Vanguard Studies of Soviet Russia

RELIGION UNDER THE SOVIETS

JULIUS F. HECKER

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VANGUARD STUDIES OF SOVIET RUSSIA

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Religion Under the Soviets

By JULIUS F. HECKER
Professor of Social Ethics in the
Moscow Theological Academy
Author of *Russian Sociology*,
and other works

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To the sincere men and women of Russia who, despite prison, exile, and death, burned out their lives trying to attain freedom, peace, and brotherhood for the common people.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JULIUS F. HECKER

Born in Leningrad, Russia, in 1881; elementary school education in Russia; college and university education in the United States,—Ph.D. in the department of political science at Columbia University; studied theology at Drew and Union Theological Seminaries,—B.D. from the former; special studies in pedagogy at Teachers College, New York, and University of Lausanne in Switzerland; in charge of Russian section of East Side Parish Settlement, New York, 1910-1916, editing Russian magazine *Enlightenment;* worked with Prisoners of War service under War Work Council of Y.M.C.A. 1916-1917; in charge of Foreign Language Publication Department of Association Press, 1918-1921; returned to Russia in 1921, engaging at first in Famine Relief, and later, in 1922, in educational work in Moscow; in 1923 helped reconstruct theological education of Orthodox Church and engaged in reopening of Leningrad and Moscow Theological Academies; occupies chair of sociology and social ethics in latter; author of *Russian Sociology,* 1915; *Cultural Institutions of America* (In Russian) 1920, and other works.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE Russian Revolution startled a war-diseased world and ushered in the most daring political and economic experiment of the twentieth century. Considering the vast territory affected, the radical changes inaugurated, and the influence which has been and still is being exerted on international relations, there is probably no greater event in modern history, whether for good or evil. Most Americans forget that a decade has already passed since Lenin and his Communistic followers assumed the power. The period of rapid revolutionary change has gone. Russia is painstakingly, step by step, building something different, something unique, something whose final destination is unpredictable.

America has been a land of discovery from its foundation. Not only in the realm of scientific invention, but in first attaining the coveted North Pole and in exploring other unknown areas of the world, Americans have given generously of life and treasure. Today we are uninformed about a great nation covering one-sixth of the land surface of the world. Russia is cut off by an Atlantic Ocean of prejudice, misunderstanding, and propaganda. We still maintain a rigid official quarantine about the Soviet Government. The result is ignorance frankly admitted by one "of the highest authorities in our Government," who declares this inevitable "in the absence of diplomatic relations." Judge Gary corroborates this verdict, "Like many other Americans, I am ignorant in regard to many of the

conditions which exist in Russia at the present time."*

Every scientist realizes that ignorance is one of the most dangerous forces in the world today. No matter how good or how bad the Soviet system, we should know all about it. Instead, we have been ruled by propaganda and hearsay.

The fact is that for the past ten years the Bolshevik government has been operated on, dissected, and laid in its coffin amidst loud applause and rejoicing by distinguished orators in all parts of the world; yet today it is stronger, more stable, than ever before in its history and its leaders have been longer in power than any other ruling cabinet in the world. It is high time that we appraise this government as scientifically and impartially as possible, without indulging in violent epithets or questionable and controversial dogmas. Surely the world is not so abysmally ignorant that after ten years of the rule of the Soviet we cannot discover a common core of truth about Russia.

Whether the Communists are thought to be "dangerous enemies of society" or the "saviors of humanity," the facts should be known before judgment is pronounced. No matter what our conviction, we have to admit that the Bolsheviki are hammering out a startling new mechanism in the field of political control. Their experiment deserves scientific study, not hostile armies; intelligent criticism, not damning epithets.

In the past, America has been flooded with propaganda of all shades. Dr. E. A. Ross dedicates his last volume on Russia "To my fellow-Americans who have become weary of being fed lies and propaganda about Russia." In his chapter on the "Poison Gas Attack"

* *Current History*, February, 1926.

he lists forty-nine stories broadcast throughout America which have been proved totally false. Other writers have pointed out similar facts. Walter Lippman, Editor-in-Chief of *The New York World*, in his illuminating study of all Russian news which appeared in *The New York Times* in the early period of the Revolution, has proved the stupidity, inaccuracy, and falsehood of the "facts and fabrications" which have passed as news. Even those articles and books which have tried to deal honestly with the subject have usually been inadequate. They have either been too general or they have been specific but too brief to be of more than passing value. In all too many cases they are based on only a few weeks of observation in Russia by someone who did not know the native language.

The present series is designed to meet the need for reliable, accurate information on the major aspects of present-day Russia. We have tried to make it as scientifically accurate as is possible in the treatment of contemporary phenomena. It has been our aim in selecting each author to choose someone who because of previous experience and training was peculiarly well qualified as an authority on the particular subject to which he was assigned. In every case we have chosen those who either have made a prolonged stay in Russia, actually writing their volumes while in the country, or those who have made a special trip to Russia to secure the facts about which they write. We have tried to make the series inclusive, covering the more important aspects of the many-sided developments in Russia. Each volume is devoted to one major subject alone. People want detailed, accurate facts in readable form. Here they can be found, ranging all the way from an

analysis of the governmental machinery to the school system. Within this series some repetition has been inevitable. The editor believes that this is distinctly desirable since each author expounds his subject in his own way, with an emphasis original to him and in the light of his own data. No effort has been made to eliminate contradictions, yet they are surprisingly few. Where the testimony of all is unanimous, the conclusions reached are overwhelmingly strong. Where differences exist, they should stimulate the reader to weigh the evidence even more carefully.

It is probably too much to hope that propaganda organizations will not endeavor to discredit any such genuine effort to arrive at the truth. Perhaps it is sufficient to say in refutation that no similar attempt to secure the facts about Russia from trained experts has yet been made in America or elsewhere, so far as the writer is aware. There is scant ground for intelligent criticism unless similar scientific studies have been made with conflicting results; even then time alone can proclaim the final truth. No sincere and unprejudiced scientist will deplore an effort to study and describe what has happened in the first experiment the world has ever seen in applied communism, even if mistakes have been made in the analysis.

These volumes on the whole not only contain the most valuable data so far available, but they will probably remain of permanent worth. In the future no real historian endeavoring to master the facts about the great political upheaval in Russia will care to ignore them. Is Russia the most tyrannical dictatorship of bloody despots that the world has ever seen? Is Russia the first step in the building of a new world order whose keynote will be industrial democracy? We do

not pretend to give here the final judgment of history, but we do claim to have made a sincere effort to portray the facts.

Thanks are due to the authors who have so painstakingly sought to present the truth as they found it, to the publishers for their assistance in making this a notable and usable series, and to all those whose labor, whether by hand or brain, has helped to give these volumes to the American public.

JEROME DAVIS,
Yale University.

INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this book is to make possible an intelligent understanding of the religious problem of the Russian people living within the boundaries of the Soviet Union.

Social and religious phenomena can be made clear only if one studies both the nature and the nurture of the social organism. This calls for the study of the psychological peculiarities of the Russo-Slavic race, and a historical survey of the church and its doctrines within the environment of semi-feudal czarism in the past and contemporary anti-clerical sovietism.

Christianity in the Eastern orthodox form was the state religion of old Russia. It was, at least nominally, professed by the vast majority of the subjects of the Czar, and it is with the fortunes of the old established church and other Christian sects of churches that this book deals. The reader will not forget that the problem of organized religion in Russia is, however, not exclusively the problem of Christian churches. There are fifteen million Mohammedans in Russia and three million Jews. With the Mohammedans the Soviet authorities have shrewdly avoided any religious controversies. To the Jews they brought liberty from the terrible restrictions and persecutions of the regime of the Czars. The activities of Jewish relief agencies in Russia have won the cooperation of the government authorities. Nevertheless, Jews in Russia, like Christians, are, of

course, subject to the secularizing pressure of the dominant Communist groups.

The psychological aspect of this study is treated in Chapter I; Chapters II and III give the necessary historical and doctrinal background of the Russian Greek Orthodox Church; Chapters IV to VI trace the revolutionary changes which have taken place in the Church since the February (political) and October (social) revolutions of 1917; Chapters VII to XI give a survey of the non-conformist and sectarian movements, which play an increasingly important part in the religious life of the Russian people; Chapter XII deals with the religious tragedy of the Russian intellectual class and the efforts of such men as Tolstoy, Merishkovsky, Berdyaev, and others to reconcile Christianity with the intellectual demands of modern times; Chapter XIII is a study of the attitude of the Communists towards religion and their methods of anti-religious propaganda. Finally, a venture is made to forecast the possible future of religion under the Soviets.

My personal interest in the religious life of the Russian people and my previous studies in Russian civilization and sociology, together with many years of close association with the people which have afforded me exceptional opportunities for observation, have given me the courage to undertake this most difficult problem of producing a book on *Religion Under the Soviets.*

It is evident that within the scope of this modest volume it is possible to give little more than an introduction to this intricate problem. The events of the last years are still so close to our personal hopes and fears that they make a cold, scientific analysis of the situation hardly possible, and, I think, undesirable. History should be more than human paleontology, more than an excava-

tion of dry bones of a past age. If, therefore, I have been able to embody in this study some of the religious passions, woes, and hopes of the revolutionary era through which we have lived in the Soviet Union, I shall be happy for having accomplished it and shall make no apologies.

I am no pessimist as to the future of religion under the Soviets. I believe the Soviet regime is most favorable for true religious expression and I fully share Oswald Spengler's point of view that the Russian people have but commenced their creative period in religion.*

JULIUS F. HECKER.

* Oswald Spengler: *Untergang des Abendlandes*, Vol. II, Chap. V, p. 623, footnote 1.

CONTENTS

RELIGION UNDER THE SOVIETS

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RUSSIAN SOUL

It is an old saying that an Englishman or American sooner or later talks of sport, a Frenchman of women, and a Russian, particularly one of the common people, of the mysteries of religion and God. Those who know the soul of the Russian people best call them *Bogonostzy* (Godbearers) and Bogoiskately (Godseekers). As Stephen Graham has truly said: "The Russians are always *en route* for some place where they may find out something about God." The mystical nature of the Russian is and probably will remain a puzzle to the Anglo-Saxon mind; it is more difficult to understand than anything else pertaining to Russia.

In my long experience as a Russian forum lecturer no topic has attracted larger crowds or caused more animated debate than that of religion. In Czarist Russia, although free public discussion of religion was prohibited by the National Church, in league with the vigilant secret police, it was impossible at any time to stop private discussion of the subject. In the parlors of the rich and the nobility little groups gathered to listen to the philosophical expositions of religion by some intellectual or by a foreigner travelling in Russia. The com-

mon folk met to talk religion informally in the cemeteries, in the woods, at railroad stations, in the market places, in the public taverns, in the humble cabins of the peasantry. On the high roads there were thousands of pilgrims tramping to visit the many sacred shrines and monasteries. Inevitably their conversation dealt with the eternal questions of God, salvation, and immortality.

