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VARIATIONS ON FAMILIAR THEMES - ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA

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## INTRODUCTION

In the characteristically militant language of Agit-Prop the first issue of a new anti-religious publication in the Soviet Union has been announced as follows:

"In the arsenal of instruments of scientific atheistic propaganda, of materialistic education of the toilers, a new weapon has appeared -- the magazine 'Science and Religion.'"<sup>1</sup>

In the explanatory note introducing this addition to ideological literature, recourse is not made to the standard commentaries on this subject in the "classics of Marxism" of the past, but to the ever growing store of quotations provided by the most authoritative Communist spokesman of the present:

"Popular education, the dissemination of scientific knowledge, the study of the laws of nature -- says Comrade N. S. Khrushchev -- does not leave place for belief in God."<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, in contrast to his predecessors, Lenin and Stalin, the First secretary not only frequently raises the question of religion in his speeches; he also with surprising regularity invokes God in his public addresses and personal conversations.<sup>3</sup> During his recent visit to the United States, in fact, Khrushchev -- the militant atheist -- referred to God forty times.<sup>4</sup> On the eve of the 5th anniversary of the Central Committee decree<sup>5</sup> on anti-religious propaganda -- the first C.C. document signed by Khrushchev alone as First secretary -- this striking concern with religion in word and deed furnishes a direct connection with Khrushchev's initial entry into the doctrinal arena. Since that date there has been no relaxation of the intense anti-religious campaign, nor has there been the slightest evidence of a higher level of argumentation. Convinced of his powers of persuasion, Khrushchev has ordered his subordinates to conduct the struggle on this front without the indiscriminate exercise of terror as in the past; nonetheless, as the actions of the state security organs against the sects<sup>6</sup> reveal,

<sup>1</sup> Pravda, 3 November 1959; see below pp. 3-6 for an interview with the deputy chief editor, F. L. Oleshchuk, one of the most prolific writers on this theme during the Stalin era.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 1-2, W. Kolarz, Khrushchev and Christianity,

<sup>4</sup> Le Monde, 29 September 1959.

<sup>5</sup> Pravda, 11 November 1954; see Background Information,  
<sup>2</sup> December 1954.

<sup>6</sup> See below p. 52.



the Party's "sword" has not been permitted to rust from disuse. As the result of a more realistic appraisal of the strength of religious belief among the Russian peasantry and among most of the nationalities in the Soviet Union, Khrushchev certainly knows that more than improved propaganda will be required to eliminate the "remaining vestiges of religious superstitions;" he also is acutely aware of the fact that propaganda, even supplemented by administrative measures and police terror, has not provided the "final solution." Today, for Khrushchev and the Party, religion is no longer a threat; it remains, however, a problem and challenge which cannot be ignored in a society which cannot permit any independent loyalties in the minds and hearts of young or old.

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CRU

23 September 1959

by Walter Kolarz

It seems that Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev was well briefed before embarking on his American tour. He may have been told that religion is an important issue in the United States and that it will require the most tactful and cautious handling on his part. If Soviet experts on American life and American mentality have tendered him such advice he certainly followed it. In one of the speeches which he delivered in the state of Iowa he went out of his way to stress the common ground between communism and Christianity. "If you look into our political philosophy", he told his American audience, "you will see we have a lot of Christian precepts such as loving one's neighbors."

Khrushchev's statement about Christianity was in very striking contrast to what is being said in the Soviet Union itself about the Christian faith. *Quod licet Iovi non licet bovi*. If any communist party propagandist or local party secretary had made a similar statement he would have lost his job at once. He would have been denounced for showing a conciliatory and opportunist attitude towards the call-alien religious ideology. It is a well-known stock argument of the anti-religious propagandists in the Soviet Union that the Christians carry the love of their neighbors too far by extending it even to anti-Soviet elements and counter-revolutionaries. Love of one's neighbor as the Christians understand it is therefore very much akin to love of the enemy - an idea which the communists have always found both repulsive and dangerous. Khrushchev must also have embarrassed his anti-religious propagandists at home by paying tribute to Christ's teachings regarding brotherhood and equality among men. In Russia the very term "Christ's teachings" can only be used in inverted commas, for it is the unanimous contention of all Soviet historians and ideologists that Christ has never existed, and that therefore he has never imparted any message or any teachings to mankind.

All this is not intended to accuse Khrushchev of a hypocritical and doublefaced attitude. To do so would be a superficial and purely propagandistic attitude which would not help us at all to understand the so complicated personality of the present Soviet Prime Minister. One might also say that New York, or even Iowa, is worth a mass for Khrushchev, but even this *bon mot*, true as it may be in parts, would not do full justice to a most involved problem. It is a historical fact that during the forty-two years of its existence the Soviet Union has never had a top-ranking leader who has taken such a tremendous interest in the religious question as Khrushchev does. The forty-three volumes of Lenin's works contain only a few dozen pages which are devoted to religion and the communist fight against it. These pages are continuously reprinted in the form of special booklets, but are of little help to anti-religious propagandists in the late fifties, for they refer of course, to conditions in the early part of the century. Stalin kept an almost persistent silence on the subject, and only a few sentences about religious questions can be extracted from the thirteen volumes of his collected works, covering the period up to 1934 and his subsequent statements published separately. People like Molotov, Mikoyan or Bulganin never said anything on the matter.



Things are quite different with Khrushchev. Religion is one of the problems which occupy his versatile and active mind. This became clear for the first time when, nearly five years ago, he issued his instructions on the further conduct of atheist propaganda in the Soviet Union. The decree which promulgated them was one of the first major ideological documents which Khrushchev produced in his capacity as First Secretary of the Soviet Communist party. It must also be taken for granted that the unceasing anti-religious propaganda campaign which has gone on in the Soviet Union during the past three years has not only Khrushchev's passive approval, but is directly inspired by him. In fact, the more Khrushchev has consolidated his power, the more extensive has the Soviet atheist campaign become.

Khrushchev himself, it is true, has never stooped to the level of his press, and in his countless public speeches he has never made any personal attacks on the clergy or on individual religious groups of the Soviet Union. However, the general problem of religion has come up in his published statements and interviews with surprising frequency. He mentioned it in some of his most important and most widely quoted pronouncements which he made in the current year, in his report to the twenty-first party congress in January, in his Leipzig speech to German workers in March, in the address he gave in May when receiving the Lenin Peace Prize from the hands of the religious-minded Chariman of the All-India Peace Council. Khrushchev's statements on religion are difficult to bring to a common denominator; their content varies with the audience he addresses. To his party comrades he talks in a bitter, sarcastic vein. When he speaks before left-wing, but not necessarily communist, peace partisans, he sounds more sympathetic. But his latest reference to the matter, delivered in an American setting, was, as we have seen, remarkable in its friendliness and even in its variance with communist atheist doctrine as usually understood.

But why does Khrushchev, the atheist - for such he has often proudly proclaimed himself - attach such an ever-increasing importance to the problem of religion? It is not easy to give a full satisfactory explanation to this question. Part of the explanation is certainly that Khrushchev has learned from his many travels a good deal about the vitality of religion, both in communist and non-Communist countries. He certainly now has a better knowledge of this subject than any of his predecessors who lived in the seclusion of the Kremlin, wallowing in wishful thinking about the final victory of communism over all "religious superstitions". However, there may be other less obvious reasons for Khrushchev's constant preoccupation with religion, reasons which a psychologist is more competent to detect than a political analyst. The psychologist, confronted with the statements on religion of the present Soviet Prime Minister, would probably question whether the individual Khrushchev has really fully solved the problem of religion for himself personally. At any rate, Khrushchev seems to feel the constant need to strengthen his own atheist conviction by advertising his opposition to religion in public, as well as by stating that communist principles are either superior to Christian morality, or that there is a certain identity between communism and Christianity, as he said during his American tour. But unless Khrushchev himself will open his heart one day we shall never know the real truth about his puzzling and mysterious interest in religion, and his great urge to talk about it.

INTERVIEW WITH FEDOR NESTOROVICH OLESHCHUK

(Dep. Chief Editor  
of Science and Religion)  
Moscow Home Service  
15 October 1959

Announcer: The first issue of the scientific-popular atheist magazine Science and Religion - Nauka i Religiya - has come out and is being sent to subscribers. The magazine is published by the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge. Our correspondent has approached the deputy chief editor of the magazine, Fedor Nestorovich Oleschchuk, with certain questions. Here is the recorded interview:

Correspondent: Fedor Nestorovich, for whom, in the first place, is the magazine Science and Religion intended?

Oleschchuk: The magazine is intended for the reader among the masses, as well as for the agitators, propagandists, and atheist lecturers.

Correspondent: Could you please tell us about the contents of the first issue.

Oleschchuk: the magazine opens with greetings from Academician Nesmeyanov, President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and from Prof. John Bernal, member of the London Royal Society, the well-known British physicist and active peace partisan. In his greetings to the magazine, academician Nesmeyanov writes: "Religion has caused and is causing so many calamities to mankind that one cannot but greet the appearance of the magazine Science and Religion, which is called upon to carry on a struggle for the triumph of the materialist world outlook without which the building of communism is impossible. The magazine Science and Religion, Academician Nesmeyanov continues, "is called upon to fulfill a task of prime importance: to carry on propaganda of scientific views on the world and to struggle against religious prejudices and superstitions."

Professor John Bernal writes: "I welcome the appearance of the new magazine science and religion which, as I hope, will further the popularization of progressive philosophical ideas in the Soviet Union. I very much want to see how your magazine will treat questions of the relations between Science and religion in the past and the present."

The magazine contains an article by academician Ambartsumyan "Science About the Universe and Religion," and another by academician Oparin, "At the sources of Life." The article by Academician Ambartsumyan deals with the latest data in the domain of the structure of the universe and with religion views on this question. Academician Ambartsumyan writes at the conclusion of his article:

"Ever since Copernicus challenged the church's authority in explaining nature, astronomy began gradually to conquer one position after another, chasing God out of every sector of the material world. The development of science in our day has brought final triumph for atheism. The idea of the existence of God, the idea of the creation of the world has suffered complete defeat. Catholic theologians still refer to the Bible, sometimes



even abandoning certain Biblical dogmas in order to save the main idea of religion: the idea of the creation of the world by God. But the rapid progress of natural science and the outstanding achievements in technology decisively refute these claims of the fideists. Scientific knowledge and religious faith are opposed to one another and irreconcilable. Every step in the development of our knowledge about the universe convinces us more and more that materialism is right and that the religious world outlook is false.

"How then, did life arise? Whence and how did the numerous animals and plants appear on earth? How did man come into being? These questions have always stood in the center of the irreconcilable struggle which has been going on for many centuries between science and religion. If it is said in the Bible and in the other so-called sacred books that God has created all living organisms, including man, science, as is explained in detail in academician Oparin's article, has proved that the origin and development of life represents a natural, regular process. In this way science radically refutes the ideas of divine creation.

Furthermore, academician Oparin writes, it would be incorrect to assume that life is an exceptional phenomenon peculiar to the earth alone. Living organisms can come to being everywhere when the necessary conditions exist; consequently, on the other planets too. The research of the Soviet astronomer Tikhov testifies to the existence of vegetation on Mars. Science assumes that life is possible on the moon as well. Thus, having solved the problem of the origin of life, scientific knowledge has completely exploded the religious ideas of the creation of living beings by a non-existent God.

Correspondent: Fedor Nestorovich, your magazine publishes an interview with Kukarkin, Doctor of Physics and Mathematics, vice-president of the International Astronomical Union, on the launching of the second space rocket to the moon. The Bible, as is known, speaks about the existence of the firmament of heaven. What can you say about this in the light of the latest achievements of Soviet astronautics? What did Comrade Kukarkin reply to this?

Oleshchuk: Replying to this question, Boris Vasilyevich Kukarkin writes: neither the moon rocket nor its predecessor launched in January this year had to break their way through the so-called firmament of heaven, about whose existence the Bible speaks. The most perfect means of radio communication could not establish anything resembling it either in the vicinity of the moon or much further. This is natural. The firmament of heaven is a sort of iron curtain erected by religion before human reason, intended as an obstacle to understanding of the universe.

Correspondent: In the magazine, in the section "Truth About Religion," there is an article by Comrade Mitrokhin entitled "Contemporary Orthodoxy", as well as an abridged text of an atheistic work by the well-known British scholar and philosopher Bertrand Russell, "Has Religion made a Useful Contribution to Civilization?" Would you please say something about their contents?

Oleshchuk: Orthodoxy in our country, as is known, is the most widespread religious ideology. At the present time the Orthodox Church has a loyal attitude toward the Soviet Government. It takes an active part in the struggle for peace and, in the official statements made by representatives of the Church, it appeals for support for the foreign and domestic policy of our state. Nevertheless, the legitimate question arises: has the contents of the ideology of orthodoxy changed as a result of all this? And what is the nature of the ideas which the ministers of the Orthodox Church are at present defending and disseminating?

Readers of the magazine will find the answers to these questions in the article by Comrade Mitrokhin. In recent years orthodox churchmen, as is known, have been endeavoring to smooth away the obvious contradictions between faith and scientific knowledge. Between the moral precepts of the church and communist morality. This article describes the real meaning and basis of this so-called close alliance between science and religion, between moral precepts and communist morality about which churchmen talk so much.

Great interest has been aroused among Soviet readers by Bertrand Russell's lecture: "Why I am Not a Christian", which has been published in our country. The editorial office of the magazine approached Bertrand Russell with the question: Does he still adhere to the views which he formulated in this lecture? This is what he writes: My views on theology have not changed since the time when I delivered the lecture "Why I am Not a Christian". I noted this in my last book under the same heading, which also contains other works on analogous themes. I am glade to know that my point of view on these questions is known in the Soviet Union."

In addition, the magazine publishes an abridged text of the atheist work by the British philosopher Bertrand Russell, "Has Religion made a Useful Contribution to Civilization?" This work is published in Russian for the first time. It will undoubtedly arouse great interest among our readers.

Correspondent: The magazine contains a hitherto unpublished letter by the celebrated German thinker, the great materialist philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach. What could you tell us about this letter?

Oleshchuk: The letter is addressed to the German radical publicist, co-proprietor of the Literary Office publishing house, Julius Fredel. From the contents of the letter one may conclude that Fredel had intended to write a work on emancipation from Christianity in German literature and asked Feuerbach, the renowned antagonist to Christianity, to give him some guidance. The promptness with which Feuerbach responded to this request is an indication of the importance which he attached to this question. The letter of so passionate an antagonist of religious obscurantism as Ludwig Feuerbach is not of historical interest only. It contains profound ideas which preserve their significance for the struggle against religion in present conditions too.

The magazine has a section: Tales, Feuilletons and Pamphlets. This section contains a story by Shaposhnikova entitled ("Zernova"?)



It is about a young woman who became involved in the pentecostal sect, of the "Shriekers", as they are known among the people, and what caused her to abandon this sect. The feuilleton "Jehovah in Volchansk," exposes the unsavory activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In a sketch "Dill Moaning by the Village of Glazatovo," comrade Khrushinskiy writes about a monstrous incident which took place in one of the villages of Kashin Rayon in Kalinin oblast. Driven to fanaticism by constant attendance at Church, a father killed his son. He motivated his crime by the desire to atone for sins by sacrifice. The author of the sketch writes:

Let this be food for thought for those people who have embarked on the path that leads one astray from real life into the imaginary world of shades, fears, and atonement. A person in our country is free to believe in any religion he pleases. But fanaticism and religion gone mad is a violation of the norms of social life. They present a danger to the community and lead to crime. And what genuine approval met the speech delivered in court by the lay spokesman for the prosecution, Praskoviya Aleksandrovna Lakmanenka.

A social worker known throughout the neighborhood who had worked 40 years in the ranks of the Party, she spoke of the great obligations of motherhood, of the joy of rearing a new generation of builders of communism. Children, grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren could testify to the truth of every one of her words. Both criminals - Borodin and Borodina, were condemned to the supreme penalty - death by shooting. What is lost cannot be returned. His comrades will not see Leva Borodin. The sacrifice to darkness, backwardness and obscurantism has been made. But this must be the last sacrifice, this is what every person with a healthy, unobscured mind must say to himself. This is what the entire Soviet public says.

