,174 churches and 25,593 chapels and 37,528 parochial schools and 241 hospitals and somewhere near 100,000,000 adherents.[70]

When in May, 1965, a letter addressed to President Podgorny from two Russian Orthodox priests was made public, which contained

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[70] Ibid., March 7, 1966, p. 12.

charges of government interference in church affairs in violation of the Soviet Constitution and laws, the Patriarchate suspended the two without a hearing for their "shameful activity."[71] The two priests had also addressed a similar letter to the Moscow Patriarch charging the Church hierarchy with "failing to resist illegal restrictions" and of being without "courage to resist mass closings of churches, monasteries and church schools . . ." It also attacked the Church leaders for their "acceptance of secular instructions in appointment of clergymen."[72] A short time later Patriarch Alexis wrote to all his bishops warning them against clerics who "stir up suspicion and distrust in church authority and the fatherland."[73] He advised the bishops to rebuke severely any priest who might take similar actions.

This rigid censoring and suspension without trial of critical priests by the Church hierarchy compares unfavorably with the more judicious handling which the State was giving to religious and political dissidents among the intellectual and scientific community. Most of the Soviet intellectuals were largely ignorant of Russian Orthodox Church life, belief, and liturgy and were not interested in the Church as an institution. But their interest had been aroused by writers such as Jean Paul Sarte, Pierre Tielhard Chardin and Nickolas Berdyaev who are humanist and religious humanist thinkers writing in the contemporary scientific idiom. This new interest on the part of the Soviet

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[71]Ibid., May 28, 1966, p. 14.

[72]Ibid., June 9, 1966, p. 47, July 2, 1966, p. 10.

[73]Ibid., August 26, 1966, p. 8.

intellectuals had stimulated them to criticize both the Church and the State for their collusion to supress individual freedom of thought and expression. For example, *Nauka I. Religiya* reported in November, 1966, that A. Y. Levitin, a soviet writer and school teacher, had been circulating letters attacking the Church hierarchy for the Church's collaboration with the atheistic government. Levitin, who was not a member of the Church, called the Church "seriously ill," with the ailment being "the age old one of caesaropapism" (subjection of the Church to the secular rulers).[74]

A rather clear statement of the unchanged position of the Church in its attitude toward the State came in a lengthy "Epistle" from the Patriarchate on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution.[75] Patriarch Alexis praised the Revolution and the "radical transformation," it had brought about in the life of society, fulfilling "the dreams of many generations of people." With a passing reference to ideological differences between the Church and the State, Alexis stressed that "the feeling of community of national interests makes it possible for all citizens . . . to find brothers in one another ready to help one another in the achievement of lofty social aims . . . ." He placed a strong emphasis on nationalism and appealed for a reuniting of all Russian born people "dwelling in dispersal" to work toward reuniting themselves with those "dwelling in the motherland."

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[74]Ibid., November 27, 1966, p. 26.

[75]Paul B. Anderson and Blahoslav S. Hruby (eds.), Religion In Communist Dominated Areas, Vol. VI, No. 24 New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., (December 31, 1967), pp. 202-204

The concept of a Holy Russia was reiterated and the relations between the Church and the State were described as "sincere" . . . and "friendly cooperation." Much of the "Epistle" was devoted to a rehearsal of the "Patriotic exploits" of the Church which were "noted by our government" and which "clearly testify to the chosen path being right." The Patriarch did not hesitate to suggest that this past history of patriotic loyalty, including the continuing "peacemaking activity" of the Church, should be clearly understood as a sign of the church's willingness to be "of fruitful public service . . . within a socialist society."[76]

The attitude and policy of the Church toward the State as portrayed in the Patriarch's Epistle were not new. Throughout this twenty-five year period the State had a built-in ecclesiastical control apparatus over any too-liberal or dissident actions by any of the clergy or flock of the Church. The hierarchy showed no signs of departing from its policy of total support and sanction of the regime regardless of its hostile ideological position or the relentless efforts of the Party and State to inhibit the Church's growth and cut off its life roots by severing its direct contact with the young.

The Soviet regime's main concern in terms of internal dissent in this last quarter century has been the rising expression of restlessness from the intellectual and scientific community over the stale dogmas of the Party line which were noticeable more restrictive in a society which has moved rapidly toward a pragmatic orientation of economic growth and affluence and toward increasing economic and

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[76] Ibid., p. 202-204.

intellectual interchange with the outside world. This internal secular unrest coupled with a growing protest movement within the Church could mean a gradual change in Church--State relations.