The Russian soul agonizes on the problems and the purpose of life. The greatest of the Russian philosophers, Vladimir Soloviev, seeking for some fundamental principle upon which to construct his system of society and of morals, postulated as the peculiar psychic characteristics of man (and, of course, it was the Russian whom he had in mind), the sense of piety, the sense of pity, and the sense of shame. The first two of these characteristics are unquestionably dominant among the Russians. Holy Russia, dotted with churches, sacred shrines, and monasteries, is perpetually worshipping. Every day has its saint. The churches are always open and there are always people devoutly kneeling, bowing, and crossing themselves before richly decorated shrines and altars. In the streets of pre-war Russia men and women would stop piously to cross themselves at the sight of an ikon, a shrine, a church, or a funeral procession, and whisper their "Gospody Pomiluy" (Lord, be merciful!). In a filthy prison in Russia, where I spent some weeks, I was impressed by the fervent piety of the convicts, some of whom were considered dangerous criminals. In the morning they used to kneel before the ikons, knocking their foreheads against the floor, as part of the chapel service which they gladly attended. Sometimes these "hardened souls" would spend their last kopek to buy a candle which they would devoutly

light at the shrine of the Virgin or in honor of their patron saint.

Korolenko, speaking of the Siberian prisons, tells us of a highway robber and murderer who, when brought to prison, blessed the iron handcuffs and chains with the sign of the cross, and thus preached to his fellow-prisoners: "In the world there is sin, and in the world there is redemption. . . . God alone is without sin, but man is by nature sinful and is saved by repentance. Repentance is measured by sin, and sin is in the world. If you do not sin, you do not repent, and if you do not repent, you shall not be saved." The conclusion of this argument is that man must sin in order to be saved. The piety of this convict was proverbial, but it did not in the least deter him from the hideous crimes which he committed every time he regained his liberty. Piety may have little to do with moral standards in the life of a Russian criminal.

Pity is the true expression of Russian piety. Soloviev makes it the underlying principle of his sociological system. Sympathetic pity, in his opinion, collectively organized, becomes the State. It is true that social relations in Russia are largely controlled by a conscious sense of pity. Stephen Graham calls it the "Russian idea." The Russian loves suffering and the sufferer. His Christ is always the suffering Christ; he would not recognize any other. The repentant thief at the Cross draws out his deepest sympathy. He actually loves the dishonest, the criminal, and the vagabond. The common people have no word for criminal. They call him simply the "'neschastny," the unfortunate. The great Russian novelists, like Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gorky, Korolenko, and others, studied the criminal, never to condemn him, but to explain and defend him.

The spirit of forgiveness is closely associated with the Russian's sense of pity. I am inclined to say that it is the underlying principle of Russian religious sentiment. The spirit of forgiveness permeates all social relations.

The last Sunday before Lent is called *Proschalnoye Voskresenye* (Forgiveness Sunday), when one may observe the most touching scenes of mutual forgiveness. Before the War servants and masters would bow or kneel before one another and often with tears in their eyes ask forgiveness of one another, which would be readily granted.

The same custom was maintained in connection with the celebration of the Holy Communion. The communicant, before going to Church, calls upon his relatives and friends and asks forgiveness of them. Once in the old days I observed a very touching scene between a Russian captain and his orderly. The captain used to get drunk frequently and kick or beat the old orderly. The orderly, who was helpless, could save himself only by a request for transfer to some other form of service. When the transfer was granted and he was ready to leave, the captain humbly dropped his head and said: "Forgive me, Ivan!" And Ivan, the orderly, deeply moved, replied: "God is merciful; forgive me also, your Highness!" They then embraced each other and wept.

When a Russian goes on a journey, or leaves his home to enter the army or for some other important reason, friends and neighbors are called to take part in the *proschalny vecher.* This expression may be translated as "farewell party," but literally it means "forgiveness party." And the Russian farewell greeting *proschai* means "forgive." The Russian cannot rest in peace unless he knows that he has been forgiven for the wrongs which he may have committed knowingly.

No other people are so ready to forgive and forget as the Russians. I had the opportunity of living for a year among thousands of Russian prisoners of war in Austria. I never noticed among them any sign of hatred or desire for revenge toward their guards. On the contrary, they treated their enemies as if they were their kinsmen—fraternized with them, shared with them when they received a parcel from home, and readily assisted them in case of need. In one instance near the front the guard who escorted several prisoners was wounded in the arm by a stray bullet and carried his gun with difficulty. The prisoners, moved with compassion for the wounded guard, offered to carry his gun and led him to the sanitary post where he could receive medical assistance. It apparently never entered their minds that they had had an excellent opportunity to revenge themselves against the disabled enemy and regain their liberty.

The preaching of hatred of the enemy, such as disgraced many of the pulpits and the religious press in America during the war, is utterly alien to the Russian. I have as yet to meet the Russian, whether he be a soldier, an officer, or a clergyman, who has shown any real hatred toward his enemies. They all regret that they were drawn into the War, and they have forgiven and forgotten the wrongs which were done to them. Even the class war of the late revolution was unable to produce any real hatred between the "Reds" and the "Whites," and to-day Bolshevik and Bourgeois, though technically enemies, live and work together quite peacefully and show no signs of mutual hatred.

The spirit of forgiveness characteristic of the Russian soul may explain the readiness with which the Russian people accept pacifist teachings. Tolstoy did not get his

philosophy of non-resistance from the New Testament; it was first suggested to him by the common people and those pilgrims whom he used to meet on the highroads and to whose views on the true meaning of religion he would listen. Later, when he began to formulate his philosophy, he found the corroboration of these popular ideas in the teachings of Jesus, whereupon he accepted the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer as the basis of his religious philosophy.

Together with these fine, truly spiritual qualities the Russian has a vivid imagination and a love for symbolism in religion. Thus the sacred ikon and relics play a most important part in his religious life. There are innumerable traditions of the redeeming and wonder-working power of these primitive works of sacred art. The Virgin God-Mother and Nikholas the Wonder-worker are particularly popular, perhaps even more so than the ikons of the Savior and the Apostles. Illustrative of the popularity of this sacred symbolism is a large volume, published by the Holy Synod as late as 1907, entitled, *The Glory of the God-Mother.* It contains the description of six hundred and twelve wonder-working ikons of the God-Mother, the places where they are to be found, and terms for their feast days. The most incredible stories are told in this volume of the power of these ikons, which appeal strongly to the imagination of the common people and stimulate their desire to go on pilgrimages to visit these sacred shrines. Among the six hundred and twelve wonder-working ikons of the God-Mother, there are some which have the power to move from place to place; some where the God-Mother, or the Christ-Child have shed tears, bled when wounded, secreted holy ointments which were used as remedies, radiated mysterious lights, killed assailants, frightened

the enemy, cured the sick, raised the dead, stopped fires, droughts, and pestilences, and given new hope and relief to many millions of conscience-stricken sinners. Curiously enough not only the original ikons are credited with these miracles, but the copies at times have surpassed the originals in wonder-working power!

The tombs and relics of saints are even more appealing to the religious imagination of the masses. Year after year they are visited by thousands of devout pilgrims. Although not a few of these pilgrims are fully aware of the fraud and exploitation connected with the veneration of these holy places, they continue to go. I have visited the sacred pilgrimage places of the Kievpetchera monastery. In its ancient catacombs rest the remains of the early hermits who lived in these subterranean passages. Hundreds of thousands of devout pilgrims still visit these grounds. The fact that atheist lecturers interpret to the visitors the natural laws which have prevented the bodies of some of these saints from turning into dust does not seem to affect the pilgrims' devotion and reverence in the least.

Doubtless an important factor in encouraging these pilgrimages is mob psychology. The enthusiasm of a crowd is too contagious for an undisciplined mind to resist. The dreariness and monotony of the village life adds a great deal to the restless desire to join the pilgrimage.

In summing up, the religious characteristics of the Russian soul are: restless yearning and searching for God and divine truth, love of suffering and the sufferer, admiration and sympathy for the social outcasts, the spirit of forgiveness, resignation and non-resistance to wrong, and finally devotion to sacred symbolism and aesthetic mysticism. Thus, religion with the Russian is,

first and foremost, worship and meditation. Morality has little to do with one's religious life. Religious organization as such he can hardly understand.

The moral code of the Russian people developed quite independently of their religious life and practices. Social and individual relations are regulated not by law based on the decalogue, but by custom and moral standards which are expressed in their rich folklore. The great mass of the Russian people are totally ignorant of the moral teachings of the Christian Church. The Russian National Church never was a preaching and a teaching Church. It was, and is to-day, an institution of worship and the guardian of the mysteries of Christ, as symbolized in the Sacraments and the ecclesiastical traditions. The village priest is often not much more literate than his parishioners, and therefore has neither the knowledge nor the desire to instruct his congregation in the doctrines and moral precepts of the Church. Pobyedonostzeff, the former High Procurator of the Holy Synod, who practically ruled the church and the State for two generations, says: "Our clergy teaches little and seldom. The Bible does not exist for the illiterate people. . . . In far-off parts of the country the people understand absolutely nothing as to the meaning of the words of the service, not even the Lord's Prayer, which is often repeated with alterations which altogether destroy its meaning. And yet, in all those primitive minds there is erected, as in ancient Athens, an altar to the unknown God, and they resign their lives to Providence as a matter of fact."

The people's ignorance of the moral and doctrinal precepts of the church does not mean that they are immoral or have no theological ideas and standards by which to regulate individual and social relations. Their

wealth of traditional folklore and customary morality compensate to some degree for their lack of religious guidance. Lovers of Russian antiquity have set out to collect this wisdom of the people and have published several volumes containing some ten thousand of these sayings and proverbs.* Scholars who have analyzed these collections claim that in their totality they present nothing less than a philosophy of religious belief and a moral code, tested by the experience of many past generations. In their scope they deal with every human need and interest. There are many proverbs which speak of God, but only a few mention the name of Christ and the Virgin, which seems to indicate that most of the proverbs antedate the introduction of Christianity in Russia. The duties towards rulers and the social order are quite clearly stated in the proverbs. There are also sayings pertaining to the love of country, the rights of property, the validity of contract, taxation, crime, poverty, justice, education, food and drink, and, finally, health, sickness, and death. Eminent Russian jurists † believe that the Russian common law had its origin in the Russian proverb. Authorities in medicine †† believe that many of the ancient proverbs also contain the people's knowledge of the medical art.

* Some very good collections were made and published by I. I. Illustrov, V. Dal, I. Snegirev, T. I. Buslaev, B. Perogovsky, and others.

† Among the jurists who hold these views is Professor Gorushkin of Moscow, who was the first to call attention to it. He says: "In reading the old proverbs, one finds in them truth which cannot be refuted, and one must recognize in them the spoken law. In the past they must have had the power of law. This may be proved by the fact that many of their principles are incorporated by us in the code of laws." Similar opinions are expressed by Professors T. Moroshkin, P. Chubinsky, and N. Taganev.

†† Thus Dr. N. T. Vysocky, Professor of Medicine, collected proverbs pertaining to health and hygiene, diseases and their remedies. He found that they contain not a few very correct observations and good advice to which any physician could subscribe to-day.

But let some of these proverbs speak for themselves: "God is free and does what He pleases." "Man presupposes, but God disposes." "Man walks, but God leads." "Man for himself, but God for all." These proverbs indicate that their God is quite omnipotent and knows his own mind. The following sayings indicate that he is not indifferent to the needs of man: "God, who gave us teeth, will also give us the bread." "God gave the body, He will also give health." "If God does not give health, the doctor cannot either." The poor, in the opinion of the people, seem to be particularly favored by God: "The rich wonder how the poor can live, but God looks after the poor." "Who trusts in the Lord shall never feel despondent." "God is not poor, his mercy is not scanty." "God is not only to be feared, but to be loved." "In whom is fear is also God." "Where love is there God is also." "Who seeks the truth is sought of God." "He who guards the truth is rewarded by God." "Who lives pure is aided by God." Reliance on God should not, however, discourage self-reliance and toil: "He who guards himself is guarded of God." "He who rises early to him God gives." Prayer is spoken of in many parables: "He who sows without prayer shall not reap." "Commence with God, end with the Lord." "If you go to war, pray; if you go to sea, pray twice; and if you want to marry, pray thrice." There are but few proverbs which refer to Christ and then He is the symbol of suffering: "Without a cross—without a Christ," says one proverb. The church is seldom mentioned, but the idea of it is spiritual: "The Church is built not of logs but of (human) ribs." "Who loves the Lord also loves the Church."