The magazine publishes the reply of Yevgeniya Gigoriyevna Levitskaya, member of the CPSU, in 1903, to the question of the Urals worker Aleksey Semenovich Akulin: "Is there such a thing as fate?" The magazine also contains sections of replies to readers' queries, a page of current anniversaries, reviews and a bibliography.

The struggle against religious prejudices and superstitions occupies an important place in the liquidation of remnants of the past that are alien to us. The magazine Science and Religion is called upon to carry on a struggle against these remnants, to help in overcoming them.

THE WAR AGAINST RELIGION IN THE USSR

FROM LENIN TO KHRUSHCHEV

American Committee for  
Liberation  
New York, New York

TWO REASONS:

Ever since the Communists took over the government of Russia in 1917, they have been waging war against religion. There were two reasons for this, one historical, the other theoretical.

After the Communist coup, practically the only organized bodies left intact were the churches (and this is true today). Among these, the largest and most influential was the Russian Orthodox Church, which under the synodal system had been so closely allied with the government and the monarchy that it was often accused of being a government agent. For example, the church was required to keep and report to the state all records of vital statistics, births, deaths, marriages, etc., a function normally fulfilled in other countries by a civil agency. In addition, the church received large subsidies from the government. Even after the Bolshevik revolution some church leaders publicly defended the old regime. Others, among them even Patriarch Tikhon, not only resisted certain decrees of the new government but anathematized its leaders. The Soviet Government responded by first nationalizing all church property and then (Jan. 23, 1918) by decreeing the separation of church and state. For a score of years thereafter, the government was in a state of open hostility against the church, and left no means untried to crush it.

But important as were the historical reasons for government hostility to the church, ideological reasons were more significant and fundamental. It must never be forgotten that for its adherents, Marxism is in effect not only a religion but the true religion and therefore the only one they can tolerate. Its holy scriptures are the works of Marx and Lenin; it has its saints and martyrs, even its heretics. To be sure, Marxists consider their faith as an ideology, in opposition to what they call religion.

As Lenin wrote:

The teaching of Marx is all-powerful because it is true. It is complete and systematic, giving people



an integrated world-view, incompatible with superstition, with reaction, or with the defense of bourgeois oppression...Materialism has turned out to be the only consistent philosophy, true to the teachings of natural science....Its enemies therefore have defended various forms of philosophical idealism, which in the end always amount to the defense or support of religion. (Lenin: "Three Sources and Three Essentials of Marxism," 1913).

Last June the journal, Youth of Estonia, put it this way: "As masters of the earth and creators of history, we must not betray our convictions, for our faith is faith in Communism which in its sincerity is the only true faith in the world."

Perhaps nowhere has the phrase, "He who is not with us is against us," received such complete and rigorous acceptance as by the Communists in Russia. Incidentally, this explains the fact that for Moscow the cold war against the non-Communist world is to continue, (unless it changes to a hot war) unrelentingly until Communism controls the world. In line with this, religion is not merely out-moded and useless, but a hostile force which must be crushed by all possible means. This is clearly stated in the official program of the Communist Party: "Among the tasks of the cultural revolution...a special place is occupied by the struggle against the opiate of the people, religion--a struggle which must be carried on systematically and relentlessly." (Program and Constitution of the Communist International, Moscow 1936).

And so for forty years the Communists have been fighting religion in the Soviet Union, using all sorts of weapons in varying degrees of intensity as circumstances varied.

#### THE PRESENT-DAY CAMPAIGN:

The present-day anti-religious campaign differs greatly from the efforts of earlier years. As will be recalled, in the first decade after the revolution the crudest and most violent methods were employed against religion and its representatives. Churches were closed, church valuables seized, the clergy were declared outside the law with not even the right to food rations or the seven and a half square yards of living space nominally accorded every other citizen. After trials for alleged anti-government activity, scores of bishops and priests were executed, hundreds more exiled or sent to forced-labor camps. Shrines were desecrated, religious meetings broken up by bands of ruffians and unbridled terror applied against all manifestations of religion.

The second decade was marked by more emphasis on legal procedures, but with the same goals. Discriminatory taxation deprived many parishes of their church buildings. After a five-year period during which the church organization was almost completely paralyzed, a more or less officially recognized administration existed until 1943, when Stalin permitted the election

of a new Patriarch. From that time on the Communists abandoned methods of violence and ever since have constantly reminded their members that anti-religious effort must avoid giving offense to believers and must use education and persuasion only.

The final paragraph of the article on "Religion and the Church," in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia (Vol. 50, pp. 642-643) after noting that the church exists legally in the USSR, points out that "the Communist Party, however, considers it necessary to conduct profound, systematic scientific-atheistic propaganda." How this principle has been applied in the past year (1958) will appear below.

#### LEGAL MEASURES:

Among the non-violent means employed by the Party for eliminating religion from Soviet life was legal limitation of religious activities. The first Soviet constitution permitted "freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda." But in 1929 this was altered to read "freedom of religious confession and anti-religious propaganda." This was further elucidated in the Stalin constitution (1936): "Freedom for the conducting of religious worship and freedom for anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens." (Art. 124). Another paragraph made this more explicit. Religious associations are forbidden to organize mutual aid funds or any other form of social service, any form of study-group or "special meetings for children, youth, women, for prayer or other purposes." Churches may not maintain libraries or reading-rooms, or offer any form of medical aid. "Only such books as are necessary for the performance of services may be kept in the church building." Before the revolution about half the schools in Russia had been church-connected. The separation of schools from the church cut short this extensive contact between the churches and the youth.

Having taken religion away from the school, the Soviet Government proceeded to measures intended to keep youth away from the church. One explanation of the frequently reported fact that there are few children and teenagers in churches, is simply the practically compulsory participation in Communist youth organizations which takes up all their time. Activities of these clubs are so scheduled as to coincide with services in churches, and a youngster is under great social pressure to remain with his club. Soviet Culture (Nov. 18, 1958) quotes a young dairy worker: "Here in the kolkhoz (collective farm) our life is so full that I have no time to visit religious institutions."

#### RELIGION AS THE "CAPITALIST SUPERSTRUCTURE":

In the direct onslaught against religion the different approaches are worth noting. One of the basic arguments of earlier years was drawn from the Marxist doctrine that religion was a social superstructure of the capitalist system, and that hence it would disappear in a non-capitalist society. For decades, now, the Soviet Government has assured its citizens that capitalism in Russia no longer exists, and this is one place where the Communists have spoken the truth.



Capitalism has vanished from the Russian scene, but religion persists.

For some years, Soviet magazines, particularly those designed for "propagandists" and "agitators" (officially recognized "professions" in the USSR) were filled with attempts to explain this phenomenon. None of the explanations seemed compatible with Marxist theory, however, and during 1958 there was almost nothing in print about the "superstructure" theory. But the theory is not abandoned. "Tens of millions of men free of religion in the USSR and other socialist states....a vivid witness to the beginning of the process of the dying-out of religious ideology, moving towards its inevitable historic end." (Science and Life, No. 10, 1958). It is interesting that the "dying-out of religion is just "beginning" after forty years of anti-religious effort.

The chief argument against religion in Communist propaganda is, of course, that religion is unscientific. Not only is religion incompatible with the complete and universal science of Marxism, but it goes against all the scientific knowledge which man possesses. On this theme the propaganda pulls out all the stops, from simple repeated declarations of Marxist dogma to argumentation based on philosophy, morals, technics and biology, on theology and biblical criticism.

An article on the fortieth anniversary of Lenin's decree separating church and state (Science and Life, No. 1, 1958) contains this closing sentence: "All this bears witness to the great power and vitality of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, including as it does scientific atheism and pointing the only sure way to a beautiful Communist future for mankind, freed from every sort of prejudice."

Science and Life, by the way, is an attractive monthly, somewhat like the Scientific American, and its special section, "Science and Religion," is probably the best-known piece of periodical anti-religious propaganda in the Soviet Union. Published in 150,000 to 195,000 copies, richly illustrated, with colored covers, it is sure to be read by anyone who can obtain a copy.

#### RELIGION--"ENEMY OF SCIENTIFIC TRUTH":

A long article on "Teachers and Religion" (Science and Life, No. 6, 1958) quotes the Bible to prove that religion is opposed to modern science:

Man's active interference in the processes of nature, his studied alterations of nature in the interests of society, are directly opposed to religious doctrines. The 'Holy' scriptures of all religions insistently proclaim the idea that men cannot and may not change the world around them, since it is created by god (no capital letter) and therefore of such perfection that it should not be altered by the will of man.

Then the writer quotes from St. Matthew (VI:25,26) Jesus' words about man's not being overanxious about his daily needs, and about birds receiving their food from God. Further to bolster this argument, the story of Adam and Eve is brought in to "prove" that "it is not given to man to know the truth, except in cases of divine revelation, since true knowledge is the property of god, alone." As if he realized how palpably weak this statement is, the writer here brings in another argument which has been used increasingly in recent months:

Compelled to reckon with facts, modern preachers of religion are constantly and ever more insistently attempting to adapt the religious world-view to the latest achievements of science and technics, to bring the Bible into agreement with scientific knowledge.

Referring to a series of German writers on technics, the article attacks their theory that technics is a foreseen continuation of God's creativity, and comes to this conclusion:

And if (Friederich) Dessauer and (G) Schmidt say that all these principles of natural science are part of the mystery of the divine consciousness, then in this case man who bends the laws of nature to his will becomes greater than god, uses god's activity in his own interests, and consequently god ceases to be all-powerful....The development of technics is not accomplished by a sort of 'creator,' is not the objectivization of mystical principles, but is the result of man's activity on the basis of his knowledge of the laws of the objective world.

Man's control of machines offers another "proof" of the non-existence of God. For instance:

If we return now to the 'theory' of technical progress as the continuation of god's creative activity, it becomes clear that this cannot explain why, for instance, a self-regulating system of machines could be invented only after a complex mechanization was established. Dessauer would answer by saying that this was part of a single unchangeable divine plan. God could not inspire Abraham to invent the automobile, because the internal-combustion engine had not yet been invented, oil had not been discovered, etc. But in this case divinity itself is evidently limited by its own unchangeable plan, and subject to it and, consequently, ceases to be an all-powerful being. 'God's plan' is higher than god himself, but this plan is nothing other than a mistaken concept of the objective laws of the development of technics.

After technics, biology serves as a basis for argument against religion. In an article, "The Myth About an After-life" (Science and Life, No. 10, 1958), we read:

The Bible says that god created man 'out of the dust of the earth' and breathed into him 'a living spirit.' Hence the body is lifeless without the spirit, and the spirit can exist without the body. However, facts discovered by science convince us of just the opposite.



Life exists for a long time, and still exists in many of its manifestations without what is known as 'spiritual activity.'

A series of biological examples beginning with the lowest order of animals, "proves" that "spiritual activity depends upon the nervous system and by no means represents some independent element....In the last analysis, the psychic depends on the physical." But, the atheist writer continues, perhaps what has been said about animals does not apply to man. "The preachers of religion affirm that animals have no souls. They say that god gave a soul only to man." The author proceeds to cite instances of revivification after "clinical death" had already occurred, and conclude triumphantly:

If the cause of dying is in the fact that the spirit leaves the body, then where was it when the people 'resurrected' by the doctors were in a state of clinical death? How could the 'spirit' return to the organism? And, most important, why does it return only in those cases where the necessary medical assistance has been applied in time? It turns out that the presence of the 'spirit' in the body, or even its return after death, is regulated, not by god, but by men themselves, armed with science.

In the USSR, besides biology, psychology provides many arguments against religion. If the great Pavlov, himself a devout Christian, could see how frequently his scientific work is cited in anti-religious writing, he would turn in his grave. All his studies in conditioned reflexes are used to prove the non-existence of the soul. A writer on "Animal Electricity" (Science and Life, No. 1, 1958) says:

From the religious doctrine of the 'spirit', it follows that it cannot be discerned by means of scientific research, inasmuch as it is supposedly invisible, intangible, weightless, and generally imperceptible. But the achievements of electro-physiology and the biochemistry of the brain, the success of Pavlov's teachings about the higher nervous activity of animals and men, proves that psychics may be studied just as any other phenomenon, for all the processes of consciousness and thought proceed from material processes, are based on them and defined by them.

The newest science of cybernetics is deified by the religious teachers of our time to prove the existence of a divine plan for the world. This field of knowledge shows that in the functioning of living organisms and machines, there are certain common features. (West German engineers, G. Schmidt and others have further developed this idea and evolved the theories of 'objectivization' and 'reverse connection').

The principle of reverse connection is presented as the essence of the divine plan of creation, and the term objectivization means the process of its realization...

Schmidt attempts to deify reverse connection.. But in fact this principle is not some element from the beyond inculcated by the will of god into living beings and machines. It is one of the natural qualities of developing material....Here then is not even a hint of some principle established by god. (Science and Life, No. 9, 1958).

#### THE PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT:

Along with psychology, philosophy provides the Marxists with valuable anti-religious ammunition. Science and Life (No. 6, 1958) has a long article on "Freedom of the Will":

This problem has occupied the minds of philosophers for centuries. And the defenders of religion have made good use of considerations of this theme. Interpreting freedom of the will in their own way, they have tried...to provide a basis for social orders favorable to the exploiters, and at the same time to escape from the contradictions which inevitably arise from a comparison of religious dogmas with the facts of life. All such attempts have proved themselves bankrupt. Only dialectical and historical materialism has provided the correct solution to the problem.

The writer then reviews the "contradictions of theological assertions" about freedom of the will: if God is unable to destroy evil, He is not all-powerful, and if He is all-powerful and does not wish to destroy evil He is not good, etc.

And so the theological conception of freedom of the will is inwardly contradictory. It merely deepens the contradictions in the religious doctrine of god....Marxism has shown that it is not correct to think of freedom of the will as something absolute, but that, on the other hand, it cannot be completely denied.

Together with pure philosophy, logic is called to witness the "bankruptcy" of religious ideas:

Contrary to all logic, religion denies to reason a capacity to know the truth, the essence of the world. Affirming the superiority of faith over knowledge, the theologians arrive at a denial of logic....There is no single logical mistake which has not been used, intentionally or not, by the defenders of religious views (Science and Life, No. 8, 1958).

Then follows a list of the acceptable principles of logic, the law of adequate foundation, the law of the vicious circle ("The Bible is infallible because it is inspired by God, and this is proved by the Bible itself"), the law of basic error ("It has long since been proved that Christ is a purely imaginary person, but, as formerly, the Christ-legend serves as the basis for much



of the Christian religion"), the law of contradictions, with a whole page of "evidently" contradictory quotations from the Bible. The article concludes with a paean of praise for science:

The insolvency of religious views is proved by science, by practice, by life. The successes of astronomy, physics, biology, history, the achievement of socialism, the wide extension of scientific and scientific-atheist knowledge.... all this daily refutes religious ideas.... Logic plays a great part in combatting one of the most stubborn relics of the past in the minds of men--religion.

Speaking of the misuse of logic, it may be noted that Soviet writers themselves are as guilty as any protagonists of religion. The assumption, repeated a million times, that "freedom of religious worship" is equivalent to "freedom of anti-religious propaganda" is one crying example. Commenting on a news item about the use in Harvard of electronic machines to compare ancient biblical texts, one writer points out the inconsistency of using science for a religious purpose, when it is known that science and religion are completely incompatible. Another author, writing on space exploration, says that the most delicate instruments have never found "the world beyond the grave. Why? Because it does not exist!" Soviet atheistic literature is as full of non-sequiturs as a Swiss cheese is of holes.

#### REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM

Biblical criticism and theological argument are also included in the "scientific" battle for atheism. The biblical dimensions of Noah's ark are reduced to modern terms and the resultant space per pair of animals is shown to be "no larger than a small suitcase." Religionists argue that technics, which admittedly ease man's labors, are part of God's creation, but the Bible says God made men to labor as a punishment for the Fall. How could the Tower of Babel be part of God's universal plan, when the Bible says it was built without His knowledge? When Jesus said (Matt. XIII:10-13) that he spoke in parables because "seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear,"

this evidently means that only the twelve disciples could know truth. But if now the preachers of religion put faith (the knowledge of the unseen) on a level, or almost on a level, with scientific knowledge (based exactly on things seen and heard), this goes contrary to the 'holy scriptures'.

No less a theologian than Lenin himself is quoted to show the capitalist origin of belief in life after death:

The helplessness of the exploited classes in their struggle with the exploiters leads inevitably to belief in a better life beyond the grave.... To the man who all his life has labored and has been in want, religion teaches meekness and patience in earthly life, conforming him with the hope of a heavenly reward. (Science and Life, No. 10, 1958)

From the difference between the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) and the Gospel according to St. John, one writer deduces that

for simple people Christ is present as a god-man, but for educated people, in the form of an abstract Logos, uniting belief with human knowledge. Of course, in all these rationalizations, there is not a grain of the scientific.

#### RELIGION...A DRAG ON PROGRESS:

Another basic line of Soviet propaganda is that religion is not only unscientific but it is also unsocial. In this, again, all the possible charges are aired. Religion hinders the fulfillment of social duty; religion holds women in inequality with men, etc.

In a society which is building socialism and Communism, the presence of religious views, fantastic and perverted reflections of reality in the minds of men, especially retards progress. Hence it follows that...we must know how to eliminate religion, have a clear idea of the ways and means of effective conflict with it. (Science and Life, No. 1, 1958).

As an example, take the attitude of all religions toward women. All religions have allegedly tried to keep women in an inferior place. Quotations from the Bible, the Koran and the Talmud are adduced to prove this. Admitting that in modern times religious preachers have been trying to "adjust" their teachings about women, the article continues:

But the general tendency of any religion has always been, and now remains, most hostile toward woman. This is what permitted the exploiters to enslave the female half of the human race. (Science and Life, No. 2, 1958).

Besides enslaving woman, religion is said to misdirect human energies:

It turns man's willed efforts toward aims which have nothing in common with the real interests of the workers, draws them aside from real life and the real struggle to change the world, the struggle for a better future....Consequently, any attempt to draw man away from society, to turn him against earthly life, is a serious limitation of man's free will and an unsocial act. (Science and Life, No. 6, 1958)

Religion is charged with interfering with scientific progress. It is reported as telling man that by his own efforts he cannot comprehend anything in the "divine order," for his knowledge is of the earth, vain, temporary, as distinct from the "higher and eternal divine truths." Such a viewpoint hinders the scientific study of nature and society. It hinders the utilization of known laws in the interests of society.



Religion, while asserting the divine origin of natural laws, darkens men's minds with belief in the complete dependence of natural phenomena and events in social life upon divine pleasure. It gives birth to fatalism... whereby it condemns men to a passive expectation of 'grace from on high' and distracts them from active work in their own interests (Science and Life, No. 12, 1958).

Instead of himself trying, with the aid of scientific knowledge, to attain the purposes set before him, the believer puts his hope in a 'miracle,' an intervention of supernatural powers in a way favorable to him. This contradicts our world-view, the very form of our socialist life; it hinders the religious person from devoting himself wholly to the great task of building Communism (Science and Life, No. 7, 1958).

Worse even than impeding the process of science, according to the Soviet line, religion hinders the oppressed in their struggle against "the exploiters." One recent writer brings up the doctrine of predestination, and continues:

To soften such stern fatalism...religious preachers have now begun to put emphasis on the 'sinful nature' of man, himself. The redemptive death of the mythical Christ is supposed to have freed men from the original sin of Adam and Eve. Now man must free himself from his personal sins, by repentance, prayer, meekness, patience, the observation of all religious rites...It is unnecessary to explain that such a conception is most profitable for the exploiters, since it distracts the oppressed masses from the revolutionary struggle....The preachers of religion are attempting to overthrow the law of class conflict, an effort quite unrealistic, since no one can change or destroy the objectively existing order of law. (Science and Life, No. 12, 1958).

On this firm order of law, the laws governing society and its development, Soviet society is reputedly built. "The whole policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government, all our economic and cultural activity, is built in accordance with the relevant, existing objective laws, on a scientific basis." But almost all bourgeois sociologists and theologians are against them. "They stubbornly repeat that everything is from god...and that social progress is an expression of the 'wisdom of god'.... and so, the religious concept of social progress has no relation whatever to the truth."

Unsocial as it is, religion, it is contended, is the cause of serious economic damage:

Pilgrimages and religious holidays often coincide with the most critical periods in agricultural work, and all these absences from work cause great economic loss....In a class-society religion, teaching of life beyond the grave, takes men's minds away from the class struggle, the struggle for a better life, here on earth. According to religion, we are temporary guests here on our own planet. Basic life awaits man after death, that is, life eternal. But in

conditions of the socialist order, where living conditions are constantly improving (7 and 1/2 square meters living space per person!--Editor) the church people are talking somewhat differently. They assure us that the church is no enemy of its parishioners, that it is not against earthly good things. But they do not give up the basic dogma that man's life on earth is only 'vanity of vanities, brief and unimportant....Hence in our society only he can participate whole-heartedly and effectively in the building of communism, who does not hope for happiness beyond the grave, but tries by his labor and his contribution to the common task to make our life better, more full-blooded, more joyful. (Science and Life, No. 10, 1958).

#### TOOLS OF ANTI-RELIGION--THE PRESS:

With these basic anti-religious arguments in mind we may look at the means by which they are presented. It should be noted in passing, that while most of the anti-religious propaganda directed against all religion, there are also often attacks against specific groups, Moslems, Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. Observers have thought that they discerned a recent tendency to avoid direct attacks on the Orthodox Church, but even in an article on the Baptists the Orthodox were included in most of its negative arguments.

Of course, the printed word is the form of propaganda easiest to evaluate, although other forms of mass communication media are more widely applied and perhaps reach more people than books or periodicals. Of new anti-religious books there is a steady stream, slackening at times and then increasing--1958 shows an increased output, as compared with 1956 and 1957. The one month of August, 1958, saw the publication of a dozen, including two symposia, Questions of the History of Religion and Atheism (No. 5, 440 pp.) and Materialism and Religion (250 pp.), the latter published in 50,000 copies. But Yaroslavsky's Bible for Believers and Non-Believers, 10th edition, was issued in 150,000 copies. Other titles are Atheism, Science and Religion, (50,000), Can Science and Religion be Reconciled? (100,000 copies)

The table of contents of this number of the "highbrow" publication is sufficiently typical to be quoted: "Thoughts of Marx and Engels About Religion"; "The Propagandist of Atheism"; "Gnostiological Forms of Religion"; "Questions of the Vatican's Policy in Africa"; "The Origin of Religiosity in Capitalist Countries"; "The Origin of the Papal Encyclical Rerum Novarum"; "Russian Proverbs of the 17th Century About the Church and Its Servants"; "Peasants Against the Monasteries in Russia in the 16th-17th Centuries"; "News of the St. Bartholomew's Massacre in Diplomatic Correspondence of the 16th Century"; "Free Thought in Tver in the 14th and 15th Centuries"; "Calvin and Calvinism"; "Russia in the Politics of the Roman Curia of the 14th Century"; "From the History of Religious Syncretism Among the Cherkess i.e., Circassians); "The Problem of the Origin of Religion in Soviet Science."



Among other titles published in November were A Book About The Bible (360 pp. - 125,000 ed.), Gospel Stories and Their Meaning (116 pp. - 75,000 ed.), The Origin of Our God (138 pp. - 150,000 ed.), Does God Exist? (80 pp. - 150,000 ed.).

The press has announced for publication in 1959 twenty anti-religious brochures, designed especially for popular consumption. The Communist, an official monthly (May 1958), complains that an insufficient amount of atheistic literature is being published, but lists 106 titles for the whole USSR as having been issued in 1957. Figures for 1958 are not yet available.

Periodicals are another medium for atheistic propaganda. There is Science and Life frequently quoted above. About three years ago a new monthly, Science and Religion, was widely heralded, and for some time subscriptions for it were accepted. Then it was announced that instead of a new monthly, a special section of Science and Life would henceforth be devoted to anti-religion. This section, "Science and Religion," is the source of the quotations used above. It is often printed in larger type than other sections of the magazine. The articles are illustrated, often by cartoons. It is notable that all these articles are directed at well-educated readers: if religion is only superstition, held by ignorant people, why such intensive propaganda for the well-read?

There are also magazines produced by local agencies. The Communist (Aug. 1958) says:

Looking through the files of journals issued by the Central Committee of the Party in the various republics -- we note that materials on scientific-atheistic questions are now published more frequently than before, that their themes are more varied and more actual.

The article quotes from six such journals, but implies that they also exist in other republics.

#### TOOLS OF ANTI-RELIGION--LECTURES

Beside the printed word, Soviet atheists make great use of the spoken word. A large corps of professional lecturers is engaged specially in anti-religious propaganda. There are trained in special courses, organized on a local or a national scale: a national convention of such "agitators" from the Ukrainian SSR alone recently held in Kiev reported 350 lecturers participating.

One small Belorussian district reported forty lectures to kolkhozes (collective farms) in 1957 on "scientific-atheist" topics. "As lecturers we had physicists, chemists, writers, biologists and historians. Lectures on the origin of Easter were given in every village." The fact that in the Orthodox Church Easter is the culminating holiday of the year, "the

Feast of Feasts," explains the choice of this particular lecture topic.

It is true that Soviet press frequently complains about the dull quality of these "popular" lectures, and reports that they are attended only by those who do not need them, but the constant use of this propaganda method is an essential part of the overall anti-religious effort. Pravda (Jan. 18, 1958) reported that in 1957, 3,875,000 such lectures were given in the USSR, "two million more than in 1956."

#### TOOLS OF ANTI-RELIGION--THE SCHOOLS

Further, the word is spoken by teachers in the schools. Every teacher is supposed to include anti-religion in all his teaching. Soviet Belorussia (May 30, 1958) remarks "how satisfying it is that our schools are giving more attention to the atheistic education of children!" The Teachers' Gazette (Dec. 11, 1958) has a long article, "Let Us Bring Up Militant Atheists," which says in part:

Our school is on the outskirts of Kishinev...Part of the local residents are still under the influence of religion. The mood in the family cannot fail to influence the children. Therefore the pedagogical collective of our school is giving great attention to training the children in atheism.

A series of examples is given. In the third grade, when the teacher asked what was needed for a good garden, one pupil said: "Mama says we have a good garden when God sends rain."

After a long discussion in the class, the teacher, explaining that "man controls nature when he has thoroughly studied it" and telling about irrigation, artificial rain and the use of fertilizers, the boy said: "I'm going to tell mama what makes a good garden, but if she doesn't believe me, will you tell her?"

In the fifth grade "the teacher demonstrated to her pupils the absurdity of belief in life beyond the grave, and in any supernatural power." In the sixth grade, the teacher "explained to her pupils how and why the Christian religion arose, giving special attention to its reactionary nature."

In the upper grades, while studying the Catholic Church, the instructor told of

the subversive activity of the Jesuits...the most evil foes of the people...how they fight for war, in the interests of American imperialists. At the same time the teacher showed the role of the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace throughout the world.

Specialized anti-religious teaching is encouraged by every possible means. A syllabus for teachers in an "anti-religious" university contains a long list of subjects with directions on



their utilization for atheistic education; among them are mathematics, mechanics, physics, geology and biology. These and scores of other subjects are to be utilized in inculcating atheism in the minds of school children.

The Teachers' Gazette reports:

In our school we organized a series of Pioneer (the Soviet equivalent of the Boy Scouts) meetings on atheistic themes, showing slides of experiments in physics and chemistry... Atheistic work with parents is carried on at home by the pupils themselves.

In the family of the third-grade pupil, Marusia K., a conflict arose. The girl obstinately refused to obey her grandmother's orders to say her prayers before going to bed. The grandmother and her mother...complained that the teacher was turning the child away from her faith. After a long talk with the teacher the mother stopped taking the girl to church, and despite the grandmother's protests, Marusia has become an active Pioneer.

Speaking of the teacher's role in "the struggle against that heavy heritage from the past, the religious portion of our population," The Teachers' Gazette, (December 11, 1958) expresses confidence that "insistent, daily, painstaking work will do the job. Teachers, lecturers and agitators are carrying militant atheism to the masses."

TOOLS OF ANTI-RELIGION--FILMS, RADIO, DRAMA, MUSEUMS

The atheists use radio, theater and movies for their propaganda. Soviet Culture (Nov. 18, 1958) emphasizes "the enormous role of clubs, libraries, theaters and palaces of culture" in the anti-religious effort. And The Literary Gazette (Oct. 30, 1958), urging intensified work along these lines, recommends "films, slides and bright, effective posters." Although Soviet Culture (Nov. 10, 1958) complains about theaters that "their anti-religious repertoire is poor in quality, primitive in content, etc., and our radio and television are also insufficiently active in the fight against religion," still this indicates the wide use of these mass-media.

Here one might mention the anti-religious museums which, a score of years ago played an important role in atheistic propaganda. Most of these disappeared during the war and the only important one now known to be operating is that in the Kazan Cathedral in Leningrad. In January, 1958, the museum published a 526 page volume marking its 25th anniversary. To a visitor in 1957 it appeared to be a ponderous mixture of fact and fancy, civic and religious history, chaotically assembled. The museum's most elaborate exhibit was a series on the Inquisition and its general effect was neither definite nor convincing.

## POSITIVE NOTES

One interesting sidelight on Soviet anti-religious propaganda is the occasional of a positive note. A sarcastic article about Billy Graham (Science and Life, No. 8, 1958) speaks of the undoubted increase of religious interest in the United States, and the author admits that a "partial revival of religion in that country is undeniable." He comments on the paradox: obscurantism is raising its head in...the capitalist country most advanced in technical civilization."

In attacking Christian positions, its opponents often have to explain what there are. A magazine article two years ago, while ridiculing the Reverend Norman Vincent Peale, outlined in full his formula for peace of mind, memorizing of Bible verses, etc., so that any Soviet reader could try it for himself, if he felt so inclined. Billy Graham's positive message is also published in the article holding him up for ridicule:

Christianity is against Communism because it sees the root of the world's evil, not in social relationship, but in man's sinful nature...with its inclination toward evil, prejudice, intolerance and hatred. And until we solve this problem we shall not be able to solve the problems of Formosa or the Iron Curtain.

An article, "Did God Establish the Laws of Nature?" (Science and Life, No. 12, 1958), mentions such "modern bourgeois scholars" as Sir James Jeans and William Smart, English astronomers, as believing in a divine Creator. Smart is quoted as saying, "When we study the universe and its magnitude and order, this brings us to recognize a Creative Power and a World Will." Oddly enough, the only refutation offered is the fact that their authors are "bourgeois."

## THE ORGANIZER:

All this intensive campaign against religion, covering the whole of the Soviet Union, is inspired and directed by the "Society for the Diffusion of Political and Scientific Knowledge." Organized to replace the "Union of Militant Godless" which was dissolved when Stalin needed the churches' support during the Second World War, it boasts "more than 644,000 members" (Pravda, Jan. 18, 1958). Government supported, it is supposed to reach into every village in the Soviet Union. Information received throughout 1958 indicated a new wave of intensified atheistic propaganda, and the Society reported that in the first quarter of the year it conducted as many lectures as during the whole of 1956 (Soviet Culture, Nov. 12, 1958).

## RESULTS:

What can be said of the result of all this carefully planned activity? Nothing, of course, concerning 1958 alone. Even for the four post-revolutionary decades, statistics are almost non-existent. There are now, doubtless, millions of Soviet



citizens who do not believe in religion. How many of these were merely indifferent before, we have no means of knowing. This number of non-believers is not surprising.