At the end of 1967 Patriarch Alexis was ninety-three years old. It appeared likely that young Archbishop Nikodim would replace him in the Patriarchal office following his death. The increasingly active ecumenical activity of Nikodim along with the Soviet State's recent efforts to reduce tensions with the west and the more sophisticated approach given to the antireligious efforts, which in the middle sixties have moved to a position of open dialogue between religionists and atheists, may indicate a new era of liberalism. However, the Church showed no evidence of departing from its long standing policy of responding to the State in whatever way seemed most expedient in terms of the continued security and well being of the hierarchy. There seemed no likelihood, therefore, of the Church officially joining the ranks of the politically dissident. If the Church could retain a measure of leadership and control over a large segment of the people, it would probably continue to enjoy the official favor of the State.

On the other hand, the State will be faced with the increasing problem of maintaining a semblance of ideological consistency to Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology while at the same time meeting all of the internal and external pressures of a status quo power in a changing world. The official ideology calls for the death of religion. But while the Orthodox Church has been seriously reduced in structure and curtailed in operation, there are many signs of a resurgence of religious interest on all levels of the Soviet society.

In summary, the Church and the State entered a new era of mutual recognition and cooperation in September, 1943 as a result of mutual interests for institutional preservation against the invading German military forces. The strong spirit of Russian nationalism proved the common avenue that led the Church and State together in the face of the German threat. The Church proved to be more than a paper ally of the State. It rallied the people in a great holy--patriotic crusade and made substantial financial contributions to the war effort. The State under Stalin's leadership apparently decided that the Church should be cultivated as an ally following the war as well as during it. Indeed, the Church proved useful throughout the post-war period by assisting the State in consolidating people in new territories won from the Germans and by establishing alliances in the Middle East as well as Eastern Europe. The Church also proved an effective foreign propaganda agent for the State by its active participation in the peace movement in the late forties and early fifties. Throughout the period of Stalin's rule the relation between the Church and the State remained close and mutually supportive with only a minimum of Party emphasis on the traditional Marxist-Leninist antireligious ideology and activity.

The official relationship remained the same following Stalin's death, but a resurgence of Marxian ideological orthodoxy against the Church grew in spurts from that time on. At times the antireligious effort became so intense--such as during the period of one hundred days late in 1956--that the Party and State policy makers had to issue a public call for restraint to keep the growing rebellion of the people

under control. At no time, however, is there any record of the official Church hierarchy even recognizing the fervency of the antireligious effort much less complaining because of it. In fact the Church even rewrote its own Constitution in 1961 in a manner that reduced the traditional clerical control over the parishes and made the way easier for local Party and State functionaries to manipulate both clergy and parishes.

However, by 1965 a new spirit of dissent from inside as well as outside of the Church was discernible by the outside world. The fact that this vocal dissent from the official policies of both the Church and the secular State was allowed a degree of public expression, though strong efforts were made at times to suppress it, was itself a sign of a liberalizing tendency if not a new direction by the totalitarian regime. The Church hierarchy appeared to be completely committed to its policy that any criticism of the State was tantamount to criticism of the Church and criticism of either was judged to seriously endanger one's spiritual salvation, the assurance of which was the Church's reason for being. The policy of the Church toward the State ironically became more defensive and unyielding in terms of its support against all critics just at the time when the policy of the State toward private citizens and to a degree, private organizations, began to yield more freedom and less arbitrary suppression.

A similar twist in recent developments regarding personal religious expression has revealed a resurgence of religious interest expressing itself outside the Orthodox Church in both the peasant community where evangelical Christianity has been attracting adherants,

and in the intellectual community of artists and scientists where a new non-Christian almost secular mysticism has broken the atheist-materialist mold.

As the Church moved away from its position of ecclesiastical isolationism in regard to the western churches in the 1960's and began to engage in ecumenical contacts, it was forced to find a stronger rationale for its sycophantic support of an atheistic State which was ideologically committed to its ultimate demise. The statements by Nikodim, Alexis and other leaders of the Church hierarchy during the sixties, which culminated in the Patriarch's "Epistle" on the Fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, indicated the continued attempt by the Church to stretch its traditional ideology to cover a unique situation by ignoring facts that would not fit. The traditional Church ideology of support for the Christian State was thus stretched to apply to an atheistic State and the overt action of the State in opposition to religion, which constricted the life of the Church within ever stricter limitations, was ignored. As long as the Church hierarchy was able to maintain the fiction that there had never been any interference by the State in the life of the Church, the hierarchy enjoyed a position of freedom and favoritism provided by the State.