These few proverbs, although taken from innumerable similar sayings, are, nevertheless, quite comprehen-

sive of the total range of religious ideas found in the Russian proverb. In comparing them with the Nicene creed, adhered to by the Eastern Church, it is amazing how little of it is reflected in the thinking of the common people. The word "Trinity" I found mentioned but once, and then it referred to the building of a home rather than to the nature of the Godhead: "Without the Trinity no home is built, without four corners no cabin is constructed, and without five sacred wafers no mass is read." The idea of God as the all-powerful and only ruler is very closely associated with the idea of the Czar, to whom the same attributes are given. Out of sixty-five proverbs pertaining to the Czar, twenty-nine are comparisons between him and God, and a number of others between him and the powers of the heavens: "There is but one God and one Czar." "God in the heavens—the Czar on the earth." "All is in the power of God and the Czar." "The Czar commands, but God directs in the right path." "God knows and the Czar." "The Czar is terrible, but God is merciful," etc. The proverbs about the Czar are in general not reproachful, whereas the much more numerous proverbs on the nobility, the government officials, the clergy, and the military service contain but little which is complimentary to them.

The Russian proverbs make small distinction between crime and sin. They hardly ever use the word "crime"; they simply call it sin. And the criminal is the sinner, or the unfortunate.

Sin, in the thinking of common Russians, is transgression of the law, or of that which is prohibited. "Sin is sinful through the law," is the proverbial saying, and "Where is prohibition, there is sin." (Every American may make his own application of this text!) That

all are sinners is taken for granted: "God alone is without sin." "As there is no fire without smoke, there is no man without sin." "As you cannot wear out a garment without spotting it, you cannot have a face that never blushed in shame." "Sin is determined by action, not by thought," or "One does not sin with the mind, but with the will." Conscience is the guardian against sin: "Sin cannot swallow you if you have any conscience." According to proverbial wisdom, poverty, misery and drunkenness are the principal causes of sin: "Need knows no shame." "Poverty is no sin, but leads to sin." "Even the Archbishop, when hungry, steals."

As sin is real and common to the Russian, so also is forgiveness: "Quarrel with sin, but be reconciled with the sinner." "For even God does not torment the forgiven sin." "Mercy over sin is like water over fire."

Thus the theology of the common people, as expressed in the proverbs and as corroborated by practice, is reduced to this simple creed: God is powerful and good; all men are sinful; God alone is without sin; yet God is merciful, he forgives, for Christ's sake, the repentant sinner.

The moral principles as expressed in the proverbs are predominantly social: "Altogether stupid is he who will not mingle with others." "To a united fold the wolf is not awful." Very many proverbs teach sociability, yet warn of the evil-minded: "The evil man is like charcoal; if it does not burn you, it blackens you." "Keep company with the good and avoid the cunning man." "Lying down with the dog you will rise with fleas."

Neighborliness, hospitality, friendship, loving-kindness, humility, wisdom, patience, the tilling of the land, and the simple life are emphasized and extolled in the proverbs. The golden rule is found paraphrased many

times: "Don't do anything you would not wish upon yourself." "Good to us and good to all, this is the lawful life."

Gossiping, slandering, coveting, flattering, avarice, and laziness are emphasized as vices. The conception of happiness, as expressed in the proverbs, has the meaning of luck and the proverbs warn against it. They look at the hard, toilsome life as a matter of course and fear happiness as a passing fancy: "Happiness is like the wolf; it deceives and then goes back to the woods." "Don't believe happiness, it rides a many-colored horse."

In recognizing and admiring the beautiful and truly Christian characteristics of the Russian soul, it would be folly to shut one's eyes to many of its dark and ugly aspects. There is perhaps no other people who can so curiously unite in their souls godliness and iniquity. John the Terrible is the classical illustration of the possibility of combining total disregard of morality with a simultaneous and apparently sincere outburst of religious emotion. This monster, honored by many Moscovites who feel in him a kinship of soul, used to retire at times for weeks into a monastery which he had built for himself near Moscow. He rang the bell for sunrise prayer at three in the morning. During the services, which lasted seven hours, he read, chanted, and prayed with such fervor that the marks of his prostrations remained on his forehead at dinner. He read to his attendants from books of religious instructions, yet in the intervals he went to the dungeons under the monastery to see with his own eyes prisoners tortured, and always returned, it was observed, with a face beaming with delight.

This Czar was, of course, a pervert, but the fact remains that such anomalies are fully possible in the

Russian character. It may be explained by the fact, as was shown above, that religion has had little to do with morality in Russia. The sense of duty, the categorical imperative which among the Teutonic people has been supernaturally sanctioned and is the cornerstone of their religion, hardly exists in the religious consciousness of the Russian. The lack of supernaturally sanctioned moral control and discipline makes it possible for the Russian, when his passions are aroused, to act cruelly and ruthlessly, usually with little forethought, and seldom from motives of revenge. With so little moral training in this respect he is still a barbarian. The excesses of the Revolution may thus be partially explained.

The great problem of the future religious and moral training of Russians will be how to conserve their beautiful innate spiritual characteristics and, at the same time, inculcate in them moral control in daily behavior.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF RUSSIA

WHEN the Emperor Constantine made the Christian Church a state institution under his protectorate he took the first step on the road which led to the state controlled church of Holy Russia. The Eastern Church never developed a Pope and its patriarchs were subordinate to the Greek Emperors. After Constantinople was captured by the Turks in 1453 and the Greek Empire ceased to exist, the Moscovite ecclesiastics caught a vision of Russia as the standard-bearer of Orthodoxy. They inspired their princes with the theory that Moscow should become the third and final Rome, while its princes as Christian Emperors should inherit the prerogatives of the rulers of conquered Byzantium.

Thus, the history of the Orthodox Russian Church may be divided into:

(1) The period of complete dependence on the See of Constantinople (988-1240);

(2) The transitional period of gradual acquisition of autonomy (1240-1448);

(3) The period from the independence of the Metropolitan of Moscow to the establishment of the Russian Patriarchate (1448-1587);

(4) The period of the Patriarchate (1587-1720);

(5) The period of the Holy Synod after the abolition of the Patriarchate (1720-1917);

(6) The period of the reestablishment of the Patriarchate and the separation of the Church from the State (1917-1923).

(7) The period of the second abolition of the Patriarchate and the schism in the Church.

From the time that Vladimir of Kiev accepted Christianity (988), the Christian Church, as organized in Russia, was under the control of the Patriarch of Constantinople, who considered the new branch of the Church as one of his dioceses and ruled it through bishops imported from Greece. The Russian clergy had but little in common with the Greek prelates, whose language they could not understand. They longed for a native leadership. The Russian princes also feared to be subjected to the scepter of the Byzantine Emperors, who used the ecclesiastical hierarchy to extend their power over the newly converted border states in the Balkans and in Russia. The invasion of the Greek Empire by the Seljukian Turks (1050), and the struggles which commenced with the Moslems during the following centuries of the crusades, slowly weakened the authority of Constantinople, and when in 1240 Russia was cut off entirely from the Mother Church by the invasion of the Tartars, the Patriarchs of Constantinople were compelled to leave the Church in Russia to be governed by its own bishops. When Constantinople finally fell, the Russian bishops seized the opportunity and secured the independence of their Church, the Metropolitan Bishop being recognized as the first independent Russian Bishop of the See of Constantinople.

This Metropolitan Jonah, who fought hard for the independence of the Russian Church, commenced to propagate the idea of the Apostasy of the Byzantine Church from the Orthodox faith, and explained the fall of

Constantinople as the consequence of its impiety and heresy. In a pastoral letter to his Bishops, he made the accusation: "You know yourselves, my children, what the Royal City (Constantinople) had suffered from the siege of the Bulgarians and the Persians, who for seven years held it as in a net; yet, it stood as long as the Greeks maintained their piety. But when they had lost their faith, you know what they had to suffer and how they were captured and killed; what became of their souls, God alone knows." The conclusion was plain. Russia had nothing more to expect from the Greek Church, which had lost its birthright. The state must take the welfare of the Russian Church into its own hands. More than this, it must become the guardian of the Orthodox faith for the world. Constantinople, the second Rome, had fallen, but there was Moscow with its "most pious" princes; she was chosen to be the third Rome, that should last till the coming of the Lord. And her princes were to be the "true Christian Emperors" and guardians of the cross.

John III, a shrewd Moscovite, liked the idea and resolutely undertook to make himself "the all pious" Emperor of Orthodox Chistendom. To facilitate his ambitions, he arranged for his marriage with Princess Sophia of Constantinople (1467) and commenced to build his great Cathedral in Moscow, which was to replace the desecrated Cathedral of Saint Sophia of Constantinople. To his Court he sought to attract the wisest of the clergy and gladly listened to their philosophizing on the coming of the third Rome—Holy Moscow. A very interesting example of this is left to us in a letter of the learned monk Philotheous to John III. He says: "The Church of ancient Rome was destroyed in consequence of the heresy of Apollinarius, and the Constantinopolitan

Church of the second Rome was cut to pieces by the axes of Hagar's posterity. But this Holy Apostolic Church of the third Rome (Moscow)—to wit, of the autocratic power—shines more brightly than the sun of the whole Universe. . . . Two Romes have fallen; the third stands upright, and there is no fourth to come; thou art the only Czar of the Christians in the entire world." Under these circumstances the domination of the Church by the State was successfully carried on by the Moscovite princes. What was commenced by John and his faithful ecclesiastics was completed by the Czars who followed him.

John IV the Terrible continued the policy of emphasizing the independence of the Russian Church from Byzantium. It was under his reign that the myth of the preaching of St. Andrew, the Apostle, on the banks of the Dnieper was circulated, and, of course, readily believed. "Why do you refer us to the Greeks?" answered the Czar to the papal envoy Possevin, who wanted the Russian Church to follow the Greeks in regard to the Council of Florence. "The Greeks are no Gospel to us; we believe not in the Greeks, but in Christ. We received the Christian faith at the beginning of the Christian Church, when Andrew, the brother of the Apostle Peter, came to this country on his way to Rome. Therefore we received the Christian faith at the same time that you did in Italy." *

In this manner the direct Apostolic origin of Russian Christianity was theoretically established and the claim of the Czars as the true and only Emperors of Orthodox

* There is no shadow of historical evidence in this myth of Andrew visiting Russia. But it is true in the South there were scattered Christian communities and isolated Christians long before Russia officially accepted the Christian faith from the Greeks.