What is worthy of note is the extent to which religious beliefs still persist. Komsomolskaya Pravda, the Young communist organ (Aug. 1, 1958), speaks of "the millions of workers who have not yet broken with religion." And The Communist (Aug. 1958) reports "not a few facts indicating the pressure of religious ideas among sections of our youth, and even of the strengthening of these ideas." This increase is confirmed by recent interviews with churchmen.

Despite all the propaganda against religion, there is a steady stream of young people in their thirties into the churches. Two priests, one from Odessa and the other from Moscow, reported during 1959 that they received an average of four or five such new members every week.

Many young people, beginning to think for themselves, find the religion of Communism unsatisfying, and are turning to the churches. Although they have no exact statistics, church authorities in Russia, both Orthodox and Protestant, estimate the total active church members at fifty million. And if critics say that these still represent a carry-over from czarist times, it should be noted that after two world wars, famines and revolutions, there are relatively few old people in Russia today. Thus the fifty million are mostly those who have never known anything but the Soviet regime.

The anti-religious propaganda machine, even with tens of thousands of clever minds working for it, has a long task ahead of it, if religion is to be wiped out in the Soviet Union. The record of the past four decades, however, gives adequate grounds for doubt that the anti-religious apparatus, no matter how highly organized and abundantly financed, will succeed in wiping out the religious feelings of the Soviet population.

RECENT ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA IN THE USSR

Review of Radio Broadcasts  
January-April 1959

Attacks against "religious prejudices" and "survivals of the past" as well as against a variety of religious sects, the churches and church leaders were heard frequently from Soviet regional transmitters in the past few years but appeared to be sporadic and limited to attacks occasioned by extraneous circumstances, as for instance, against "Pan-Islamism, Pan-Iranism, and Pan-Turkism" at the time of the creation of the Baghdad Pact, and attacks against "Sheriat" (Code of Islamic Canon Laws) and "Ada" (National customs prevalent among Moslem people) during Moslem religious holidays. It has also been noted that anti-religious propaganda in the Soviet Union has greater intensity in non-Russian areas, indicating alliance of religious groups with nationalism in the struggle against Communist rule. The bulk of anti-religious items in the past few years has come from the Ukraine. For example, at least 120 items were noted on Ukrainian regional transmitters in 1957 and 52 in January, February and March of 1958. Very few were heard from other Soviet regional transmitters during the same period.

In the Ukraine, anti-religious attacks were aimed mainly against the Catholic Church, with the uniate church singled out for particularly vicious invective. The Catholic Church was described as "agent of the Vatican", and painted in the blackest colors possible. The church and its leaders were associated in these attacks with murder, lust, and other immoral behavior in an apparent attempt to debase the church and the priesthood in the minds of Soviet citizens. Priests are usually described as "agents of the Vatican and the imperialist powers", engaging in subversive activities against communism in general and the Soviet Union in particular.

Similar attacks were also noted against a variety of religious sects, such as Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists; Old Believers, Pentecostalists, Khlysty, and so forth, all being generally described as "hostile to the Soviet Union and Communism."

In January 1958 Kiev Radio was reported to have started a regular series of anti-religious broadcasts, and the Ukrainian republican and local press was said to have devoted special anti-religious propaganda columns to this ideological task. Meanwhile considerable broadcasting time on the Ukrainian regional transmitters was devoted to interviews with renegade priests and students of theology who came forth to "renounce God" and "denounce religion."



Several names heard repeatedly and described as authors of anti-religious talks included Duluman, Dermanskiy, and Shchelokon, who have also broadcast similar talks over Radio Moscow.

Besides these well-known anti-religious specialists, several kolkhozniks and former members of minor sects were heard "denouncing" their sects and religions, describing how, after they had "seen the light," they decided to renounce God and their sects and devote their lives to "socially useful labor" and "for the good of society."

Throughout 1958 anti-religious propaganda remained at a high pitch, declining a little toward the end of the year and at the beginning of 1959. The launching of the Soviet sputniks was used as an occasion to intensify anti-religious propaganda by showing that "miracles" can be made by man and citing the sputniks to "prove" that "there is no God in heaven."

In March 1959 came a sudden increase in frequency of anti-religious items not only in the Ukraine, but also in the Russian Federation, Soviet Central Asia, and the Transcaucasus. In none of these areas, however, did frequency and intensity of anti-religious propaganda compare with that noted in the Ukraine, which still held first place in this regard.

Anti-religious items in February were mainly contained in news and press reports of propagandists activities, club work, seminars and library conferences on atheistic topics. There were reports of lectures by atheists and propagandists on subjects such as "there are no miracles in the world," "Why I broke away from religion," "Science and Religion," as well as reports on organized evening discussions, and exhibitions, featuring anti-religious propaganda, Soviet sputniks, atheistic literature, and so forth. Several items revealed that schools and kolkhozes in rural areas were displaying "atheistic wallsheets."

Several talks reported on Ukrainian regional transmitters dealt with the incompatibility of science and religion, in which propagandists explained the conflicting ideas of religion and science, supporting their arguments with the history of the inquisition, cases of burning at the stake in medieval Europe, and persecution of science and scientists by the Roman Catholic Church. Stress was placed on biblical cosmogony - the creation of man from dust and of Eve from Adam's rib - presented in such manner as to make the bible appear ridiculous.

An interesting fact of the anti-religious campaign is the attempt to isolate Soviet youth from church influence by instituting "Komsomol weddings" at village clubs rather than permit church weddings.

The theme "origin of life" was heard frequently in February. Propagandists contrasted the scientific view, supported by Soviet science and "proved" by Soviet scientific experiments, with views presented by the Bible and the various churches. The "How I broke away from religion" theme usually featured a Kolkhoznik or worker who, having seen the light, entered the "path of socially useful labor for the good of the community." Such as the full-length feature by Ivan Kulchytsky, who, as author of a series of articles published in pamphlet form by the Lvov oblast publishing house, renounced religion, joined the "communal economy," and "stopped believing in the Kingdom of Christ, thus finding true happiness in socially useful labor."

### Anti-Soviet Propaganda

Several full-length atheistic features suggest that religious sects and churches in the Soviet Union, particularly in the non-Russian areas, are conducting anti-Soviet propaganda among Soviet citizens. Kulchytskyy, author of the above-mentioned article in the pamphlet entitled "We have broken away from religion," as reported to have "exposed the harm caused by Seventh-Day Adventists," also called "Subotniks," whose leaders conduct "anti-Soviet propaganda, preaching that all who breed pigs or eat pork, will be burned by fire on judgment day." These Subotniks, according to Kulchytskyy, work under auspices of the Vatican, "sworn enemy of the people."

A Zakarpatska Pravda editorial of February 26 called for raising the level of anti-religious propaganda, adding that a small group of people, retaining vestiges of the past in their minds, slowed down "development of the consciousness of the Soviet people and retarded progress of the Soviet Union." Party committees were also admonished to concentrate "on an extensive and offensive campaign of dynamic anti-religious propaganda."

The trend continued in March. Items heard in the middle of that month indicated that the anti-religious campaign was assuming an offensive character in the Ukraine. This was confirmed by increased frequency and by quality of broadcasts. Party plenums were reported convening especially to deliberate on intensifying the anti-religious campaign. Atheistic seminars and conferences were reported more frequently, while Kiev Radio and other Ukrainian regional transmitters arranged special series of anti-religious broadcasts.

By mid-March several items were heard from Soviet Central Asia dealing mainly with the dangers of Islam, usually under the title "Islam is an Instrument for Enslaving Women," or other titles "exposing" the harmful essence of Islam.

The subject of "atheistic education of children" also appeared in March. Kiev Radio was reported to have instituted a special series of broadcasts under the heading "Religion and Child Education." At the same time "Mobile Atheist Clubs" toured rural areas, visited clubs, libraries, and other centers of Communist propaganda to "show interesting chemical experiments to produce man-made miracles" purporting to prove that miracles are no monopoly of divine agency. Various regional transmitters in the Ukraine reported the establishment of schools of atheistic education.

### Charge of Nationalism and Immorality

There was only one report of actual violence - against a priest who advocated opposition against the Soviet Union. The priest was bound and "delivered to the authorities" after he had tried to slash his assailants with a knife. This report, featured by Kirovograd Radio in the Ukraine, came from an article published March 8 in the oblast newspaper Kirivogradska Pravda.

The author, Mykhailov, entitled his article "flies and spiders," depicting several priests in various immoral circumstances and activities. One of the priests, "Father Peter," did not work, yet "managed to buy himself a house for 20,000 rubles and furniture and things to put into the house, to the value of 200,000 rubles." Among the articles of furniture was a chair brought from distant Odessa. Mykhailov charged that "Father Peter" was not a priest at all,



but a common criminal with a long history. He had a wife called "fly" (mukha). Her real name was Marya Khodakovska, but he also had "flies" in Khabarovsk, Krasnoyarsk, Omsk, Tomsk, and many other towns. He was in fact a charlatan who befooled many women by his ready charms and discarded them when they were useless. Finally one of such discarded "flies," a certain Tomkina, denounced him to the "authorities."

Another priest was "Father Anatoliy," who, according to the article, "was so upset on learning that a certain child was registered in the name of Anatoliyevich, that he tore up his birth certificate."

At a funeral service in Vysoki Bayrak village in Adzhamskiy rayon, the article stated, another priest became so drunk, that the mourners decided to bind him up and "deliver him to the authorities." In the ensuing scuffle the priest became violent and tried to knife his assailants. He also spoke "indecent words about Soviet rule and slandered the Soviet Union." Yoann Moiseyevich Holyuk, also a clergyman as well as a cousin of Father Anatoliy, involved himself in an incident or a series of incidents which apparently merited full treatment in the article as broadcast by Kirovograd. It said: "He gathered his faithful in Prozhany village, Hayvoronskiy rayon, and preached a sermon not on God but on how to distract Soviet youth from the club and prevent their joining the Komsomol organization or participating in communal life. Under the Fascist occupation this priest cried at the top of his voice from the pulpit: Gentlemen, we must make sacrifices so as to help annihilate the red foe. Today the same priest preaches: Members of the Orthodox Church and peasants, your life on earth is short and temporary. Neither think about it nor worry. Let God shoulder your troubles. Make sacrifices with a glad heart, and you shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

The broadcast did not elucidate on the "sacrifices" and "troubles." The fact, however, that Father Holyuk reportedly was still preaching and making references to "sacrifices" and "worries" may have some bearing on the present Soviet offensive against Kolkhoz peasantry.

Expressions of opposition to the Soviet rule and of Ukrainian national resistance to Soviet domination were contained in another broadcast from Western Ukraine. A Kolkhoznik, who "broke away from religion," was reported as saying: "When the Soviet troops liberated us from the Fascist yoke servants of the church did not hesitate to struggle against the true peoples system, and lavished praise of all kind on our enemy. And this was done by religious leaders who preach that religion allegedly plays a progressive role in the life of the people." After describing certain incidents in his village against the background of the struggle between supporters and opponents of the Soviet rule, the author went on: "When Soviet rule came, there lived in our village the family of Gregory Khomets. He was convinced that Soviet rule was what he had been dreaming about for many years. But there was also a group of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists such as Bassarab, Stakh, and Petko - outcasts of humanity - who broke into the house of Khomets and murdered him and his son and his wife. Within a few days, this gang of murderers were kneeling in front of the confessional, confessing their murders to the priest, who blessed them and encouraged them to commit other murders."

The broadcast described several other murders in the village, adding that there was an erroneous opinion that religion was ostensibly close to Communism, "that Christ was the first to call for brotherhood and freedom among men."

Several other items, referring to this opinion, said the erroneous concept, must be eradicated from the peoples consciousness. A similar full-length feature, also from the Ukraine, said: "Every religion is against the friendship of people. Every religion breeds nationalism, which prevents people from uniting their forces to overthrow the power of capitalism."

#### Religion Against Socially Useful Labor

Church leaders and religious festivals are frequently represented as hindering work and preventing individual workers from devoting useful time to labor. A republican press review beamed to Kazakh listeners on April 29 described an article by Marinin, "under the black soutane," saying that "an agent of the Vatican" was discovered in Adkmolinsk oblast. He was identified as Bronislaw Stebetski, who "under the guise of priestly garb and the hypocritical mask of a servant of God tried to commit black acts against the people. This unbridled servant of religion has attempted many times to undermine important political and economic measures and harm kolkhoz production." The broadcast advised listeners to read the article.

A Rostov broadcast on the same day, describing the "reactionary essence of Easter," declared that Easter serves to propagate anti-scientific and religious ideology. It said it undermines the people spiritually instilling in them a lack of faith, diminishing their creative abilities for labor, and blunting their intelligence. "The Soviet people have their own holidays," said the broadcast, "such as celebrating victories and labor achievements in the struggle for emancipation, celebrations which mobilize and inspire Soviet people to perform new feats of labor and strengthen their determination to fight for fulfillment of the graniose plans of communist construction."

Listeners in Abkhazia were told that pompous funerals and sumptuous wedding feasts "distracts hundreds of people from productive work." A Radyanska Ukraina editorial also stressed the idea of creative labor in connection with anti-religious propaganda, noting that "every year more and more religious communities dissolve. Churches and church establishments stand gaping empty. In recent years in our republic more than 1,300 religious communities dissolved," and many of their members "started communal work for the good of the fatherland."

#### Religious Revival

Several reports mentioned a religious revival in the Soviet Union in recent times, as for example a Tbilisi anti-religious broadcast on April 16. "The recent revival of religious fervor in the Soviet Union and in Georgia and the great increase of religious sects, are due to disaster suffered during the war and personal sufferings and bereavements of many people, as well as to Fascist religious propaganda and violent foreign attacks against Marxism-Leninism."

On several occasions Party organizations were reprimanded for entrusting propaganda lectures to incapable propagandists and for lecturing audiences composed of atheists, forgetting that the aim is to persuade believers, not atheists. Likewise stress is noted in numerous items on the need to educate children in atheism. In this connection many items point out that education of children during their most formative and perceptive age is entrusted to parents, grandparents, and other old people who transmit their religious views to the children, with the result that many young people are to be found in the



fold of the church. Numerous items cite the "erroneous" opinion that religion, having survived, indeed, having revived, "at this important juncture" when Soviet society is passing from socialism to communism" is compatible with communism rather than harmful to it. "Such allegations," said a Zaporozhye oblast broadcast in the Ukraine, are designed to deceive ordinary people and bring profit to religious leaders."

Yerevan Radio provides an interesting example of catering to different audiences, broadcasting as it does to the Soviet regional listeners in Armenia, as well as to Armenians abroad. Several anti-religious items were beamed to home listeners, but none to Armenians abroad. Yerevan programs beamed abroad have in the past been noted to carry sermons and church services at Easter time, but never to home listeners.

The customary Easter service for Armenians abroad was not heard in 1959 though it had been scheduled for broadcast. Listeners in Soviet Armenia itself were subjected to a long feature on the anti-religious theme. Several references in programs beamed abroad show that listeners in Soviet Armenia listen to programs beamed abroad. The practice of broadcasting religious services and sermons to outside Armenians may have been discontinued for this reason.

CURRENT SOVIET PRESS ATTACKS ON RELIGION

Soviet Affairs Analysis Service  
Institute for the Study of the  
USSR, Munich, Germany  
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Reports in the Soviet press during the last few months show a remarkable reawakening in religion among the population of the Soviet Union, accompanied by ineffectual attempts on the part of the Party Central Committee to suppress it. This movement first found an outlet during World War II, was stimulated after the death of Stalin and especially after the publication of the Party Central Committee's decision of November 10, 1954, which put a stop to the use of punitive measures against religion, and is now spreading and growing in intensity.

It was the growth of this movement during World War II that obliged the Party leadership, for tactical reasons, to go over to the defensive. A direct attack upon religion is hampered by the fact that the Communist leaders can no longer rely, not only upon local Party organizations, but even upon officials at the city and oblast level, who frequently prefer to adopt a policy of non-interference.