Church--State relations on the official level thus remained relatively constant throughout this twenty-five year period. But the State continued to support an antireligious effort, which while erratic in its intensity, had proven rather effective in reducing the official Church structure to only a fraction of its pre-Revolutionary size. The Church was allowed to expand considerably in the first ten years

of this period, from 1943 to 1954 until Stalin's death. Then, following two years of uncertainty while the Soviet leaders struggled for power, the pressure was resumed and the Church grew steadily smaller.

In conclusion it can be said that the relationship between the Church and the State from 1943 to 1967 was one in which the self interest of the two institutions was served by a variety of ideological and non-ideological factors and that the totalitarian nature of the socio-political structure formed a highly restrictive context within which that relationship existed. The Church was not free to do as it pleased and so its leadership elected to support the State and its policies almost without qualification or reservation. Ideology which suited this policy was used to justify it, and ideology which conflicted with it was ignored. Similarly, State ideology which was hostile to the Church's purposes was ignored by the Church leaders while that which recognized the separate existence of the Church was given exaggerated attention.

The State found the Church to be a useful institution for its own purposes of control and expansion and therefore, like the Church, made use of ideology to justify the continued existence and recognition of the Church within an otherwise closed society. In its antireligious efforts the State demonstrated its loyalty to an important ideological principle. However, the fluctuation of this effort indicated that even here, ideology may have played more of a supportive than a guiding role in determining State policy.

On the official level, the relationship between the Church and the State remained cordial and almost without incident during this

twenty-five year period. But because this cordiality tended to disguise the real relationship on the level of people and parish, one is led to conclude that the Church hierarchy was actually, though unofficially, part of the single ruling group or class in Soviet society.

In any case, it is at least clear from this survey of the Church --State relationship that ideology did not play the same role in determining the policies of the State or of the Church as it had done in the previous twenty-five year period. It is the considered judgment of the author that non-ideological factors, focusing in institutional self-preservation, seem demonstrably more important than ideology as the primary influence on both the Church and the State from 1943 to 1967.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the Introduction to this paper, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the principal factors which lead to an accurate understanding of the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian State in the years from 1943 to 1967. The author's tentative postulate at the beginning was that while both ideological and non-ideological factors played important roles in determining this Church--State relationship, the former of these two factors had assumed a more secondary and supportive role, thereby leaving the practical factors in a role of primary significance. While the verification of this postulate must, in the final analysis, be left to one's subjective judgment, the author believes that there has been sufficient evidence accumulated in the chapters of this paper to substantiate the hypothesis.

Chapter two pointed out several historic factors that are rooted in the Russian national tradition and which suggest a strong historic tie between the Russian Church and the Russian State. The first of these was the development of a religious nationalism which identified the head of State as included within the temporal religious aspirations of the Church and the people. He was "divinely appointed" and hence the nation was a holy nation i.e. "Holy Russia." A second factor was the development of autocracy in Russia that was as nearly totalitarian as any in the western world. This made the third factor--the submission of the Church to the State--nearly axiomatic. As the power of the State grew and became increasingly centralized, the independent

power of the Church subsided until, in the age of the Empire (1880 - 1900), the Church became, for all practical purposes, a religious department of the State. The fourth factor was the gap which developed between the leaders of the Church and both the intelligentsia and the common people. This gap was bridged in the latter case by the rich and colorful liturgy and the otherworldly pietism which grew out of the mystical Church dogma. A fifth factor was the messianic theme which grew out of the spirit of religious nationalism and which influenced both the Church and the State to adopt seemingly contradictory policies. Suspicion of foreigners tended to drive both the Church and the State toward isolationism while convictions of Slavic superiority led them both toward efforts to unite all Slavic peoples under Russian leadership.

The influence of these historic factors can be seen in the rather strange and paradoxical relationship between the Church and the State from 1943 to 1967. On one hand the State could not eliminate the Church by destroying its leaders because of the almost certain reaction of the people. On the other hand the State found it rather easy officially to maintain open and cordial relations with the Church even while officially rejecting the ideological framework behind the Church and working relentlessly and publicly to render the Church totally irrelevant and hence dispensable. The Church based its justification for its support of the Soviet State on its history of identification with the nation and its political leaders. There is, however, little in this history which would give ideological support for the Church's backing of the Soviet State. For until the Revolution the State had

always claimed ideological identity with the Church in terms of the latter's ultimate goals and values. This has not been true, of course, under Communist leadership.