Christianity strengthened.* To complete the independence of the Russian Church and give proof of its orthodoxy, the ecclesiastics felt the need of real Russian saints. Until that time the saints and martyrs whom the Church venerated were all foreign, mostly Greeks, and it looked as if the Russian Church itself was barren of holy witnesses for the Christian faith. To overcome this drawback, the Russian Bishops began to inquire whether there were any Russian saints venerated by local communities, and what great deeds of piety they had wrought. In the year 1547 a general Council was called at Moscow and the Bishops reported on their researches, which yielded twenty-two saints whom the Council canonized. The search for saints was continued in the year following, and in 1549 the Council met again and canonized seventeen more saints. Those prelates who dared to oppose the Moscow hierarchy in its efforts to aggrandize Moscow to the rank of the third Rome were anathematized by the Council. This opposition, the first known to the Church, came from the Southeast. On the lower Volga was a monastic settlement founded by Nil Soroky, a man of deep spiritual insight and learning. He attracted an able following and for half a century opposed the imperialistic tendencies of the Moscow nationalist-ecclesiastics, until he and his followers were finally suppressed by the Moscow Councils.

The Volga monks were opposed to a too close union between Church and State, and demanded that each be

* The Greek Church held that there could be only one Christian Emperor. In 1393 the Greek Patriarch wrote to Basil I, prince of Moscow: "It is impossible for Christians to have a Church without a Czar for the State and the Church are in close union and can not be separated. . . . The Apostle Peter said 'Fear God, honor the Czar.' He did not say 'Czars,' but 'Czar,' in order that none should consider the Czars of different people, showing by this that there is but one Czar in the world."

independent of the other. The pastors of the Church, they said, should not fear the temporal power, but should stand for what is right in the Kingdom of the Spirit. The ruler of the State should be no judge in spiritual affairs. Religion is a matter of individual conscience, and the State should not persecute anyone for religious opinions.

These Volga monasteries and many other religious retreats throughout Russia, the so-called "skity," continued the practice of free religious thought, particularly along mystic lines, and this was quite generally tolerated by the hierarchy of the Church.

One thing still was lacking in the Russian Church. It had no Patriarch of its own and was compelled to recognize the Patriarch of Constantinople. To get one was no easy matter, for it needed the consent of the Byzantine Patriarch. Boris Godounoff, the shrewd pretender to the Russian throne, finally succeeded in getting the consent of the Greek Patriarch Jeremiah, who in 1589 had come to Moscow to collect alms for the impoverished Byzantine Church. The Moscow hierarch, Job, was consecrated First Patriarch of Russia and thus the dream of Russian ecclesiastics for independence and dignity was attained. With this achievement simultaneously was created a situation which inevitably led to the decline of the Russian Church.

There were now in Russia dual powers: the Patriarch and the Czar. And as the Patriarchs began to assert their spiritual sovereignty, rivaling the Czars in the splendor of their court, it soon became evident that a conflict was inevitable.

During the troubled times which followed the extinction of the Rurik dynasty, when all kinds of pretenders reigned in Moscow, order was restored by the strong

hand of the Patriarch Philaret, who placed his youthful son, Michael Romanoff, on the throne, but practically reigned himself as long as he lived. Under the second of the Romanoffs, Alexis Nikon was made Patriarch and was unquestionably the ablest of Russia's ten Patriarchs. Historians frequently called him the Thomas à Becket of the Russian Orthodoxy. He was the first to clash with the Czar and the nobility, who feared this mighty man as a super-autocrat. That there were good reasons for this fear is apparent. Nikon was conscious of the dignity of his office and his power. Once, when irritated by the insubordination of the Czar's powerful boyars, he said: "Know ye not that it is not we who receive the sublime sacerdotal authority from Czars or Emperors, but on the contrary those who govern are anointed to rule. By that same token it is clear that priesthood is a far greater thing than royalty." This was dangerous doctrine. The timid Czar feared the Patriarch, whom he had loved in his youth. But he did not hinder his boyars, who plotted Nikon's downfall and finally succeeded. Nikon's defeat irrevocably established the supremacy of State over the Church and prepared the way for abolishing the Patriarchate altogether. This was accomplished by Peter the Great a few decades later.

Nikon was the last of the influential Patriarchs. He is frequently thought of as the reformer of the Russian Church. It is true that he made many changes in the outward form of the Orthodox cult. This, as we shall see later on, aroused the protest of the conservative zealots and paved the way to a schism which alienated a large portion of the most devout members of the Church and irreparably destroyed its unity, on which it had justly prided itself.

Peter the Great was determined to modernize Russia.

He recognized in the Patriarchate not only a dangerous rival to the absolutism of the throne, but also the greatest obstacle to his modernizing reforms. With the aid of several ecclesiastics who lent themselves as willing tools to his wild schemes he abolished the Patriarchate, and in 1720 brought the Church under the complete control of the State. In place of the Patriarchate he organized a governing College of Ecclesiastics, under the guidance of a layman appointed by himself. This institution was later called the Holy Synod and was patterned after the models of Protestant State Churches. The purpose of this reform was to subject the Church to the interests of the State and use it to strengthen centralized autocratic sovereignty. Peter had little interest in purely spiritual matters, and therefore neither he nor his successors ever meddled with the doctrines or ritual of the Church. In fact, the Holy Synod had no authority to decree doctrines, but was simply the governing body of the Church, and in this capacity controlled by the State. The future history of the Church proved that it was made a very efficient tool to prolong the despotism of the Russian Czars long after autocracy had not only ceased to be a necessity for Russia but had become its greatest hindrance to progress. That the State control over the Church hampered to a great extent its spiritual development will subsequently be shown. Peter's ecclesiastical coup has been the principal cause of the spiritual decline of the Russian Church. To understand this, we must fully understand the organization and functions of the Holy Synod.

The Holy Synod was constituted of all classes of the clergy, and all were appointed by the Emperor, but not for the same length of term. There were two kinds of members, active and assistant, the former non-remov-

able and the latter consulting and temporary. The number of members was also unlimited and could be enlarged or decreased by the will of the Emperor. The Metropolitans of Petrograd, Moscow and Kiev were considered permanent members. The same status was provided for the Exarch of Georgia.* The Metropolitan of Petrograd was honored with the title of the "first member," and, as a rule, with the presidency. The other active members were five or six Archbishops, Bishops, and Archimandrites and were appointed for a specific term. Finally, there were several members of the white (married) clergy, one of whom usually was the confessor of the Emperor.

The assistant members of the Holy Synod, who were mostly Bishops and influential priests, were consulted only when their services were needed. The general executive of the Holy Synod was the High Procurator, representing the Emperor. Peter described the function of the High Procurator as "the eye of the Czar," and his duty was to see that the affairs of the Church were carried on in conformity with the imperial decrees. He held the rank of a Minister of State, and was represented in the State Cabinet, with responsibilities to none except the Emperor. Laymen were appointed to this high position, and Peter preferred military men of firm character who could control the clergy by military discipline. Thus it happened that under Nicholas I a spurred and sabred officer, Count Protassof, was occupying the post of High Procurator and presiding over the shepherds of the Church.

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* The Church of Georgia is much older than the Russian Church. Its head is called Exarch. When Georgia was incorporated into the Russian Empire, the Georgian Church was supervised by the Holy Synod, yet maintained relative independence.

The power and range of functions of the High Procurator were extraordinary. Nothing could be done in the affairs of the Church without his consent. No act of the Synod was valid without his signature. He possessed the veto power if any act of the Synod, in his opinion, was not conforming to the laws of the State.

The affairs which came within the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod were of several categories, such as those pertaining to censorship of religious books and periodicals, the administration of justice in cases of clerical misconduct and heresy, and the like. These duties were disposed of principally by the ecclesiastical members of the Synod. Matters pertaining to education, finances, and so forth were attended to by the Procurator and his numerous staff of assistants and clerks. The affairs of the Church were centralized to such a degree that no Bishop could travel beyond the boundaries of his diocese without first getting permission from the chancellery of the Holy Synod. Some ten to fifteen thousand cases had to be disposed of annually, and each case had to pass numerous stages of the bureaucratic machinery.

In the provinces, branches of the Holy Synod were organized, called the "Diocesan Consistories," which were patterned after the Holy Synod and were to assist the Bishop of the diocese. They were presided over by lay appointees of the High Procurator and the Holy Synod, and occupied themselves principally with matters of clerical discipline and cases pertaining to marriage and divorce, with the Holy Synod open as the higher court of appeal.

The fact that the Emperor appointed all bishops on nominations made by the Synod, and at his will bestowed the dignities of Archbishop and Metropolitan, who in turn were called into membership of the Holy

Synod, make it apparent that the governing hierarchy and the Holy Synod lent themselves as willing tools to the interests of the autocracy. The State was not slow to use the clergy for its advantage, often at the expense of the welfare of the nation and the Church, and the unity which the system promised to produce was only external.

The more spiritual ecclesiastics in the church resented this servitude to the State, and the schism which commenced as a protest against the innovations of Patriarch Nikon in the sixteenth century widened on the new issue of State control. Peter was branded Antichrist, and the number of adherents to the schismatics grew in leaps and bounds and continually drained the Church of its best spiritual resources. This state of affairs was bound to accelerate the decline of the national Orthodox Church.

The iron despotism of Nicholas I roused the Russian intellectual class to take up the fight against autocracy which, in spite of all repressive measures, continued until the old regime was vanquished in the successful proletarian revolution of 1917. The Russian autocracy, struggling for its existence, enlisted the hierarchy of the Church and the Holy Synod to fight its battles. This led to the darkest period in the history of the Church, and it will be a long time before it will regain the confidence of the people which its unholy alliance with the State has undermined.

The man who led the Church during this worst reactionary period was the High Procurator of the Holy Synod, K. P. Pobyedonostzev, who died in 1908. He was an able administrator and possessed considerable erudition. He was loyal to the crown and the autocracy, and loved the State Church. He enjoyed the com-

plete confidence of the Imperial family and was entrusted with the education of the Czars Alexander III and Nicholas II.

Pobyedonostzev, in his continuous efforts to uphold the existing order, was particularly severe with the sectarians, the revolutionists, and the Jews, whom he considered enemies of the Church and the autocratic State. He inspired repressive legislation and organized his "missionary departments," which were principally used as secret service agencies of the Holy Synod. The ordinary clergy was enlisted in this widespread persecution. The priests were requested to cooperate with the secret service of the Czar and inform the police of any revolutionary propaganda carried on in their parishes. As a result of their information, more than 10,000 school teachers were imprisoned or sent into exile.

Believing that ignorance was the best safeguard against revolutionary propaganda, Pobyedonostzev suppressed the zemstvo (public) schools and made great efforts to organize a parochial school system under the supervision of the parish priests. By rigid censorship he tried to control also the thinking of the more educated classes. The higher clergy, in general, followed his leadership, and became zealous advocates of his reactionary policies. Some went so far as to abuse the most sacred institution of the Church, the confessional, for spying purposes, and the blood of many innocent victims may be charged to this heinous espionage. One priest, who had his parish in a district where there were many revolutionists, confessed to me some time ago his guilt of this black crime and added that the Church at present justly suffers for its sins in supporting the wicked activities of the old regime. It is true that such abuses were not frequent, and that there were not a few even

among the higher clergy who protested against this prostitution of the Church to the interests of autocratic despotism, but they were quickly silenced by the almighty Holy Synod. Such men were Father Tikhovinsky and Gregory Petroff, and their names will go down in history as martyrs and prophets of righteousness.

The lower clergy, particularly the village priests, who had little to gain from official favors and who depended largely upon the good will of their parishioners, generally showed passive resistance to the efforts of the State to abuse their office for political purposes. By tradition and habit they had no interest in politics and generally ignored the political efforts of the Holy Synod and the high clergy. It is true that in the elections of 1912 their participation as electioneers for the government parties had increased. Yet, even then, many participated not out of conviction but because of pressure from above.