The Party's present defensive attitude is illustrated by an article entitled "Miraculous Cures," published by Komsomolskaya Pravda on October 4 of this year. In it, the writer describes how a certain "Kostya the Fortune-Teller" successfully cures victims of apparently incurable ailments:

There has appeared in our raion center a certain "Kostya the Fortune-Teller" who works miracles in public, curing victims of disease...

The people believed in Kostya because they said they knew of cases of genuine cures and, perhaps, had themselves seen a blind man recover his sight or a lame man walk away from the wonder-worker completely cured.

The author of this article, E. Fadeev, proceeding, apparently, to generalize on the basis of a single instance, writes of the large number of "wonder-workers" scattered throughout the country and of attempts to cure cases of illness at "sacred graves" or "sacred springs," and without denying the efficacy of such cures, tries to save the Communist viewpoint to some extent by assuring



his young readers that "in the first place, cases of 'miraculous' cures are not so frequent." Moreover, he maintains that religion plays no part in them and that they are solely due to the use of hypnosis.

All the recent issues of the main Soviet newspapers and magazines contain articles dealing with the spread of religious beliefs and the necessity of intensifying the struggle against them. On August 21, for example, Pravda carried an article headed "Against Religious Prejudices," which interpreted this development as a serious threat to the construction of Communism:

Religion is hostile to the interests of the working masses and is the most conservative form of social consciousness, which hinders the active struggle of the popular masses for the reform of society.

(Religion) hinders Communist construction and prevents some people from taking an active part in our great work.

The article states that the Orthodox Church and also various sects have recently "extended their evangelistic activity" and have "intensified their work" upon the young and immature sections of the Soviet population. The success of these activities is attributed to the fact that the clergy is striving to

...accommodate religion to present-day conditions, to "reconcile" religion with science, to convince people that Communism, as a world outlook, can live side by side with religion.

Pravda names the "weakness of scientific atheistic propaganda" as one of the causes of the spread of religious beliefs, and attributes the success of the churchmen to the insufficient vigilance of the state's punitive organs, which in Stalin's time nipped in the bud any attempts to spread religious belief:

Cases have been discovered of criminal activity by fanatical sects which are banned in this country--Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentacostal Brethren, etc. These and similar acts on the part of churchmen have become possible only through the connivance of organizations whose duty it is to ensure strict observance of Soviet legislation on religious cults.

The journal Molodoi kommunist acknowledges the important influence of religion on Komsomol members and young people generally and the low quality of atheistic propaganda:

Evidence is available of religious influence on young people of both sexes. Even so, Komsomol organizations are not conducting any profound, thoughtful, concrete scientific atheistic propaganda. Komsomol committees are devoting too little attention to the selection and education of anti-religious activities.

Two examples may be cited of the interest of young people in religion. On August 16, 1959, Komsomolskaya pravda published an article headed "Alesha Grows a Beard." This tells how a 22 year-old laboratory assistant, formerly conspicuous as something of a dandy, is now growing a beard to the astonishment of his colleagues. Previously, he wanted to enter a pedagogical institute, but he has changed his mind:

Now Alesha studies everything in turn: mathematics and prayers, literature and then prayers again. Days and nights, the young man spends in vigil.

The letter which he wrote to the famous monastery, the Troitse-Sergievskaya Lavra, was published instead of being sent to its destination:

To the Right Reverend Rector of the Theological Seminary in Zagorsk, from God's slave, Aleksei Smyshkin. I hereby acknowledge receipt of your reply. I am very glad that your school trains priests for the Russian Orthodox Church. I am a profoundly convinced and religious-minded Christian, and have firmly decided to become a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church. I am obliged to tell you that I am a member of the Komsomol. However, in the event that the question of my entering the seminary is favorably decided, I shall resign my Komsomol membership.

The mere publication of such an article suggests that cases of this kind are by no means infrequent. The author tries to dismiss the whole matter as being of no great significance, and attributes materialist motives to the young people concerned, overlooking the fact that at the beginning of his article he describes Smyshkin as earning a fair salary.

Our second example is taken from Komsomolskaya pravda's issue for August 9, 1959, which describes how a certain burial vault belonging to the Erlanger family, in the Vvedensky Cemetery in Moscow, has recently been attracting particular attention. The walls and pillars of this vault are covered with inscriptions written by young people, especially schoolchildren and students. The article cites a few of the inscriptions on the vault, as follows:

"Lord!" -- cry the stones of the Erlanger cemetery --  
"Help us order our lives! Sasha and Dusya."

"Lord! Help me to be a good student and to get promoted to the sixth grade!"

Her classmate "the slave Anatoly" also begs help of God...

Older students, who think like Anatoly, are a little more literate and cunning than he. "Lord!" writes one of them, "Help me to pass my unsynchronized machinery."



If this sort of thing be regarded as "survivals of the capitalist past," it should be remembered that student youth in pre-Revolutionary days scarcely showed such a pronounced or naive piety as this. Expressing surprise that the Erlanger vault should be chosen in particular, the author himself provides the answer: it appears that at the back of the vault there may still be seen a mosaic picture of Christ.

In No. 18 (September), 1959, the Party Central Committee's organ, Partiinaya zhizn, published an article dealing with the latest resolution of the Central Committee, "On Measures to improve the Work of the All-Union Society for the Propagation of Political and Scientific Knowledge." The work of this organization, which chiefly consists in conducting atheistic propaganda on a scientific basis, is here subjected to severe criticism and branded as "exceptionally unsuccessful." Perhaps the most interesting feature of the article is its admission that many prominent scholars, social and political workers, writers, composers and artists are leaving the Society. This is a reflection of the general tendency toward non-interference or even support for religious manifestations. On September 20 of this year, the satirical magazine Krokodil printed a caricature of a priest in ceremonial robes chanting "Many Years!" -- the traditional song in honor of someone -- to the chairman of the Society.

In its thirteenth issue for 1959, another Party Central Committee organ, Kommunist, printed an article called "Contemporary Fideism in Science," by I. Kravelev, who attempts a reasoned criticism of religious philosophy and of the work being done by the clergy of all churches in the USSR, including the Orthodox. The chief proposition of the article is the incompatibility of science and religion:

By preaching peaceful coexistence between science and religion, they try to limit science and to tie its hands in order to exploit it for their own ends.

Many churchmen and theologians are not content with demanding coexistence: they advance the slogan of cooperation between science and religion.

Particularly sharp attacks are directed in this connection against articles published in the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate. The author goes on to reproach the Catholic Church and even the Protestant Church for an attitude like that of the Inquisition toward representatives of science, and declares: "Not a few cases of persecution of science and scholars can be laid to the account of the Orthodox Church, both Byzantine and Russian."

Religious tendencies often make themselves felt in various literary, and sometimes even scientific, publications. In its issue No. 8, 1959, the periodical Voprosy sovetskoi literatury, issued by the Institute for Russian Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, printed an article by L.K. Dolgoplov

which was subsequently severely criticized by Krokodil (1959, No. 26). In this article, devoted to the poetry of Alexander Blok, Dolgopolov's comments on the poem "The Twelve," were attacked as an indirect defense of the thesis recently advanced by the Orthodox Church in the USSR to the effect that many Christian dogmas are identical with the basic principles of Communism.

The roads followed by Christ and the Revolution coincide. Christ merges with the people but does not become lost in it, continuing to represent that high level of moral development which the apostles of the Revolution, following in his steps, must (and in the end will) achieve.

Thus, in Blok's interpretation, Christ is characterized by a lack of passive contemplation. Blok's Christ embodies an active principle; he takes part in the revolutionary coup, leading the humiliated and the dispossessed to the kingdom of socialism, which will also be his Kingdom (Quoted from Krokodil, 1959, No. 26, p. 10).

Sometimes one finds evidence of practical, material assistance given to the Church:

In the village there is a fine church surrounded by an iron fence. The paths are properly swept, and everything is neat. Next door is a little black club--black like a bathhouse. In the village, everything is managed by the priest, a former colonel in the Tsarist army. He does everything to attract people to his side. Recently the manager of the club came to grief he had helped the priest organize a "demonstrators' column" -- a real crusade. (Novy mir, No. 6, 1959).

It should be added that this village is not somewhere way out in the provinces, but in Moscow Oblast, next door to the Communist state capital.

One striking example should be given of the profound, mystical faith which has evidently survived all the years of Soviet attempts to root it out and which is now coming out again into the open. In Gorky Oblast, almost in the very center of Russia, there lies the lake known as Svetloe, or Svetloyar. According to tradition, the Tatar khan Baty at the beginning of the thirteenth century discovered some secret tracks leading to this lake and laid siege to the City of Kitezh, which was situated on its banks. Since the inhabitants of Kitezh were known for their great piety, God made the city invisible and plunged it into the waters of the lake. Since that time, Svetloyar has been regarded as a holy place. After Stalin's death, the lake once more became an object of pilgrimage. The scale of this movement has continually increased, and is evidently now a cause of anxiety for the Communist authorities. Two articles devoted to this subject by a writer named Shaposhnikova appeared (Nash sovremennik, 1957; and Zvezda, 1958), to be followed by an account by V. Maltsev, entitled "The Sacred Lake" (Smena, 1959, No. 12). In an editorial note appended to the last article, we read:



The ground has scarcely dried out in the spring before the first pilgrims appear on the shores of the lake. They come from various districts in the Gorky, Ivanovo, Kostroma, Vladimir and Kirov oblasts, from the Mari and Chuvash Autonomous Republics.

Among the pilgrims young men and women and schoolchildren are frequently to be seen. The writer of the article gives the following description of what he saw:

Down in a hollow between two hills, a place of prayer has been arranged: a wooden cross has been set up, and on either side are two posts to which two little houses resembling birdhouses for starlings have been fixed. These contain ikons and lighted candles. Around the posts swarms a crowd of at least a hundred people; one hears the indistinct sound of church singing, like the hum of a disturbed beehive. Many people move round the lake in one direction--"according to the sun." Some of them crawl on their knees...

Imagine a fairly young woman who, after crossing herself in front of the lake, lowers her headkerchief over her eyes and, dropping to her knees, crawls through the mud, over the rocks, for a kilometer, for a second, a third.... Now, even if you step on her hand, she will not utter a sound until she has fulfilled her vow.

The above and many similar recent press and journal reports indicate the degree to which the Party Central Committee is disturbed by the growth in size and strength of the religious movement. When propaganda fails to produce the desired effect, the Party Central Committee still has in its arsenal, of course, the old weapon of punitive measures. But under present circumstances it is difficult to believe that the authorities will resort to the use of terror on a large scale. And the apparent depth and spread of religious feeling revealed suggests that the movement toward religion may well become a factor of political significance as well.

TWO BOOKS BY THE CREATOR

Komsomolskaya Pravda,  
September 20, 1959.  
by Ernest Kolman, Professor  
of Mathematics and Dr. of  
Philosophy

...Clergymen have recently been circulating among believers the mimeographed text of a sort of lecture or sermon entitled "Science and Religion (Thesis of the Religious)". The work is anonymous, but this actually isn't very important, since the "theses" represent not the subjective opinion of a single individual but the official view of the learned theologians.

The Orthodox theologian who wrote the "theses" endeavors to prove that religion and science are in accord. "The Bible and nature, religion and science, are two momentous books that the Creator has predestined for inquisitive man," he writes. The truths of faith are declared by the theologian to be eternal and absolute and the truths of science to be transitory. He believes, furthermore, that "the truths of divine revelation" even predetermine the development of science, and that the scientists not only do not deny God but on the contrary help to make him known.

The article below considers some of the assumptions in the anonymous theologian's homily.

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"We are witnessing spectacular scientific discoveries, and we cannot deny that with the passage of time ever new discoveries will ensue - the disclosure of new forms of the existence of matter, or rather of varieties of energy, so fine, moreover, as to necessitate referring to them as semimaterial essences. The very concept of semimateriality contains within itself an acknowledgement of nonmateriality. Then it is that the religious truth that in addition to matter there exists a purely spiritual source may receive scientific confirmation."

Let us put it to our theologian bluntly: These hopes of his are an idle dream, founded on nothing except wishful thinking on his part. After all, when new varieties of energy, new forms of matter, are disclosed, this will merely constitute a further substantiation and development of materialism, and certainly not of religious dogmas. Can our theologian really be in earnest in hoping that science will find "methods and reagents for revealing" angels, say, or devils, the three members of the "Holy Trinity," paradise and hell, etc., the imaginery existence of which is "empirically undemonstrable" though religion pronounces it veritable? What gives him the idea that the forms of matter that science is bringing to light are of such a nature as to indicate that they soon will have to be called "semimaterial essences?" What gives him the idea that science will itself vindicate the religious dogma of the spiritual source?

Examination of the centuries-long history of natural science and of the results it has obtained prompts precisely the reverse conclusion. Physics and chemistry have fathomed the structure of matter. We have learned how to create artificially in our laboratories organic substances and hundreds of thousands of



chemical compounds not encountered in nature. We are creating isotopes - unstable varieties of atoms. We have learned to duplicate the processes of formation of heavy atoms out of light atoms and the processes that occur in the depths of the sun and the stars...

Step by step physics has been discovering increasingly infinitesimal particles of matter - molecules, atomic atoms, nuclei, electrons, mesons and others so-called elementary particles, three range of which at present numbers approximately thirty. Though it has probed deeper and deeper into matter, physics has nonetheless failed to discover any traces of "semimatter." However diminutive the particles of matter may be, however, "exotic" their laws may appear to ordinary "common sense," all these particles, the very tiniest of them, are as material as knowledge of them or not, they existed even when there was not the slightest inkling of any intelligence on earth, or of any living creatures at all. All these "finest varieties of matter," furthermore, are part of the structure of all material bodies, including our human body and even the transitory flesh of ecclesiastics of the highest office.

Deferring to the intentions of our theologian, we shall append to his arguments yet another that is advance by some of his Western colleagues who are better "informed" than he on the very latest discoveries of atomic physics. It is their contention that by unveiling the "anti-world", contemporary physics has shown the existence of "nonmaterial, other world being."

Yes, it is true that physics has discovered so-called anti-particles - the positron, anti-proton, anti-neutron, etc, endowed with properties in a certain sense opposite to those of their "twins" - the electron, proton, neutron, etc. It is also true that the assumption has been voiced that far beyond the confines of that part of the universe observable by us there exist spheres, arbitrarily called the "antiworld," in which matter consists of anti-particles. But should this hypothesis be borne out, it will do nothing to alter the fact that anti-particles are not one whit less material than particles. We are exploring them and even creating them artificially with the help of so extremely material an apparatus as, for example, the synchrophasotron. Here too, consequently, the theologians fail to find any proof of the existence of nonmaterial, purely spiritual, other-world being.

"I recall the heated arguments we academy students has more than 40 years ago about the atom as an indivisible particle of matter," the author of the "theses" also says. "The theory of energy had by that time appeared. I was then working on my candidate's dissertation, 'The teaching of the Holy Fathers and Church Writers on Matter.' The Holy Fathers, and particularly St. Gregory of Nyssa, had a profound theory of matter. St. Gregory maintained that matter is a reservoir of forces and energies poured into it by the Creator. He said that a consumed candle had not been destroyed but had merely disintegrated into its elements, remaining equivalent unto itself. St. Gregory of Nyssa therefore anticipated Lavoisier. Not until the 18th century did the latter discover the law of the preservation of matter, and it was only recently that science found it possible to decompose the atom. Yet 40 or 50 years ago scientists considered the axiom of that day that the atom was indivisible to be an absolute truth. We now see what a mistake that was. And at the same time we take pleasure

in being able to say that the holy fathers' teaching on matter, which once conflicted with the science of their time, has many centuries later found its confirmation in the most recent deductions of science."...

Actually, the "church fathers," and Gregory of Nyssa as well, had no "profound theory of matter" of their own. In not one of Gregory's writings do we find him affirming that "matter is a reservoir of forces and energies." This being the case, to what does our scholarly theologian allude?