Chapter three pointed out the dynamic of Soviet ideology which was able to take Marxian dogma and reinterpret it to fit changing circumstances. Marx's idea that the State would "wither away" was affirmed by the Soviet leaders, but projected into the future and qualified by a series of prior events such as the elimination of world capitalism. The Marxian dogma concerning the elimination of religion gave the Soviet State more difficulty and has caused considerable ideological argument as well as strategy debate within the Communist Party in recent history. It is clear, however, that Marxist-Leninist ideology called for the elimination of religion and its institutions as part of the process of eliminating bourgeois elements in the building of a Communist society.

This chapter confirmed the findings of chapter two regarding the ideology of the Church toward the State. The State was regarded as divinely called to protect and provide for the faithful and the institutions of the Faith during their temporal existence. While the State may at a given time fall into evil and temporarily reject this divine calling, it remained under God and was to be endured patiently until presumably it repented of its evil and once again accepted its divine mission. Passive submission was the rule of behavior on the part of the Church and its members during such a political interim. While this ideology might explain the docile behavior of a patient Church under an avowed atheistic State, it hardly explains the active

nationalistic support which the Church has given to the Soviet State in the modern period.

Chapter four made clear the fact that the Communist Party determined the policy of the Soviet State during the first twenty-five years of its existence. It also made clear the fact that the State policy toward the Church, which followed the Marxist ideology in outline, was, however, increasingly influenced by practical factors that modified its policy almost to the point of reversal by the year 1943. Stalin's de-emphasis of "objective factors," or the pure doctrine of historical determinism, and his emphasis on Party initiative in policy making and execution, tended to move the general policy of the State onto a much more pragmatic basis. This orientation of State policy helps to explain how the Church and the State could have achieved such a favorable *modus vivendi* during the war years.

Chapter five, looking at this same period (1917 - 1943) from the point of view of the Church, pointed out that an even more dramatic change in Church policy had taken place during these years. Operating under its historic ideology regarding the State, the Church found itself facing an ideological enemy when the Communists came to power. For several years the Church fought against the State and denied its authority. When the State consolidated its power the Church withdrew to a position of neutrality and patience consistent with its ideological heritage. However, when the State directed its attention and recognition to a group of dissident Church leaders who opposed the traditional Church leadership and called for the Church to support the State, the Church hierarchy rapidly altered its passive resistance into active

support of the State. This new policy won for the Patriarchal Church the unofficial recognition of the State and a moderation of overt opposition and harassment of Church activities. Antireligious and anti-Church efforts, however, continued with sporadic force until the German invasion in 1941. The official policy of the Church toward the State from 1923 onward, then, was one of complete accommodation and public support.

In order to achieve a modicum of ideological integrity the Church adopted the ideology expressed by the Decree on Separation of Church and State which indicated that the political and religious spheres of Soviet society were completely separate entities and could hence follow diametrically opposed ideologies. However, by its official apolitical stance on one hand, and its active super-patriotic support for the foreign and domestic policies of the State on the other, the Church betrayed the fact that practical expediency rather than traditional ideology was its primary motivating factor.

Chapter six analyzed several non-ideological factors in Soviet society as illustrations of pragmatic influences on the policy of both the Church and the State. The three factors influencing State policy which were discussed were: the rise of a new class; Soviet Russian nationalism; and personnel changes in the political hierarchy. Also, three non-ideological factor's illustrating pragmatic influences on the policy of the Church were discussed. These three were: traditional Russian nationalism; institutional self-preservation; and personnel changes in the Church hierarchy. All but the last of these six non-ideological

factors were shown to have played an important role in influencing policy of both Russian institutions.

Chapter seven discussed the major events that essentially constituted the relationship between the Church and the State between 1943 and 1967. It was indicated that nationalism was the common factor which led the Church and State together during the war with Germany. Following this it was the willingness of the Church to be used by the State in its expansionist and propaganda efforts that sustained the harmonious relationship that was unmarred even by the formerly relentless antireligious efforts.

By the time of Stalin's death the antireligious effort had resumed and continued, including several periods of "agonizing reappraisal," through 1967. The Church and the State continued their official policies of cordial relations while the State used the Church leaders to endorse and support its foreign policy and the Church leaders willingly followed the government's lead.

Movements of dissent within Soviet society in the 1960's have occurred both inside and outside the Church. In response the Church has moved to silence all dissent and has indicated that it interprets opposition to the State or the Church as equally intolerable and in violation of its spiritual guardianship. The State has, of course, also opposed dissent but has been somewhat more judicious about it and has permitted a greater freedom of debate concerning the role of religion in Soviet society.