The crowning shame of the Church was the unspeakable Rasputin scandal at the Court of the late Czar, which humiliated the Church and dragged it to the lowest depths. Nicholas and his consort, Alexandra, were by nature superstitious persons and their perpetual fear for their lives and their throne made them susceptible to occultism. There were always some mystical personalities kept at Court, who, by their prophecies and spiritualistic messages, guided the family affairs of the late Czar. For a while the renowned charlatan-spiritualist Philippe controlled the situation. Then Hiliodor, of Tzaritzin, was for a while the favored "saint," but was soon replaced by his rival, Gregory Rasputin, mockingly called "Grishka." Rasputin was a licentious, ignorant, and drunken peasant who came to power because of his forceful and brutal personality and animal magnetism,

which lured hysterical women into his net. He was brought to Moscow by a rich woman who had met the "holy man" on one of his pilgrimages in Siberia. Later, he was introduced to Court on the occasion of the illness of the young heir, for whose health and life the Empress continually worried. Somehow Rasputin succeeded in arresting the frequent hemorrhages from which the Czarevitch suffered and which the physicians were unable to prevent. This assured the Empress of his "supernatural" power. Rasputin made her believe that not only the life of the boy but also the security of the empire depended on him. She clung to the impostor until his tragic end, when he was brutally murdered with the aid of some members of the Imperial family. Rasputin was shrewd enough to exploit his position as "spiritual" adviser of the Empress. No favor which he asked for himself or his friends was refused him. Office-seekers in the State and Church therefore sought his aid by flattering him and begging him for his blessing. Those who dared oppose him were instantly removed from office. Ministers and generals were placed in office or discharged at his will. It is even believed that the transfer of the Grand Duke Nicholas, the Generalissimo of the Russian Army, to the Caucasus was suggested by Rasputin.

The reputation of the Church suffered greatly because of its tolerance of Rasputin. Members of the Holy Synod did not dare to oppose him for fear of their positions, and when Samarin, the highly respected High Procurator of the Holy Synod, was not friendly enough to Rasputin's favorites, he was dismissed. Through Rasputin's influence unworthy men were made Bishops and even elevated to the rank of Metropolitans. Thus Bishop Makarius, who was accused of having set afire the

Tomsk theatre in 1905 while a popular meeting was being held, causing the loss of many lives, was made Metropolitan through the influence of the all-powerful Rasputin. All of Russia was indignant over the dictatorship of the "Holy Devil," as his rival Hiliodor called him, and when finally he was murdered there was general satisfaction over the foul deed, with the exception of the Court camarilla and the Empress and Emperor, who greatly mourned their "saint." The position of the Church, already weakened by its long servitude under State control, was greatly shattered by Rasputin's unholy dictatorship. When the Revolution broke out the best elements of the Church welcomed the change, but the higher clergy which was used to lean on the mighty arm of the State was of different opinion. It feared for its power and generally protected the counter-revolutionists, who promised to reestablish the former favored position of the hierarchy.

Thus, by virtue of historical circumstances, the Church became a mighty national institution and its development was parallel with the growth of centralized government in Russia. From its very beginning the hierarchy of the Church was closely associated with the secular power, and finally, under Peter the Great, it was definitely degraded to a tool of the State. Since the Church was prostituted to autocratic despotism, the ill repute of the old regime was attributed to the Church as well as to the temporal power. The alliance of Church and State proved a failure in Russia as it has in other nations. Now, freed from its old bondage, the Orthodox Church has received a new lease on life.

CHAPTER III

THE DOCTRINAL PECULIARITIES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

STEREOTYPED orthodoxy of doctrine, and strict conformity to ritual, are peculiar to the Greek Orthodox Faith. The static aspect of religion is very much in evidence. The Church prides itself on its function of "conserver" of the faith, and does not pretend to have any task of discovering new truths.

At the occasion of the ninth centenary of the conversion of Russia, the Russian-Japanese Mission, headed by the Russian Bishop Nicholas, sent a letter of appreciation to its Mother Church. In the letter the teachings of the Russian missionaries are clearly outlined, particularly with regard to the other branches of the Christian Church, whose arguments the Russian missionaries had, no doubt, to meet in their rival activities on the foreign field. It attacks both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism as being rationalistic movements, which continually change their ideas to meet the emergency of the age, and thus reject the authority and the doctrines of the universal Church, as established by the Ecumenical Councils in the early history of Christianity. "It is the Orthodox Church, alone," concludes the letter, "which can give drink from the fount of the sweetness of the word of God to those who come to her, for she alone has preserved the divine doctrines just as they were committed to her, and *will preserve them unchanged to the*

end of the ages, without adding to or taking from them a single iota, inasmuch as she is the pillar and ground of the truth, inasmuch as the Spirit of God, which dwelleth within her, preserveth her from all error."

This is precisely the doctrinal position of the Greek-Orthodox Church. It considers its task to *preserve,* not to develop or search for truth. Therefore the learning of Orthodox theologians limited itself to the apologetic function of guarding against any possible innovation. By the "Divine Doctrine," which is mentioned in the letter, is meant the Nicene Creed and the canons of the seven Ecumenical Councils.* The doctrines of the first four of these Councils were raised by the Emperor Justinian, and confirmed by the Fifth General Council to the level of the Holy Scriptures, and this ruling has been accepted by the Russian Orthodox Church.

Let us briefly recall what doctrines were developed in these councils, which, as we have seen, are still valid in the Russian Church and which it intends to preserve unchanged to the end of the ages. The first General Council of Nicaea in 325, because of its Catholic representation, was unquestionably the most important of the doctrine-making councils. The principal problem it attempted to solve was to give a definition of the Godhead, which to the philosophically-minded Greeks seemed to be of the highest importance and about which passionate controversies were carried on by the followers of Arius and Athanasius, of Alexandria, the most prominent center in the early centuries after Christ for philosophical and theological speculation.

The controversy turned on the relations of the Divine

* These Councils are known according to the names of the cities in which they were held: in Nicaea in 325; in Constantinople in 381; in Ephesos in 431; in Chalcedon in 451; in Constantinople in 680; in Nicaea in 787.

Persons in the Trinity, not only before the Incarnation, before Creation, before Time, but before the first beginning of Time. There was no real disagreement on any dealings of the deity with man, nor on the divinity or the humanity of Christ, nor even on some form of the Trinity. All these articles of faith were acknowledged by both parties. The controversy raged over the most subtle shades of meaning of words for which only the Greek language finds expression. And yet this excess of dogmatism in the most abstract region of human thought was elevated, subscribed, sealed, and guarded by anathemas as "Divine Doctrine," of which the Greek Orthodox Church of to-day is the most ardent supporter.

The Creed, which was the final outcome of the heated debates of the ecclesiastics at Nicaea reads as follows:

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible;

"And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, *only begotten that is to say, of the substance of the Father, God of God,* Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, *both things in heaven and things in earth*—who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh and was made man, suffered, rose again on the third day, and went up into the heavens;

"And in the Holy Ghost.

"But those that say 'there was when He was not,' and 'before He was begotten He was not,' and that 'He came into existence from what was not,' or who profess that the Son of God is a different 'person' or 'substance,' or that he is created, or variable, are anathematized by the Catholic Church."

Although the makers of the Creed intended to have it stand unaltered for "ever and ever," there were, nevertheless, certain additions and subtractions made at the Second General Council in 451. From that time on it has stood unaltered.

Other problems which occupied these councils pertained largely to the condemnation of heretics, i.e., those ecclesiastics who did not yield to the rulings of the majority in the controversies. Besides this, the Councils regulated the conduct of the clergy and gradually developed the Greek Orthodox system of ecclesiastical hierarchy. Thus the resolution of the patriarchate was established at the Fourth General Council in 451. The Seventh and last General Council recognized by the Russian Church sanctioned the veneration of sacred pictures and condemned the iconoclasts who would destroy them.

This was in the year 787. Since then the Holy Spirit ceased to reveal "Divine Doctrine." Orthodoxy was stereotyped and the theologians of the Church for more than a thousand years have spent their energies in guarding against adding or taking from it a single iota.

This stereotyped doctrinal position of the Eastern Church, both Greek and Russian, explains some of the peculiarities which distinguish it from those of the West, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. It is particularly marked by the absence of learned clergy. There is no need for them, since no new truth is to be discovered. There exists some scholarship to perpetuate the traditional theology and guard against heretics who might undermine the Orthodox faith, but for original thinking there is neither need nor place in the Orthodox Church. This may account for the fact that the few original religious philosophers Russia has produced were all lay-

men; the best known of these are the Slavophil Khomayakoff and, more recently, Vladimir Soloviev. The Russian Church, unlike the Churches of the West, has not developed any institutions of secular learning. There were never any Church Colleges and Universities in Russia, and even the former theological seminaries and academies, which generally maintained a fair standard of scholarship, have ceased to exist. New theological schools are developing but slowly. Even the parochial schools, which the Church attempted to develop in the last few decades before the revolution, were exceedingly poor and now have disappeared altogether.

The monasteries, which in the West were generally centers of learning, were not so in Russia, at least not with respect to letters. The learned monk was looked upon with suspicion. "Book cunning" could easily lead to spiritual pride, and was considered a weapon used by the devil to drag the souls of men to hell.

A narrative of the monks of the famous Petchersky Monastery tells how one of their brothers, named Nikita, had a vision of an angel who told him to become learned in order that he might instruct the people who came to him for advice. He set out to learn the Scriptures by heart and actually could recite the whole of the Old Testament. The Brethren suspected that it was the devil who seduced Brother Nikita to this folly and by persistent admonition and prayer succeeded in driving off the evil spirit from the learned Nikita, "and," ends the narrative, "Nikita lost all his knowledge."

Thus, because of the absence of learning, the Russian Church was not only unable to develop any further the religious ideas she had received, but she was even unable to preserve them unchanged. Paul Miliukov, the historian of Russian civilization, makes the assertion that

the Russian Church "necessarily adopted very easily and involuntarily the dogma of her former pagan creed. She attained this result by dint of simplifying eastern Christianity and reducing it to a state of complete nationalization. Simplified and materialized, the oriental creed has become a particular and national type of Russian orthodoxy."

Because of the mass baptism of the Russian people and the absence of religious instruction, no very great change was made in the thinking of the new converts. Their pagan superstitions in general remained. Although the former gods were now called demons and evil spirits, the faith in their existence did not cease. All trouble, whether sickness or a drouth, was ascribed to them, and to overcome their evil workings the Christian saints were invoked and sacred rites practiced. The fetish worship so common in the more primitive religions was continued under new symbols. The cross, the ikon, the relics of saints, holy water, the communion wafers, incense and sacred ointment, even the Bible, are to the great mass of people magic objects which guard against trouble and the work of evil spirits. A Russian, for example, would consider it a mighty risky thing to take a dive, or a swim without his baptismal cross around the neck. This cross he wears day and night from his earliest infancy. I have seen the people try to stop the spread of a fire by placing the ikon of some saint between the burning house and the next building. At times there exists something like an *entente cordiale* between the old spirits and the new Christian ikons. For example, a very favored spirit is the *Dyedouska Domovoy* (the house grandfather spirit). When the family moves there is a special rite of moving this spirit. The day before leaving, the housewife takes a piece of

bread and salt and a cup of water and says, "Now, Dyedouska Domovoy, let us go." When they arrive at the new house, the cup and the bread and salt are placed under the ikon, and the housewife says, "Now, Dyedouska, there is your place of honor." This custom, I am told, is quite generally observed to this day, even by intelligent Moscovite families.