In 1961-1871 the Moscow Theological Academy published an eight-volume Russian translation of Gregory of Nyssa's works. Among them is a composition called "On the Soul and Resurrection", written in the form of a dialogue with his sister Macrina. In response to the question "What in death is especially lamentable?" he says, "The absence of breathing, the speechlessness, the motionlessness of the dead body." And he continues: "Therefore, when the change is perceived in it and that source of life that once existed in the body suddenly becomes invisible and imperceptible, just as the flame that has hitherto burned on a lamp neither remains on the lamp nor shifts to any other place when the lamp is extinguished but vanishes completely, how then is it possible for one who has no other support to endure such a change without grief?"

What Gregory is saying, therefore, is not that matter is preserved, but that, on the contrary, the flame disappears completely with nothing remaining. He expounds the materialist view as the opinion of his opponents: "Those who defend the opposite view will perhaps say that the body, being composite, of course decomposes into its ingredients," and he contests the opinion that "that which nowhere is, does not, of course, exist."

It is beyond comprehension how the author of the "theses" could have ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa even an iota of materialist thought. Can it be that he altogether discounts the authority of all Christian theologians, Orthodox included? These are unanimous in regarding Gregory as one of the pillars of patristics - that philosophy of the "church fathers" of the 3rd to the 5th centuries founded on three principles: (1) religion is above science; (2) the principal concern of philosophy is God (3) nature is a secondary, sinful element subservient to God, for which reason the mortification of the flesh is essential...

And so we are persuaded that Gregory of Nyssa neither did anticipate nor could have anticipated the law of the conservation of matter discovered by M.L. Lomonosov in 1748 and independently by Lavoisier in 1774. He naturally performed no experiments to determine the weight of a burning substance, of air or of the products of combustion, yet only through experiment was it possible to discover this law. Nor does his utterance contain any conjecture concerning his law. The entire discourse on the flame was simply an expression in imagery of the favorite religious idea of the "evanescent" nature of life.

There is even less validity in the attempt our theologian makes to create the impression, with the help of an artfully contrived suggestion (after all, he does not dare to come right out with it), that in opposing the scientific views of their time, Gregory of Nyssa and other "church fathers" were defending the divisibility of the atom that did not find confirmation



until the very latest discoveries of physics. Yes, the "church fathers" opposed the scientific view of their day - that is, they opposed the progressive ideas of the ancient Greeks - but it was not the indivisibility of the atom that they opposed, but atomism in general. The theory of the granular, atomistic structure of matter was a materialist theory and hence abhorrent to the "church fathers" and unacceptable to them.

As he approached the conclusion of his sermon, our theologian had a sudden thought.

"We concede that the achievements of science, which studies nature, and its deductions and findings contribute to an awareness of the Creator's wisdom, even when the representatives of science deny his existence", he writes. "We can repeat the words of Agassiz, who maintained that 'the system of nature...contains a rendition of the Creator's thoughts into human language, and in conducting systematic research we unconsciously expound the Creator's thoughts.'"

The achievements of science "contribute an awareness of the Creator's wisdom"! Can this be why theologians have expended such efforts on combating the achievements of natural science, the theories of Galileo and Copernicus, the theory of Darwin, the theory of Lyell, and so forth without end? As for J.L.R. Agassiz, to whom our Orthodox theologian refers, he was the sworn enemy of the theory of natural evolution on earth and the development of plant and animal life on it...

"We say again that there are no grounds for thinking that an eternal and unbridgeable cleavage has been established between science and religion," the theologian goes on. "Science has failed to prove there is no God. Science does not know whether we shall live after the decay of our bodies or not."

We have already made it clear to our theologian that unsubstantiated repetition will not make any more convincing his affirmation that no unbridgeable cleavage exists between science and religion. As for the allegation that science has proved there is no God, this is true only in the sense that no one can either prove or disprove the child's fairy tale that the cockerel pictured in his little books sings inaudibly and flaps his wings whenever the book is closed, but that no one can see him.

Science has, however, proved and by its entire development continues to prove that to admit the existence of God contradicts all the law that it has discovered. It has proved that there is no place in reality, in nature, for God, supernatural power or miracles. Divine being is a fiction that does not become reality on the strength of someone's belief in it.

As for the allegation that science does not know whether or not we shall live after the decay of our bodies, it is hard to call this anything but a deliberate falsehood. However thick the monastery walls behind which the theologians of today have found a haven, it has, of course, come to their ears, albeit in the most general terms, that science - biology and medicine - has in most detailed fashion ascertained the physiological and biochemical processes on which life depends. And though medicine

is for the time being still unable unerringly to diagnose and cure all illnesses, its successes are incontestable. Death, which once mowed down hundreds of people in epidemics of plague, cholera, and smallpox and took the lives of children through diphtheria and scarlet fever, has been forced to retreat...

Only recently, science succeeded in finding a remedy for the horrible radiation sickness that has appeared in our atomic age and is caused by an overdose of radiation emanating from the products of atomic fission and leading to the disintegration of red and white blood corpuscles. During a sudden accident in the atomic laboratory producing radioactive isotopes for medical use - isotopes are imported devices for diagnosing and treating diseases - six Yugoslav physicists were exposed to lethal radiation. At the Paris institute to which they were brought, doctors were able to save the lives of four of them. After repeated failures, a reliable method of treating radiation sickness was found - injections of bone marrow from healthy individuals.

It is to be assumed that in the event of their own illness or the illness of dear ones, our theologians do not rely on God but resort to a physician. In so doing they are concerned not only with the doctor's religious beliefs but with his medical knowledge and experience. They expect him to prevent the body's decay and thereby to prolong the life that will vanish forever the moment the decay has gone too far.

At long last our theologian arrives at his conclusion, which is at the same time his cardinal thought. He pontificates:

"A scientific world view, a scientific philosophy, does not exist."

Well, if by words alone one can prove the existence of God, angels, devils and the spirits of the dead, why can one not, in words, declare the scientific philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, its world view - dialectical materials - to be nonexistent? Of course this can be done. The only thing is that just as the 're-appeal' appeal "Lord, show thyself to us!" has so far not enabled anyone to see a nonexistent God, so no theologian will be able by the exorcism "Begone, get thee hence!" to achieve the disappearance from the world of the scientific philosophy, the invincible doctrine of Marx and Lenin. The socialist countries, with a population totaling around a billion people, are building their lives under the guidance of this philosophy, and it is this philosophy that underlies the activity of the millions of members of Communist and Workers' Parties who are struggling in all lands for a better and happier world for mankind.

No one, and that includes the church, will succeed in reversing the wheel of history. More and more Soviet people, divesting themselves of the prejudices of faith, are guided in their lives by the conclusions of scientific knowledge. More and more votaries of the church will perceive the true nature of religion, turn from it and find their niche in Soviet working life. The guarantee of this is not only the intensifying and ever-expanding atheistic propaganda organized on a scientific foundation, but above all the realization of the great program for our country's economic and cultural development, the program for the construction of communist society.



ON AN ACUTE THEME

Pravda

August 13, 1958

by I. Ryabov

(summary)

In his new novel, V. Tendryakov gives us the story of a 12-year old boy who finds an old ikon that disappeared in 1929, when the local priest was convicted of anti-Soviet activities and the church closed by a decision of a meeting of citizens. The boy's grandmother and, following her example, a number of other women immediately pounce on the ikon and declare that its allegedly miraculous power has revived. They try also to bring up the boy on religious beliefs and thereby engender conflicts between him and his playmates.

The novel, published under the title "The Miraculous one" in the May issue of the periodical Znamya also gives the historical background to the story of the miraculous ikon, which goes back 150 to 200 years, drawing a picture of religious hypocrisy and deception. Things were like that, Tendryakov writes, in the bad old days, when the Russian village was held in the sway of obscuratism and superstition. The ignorance of the country people was a good feeding ground for the churches and monasteries of which there were more in Russia than schools, reading rooms and houses of culture.

Now, however, the age-old power of the forces of darkness in the countryside has been broken alongside the rule of the old social and economic pattern; education and culture have become the property of the whole village. The full master of his land and toil, the Soviet peasant stands head and shoulder above the former muzhik. There would, therefore, seem to be no reason for such a vital study of the workings of superstition in the countryside as Tendryakov gives us, but nevertheless, we think that he did well. The tenacity of prejudices should not be underrated - many a time a dead man can still drag a living one down with him.

In fact, the events which the author depicts in this novel, contain a good deal of truth to life. He shows to what length simple people may go in the befogging of their minds, especially when they are ensnared by clever fellows like Father Dmitry who makes his appearance in the village in connection with the reemergence of the wonder-working ikon.

Tendryakov gives a very graphic description of this person. He is a priest of a type altogether different from that handed down to us by Leskov and Gusev-Orenburgskiy. He is not a dyed-in-the-wool fanatic or dogmatic; that person has gone with the modern times. He is supple and versatile. If you sound him out, he will be by all means for progress, support peace in the whole world and at the slightest prompting be ready to raise the hue and cry about foreign capital. He agrees with everything as long as he is given a chance to make people believe in the Lord. It is around this central figure that a little war flares up in the novel.

Naturally , the new system carries the day in the end, and the village teacher manages to rescue the boy from the fangs of the bigoted old hags. We witness a transformation in the mind of the boy's mother who eventually refuses to live with her superstitious mother under the same roof. The myth of the miraculous ikon crumbles and a legend woven around the village church is laid bare in all its stark threadbareness.

V. Tendryakov's novel maintains the standard of his first work which was received with well-earned popularity among the reading public. However, one would prefer the talented author to take more care in the future about every word he writes, and to eschew certain tasteless passages such as jar one in perusing this book. For instance, it is hardly credible that a twelve year old boy should be so well versed in the religious outlook of our writer of genius, Leo Tolstoy.

V. Tendryakov's novel deals with an acute theme. It focuses attention on an aspect of rural life which receives but scant treatment in contemporary fiction."



Zum Problem der Religiosität in der Sowjetunion  
Ost Europa, Mai-Juni, 1959,  
von Alexander Steininger

Die sowjetische Presse im allgemeinen, und ganz besonders die sowjetische Kritik, bilden einerseits ein wichtiges Werkzeug der Propaganda- und Erziehungsmaschinerie, machen andererseits aber auch auf die neuralgischen Punkte innerhalb des Systems aufmerksam. Letzteres läßt sich nicht vermeiden, will man nicht die Wirkung des ersten Faktors gänzlich zunichte machen. Zu den interessantesten Objekten, die in der letzten Zeit - insbesondere in den letzten beiden Jahren etwa - einer immer intensiveren Behandlung durch die journalistische-publizistischen Organe unterliegen, gehört der Fragenkomplex Religiosität. Aus der ganzen Art der Behandlung dieser Fragen und aus den geschilderten Vorfällen lassen sich interessante Einblicke in die Situation auf diesem Gebiet gewinnen. Die geschilderten Tatsachen können dabei ohne weiteres als gegeben angesehen werden: die sowjetische Presse hat keinen Grund, derartig "negative" Dinge zu erfinden. Sie wird sie eher abmildern und ihr Ausmaß als gering darzustellen versuchen.

Die Tatsache, daß man sich überhaupt so viel mit Fragen der Religion bzw Religiosität beschäftigt, bestätigt das Vorhandensein eines religiösen Auftriebes im Volke. Religion und Kommunismus sind jedoch Erbfeinde. Und es spielt dabei keine Rolle, ob es sich um christliche, mohammedanische, buddhistische oder sonstige Glaubensgemeinschaft handelt. In jedem kommunistisch regierten Staate ist und bleibt die Religion bzw. die Kirche als Zentrum und leitendes Prinzip einer großen oder kleinen Gemeinschaft von Gläubigen ein Fremdkörper, der nur solange geduldet wird, bis das Regime stark genug ist, ihn, oder zumindest seine äußeren Erscheinungsformen, auszumerzen. Jegliche Steigerung der religiösen Kräfte im Volke bedeutet daher eine potentielle Schwächung des kommunistischen Regimes.

Nicht selten wird der Kern eines bewußten Glaubens durch die zunächst unbewußte Erfüllung von Riten und Bräuchen geschaffen. In der Zeitschrift "Molodoj kommunist" (Der junge Kommunist, Nr. 1/1957) stellt I. Uskow an den Anfang seines aufschlußreichen Artikels eine hierfür bezeichnende Episode. Er beschreibt, wie er kurz vor Ostern unweit von Moskau eine Gruppe von Kindern traf, die gesegneten Osterkuchen (Kulitsch) aus der Kirche trugen. Die Kinder, durchweg Pioniere, erklärten ihm, daß dabei ja nichts besonderes sei und es alle so machen. Für Uskow ist dieser Vorgang keine harmlose Erscheinung, da solche "Vernügen" der Erziehung schaden und zu all dem in Gegensatz stehen, was man den Kindern in der Schule beibringt.

Uskow berichtet ferner, daß Schüler des öfteren nicht in die Pionier-Organisation eintreten, weil die Eltern es ihnen verbieten - er bezieht sich hierbei insbesondere auf den westlichen Teil Belorußlands. Die kirchliche Trauung sei für viele Eltern die Voraussetzung für die Heirat ihrer Kinder. "Es kommt vor," schreibt Uskow (S. 77), "daß sich die jungen Leute von der äußerlichen Seite religiöser Riten angezogen fühlen, und sie führen sie dann freiwillig aus." In der Kirche oder in Bethaus sei ja alles ungewöhnlich - erklärt er - , man werde neugierig; deswegen sei es keinesfalls erstaunlich, "daß die Jugend in die Kirche geht...". Und in vielen Dörfern oder gar Städten wüßte die Jugend ja nicht, wie sie sich vor Langeweile retten solle: "Der Klub ist

entweder geschlossen oder vollkommen untätig, alles in ihm starrt vor Überdruß, es gibt nichts Interessantes... Auf das Läuten der Kirchenglocken hin streben die jungen Mädchen zur Kirche, den alten Kirchgängern nach, und hinterher kommen auch die Burschen... Auch trifft man sich abends in Häusern, wo die Aktivisten der Kirche und der Sekten mit Predigten auftreten, seelenrettende Gespräche führen, geistliche Gesänge einstudieren..." (S. 77)

Aus dem Artikel von Uskow erfahren wir auch einiges über die Verhältnisse in den mittelasiatischen Teilen der Sowjetunion und im Kaukasus. Es käme immer noch vor, daß man dort Minderjährige verheirate und solche Bräuche wie Brautgeld, Brautraub, Polygamie, Ausschließung der Frauen aus dem öffentlichen Leben, Tragen des Gesichtsschleiers u. ä. ausübe. Sogar die Komsomolzen unterstützen derartige überlebte Bräuche. "Im Lenin-Bezirk der Provinz Dshalal-Abad" - schreibt Uskow - "wurden über zwanzig Schülerinnin geraubt, wobei der Sekretär des Bezirkskomitees (der Partei), genosse Schamamatow, selbst die Verbrechen begünstigte..." Sogar ein Lektor des ZK des Komsomol, ein Aspirant der Universität, habe eine Studentin entführt (S. 79).

Natürlich läßt sich das Ausmaß der Steigerung der Religiosität nur sehr schwer beurteilen. Sogar für eine ungefähre zahlenmäßige Schätzung fehlt jegliche Grundlage. An Hand des verfügbaren Materials von dem hier natürlich nur ein ganz kleiner Teil illustrativ gebracht werden kann, läßt sich lediglich feststellen, daß anscheinend ein für sowjetische Verhältnisse bedeutender Anstieg zu verzeichnen ist. In einem Artikel über die Erziehung der jungen Generation (Molodoj kommunist), Nr. 5, Mai 1957) lesen wir z. B.: "Ende vergangenen Jahres taufte ein reisender Pope in der Waldsiedlung Ijagkomino eine große Gruppe von Kindern und Jugendlichen, darunter der Sekretär der Komsomol-Organisation und dessen Stellvertreter" (S. 37). Solche und ähnliche Sätze über Taufen, kirchliche Trauungen, religiöse Feiern, Bräuche u. ä. findet man heute nahezu täglich in der sowjetischen Presse. Sie sind natürlich mit heftiger Kritik - sowohl an den Zuständen als auch an den Parteiorganen - und Forderungen nach einer forcierten und besseren anti-religiösen Propaganda verbunden. In dem Artikel "Über die wissenschaftlich-atheistische Propaganda" (Partijnaja shisn, Nr. 12, Juni, 1957) berichtet S. Chudjakow über das offensichtliche Nachlassen der wissenschaftlich-atheistischen Propaganda; bei einem gewissen Teil der Bevölkerung seien aber die "religiösen Vorurteile" noch stark, lebendig und zäh.