An analysis of this somewhat paradoxical relationship in the light of the ideology of the Church and the State and the

non-ideological factors pointed out in chapter six has led the author to a helpful observation. Using the analysis of Milovan Djilas discussed in chapter six it is possible to say that the Church hierarchy was received into the "new class" of Communist society in 1943 by Premier Stalin and has remained within this socio-economic structure since then. This was possible due to the essentially non-ideological nature of the "new class" which was able to contain those who would support its totalitarian control over the means of production and ownership of the nation's goods even though some elements of their official ideology might have been contradictory to that of the Party and State. Since the "new class" has no official membership or visible structure but exists by virtue of its control over the rest of society, it would appear from the evidence accumulated that this interpretation of Church--State relationships is valid as well as illuminating. It would serve to explain the Church's failure to keep its own ideology central to its policy regarding the State and its propensity to ignore antireligious ideology and practice.

It must be recognized that both the Church and the State in the Soviet Union have attempted to maintain ideological consistency particularly in their policy statements and to a degree in their policy actions. On the other hand a Church without power to oppose the State but willing to back State policy for the concessions it might receive could be very useful to a totalitarian State. In order for it to be genuinely useful, however, it would need the power and prestige which the "new class" alone could give. Thus, whether the Church leaders could be spoken of as belonging to the "new class" or not, they

certainly did become instruments of that class and therefore in a real sense part of the class bureaucracy. Such a position does not have much of a guarantee of security. Consequently the Church tended to become hypersensitive to criticism directed at either the Church or the State. Also, since the Church hierarchy as a part of the "new class" would be performing a particular function on behalf of the State which required that it not be identified with the State but have an expressly independent private identification, one would expect it to be defensive about criticism of its support of government policy. This has been the case.

It is not the author's intention to suggest that the leaders of the Russian Church entered into an intentional conspiracy with the leaders of the Soviet State to deceive the people of Russia or the outside world. There is little evidence to substantiate such a position and little reason to suggest it. It is entirely possible that the Church leaders have acted in good faith and have done as well as they might under the circumstances.

The fact remains, however, that the almost sycophantic attitude of the Church hierarchy toward the Soviet State in the face of clear ideological differences is strong evidence that the leaders of the Church have decided to overlook those ideological differences in favor of expediency. Likewise, the action by the leaders of the State to include the Church hierarchy in many formal state occasions as well as to grant them unusual freedom in participating in world ecclesiastical conferences indicates that the State has chosen to relate to the Church leaders on a pragmatic rather than an ideological basis. There is every

reason to expect that this non-ideological basis of the Church--State relationship will continue as long as the Church continues to afford the State a favorable image to the outside world and an effective instrument in the societal control apparatus at home.

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APPENDIX

TEXT OF DECREE

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

DECREE OF THE SOVNARKOM, FEBRUARY 5, 1918

1. The church is separated from the state.

2. Within the territory of the Republic the passing of any local laws or regulations limiting or interfering with freedom of conscience or granting special rights or privileges to citizens because they belong to a certain faith is forbidden.

3. Every citizen has a right to adopt any religion or not to adopt any at all. Every legal restriction connected with the profession of certain faiths or with the non-profession of any faith is now abolished.

   Note: official acts shall make no mention of a citizen's faith.

4. State or semi-official public functions are not to be accompanied by religious ceremonies or rituals.

5. Religious performances may be carried on freely in so far as they do not disturb the public order or encroach upon the rights of citizens of the Russian Republic. Local authorities have the right to take the necessary measures to preserve order and safeguard the rights of citizens.

6. No one can decline to carry out his civic duties on the ground of his religious views. Exception to this ruling may be made by special decisions of the people's court provided one civic duty is substituted for another.

7. Religious oaths are abolished. In case of necessity a solemn promise will suffice.

8. All civil acts are performed exclusively by the civic authorities [in charge of] the department for the registration of marriages and births.

9. The school is separated from the church. The teaching of religion in state and public schools, as well as in private schools where general subjects are taught, is forbidden. Citizens may study or teach religious subjects privately.

10. Church and religious societies are subject to the same laws and regulations as private societies and unions. They do not enjoy any special privileges or subsidies from the state or from local institutions.

11. The levying of obligatory collections or imposition for the benefit of church or religious societies is forbidden. These organizations are forbidden also to coerce or punish their members.

12. Church and religious societies have no right to own property. They do not have the rights of a legal person.

13. All property in Russia now owned by churches and religious organizations is henceforth the property of the people. Buildings and objects that are needed for religious services revert to the free use of religious organizations by special arrangement with the central or local Soviet authorities.

Ulianov (Lenin)
President of the Sovnarkom

Podvoisky, Algasov, Trutovsky, Schlichter,
Proshian, Menzhinsky, Shliapnikov, Petrovsky
People's Commissars