In practice, the Christian clergy had to perform for Russian peasants virtually the same duties for which their ancestors turned to the pagan priest and medicine man. He was asked to expel the evil spirit from houses and fields by magic rites and incantations. In this the clergy acquiesced, and at such rites the priest may be seen even to-day when drouth or disease visits his lonely village.

The veneration of ikons and relics, which if properly understood has aesthetic and symbolic value for the faithful has lost most of its spiritual quality in the practice of the Russian Church. The ikon* is such an important factor in the religious life of the Russian people that I shall attempt to give the teachings of the Orthodox Church in regard to its meaning. As always the church harks back to the interpretation and sanction given to the use of ikons by the General Councils. We already know that the Seventh General Council, which met at Nicaea in 787, occupied itself with the iconoclastic controversy and decided in favor of the veneration of sacred pictures. The arguments presented at the Council favoring the veneration of pictures are still advanced by the Russian Church. They are briefly as follows:

* The ikon is a painting and representation in relief of Christ, the apostles or the Saints. The word is derived from the Greek word for image. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Churches do not use statues except sometimes of angels.

The abuses and superstitions which have arisen in connection with the worship of the sacred images, like the existence of evil itself, are not of the essence of the matter. St. Methodius of Constantinople, one of the champions in the defense of sacred images at the iconoclastic controversy, writes to his opponents:

"You say that this veneration of the images has made gods of them? But it is you, yourselves, who ought to teach the people in what way it is befitting to honor them. For supposing that some villager or country boor were to meet a servant of the King, and should worship him, as if he were the King himself, and should say to him, 'Have mercy on me, most gracious Majesty,' would you order that both the servant who received this homage and the man who offered it should be punished with death (on a charge of lese majeste)? Certainly not, inasmuch as he did it in ignorance. But it is the business of those who know to explain to the inexperienced that this is not the King; inasmuch as the King lives in his palace and no one sees him except at such times as he chooses to show himself outside. And so you ought to teach those who in ignorance make a god of an image of Christ, that it is not Christ in the flesh, but only an image of Him. For Christ is in Heaven, and no man seeth Him, so far as I know, until He appear in His second coming to judge the world. And this they would certainly understand, and would regulate their worship accordingly. For this is what Bishops are meant for, namely to teach the people to believe and pray."

Thus in the early church pictures were maintained principally on the ground of their practical utility. Images were the books for the unlearned and, in truth, the images in the older churches do represent the orthodox plan of salvation and the history of the Church. A

classic illustration is furnished by the Cathedral of the Assumption, first built in 1493, and considered to be a perfect model of the Orthodox idea of a Christian Church. Its iconostasis, that part of the church where the altar is situated, is divided horizontally into several tiers or stages, upon which in long rows are mounted the various ikons. The basic idea expressed in the pictures (ikons) is the beautiful and truly Christian doctrine of "The Community of Saints" down through the ages.

The upper tier represents the saints of the era before Moses, with the Lord of Sabaoth in the center. There are Adam, Seth, Enoch, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who symbolize continuity of holiness proceeding from the Father of All Life. The next tier represents the saints of the Old Testament Church, from Moses to Christ, with the Holy Virgin in the center. The prophets on either side of her are holding scrolls containing the Messianic hope. In the tier below is pictured the story of the Gospels in twelve great events* On the fourth row (immediately above the royal gates) the Christian Church itself is depicted by the reign of Christ who is seated on a heavenly throne as the everlasting High Priest making intercession for our sins; on either side of Him stand, in the position of prayer, His Mother and St. John the Baptist, as two representatives of human perfection, the nearest intercessors before Him on behalf of sinful man. On both sides of them are ranged all the Apostles, beginning with St. Peter and St. Paul, as preachers of the Gospel of Christ and builders of His Church. Thus, beginning from above and descending upon the inner wall of the nave is depicted the gradual

*These events are celebrated in the twelve principal feasts of the Orthodox Church. Easter is called the "Feast of Feasts."

growth of the Church as the invisible Community of Saints.

The four central pillars of the Church are representative of the Martyrs, whose blood has been the strength of the Church; on the royal gates in the iconostasis are the ikons of the Annunciation and the four Evangelists; on the south wall are paintings of the General Councils, whose doctrines and canons contain the teachings of the Orthodox Church, and on the west wall is represented the Last Judgment. Besides these, there are many other ikons and paintings, representing madonnas and saints who were important factors in the making of the Russian Church and State.

The doctrinal interpretation of the ikons, however, goes beyond the ideas of symbolism. According to St. John Damascene, whose point of view triumphed at the Seventh Council, the ikon became an object of incarnation of the Logos. This idea must have had considerable to do with the belief in "God-manifested" ikons, now prevalent in Russia. There are scores of ikons in Russia which the Church claims were not made by man but were sent down by God from Heaven. This is proved by their wonder-working power. I doubt whether the Fathers of the Councils would have accepted these myths, but in Russia they are but a natural development of the idea which was advocated by St. John Damascene, and are a clear case of what Milukov calls the materialization of the Christian ideas in Russia. No doubt, as the Russian people and clergy become more educated this materialization of the ikon will gradually pass away and the pictures will become, as they really are intended to be, a sacred symbolism and an aesthetic expression of Christian ideas.

The idea of charity and good works has also been put on a low and selfish level in the church. Until recently, pauperism was not considered by the Russian Church as an economic evil, but rather as an institution for moral education. God, so to say, provided the poor and down-trodden people in order that the pious might have a chance to practice charity. Thus pauperism was considered a part of the divine order, and was not to be destroyed or even permanently alleviated, but simply used for the soul's salvation. This materialization of ethical ideals is well illustrated by the advice of Pososhkov, who was one of the popular teachers on religious matters in Russia. "Take care," exhorts Pososhkov, "that you surpass the scribes and Pharisees by your virtues in order that you may enter into the realm of Heaven. Therefore, you must, after having given to God the tenth of your substance, add about five percent to it. The Pharisee feasted twice a week, but besides this you must fast the whole four parts of the year established by the Holy Fathers. Thus you will be superior to the Pharisees."

Fortunately, the Slavophil religious-philosophical movement of the last century has given the Church some new interpretations of the Orthodox doctrines and traditions ethically higher than the materialized ideology of the monks and priests. These Slavophil philosophers were well-educated, yet pious, laymen who commenced to study the Church as a national institution around which they hoped to realize their panslavistic dreams. Among these philosophers, Khomyakoff enjoys the general recognition of the Church and Russian ecclesiastics, who make free use of his writings when they wish to interpret to foreigners their idea of the Orthodox faith and practices. This shows that within the limits of the

rather stereotyped cult there is still room for creative religious thought. It is remarkable that heresy-hunting is quite alien to the Orthodox Church so long as there is no attack upon the cult or ritual of the church.

The acceptance of Khomyakoff's ideas by intelligent churchmen is a hopeful sign that the masses will sometime be instructed in these new interpretations, thus overcoming the materialization of religion which is not essential to the practice of the Orthodox faith. Khomyakoff's interpretation of the Church, of intercession for the dead, and prayer to the saints has spiritual beauty. He defines the Church as "faith and love as an organism."

"The Church is grounded upon love, and is joined together by love in all her parts and members. Without love she is inconceivable. . . . Joined together in one compact organism, the visible Church, which is a part of the whole Church of Christ, constitutes for the believer heaven upon earth. Established in a world of enmity, she, inasmuch as she is grounded upon a new principle of life, detaches her members from sinfulness, and brings them nearer to the Maker and Father of all men, and before all to Jesus Christ, the Fountain of love, the chief Corner-stone, and Head of the whole Church. With His infinite love He permeates and embraces the whole Church, as being His own Body, inseparable from Himself, and in its essence invisible."

Upon this idea of the Church as an organism of faith and love of all who ever lived or will live, confessing Christ as their Saviour, the idea of intercession for the departed and supplication to the saints is a natural sequence and means nothing more than the communion of prayer between the visible and invisible world. Khomyakoff resents the Roman Catholic idea of a pur-

gatory and the bargaining with saints for their assistance to get the tormented sinner out of his agonies, and interprets prayer for the living and dead as the true bond of love which is to unite the visible and invisible Church. He says:

"We know that when anyone of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He who is saved in the Church is a member of her, and in unity with all her other members. If anyone believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves, he is in the communion of love; if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer. . . .

"Just as each of us requires prayers from all, so each person owes his prayers on behalf of all, the living and the dead, and even those who are as yet unborn; for in praying, as we do with all the Church, that the world may come to the knowledge of God, we pray not only for the present generation, but for those whom God will hereafter call into life. Mutual prayer is the blood of the Church, and the glorification of God her breath. We pray in a spirit of love, not of interest, in the spirit of filial freedom, not of the law of the hireling demanding his pay. Every man who asks: 'What use is there in prayer?' acknowledges himself to be in bondage. True prayer is true love.

This profound spirit of worship and of intercessory prayer is the real dynamic of the Orthodox Church which is otherwise doctrinally static and officially permits no deviation from its traditional theology.

The Orthodox Church, even in the darkest days of her history, was never without her saints and prophets, who mantained the continuity of Sanctity. They were often crude and homely men, but all of them reflect the mind of the people who venerated and recognized them as saints.

It is true that the reader of the lives of Russian saints will be greatly disappointed if he expects to find among them such magnificent personalities as were the saints of the west. The Russian Church has not produced any such religious geniuses as St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Domenic, St. Bernard, Thomas à Kempis, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and the like. There is not one great thinker or preacher among them. The "Lives" of the saints are poorly and uninterestingly written, and are monotonous repetitions of ascetic accomplishments or *podvigs*, with occasional anecdotes of incredible miracles performed by them. The "Lives" are of little historical value; they reflect the imagination of the people as to what a "saint" ought to be rather than what he actually was. In this respect they are valuable, giving us additional material for the study of the religious mind of the Orthodox Christians. The canonization of the saints by the councils of the Russian Church followed after the saints had long been venerated by local communities. In most cases their bodily remains were discovered "incorruptible" and had produced miracles of healing. These "Lives" were often written by half-literate monks, who made little or no historical research, but rather enlarged upon the traditions associated with a particular saint. After reading several volumes of the "Lives of Saints," I have made an attempt to classify them according to types.

First there is the *ascetic type*, the most common among the Russian Saints. They usually lived in caves, slept in coffins, and sometimes buried themselves alive in a sepulchre, the opening of which was closed with a wall, leaving only a small hole, through which a little bread and water was passed to the inmate. There he lived, sometimes for decades, seeing no one and speaking

to no one, and dying of starvation and filth. When he ceased to take his bread and water for several days, and no other sign of life was heard from him, the hole was sealed and the saint was declared to have passed to his heavenly rest and joy. It is probable that some of the bodies of those men who were dying slowly from undernourishment did not decay very rapidly and were fossilized into mummies. These were called the "incorruptible (*netlennye moshchi*) and were highly venerated by the Church and the people.*

Another quite common type of saint is what might be called the idiotic type, or, as the Church canons prefer to call them, "Idiots for Christ's sake." They were usually unkempt, half-insane, half-naked tramps with iron collars around their necks and ankles, dirty and bleeding from many wounds. Some of them could hardly speak, but their groans and mutterings were eagerly snatched up and interpreted as oracular messages. A goodly number of these "holy" idiots have been canonized, and they enjoy great popularity among the people.