Und immer wieder trifft man in den Äußerungen über die Religiosität die Bemerkung: "Zu den Menschen, die religiöse Riten erfüllen, die Kirche besuchen, gehört auch ein gewisser Teil der Jugend..." (ebenda, S. 29). W. Ruskulis schreibt hierzu in der Zeitschrift "Molodoj kommunist" (Nr. 5, Mai 1958): "Die erzählerische Arbeit unter der Jugend wird in unserer Republik (Lettland) dadurch erschwert, daß die Geistlichkeit sie auf jede Art und Weise zu hemmen versucht... Ob ein Junge oder ein Mädchen den Weg des Komsomol einschlagen wird oder unter den Einfluß der Kirche gerät - das ist eine Frage, über die sich Gedanken zu machen jede Grundorganisation (der Partei) gezwungen ist" (S. 57).

Immer wieder taucht der Hinweis auf, daß die von kommunistischen Organisationen veranstalteten Feiern zu langweilig und farblos sind, um auf die Jugend anziehend zu wirken. Man müsse, so heißt es unter anderem, die alten Traditionen mit neuem Inhalt erfüllen. Das gelte auch für den privaten Sektor. "Es ist kein Geheimnis",



schreibt Ruskulis (S. 57),...daß ein junges Paar machmal nicht deswegen zur Trauung in der Kirche geht, weil es an Gott glaubt, sondern nur deshalb, weil es dort schön und feierlich ist. Wenn aber (statt dessen) Komsomolzen dem Brautpaar zu einer lustigen Hochzeit verhelfen, dann wird dieses kaum noch etwas in die Kirche ziehen."

Dieselbe Meinung vertritt der bereits erwähnte I. Uskow (Molodoj kommunist, Nr. 1, Januar 1957); er gibt zu, daß die Hochzeitsbräuche viele farbige und markante Züge aufweisen und schreibt (S. 80): "Vielleicht ist das junge Paar auch gar nicht religiös, geht aber dennoch in die Kirche..." Vor dem Kanzleitsche des Standesamtes dagegen sei es "grau, langweilig, amtlich".

Das "Problem" der kirchlichen Trauungen steht überhaupt mit an erster Stelle derartiger Berichte. Unter dem bezeichnenden Titel "Beim Klang der Glocken..." veröffentlichte die "Komsomolskaja Prawda" vom 30 Mai 1958 eine Reportage über die kirchliche Trauung einer Lida Wichrowa. Diese Lida, 17 Jahre alt und Mitglied des Bezirkskomitees des Komsomol, stand vor ihrer Heirat in der vordersten Front im Kampf für die Steigerung des Milchertrags. Die ihr zur Pflege anvertrauten Kühe gediehen prachtvoll und lieferten Rekordmengen von Milch. Sie war zur Berühmtheit des Bezirks ausserkoren worden, bekam Orden verliehne, hielt Reden, fuhr zu Kongressen. Und nun ließ sich diese Lida in der Kirche trauen - in einem weißen Brautkleid, mit einem langen Schleier, mit einer Ikone in den Händen.

Bei alledem mögen die von den Sowjetkritikern angeführten Ursachen des Wiederauflebens der kirchlichen Traditionen tatsächlich eine Rolle spielen: Die rein äußerliche Anziehungskraft der kirchlichen Bräuche und Riten ist sicherlich groß. Dennoch darf dieser Faktor nicht überschätzt oder als der allein ausschlaggebende betrachtet werden. Daß diese Bräuche und Riten nach vierzig Jahren unermüdlicher Ausrottung jeglichen religiösen und kirchlichen Lebens überhaupt noch wieder auflühen können, ist bereits bemerkenswert. Wenn auch die Gründe dieser Erscheinung in jedem Einzelfall variieren mögen, so kann man doch mit einiger Sicherheit das Anwachsen der Religiosität auf eine allgemeine Ursache zurückführen: die graue Sowjetwirklichkeit mit ihrer seelisch und friedigenden materialistischen Ideologie und im Gegenspiel dazu das immerfort während Streben nach geistigem Leben.

Die Orthodoxie ist geistig elastischer geworden

Nicht selten richtet sich zur Zeit die sowjetische atheistische Propaganda gegen das neue, modernere "Gewand" der Kirche. "Die Errungenschaften der Wissenschaft sind so groß und offensichtlich," lesen wir in der "Utschitelskaja gaseta" vom 24 Juni 1958, "daß die Geistlichkeit sich zur Zeit nicht selten zum Freund der Wissenschaft erklärt und bestrebt ist, diese in den Dienst der Theologie zu stellen und die Vereinbarkeit von Wissenschaft und Religion zu 'beweisen'. In Wirklichkeit aber sind sie direkt entgegengesetzt und unversöhnlich." Immer schärfer werden die Angriffe gegen die Kirche, wobei man sich immer noch meist der althergebrachten "Beweisführung" bedient: die Religion gründe sich bloß auf phantastische Erfindungen, auf biblische und sonstige Überlieferungen tausendjährigen Alters, auf Aberglauben. Die Religion verdunkle das Bewußtsein des Menschen, verurteile ihn zur Passivität vor den Kräften der Natur und fessele seine Initiative. In dieser Art sind insbesondere auch die antireligiösen Sendungen des Soldatensenders "Radio Wolga" gehalten.

Die Berichte über Unstimmigkeiten an der "religiösen Front" haben sich in allerjüngster Zeit besonders vermehrt. Die "Literaturnaja gaseta" vom 10. Januar 1959 wettert gegen den immensen Arbeitsverlust, der durch die zahlreichen Kirchweihfeiern entstehe. Die örtlichen Kolchos- bzw. Sowchosleiter erklären solche Tage manchmal sogar offiziell zu Feiertagen. Der antireligiöse Kampf bestünde ab und zu bloß in der Unterstützung der orthodoxen Kirche in ihrem Kampf gegen die Sektierer. Daneben wird in hämisch-"humorvoller" Weise von einem Kreuzzug von Dorf zu Dorf berichtet (Provinz Belgorod). Der Kreuzzug sei durch die Auffindung einer wundertätigen Ikone ausgelöst worden. In jedem Dorf hätte ein feierlicher Gottesdienst vor der Ikone stattgefunden. Auch die "Komsomolskaja prawda" vom 8. Januar 1959 berichtet in einer Korrespondenz aus der Provinz Pskow (Pleskau) von erheblichem Arbeitsausfall durch Kirchweihfeiern. In einem Bezirk der Provinz gäbe es 260 solche Feiertage. Und man gehe von einem Dorf zum anderen und feiere. In letzter Zeit nähmen auch die Komsomolzen an den Feiern teil.

Von einem lebhaften Handel mit Ikonen - vermutlich meist neuester Ursprungs - erfahren wir aus der "Komsomolskaja Prawda" vom 3. Januar 1959. Der Handel werde von Privatleuten und Spekulanten auf Trödelmärkten getrieben. Man könne auch Taufkreuzchen, Weinrauchfäßchen, Seelenmessenregister u.ä. erstehen. Diese Erscheinung sei in so weit auseinanderliegenden Städten wie Stalino, Iwanowo, Barnaul, Woronesch, Dnepropetrowsk "und in vielen anderen Städten" zu beobachten.

Während sich vor kurzem noch die weitaus meisten Meldungen auf die Religiosität auf dem Lande bezogen, mehren sich jetzt auch entsprechende Meldungen aus den Städten. Die "Komsomolskaja prawda" vom 26. Dezember 1958 veröffentlichte eine interessante Leserzuschrift aus Shitomir. Darin berichtete ein Arbeiter, daß seine jungen Kollegen im Werk ihn überzeugen wollten, er solle seinen neugeborenen Sohn taufen lassen, denn "einen russischen Menschen muß man unbedingt taufen lassen." Der Arbeiter beklagte die unzureichende antireligiöse Propaganda und stellte unter anderem fest, daß die atheistischen Vorträge sowieso nur von Ungläubigen besucht werden. Es sei kaum möglich, einen Gläubigen zu einem Besuch zu bewegen. Viele Arbeiter und Angestellte lehnten ihnen angebotene Karten zu solchen Veranstaltungen ab.

Die in der "Utschitelskaja gaseta" vom 8. Januar 1959 berichtete Geschichte der Familie Nikitin scheint auf den ersten Blick einen Einzelfall darzustellen. Die Mutter, eine streng gläubige Frau, habe ihre nichtgläubige Tochter zu beten gezwungen. Daraufhin nahm sich die Atheistin das Leben. Ihre Schwester habe sich dagegen nach Schulabschluß gänzlich dem Gebet gewidmet. Eine weitere Schwester gab das Studium auf und ließ sich aus dem Komsomol ausschließen. Der Grund: sie glaube an Gott. Diese scheinbar aus dem Rahmen fallende Geschichte gewinnt aber an Gewicht durch den Zusatz des Berichterstatters: "Der Vorfall mit Nikitina ist bei weitem nicht der einzige..."

Es sei noch auf einige weitere Erscheinungen eingegangen, die von dem Heißhunger des Volkes nach einem neuen inneren Leben sprechen, wobei sozusagen jeder Strohalm, der hierzu dienen könnte, aufgegriffen wird. Nicht selten ist in den entsprechenden Berichten der sowjetischen Presse die Rede von "heiligen Leuten", von "Predigern aller Art, von Pilgern. Natürlich werden sie hierbei alle als Scharlatane dargestellt. Es mag sein, daß unter diesen Leuten auch Betrüger ihr Unwesen treiben. Da sie



aber offensichtlich auf das Volk einen gewissen Einfluß ausüben, und der Einfluß eine bestimmte Glaubensbereitschaft voraussetzt, zeugt diese Erscheinung von dem Wunsch eines Teils des Volkes, irgendeiner neuen Glaubensidee zu folgen.

Einen interessanten Fall schilderte unter dem Title "Christus auf Dienstreise" die "Komsomolskaja prawda" von 28 Dezember 1958. Ein gewisser, 1915 geborener Nikolaj Alexejewitsch Schibanow habe sich als Christus deklariert (Vorfälle solcher Art kamen auch im alten Rußland vor) und sei zunächst an einer Quelle in der Nähe von Moskau aufgetaucht. Seine Haupttätigkeit habe er allerdings in Leningrad entfaltet, wobei er selbst und auch seine Predigten bis zu einem gewissen Grade in bestimmten Kreisen Popularität erlangten. "Wir würden dieses Feuilleton nicht schreiben", äußern die Autoren, "wenn auf Schibanows Angel nicht auch junge Leute mit Mittelschul- und sogar Hochschulbildung anbissen."

Schließlich muß noch die anscheinend besonders große Aktivität der Sekten und der kleineren Kirchengemeinschaften verschiedener Art hervorgehoben werden, wobei auch ein gewisser Wiederhall seitens der Bevölkerung festzustellen ist. Da wohl ein äußerster Mangel an Priesternachwuchs bei den großen Kirchen vorhanden ist, macht sich das Streben eines Teiles der Bevölkerung nach neuen geistig-seelischen Inhalten in der Wiedererstehung alter bzw. der Proklamierung neuer Sekten bemerkbar. Die Führung solcher Sekten bzw. einzelner Gemeinden übernehmen in der Regel Laienpriester und Prediger. Während die Bildung von Sekten im allgemeinen nicht unbedingt als eine positive Erscheinung anzusprechen ist, bezeugt sie in diesem Zusammenhang zumindest eine bestimmte Eigenständigkeit des Denkens wie auch den aktiven Wunsch, sich in der geistigen Not selbst zu helfen und einen Ausweg zu finden. Da Sektierer nicht selten fanatische für Ihre Überzeugung eintreten, stellen sie für das Regime innerhalb des Fragenkomplexes Religiosität sicherlich ein besonderes Problem dar. Die Zeitung "Krasnaja Swesda", ein Organ der Armee, berichtete am 28. Dezember 1958 sogar von Sektiererinnen unter Offiziersfrauen. Aus der Zeitung, "Sowjetskaja Rossija" vom 5 Juni 1958 erfahren wir u.a., daß in der sibirischen Stadt Tajschet (Provinz Irkutsk) die Sekte der Zeugen ihre Tätigkeit entfaltet. Ehemalige Verbannte sollen die Hauptträger dieser Sekte sein. Anscheinend sind die Zeugen Jehovas auch in Belorußland nicht unbekannt (vgl. Sowjetskaja Belorussija, 25.5.58).

In dem Dorf Nowo-Iwanowka (Bezirk Kedabeksk) existieren gleich fünf Sekten (Zeitung Bakinskij rabotschij, 13.12.58), und zwar sind dies: Pryguny (die Springer), Molokanen - Milchesser), Baptisten, Subbotniki (Sabbatarier) und Adventisten. Jede Sekte besitze ihr eigenes Gebetshaus. Man habe es vermocht - schreibt die Zeitung -, nicht nur den älteren Kolchosbauern die Köpfe zu benebeln, sondern auch der Dorfjugend. "Die jungen Leute Wasilij Morosow und Alexej Cholostow sind Popen geworden." In Nowo-Sartowka, 7 Kilometer von Nowo-Iwanowka entfernt, stehe es nicht anders, schreibt dieselbe Zeitung.

#### Eine Parteiamtliche Stimme

Diese - keineswegs vollständige - Übersicht erfährt gleichsam eine Synthese in dem redaktionellen Artikel der Zeitschrift "Kommunist" (Nr. 17, Dezember 1958, S. 91-98) unter dem Titel, "Die wissenschaftlich-atheistische Propaganda ist zu steigern,"

welcher uns u.a. belehrt, daß "noch bei weitem nicht alle Werktätigen der UdSSR tatsächlich zu Atheisten geworden sind."...

Jedem Artikel, der in der Zeitschrift "Kommunist"-ehemals "Bolschewik" - , dem Organ des Zentralkomitees der KPdSU, erscheint, muß doppeltes Gewicht beigemessen werden; desto mehr einem redaktionellen Artikel, der die jeweiligen Richtlinien auf dem oder jenem Gebiete vorzeichnet. Diese Überlegungen unterstützen unsere Ansicht, daß die offensichtlich vorhandenen religiösen Gegenströmungen vom Regime ernst genommen und für gefährlich gehalten werden...



REBELLION DER GLÄUBIGEN IN DER SOWJETUNION

Kürzlich schrieb die "Komsomolskaja Prawda" über folgenden Zwischenfall, der sich vor der Rayonsmusterungskommission im Gebiet Woronesh abgespielt hat:

"Sind Sie der Militärdienstpflichtige Bobrowskij?"

"Ich bin ein Christ".

"Sie sind doch Bürger der Sowjetunion?"

"Nein, ich bin ein Mensch Gottes."

"Wenn Sie an Gott glauben, so können Sie das bitte schön auch weiter glauben. Aber den Gesetzen der Sowjetmacht sollten Sie sich unterordnen."

"Ich unterordne mich nur den Gesetzen Gottes."

Jetzt haben wir uns entschlossen einige 'theoretischen Letzätze der Christlichen Religion' zu Hilfe zu rufen:

"Nach der Schrift stammt doch 'Jede Macht von Gott' . ist es so oder nicht?"

"Ja, antwortete Bobrowskij.

"Also stammt die Sowjetmacht doch von Gott?"

"Von Gottes Duldung."