Other saints who were recognized by canonization were of the warrior type. These were brave and pious soldiers and princes who sacrificed themselves in defending their people and Church. Akin to the warrior type is the prophetic type of saints. These were prelates of the Church who, without fear or trembling, rebuked

* Many monasteries sought to acquire such mummy-saints, which attracted crowds of pilgrims and gave the monasteries large incomes. Because of the lack of genuine mummies some monasteries were tempted to fraud and made them out of wax. The Soviet Government stopped these frauds by investigating all the saints and publishing their findings. The number of imitation saints appeared to be considerable. The worst scandal, however, was the exposure of the remains of St. Sergius, the much venerated and truly saintly founder of the Troitzky Monastery, who was fraudulently advertised as "incorruptible" to attract crowds of pilgrims to the monastery.

unjust and cruel rulers, preferring the martyr's crown to the favors of the blood-stained rulers. Such, for example, was St. Philip, Metropolitan of Moscow, murdered by the Terrible John. Finally, there is what we may term the ethical type of saint. These were venerable, pious sages, usually of little learning but simple in their mode of life, working hard and sharing their possessions with the poor.

These men had experienced a true *preobrazhenye* (transfiguration or transformation from within). The doctrine of *preobrazhenye*, which is aspired to by all true saints, is taught by Russian mystics. It is comparable to the Protestant idea of a spiritual rebirth, Christian perfection, and sanctification of soul and body. It is believed by Russians that it can be more readily attained by retreating from the world and living either in total solitude or in a group of like-minded seekers. This gave origin to the *skity* (retreats) which frequently developed into great monasteries and finally into towns and even cities.

There is no doubt that even to-day in many places, particularly in Siberia and the Caucasian mountains, saintly men are still living who exert profound influence upon the religious destiny of the Russian people. They are the salt and the leaven which preserved the Orthodox Church from disintegration and ruin through centuries of her captivity to the State.

CHAPTER IV

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH: THE SOBOR OF 1917-18

"In the year since the birth of Christ 1917, on August 15, the day of the Assumption of the most Holy Mother of God, in the God-saving city of Moscow in the great Cathedral of the Assumption took place the opening of the Holy Sobor of the Orthodox Church of Russia." . . . Thus commences the record of the so-called "Acts" of the Holy Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church.*

The reconvening of the Sobor was the hope of every sincere churchman. It was a part of his creed and his daily prayer. "I believe in the Holy Catholic Apostolic Orthodox Sobor Church," recites the pious Orthodox Russian. The Sobor idea is clearly related to the affectionate idea of the "Community of Saints," which we have learned is the beloved doctrine and practice of the Russian Church, and the "Sobor mind" (*Sobor rasum*) is believed almost infallible, for through the Sobor, the Holy Spirit reveals divine truth and the will of God.

If we keep in mind these traditions and the fact that for more than two hundred years† the Russian Church

* We shall use throughout this chapter the term "Sobor," which usually is translated "Council," to differentiate from "Soviet," which also is translated "Council." "Sobor" is distinctly an ecclesiastical term, whereas "Soviet" is predominantly a secular term.

† The last Sobor was held at Moscow in 1667. Peter the Great, who wanted to rule the State and the Church after his own ideas, did not

was robbed of this privilege by the despotic will of the Czars who did not want any Sobor, and if we but realize the deep fear which gripped the faithful for the welfare of the church when the revolutionary cyclone swept the country, first in 1905 and later in 1917, we may well understand what deep emotions moved the pious masses when the Sobor finally opened on August 15, 1917.

Prior to the opening a thorough study was made of some of the problems which faced the church. These studies were begun in 1906, at which time the Czar, frightened by the 1905 revolution, finally consented to call a Sobor.* A preparatory committee was organized by the Synod for study of the problems which were to be submitted for its decision. The Czar promised to call it "soon," but never did, and passed ingloriously out of history without keeping his promise.

More than fifty of the most learned and influential bishops, professors, priests and laymen attended this preliminary conference of 1906. For a whole year they met regularly to discuss the problems of the Church and make their recommendations. Three bulky volumes† contain their discussions and recommendations referring to: the composition, rules, and practices of the coming Sobor; the reorganization of the central regional and local administrative organs of the Church; Ecclesiastical Courts; legislation as to marriage and divorce; parochial and theological schools; church property; organization of the clergy; church unity and some doctrinal questions; and finally "measures to be taken to protect the Orthodox faith and Christian piety from false teachings

call a Sobor nor a new Patriarch when in 1700 the last of the Russian Patriarchs, Adrian, died. Cf. Chap. II, p. 21.

* On December 17, 1905 the Czar instructed the Holy Synod "to exercise special effort and do everything necessary for the calling of the Sobor." *Journals and Protocols of the Sessions*, Vol. III, p. 3.

† Published in 1906-7 by the Synod Press of St. Petersburg.

and interpretations, in view of the strengthening of the principle of religious tolerance in the Empire.*

The records of these conferences are very valuable. They reflect the state of mind of the best thinkers of the Church during the period antecedent to the revolution. Although criticism of the Czarist regime was taboo at these meetings, there was enough said to show that at least a large minority of these churchmen felt that the greatest evil in the church was its subjection to the State. They of course did not want separation of the Church from the State. They wanted to receive support and protection, but otherwise they sought independence and self-administration on a democratic basis, with the Sobor as the final and supreme authority instead of the Czar. As the proceedings went on, it became steadily clearer that there were present two irreconcilable parties: the liberals, who were the genuine supporters of the Sobor and of a democratic regime in the Church, and the reactionaries, who feared that should the principle of a Sobor Church triumph another pillar of Czarist absolutism would be weakened and hasten its downfall. The realization of this fact was probably the reason why the Czar finally changed his mind and did not call the Sobor. To placate the liberal elements, led by the noble Metropolitan Antonius of Petersburg,† one of the main initiators of the Sobor movement in the Church, the reactionary High Procurator of the Synod, Pobedonoscev, and later the still more reactionary High Procurator, Sabler, continued to talk

* *Journals and Protocols of the Sessions.* Vol. I, p. xi.

† Antonius Vadkowsky, Metropolitan of Petersburg, called in liberal circles "the Great," must not be taken for Archbishop Antonius Khrapovitsky of Kherson and Kharkoff, called by the liberals the "Little." The "Little" Antonius was one of the chief leaders of reaction and a bitter opponent of the "Great" Antonius.

about the Sobor but apparently had not the least intention of actually calling it. Thus in 1912 Sabler revived the idea of the Sobor as a shield against attacks made upon him by the liberal factions of the Duma, and they were promised that for the three hundredth anniversary of the reign of the house of the Romanoffs (celebrated in 1913) the Sobor would be called. But the anniversary passed with no Sobor.

The work done by the Pre-Sobor Committee of 1906 and the reactionary Sabler Committee of 1912 was, however, not lost; many of its findings, good and bad, were used by the Sobor of 1917. Naturally there was a tremendous difference between the situation of the Church from 1906 to 1912 and in 1917. The period of 1906 to 1912, and until the outbreak of the war, was marked by the triumph of reaction in Church and State. In 1917 the head of the Church, the Czar, had disappeared, and the new provisional government, although not openly hostile to the Church, did not maintain the old relations. Also, the political revolution, which commenced with the abdication of the Czar, was rapidly developing into a social revolution. The horizon was black with coming storms. These could not pass and leave the Church unharmed. This was decidedly felt by the leaders of the Church, and they turned to the belated Sobor as a storm-tossed ship would turn toward a harbor.

There were 564 delegates entitled to a seat at the Sobor. Of these 80 were of Episcopal rank, 20 monks, mostly Father Superiors of various monasteries, 129 priests, 36 deacons and subdeacons, and 209 laymen representing all strata of society. Among the laity there were many representatives of the nobility, besides ten counts and princes, 36 professors at theological schools

and universities, big land owners and manufacturers, politicians, military men, and peasants. Three hundred and forty-one delegates were elected. The rest were *ex officio* members representing the Episcopacy, the monasteries, the army and the navy, the theological academies, the Academy of Science, universities, the Duma (parliament), members of the Government, and so forth. In all it was a representative body, but, of course, predominantly representative of the conservative elements of the Church.

The elections of the delegates from the dioceses were carried through by an indirect method. Each parish elected delegates to the district meeting, which in turn elected delegates to the diocesan meetings, which chose the delegates to the Sobor. The laity at this Sobor was in the majority, which would be unusual in similar conferences of the western churches.

The speakers who brought greetings to the Sobor from their various angles all voiced the same sentiment: the nation is pressed by foreign enemies and, still worse, by inner strife and demoralization; no human effort can save it any longer, therefore the Church must awaken to its duty.

Dean Lubimoff of the Cathedral of the Assumption said: "Our Russian fatherland is not so much overcome by a fierce foreign enemy as it is torn from the inside by various drifts of false teachings, unbelief, and mutiny. . . . Where shall it find safety from the storm of life and be redeemed of the heavy affliction which has overcome it? Where, save in the Church of Christ . . . ?"

The Metropolitan of Moscow, Tikhon, later elected Patriarch, welcoming the Sobor, said: "Our Fatherland is now in upheaval and danger, almost on the verge of ruin. How to save it? This question calls for deep

thinking. Millions of the inhabitants of Russia trust that the Church Sobor will not remain inactive in this difficult situation. . . ." C. K. Rodionoff, representing the Zemstvo, put the query: "Where is the voice which can arrest the unbridled Russian people; where is the voice which will say: 'Hold on, brethren, we perish under the orgies of unrestrained passions'?" This same note of alarm and fear before the rising social revolution repeated itself in every speech. All looked up to the Sobor as the last possible hope in the crisis.

The first decision of the Sobor was to issue an appeal to the army and to the people to set apart September 27 as a nation-wide day of repentance and prayer to save the country and the Church from civil strife and invasion by the foreign enemy.

At this critical period of the Russian nation the Sobor was put to a test of its moral authority. There was no doubt that the nation was in danger of being overrun by the German armies, and the political party strife threatened to end in a civil war. The army was demoralized and presented rather an armed mob which turned to loot and banditry in its own country, often against the monasteries and nunneries. The provisional Government was impotent to cope with the situation, and its only trust was in the Constitutional assembly which was to settle the question of the new form of government.

The question which forcibly pressed itself upon the Sobor was "to be or not to be" in politics. There was a group which favored active participation in the elections and the formation of something like a clerical party. Others were altogether against participation, fearing that it would impair the spiritual significance of the Church.

When General Kornilov marched upon Moscow at the end of August, 1917, in order to establish a military dictatorship, he sent a message to the Sobor asking for its support. Many members of the Sobor welcomed his move and urged the Sobor to side with him. The question was debated in a closed and secret session. Only the prompt and inglorious failure of the coup prevented the Sobor from openly joining the General, and the incident was closed by a resolution of admonition to "unity and brotherly love" and a plea for mercy upon the defeated usurpers. The Kornilov affair was a timely warning to the Sobor of the danger of politics for the Church. After heated debates concerning the participation or non-participation of the Church in the elections under a separate ticket, a compromise was reached which took the stand that the Church cannot remain indifferent at a time when the nation is in danger of anarchy but that it should use only its moral and spiritual influence within all parties and should say to the people: "Do your duties as citizens thoughtfully and conscientiously. Choose whom you like as long as your candidates will remember that the Christian religion and the Orthodox Church are of great and incomparable value."* An appeal expressing this thought was issued just before the elections. We now know that it carried little weight with the masses. The rapid march of the social revolution could no longer be stemmed by such admonition. The eruptions of the revolutionary volcano had to run their course.