Solche Fölle sind in der Sowjetunion keine Ausnahme. Die sowjetische Presse berichtet laufend, die Sektenbewegung habe sich aktiviert und genieße die Unterstützung eines Teils der Jugendlichen. Besonders die von den Sekten geleitete Kriegsdienstverweigererbewegung bildet ein ernstes Problem für das innerpolitische Leben. Alles was hier auf religiösem Sektor zu verzeichnen ist verdient den Namen "Rebellion der Gläubigen". Das charakteristischste und wichtigste Merkmal dieser Rebellion besteht in der Tatsache, daß ein Großteil der Gläubigen die traditionellen Kirchen verlassen hat und in Sekten und anderen Religionsgemeinschaften die Befriedigung ihrer religiösen Bedürfnisse sucht. In den letzten Wochen und Monaten erscheinen jetzt neue anti-religiöse Zeitungen und Zeitschriften und die Presse schlägt Alarm. Gerade im Juli und August erschienen massenhaft Berichte, die versuchen, einzelne Sektenführer zu kompromittieren. Der nachstehende Bericht ist zeitbedingt. Er soll nicht nur einen Überblick über die gegenwärtigen Sekten in der Sowjetunion vermitteln, sondern auch einige Gründe nennen, weshalb gerade jetzt die Sektenbewegung in diesem Land ihre Triumphe feiert.

In der Sowjetmacht bestehen legale and illegale Sekten. Letztere sind solche, die entweder aufgelöst sind oder sich nicht bei den zuständigen Behörden registrieren. Zu diesen gehören in erster Linie die "Zeugen Jehovas", die in der sowjetischen Terminologie auch häufig als "Hehovisten" bezeichnet werden. In Rußland gab es zwei Richtungen dieser Sekte, die "Iljin-Richtung", deren Gründer ein zaristischer Artilleriekapitän, ein gewisser M.S. ILJIN, war, und die "Rutherford-Richtung", welche ein verlängerter

Arm der amerikanischen Zentrale der "Zeugen Jehovas" war. Das Regime bezeichnet die Zeugen Jehovas als eine "antisowjetische Spionageorganisation."

In einer offiziellen Schrift "Wer sind die Jehovisten?", die 1957 in Kiew erschien, wird die Sekte mit folgenden Worten charakterisiert: "Zurzeit leitet der amerikanische Kapitalist Nathan HAMMER-KNORR die jehovistische Zentrale in Brooklyn, die im Dienst der amerikanischen Spionage steht und nach deren Richtlinien arbeitet... Der amerikanische Nachrichtendienst nutzt die organisatorischen Verbindungen der jehovistischen Zentrale in Brooklyn und sendet jehovistische Missionare als Spione und Diversanten in die Sowjetunion und die volksdemokratischen Länder. Der Führer der Jehovisten KNORR lehrt seine Agenten, in der Sowjetunion und anderen sozialistischen Ländern im Untergrund zu arbeiten und eine strenge Konspiration zu befolgen. 'Seien Sie so freundlich wie die Tauben und schlau wie die Schlangen', lehrt KNORR. Eine besondere Konspiration verlangt KNORR von den sogenannten 'Pionier-Kurieren' - den Gehemiboten der jehovistischen Zentrale in Brooklyn. Diese Agenten führen die verantwortlichsten Aufgaben der jehovistischen Untergrundbewegung durch, von welcher sie unterhalten werden. Es ist ihnen verboten Familien zu haben, die sie in ihrer subversiven Tätigkeit gegen die sozialistischen Länder behindern könnte."

1952 und 1953 haben die sowjetischen Sicherheitsorgane eine entschlossene Aktion gegen die Zentralen der Zeugen Jehovas in der Sowjetunion durchgeführt. Aber alles deutet darauf hin, daß die Sekte weiterhin aktiv ist.

Zu den illegalen Sekten gehören auch alle jene, bei denen barbarische rituelle Auswüchse geübt werden. So ist es gewiß kein gutes Zeichen für die "Kulturelle Revolution", daß in der Sowjetunion bis heute noch Sekten bestehen, die "Gott" "Blutopfer" darbringen und Menschen durch Kastration zu Invaliden machen. Zu solchen Sekten gehört z.B. jene, die als "Zitternde" bekannt ist. Während ihrer Gebetsversammlungen geraten die Sektenangehörigen in religiöse Ekstase, in welche der ganze Körper zum Zittern gebracht wird. Auch diese Sekte stammt aus den USA? wo sie bis heute noch eine gewisse Zahl von Anhängern besitzt. Die "Zitternden" werden von den sowjetischen Behörden aus zwei Gründen verfolgt: Ihre Auswüchse haben häufig Krankheiten und Verbrechen zur Folge. Außerdem sind sie die hartnäckigsten Feinde des sowjetischen Regimes. - sie verbreiten wilde Gerüchte über die "Weltuntergang" usw. Schließlich sind sie entschieden Kriegsdienstverweigerer.

In Rußland bestehen bis heute noch die Chlysten, Neo-Chlysten und Scopcen. Die Chlysten propagieren das Verbot des Geschlechtsverkehrs, betrachten Kinder, die dennoch zur Welt kommen als "Kainskinder," und praktizieren "Feuertaufen", bei welcher Sektenangehörige entmannt werden.

Zu den legalen Sekten gehören in erster Linie die Baptisten. In der Sowjet Union bestehen drei baptistische Richtungen. Ihre Zentrale ist der "Sowjet der Evangelischen Baptisten - Christen in der UdSSR". Sie besitzen im ganzen Land zahlenmäßig starke Gemeinden. An der Spitze dieser Glaubensbewegung steht der bekannte Baptistenführer SHIDKOW.

Die zweitgrößte legale Sekte bilden die "Siebenten Tages-Adventisten". Die Zentrale dieser mystischen Sekte befindet sich



in den USA, sie wurde bereits im 19. Jahrhundert im zaristischen Rußland ziemlich populär. Aber es scheint, daß sie heute unter dem Sozialismus noch viel mehr Anhängern besitzt als unter dem Zaren. Sie wird im allgemeinen vom Regime geduldet, eine Ausnahme bildet lediglich eine abgespaltene Gruppe, die "Adventisten-Reformisten". Letztere betreiben Kriegsdienstverweigerung und propagieren eine "sanitäre Reform", verbieten ihren Mitgliedern jeglichen Geschlechtsverkehr und predigen ein strenges Vegetariertum.

Ferner besteht in der Sowjetunion bis heute die "Kirche der Altgläubigen". Es ist dies in Wirklichkeit keine Sekte. Im 17. Jahrhundert spielte diese Kirche eine wichtige Rolle als sie gegen die Bemühungen der Zaren, sich der Orthodoxen Kirche als Stütze zu bedienen, rebellierte. Damals sind Millionen zu den Altgläubigen übergetreten. Das Gerücht, der verhaßte Zar sei der "Antichrist", hat viel dazu beigetragen. Heute bestehen in der Sowjetunion drei verschiedene Richtungen der Altgläubigen, die sich als separate Kirchen bezeichnen.

Ferner gibt es bis heute noch Sekten wie die "subotniki", "swertluowierci", "duchoborzen" und "molokanen". Besonders die beiden letzten scheinen populär zu sein. Die "duchoborzen" sind für die "Sauberkeit des Geistes", und behaupten, daß sie während des Gebets einen direkten Kontakt mit dem Heiligen Geist herstellen können. Die "molokanen", die sich auch als "geistige Christen-molokanen" bezeichnen, haben sich seinerzeit von den "duchoborzen" abgespalten. Sie betrachten die Bibel als unerschütterliche Grundlage ihres Glaubens.

Sekten bestanden auch im zaristischen Rußland, aber die heutige Sektenbewegung kann man nur bis zu einem gewissen Grad als Fortsetzung dieser Traditionen betrachten. Eine Auswertung der vorhandenen Dokumente bestätigt, daß die heutigen Sekten in der Sowjetunion ein Phänomen bilden und ihre Aktivierung durch die sowjetische Wirklichkeit selbst bedingt ist.

Über die Gründe der religiösen Aktivität in der Sowjetunion in Form der Sekten läßt sich zusammenfassend Folgendes sagen:

#### +) versagen der sowjetischen Politik auf religiösem Sektor

In der Sowjetunion wurde eine Trennung der Kirche von den Staatsapparten nicht verwirklicht. Das Regime hat sich nach einer Etappe großer Verfolgungen aller Kirchen und Religionsgemeinschaften, einschließlich der Russisch-Orthodoxen Kirche, zu einer differenzierteren Politik gegenüber den bestehenden Kirchen entschlossen. Die Russisch-Orthodoxe Kirche wurde als ein Apparat betrachtet, mit dessen Hilfe man das religiöse Leben zu kontrollieren und zu steuern gedachte. Diese Kirche wurde nicht nur bevorzugt, sondern zugleich mit prokommunistischen Elementen durchsetzt, so daß ihre gesamte Hierarchie nicht nur dem Regime ergeben ist, sondern auch aufs Engste mit den entsprechenden Behörden zusammenarbeitet. Wie bekannt, gehören die Gebete für die Sowjetunion und die sowjetischen Führer zum kirchlichen Ritual. Die daher rührende geistige Entartung dieser offiziellen regimetreuen Kirche ist einer der wichtigsten Gründe für eine Verlagerung des religiösen Lebens in die Sekten.

#### 3) Die gnoseologischen Wurzeln der Religiosität.

in der Sowjetunion sind bereits durch zahlreiche offizielle

Quellen bestätigt worden. Die kommunistische Doktrin versuchte - wie jede andere totalitäre Doktrin - nicht nur die Probleme der Staats- und Wirtschaftsordnung, sondern auch das Gebiet der transzendentalen Beziehungen zwischen Mensch und Religion zu lösen. Diese Bemühungen schlugen völlig fehl. Der Kommunismus war nicht in der Lage, dringende weltanschauliche Probleme ganz zu lösen.

Am besten bestätigt das ein in "Voprossy filosofii" Nr. 6/1958 erschienener Artikel von TCHERKASCHIN "Über die sozialen Wurzeln der Religion". Die These des Autors ist, die Religion sei nicht nur ein Ausdruck der Rückständigkeit gewisser Menschen, sondern verfüge auch in der sozialistischen Gesellschaft über gnoseologische Wurzeln. "Die Erkenntnis ist ein Prozeß, der sich niemals zu einem erschöpfenden und absoluten Bild der objektiven Welt vervollkommenet. Zwischen dem erreichten Stand der Wissenschaft und der Lösung aller Probleme wird stets eine Diskrepanz bestehen und dadurch wird immer, auch in der fortschrittlichen Gesellschaft, ein Spielraum für die Religiosität bleiben.

+) Es darf kein Zweifel daran bestehen, daß viele Dokumente zeigen, daß das fanatische Sektierertum in einigen Gebieten, das Bestehen solcher Sekten wie der "Zitternden" zweifellos auf eine bestehende Massenhysterie hinweisen. Negative strukturelle Veränderungen der Gesellschaft, für welche das Regime zum Teil verantwortlich ist und die auch durch die Kriegsereignisse bedingt sind, erklären, weshalb beispielsweise die Sowjetunion zu einem Zentrum der Sektensbewegung geworden ist. Infolge der Kriegsverluste war der Frauenüberschuß in dieser Republik schlechthin gewaltig. Diese völlig widernatürlichen Verhältnisse bilden selbstverständlich einen besonders günstigen Boden für religiöse Auswüchse.

+) In der Sektensbewegung äußert sich schließlich die bis zu einem gewissen Grade sublimierte politische Orientierung eines Teiles der Sowjetischen Bevölkerung in eine Richtung, die unter dem Begriff "Amerikanismus" zu verstehen ist. Den sowjetischen Gläubigen imponiert nicht der Kapitalismus. Sie sind auch Gegner der sozialen wie der ökonomischen Verhältnisse in den USA. Aber sie betrachten die USA als eine Domäne der mächtigen Sekten. In der amerikanischen Sektensbewegung und verschiedenen amerikanischen Kirchen sehen die sowjetischen Gläubigen ein gewisses Vorbild, das ihnen imponiert und mit dem sie sympathisieren. Dieser politische Hintergrund darf nicht übersehen werden.



# THE TRIALS OF THE SECTS

SIMFEROPOL CRIMEAN REGIONAL SERVICE IN RUSSIAN, MAY 24, 1959

The State security organs have unmasked a group of organizers and leaders of the illegal religious sect of Pentecosts or Flagellants. Of the four arrested, three lived in Simferopol and one in Dzhankoi.

Recently the Crimean Oblast criminal court examined the case of the four accused. The Pentecosts, who belong to a secret sect, hinder the education of the Soviet people in Communist ideology. The materials in the case and the statements of the witnesses proved beyond doubt the reactionary attitude of the Pentecost sect and the accused were found guilty of harmful anti-Soviet activities.

The four accused headed groups of Pentecosts in Simferopol and Dzhankoi, a sect which is proscribed by the organs of the Soviet State. Despite frequent warnings aimed at ending the illegal activities of the sect, the accused were found to have visited Kerch, Feodosia, Yevpatoriya, Yalta, Sevastopol, and Starvy Krym Rayons with the aim of expanding and organizing groups of Pentecosts in the Crimea. One of the four accused created an independent group of sectarians in Dzhankoi and maintained connections with the other three accused.

The Soviet State cannot tolerate rituals which deform the Soviet people and harm their health. The court sentenced two of the accused to six years each, one to five years, and the fourth to three years imprisonment at a labor camp.

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ODESSA OBLAST REGIONAL SERVICE IN UKRAINIAN, JULY 15, 1959

The five-day public trial of a group of organizers and active members of Jehovah's Witnesses, which operated in Odessa and Nikolayev Oblasts, was recently held in Pervomaysk Town, Nikolayev Oblast. The persons accused were Paraskoviya Nyzhnyk of Krasnoseltsi Village, Odessa Rayon, leader of the Odessa Rayon group of Jehovah's Witnesses: Yakiv Levchuk and Mykola Kovalchak, active members and organizers of teams and groups of Jehovah's witnesses who come from Pervomaysk Rayon, Nikolayev Oblast: and Petro Olefirenko of Staroholubyovo Village, Domanivskyy Rayon, Nikolayev Oblast.

Oblast papers published detailed reports on this trial. The court proceedings convincingly proved the anti-Soviet character of all activities by Jehovah's witnesses, who were acting on instructions from abroad and served the interests of imperialist instigators of war. The court sentenced all accused. Hundreds of people who attended the

trial and thousands of Pervomaysk inhabitants who listened to radio broadcasts of the trial proceedings wholeheartedly approved the sentences of the court.

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KIEV UKRAINIAN REGIONAL SERVICE IN UKRAINIAN, JULY 15

Pravda Ukrainy publishes a report on the trial of an underground group of anti-Soviet Jehovah's Witnesses (Yehovistske Pidpillya) which operated in Nikolayev and Odessa Oblasts. During the course of the trial, it was proved that preachers of Jehovah's Witnesses played a role assigned to them by their headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. Under the guise of preaching biblical dogmas, accused openly opposed measures introduced by the Soviet authorities. Inhabitants of Pervomaysk and neighboring villages who attended the trial welcomed with great satisfaction the sentence of the court according to which leaders of the underground group were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

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OREL OBLAST REGIONAL SERVICE (VIA KHARKOV) IN RUSSIAN, OCT. 31

In an article entitled "The Snake Pit," Orlovskaya Pravda of October 20 informed on the disclosure of a Jehovahist sect and its anti-people activities in Mtsensk. Since the publication of the article, meetings attended by many people were held at the construction and assembly administration and the vegetable and fruit cannery. At these meetings the working people definitely unmasked the anti-people essence of the Jehovahist sect.

The meetings found out that the Jehovahists were trying to attract to the sect a number of workers and employees of these enterprises, copying and spreading among the working people the underground Jehovahist literature received from across the ocean. They interfered with public activities of those people whom they succeeded in enrolling, forbade the enrolled to take part in the elections of Soviet authorities and the all-union census. Some of them left trade unions and other public organizations, and were rearing their children in an anti-Soviet spirit.

Today, Orlovskaya Pravda in its column "following the criticism" reports that the people have unmasked the miserable knot of the renegades of society and their sect bosses. Those attending the meetings which were held condemned the harmful activity of the Jehovahist sect.