One of the chief tasks of the Sobor was to devise a new form of Church government. The old Synod government had broken down completely, and even the most conservative elements of the Sobor did not desire

* From the speech of Prof. Kudriavzeff on September 27, 1917.

its reestablishment. To remove the odious associations which were attached to the High Procurator of the Holy Synod, the Provisional Government abolished his office altogether and provisionally established a Ministry of Cult.

The debates on the question of the new Church government were naturally long and heated. There was one group, led by Archbishop Antonius (Khrapovitzky) of Kharkov, which stood for a strongly centralized government and was willing to vest much power in the office of the Patriarch, reducing the Synod to his advisory council. Another group was altogether against a Patriarchal Government and warned of the danger of autocracy and centralization of power. It cited from the pages of Russian history the troubles the former Patriarchs had made. The anti-monarchist and democratic tendencies prevalent in revolutionary Russia did not favor the reestablishment of the Patriarchate. It was said: "A one-man rule is needed when quick action is called for, but wherever thorough deliberation and safe action are desirable collegiate rule is the better?" This democratic opinion dominated the situation throughout October, but changed suddenly with the ascent of the Bolsheviks to power.

A panic overcame the Sobor. They feared to disband without accomplishing the purpose for which they had come. The debate for and against the Patriarchate had lasted for two weeks. Sixty speakers had expressed themselves on the question, and fifty more registered to speak who were not heard. It was decided to terminate the discussion and proceed to elect a Patriarch. It was felt that the enemy was within the gates of the Church and that quick and drastic action was needed.

On November 17, 1917, the Sobor voted in favor of the resolution which should become the basis of the Constitution of the Church. This historic document in full is as follows:*

1. In the Orthodox Church of Russia the supreme power—legislative, administrative, judicial—belongs to the Territorial Sobor, which is called together periodically at definite dates and is constituted of Bishops, clerics, and laymen.

2. The Patriarchate is reconstituted and the administration of the Church is headed by the Patriarch.

3. The Patriarch is first among the Bishops who are equal to him.

4. The Patriarch, jointly with the administrative organs of the Church, is responsible to the Sobor.

We see that this brief statement was definite as to the power vested in the Sobor but it did not state the rights and responsibilities of the Patriarch except that he was to be *primus inter pares* among his colleagues in the episcopacy; nor was any indication given as to the administrative organs of the Church. In the election the old custom was followed of choosing three candidates and then deciding by lot which of these three was to be Patriarch. The majority of the votes were given to Archbishop Antonius Khropovitzky of Kharakov, who was the main advocate of the patriarchal system of government and who represented the right wing of the Sobor; next followed Archbishop Arsenius of Novgorod; as the third and apparently the least desirable candidate, Tikhon, then Metropolitan of Moscow, was elected. On November 8, while the city was still in panic over the fighting which was waged for the possession of the Kremlin and the control of the city, the

* From the *Sobor Definitions and Decisions* Moscow, 1918.

Sobor gathered at the Cathedral of the Savior where the aged ninety-year-old monk Alexys drew the ballot which made Metropolitan Tikhon Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Russia.

The election of Tikhon was a disappointment to the right wingers of the Sobor, particularly to the friends of Antonius Khrapovitzky, who had hoped to see him on the patriarchal throne. Not that Metropolitan Tikhon was a liberal; no one charged him with such heresy! It was thought, however, that he was not strong enough to cope with the situation, that the situation needed a ruthless fighter like Antonius. Tikhon was known as a kindly, not too aggressive, character, easily swayed by the men about him. The Sobor decided, therefore, to surround him with "strong" men in organizing a "Supreme Church Council" and a "Holy Synod" over which he was to preside and with whose aid he was to govern the Church.

The Sobor allotted to the Patriarch the title of "Most Holy Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia." It laid upon him the duty of caring for the welfare of the Church. In this he was to cooperate with the Synod and the Supreme Church Council, which were to discuss and sanction all measures proposed by him and on the initiative of their members suggest measures for the good of the Church. Such suggestions, however, could be brought before the Synod and the Council only through the Patriarch, who was the permanent chairman. To the Patriarch was granted the veto power, which could be overridden only by action of the Sobor, which he was to call not less than once in every three years and to which he was to report concerning his activities. The Patriarch was also charged to carry on all necessary relations with the State and other Orthodox Autoce-

phalic Churches (e. g., of Bulgaria, Greece, etc.) fill episcopal vacancies, receive complaints from Bishops and settle disputes between them, and other such administrative and judicial functions.

The Patriarch could be impeached at the joint initiative of the Synod and Council before a special Council to which all Bishops of the Church and, if possible, Patriarchs and representatives of other Orthodox Autocephalic churches should be invited. An impeachment and sentencing of the Patriarch called for two-thirds of the votes of this special council. Finally, it was provided that in case of the Patriarch's death or impeachment his place should be taken by the Senior Bishop in the Synod and Council and the sole heir of his property should be the "Patriarch's Throne," by which probably was meant his successor in office.

The Holy Synod was to be constituted of twelve Bishops. Of these the Metropolitan of Kiev was to be a permanent member *ex officio*, six were to be elected by the Sobor, and five were to be called by the Patriarch in succession, each for one year. The Supreme Council of the Church was to be constituted of fifteen members, including three Bishops elected by the Synod from its own constituency, and one monk, five clerics, and six laymen elected by the Sobor. The Patriarch was to be chairman of both the Synod and the Council.

Under the jurisdiction of the Synod came questions pertaining to Faith and Order of the Church, its missionary and educational policies, administrative appointments, and so forth. The Council was charged with questions pertaining mainly to the temporal welfare of the Church, such as business and administrative functions, finance, accounting, and juridical questions. Matters of special importance, at the request of the Patriarch

or of either House, were to be decided in joint session.

The Bishops of the Church were to be celibates or widowers* who had accepted monastic orders. They were to be elected by the diocesan meetings from candidates suggested by the Holy Synod and also from local candidates suggested by the diocesan meeting, in which both clergy and laity participate in equal numbers. The elected candidates had to be ratified by the Holy Synod. In cases of emergency the Patriarch and Synod had the right to appoint Bishops. The diocesan Bishops ruled in cooperation with a diocesan council of clergymen and laymen. The dioceses were subdivided into districts, which were to elect from the local clergy a superintendent and a district council of clerics and laymen who were subject to ratification by the diocesan administration.

Each local parish was organized on the same principle. The parish had its elected council and elders to administrate the temporal offices of the local church. The congregation had the right to elect its priest from candidates suggested by the parish council or the Diocesan Bishop. All elected candidates were subject to ratification by the Diocesan Bishop.

This briefly outlines the organization of the Orthodox Church of Russia as it was established by the Sobor. From top to bottom its basic idea is to coordinate in close cooperation laity and clergy, with due authority to the Episcopacy and the "first among them," the Patriarch, as the head. The final authority is to be the Sobor, which in turn is composed of Bishops, clerics, and laymen, under the Chairmanship of the Patriarch. Having

* Bishops and ordained monks are called "Black clergy" and are supposed to be celibates. Married priests and clerics are called "White clergy." When widowed or divorced they are not permitted to remarry.

thus organized itself, the Church felt confident of coping with the problems which the social revolution created. In spite of all difficulties, it expected to maintain its old privileges and hegemony in the nation. Anyway this was the hope of the old hierarchy created by the will of the Czar, which by this time had got the Sobor well under its control. By no means could it reconcile itself to the idea that because of its former unholy alliance with the discredited Czarist regime it had lost the confidence of a large part of the population.

The old leadership of the Church was blind to the fact that the Church could not escape the logic of the social revolution which authoritatively said: "Rights and privileges are granted for service to the people." This service the Church had yet to render and could do so only by reconstituting itself from the ground up.

CHAPTER V

THE WARFARE OF THE CHURCH WITH THE REVOLUTION

THE reestablishment of the Patriarchate was a challenge to the revolution. It showed the triumph of the right reactionary wing of the Sobor and the weakness, if not absence, of a truly liberal trend in the church. The Patriarchate was a challenge to revolutionary public opinion because it meant monarchy in the Church and would keep the monarchical idea before the people. The reactionaries who by this time were in full control of the Sobor hoped that the Patriarchal throne would prepare the way for the reestablishment of the Czarist throne. The Sobor could not read the signs of the time and had no faith in the triumph of the social revolution. The ascent to power of the Bolshevik Communist party, which knew what it wanted and fearlessly carried out its revolutionary program, intensified the counter-revolutionary aims of the Sobor. Blind to the actual situation, it continued its work, totally misunderstanding the just claims of the workers.

The opposition of the Sobor to the revolution, however, had started long before the Bolsheviks took power. The records of the Sobor show this clearly. The provisional Government of Kerensky pursued a careful policy in regard to the Church; it feared its political influence, and yet it could not resist the demand of the time to take a firm stand against some of the most

objectionable claims and practices of the church.

There were two outstanding problems which the revolution created in regard to the Church. First, there was the question of separation of State and Church. Progressive public opinion demanded separation. The Church was against it and presented a project which would free it from the unpleasant control by the State which it had experienced under the Czarist regime and at the same time would safeguard all the privileges it enjoyed during this regime and even increase them. The provisional Government favored a gradual process of separation of the State from the Church but left the issue to be decided by the Constitutional Assembly.

The other problem which called for immediate solution under pressure of public opinion was the separation of the school from the Church, to which the Sobor was uncompromisingly opposed. It must be remembered that education was not a natural function of the Russian church, which never was a teaching Church. Rather it had opposed worldly learning, which it felt did not increase piety. This point of view was shared by such leaders of the Church and State as the famous Pobedonoszev, who for two generations controlled the fate of the Russian State and Church. In spite of its indifference and animosity to popular education, however, the Church could not, in the long run, prevent its spread. Modern life called for it. Russia could not maintain itself agains the Western nations unless its people were educated. Thus the State undertook the organization of public schools which, in spite of all efforts on the part of the Church, were anticlerical in spirit. To offset this and regain its authority among the masses, the Church, particularly after the 1905 revolution, attempted to control public education by means of an extensive net

of parochial schools. For this purpose it received abundant funds from the State. By 1917 there were 37,000 parochial schools for primary education, with buildings worth 170 million roubles. In addition the Church established many theological seminaries and several institutions of higher theological learning, the so-called Spiritual Academies, which were, in comparison to other Church schools, real centers of learning and scholarship.

The parochial schools for primary education were particularly unpopular and inefficient. Therefore the Provisional Government under Kerensky decided to separate these schools from the Church and put them under the control of the Department of Education. A law was passed to sanction this plan just a few weeks before the convening of the Sobor. Naturally the revolutionary move was interpreted by the Sobor as an attack upon the Church. Then again there was a project to make religious instruction in the public schools non-compulsory, to be decided upon by the parents for children under fourteen years of age and by children above this age for themselves. To this proposal the Sobor vehemently objected and created a special section to fight it. Finally, the Sobor was greatly disappointed by the Provisional Government's impotency to protect Church properties, such as monastic lands, which were frequently seized by peasants for their own use, while in the cities church printing presses and other properties were often confiscated by revolutionary groups of workmen for their own propaganda purposes. There were also frequent excesses by mobs against unpopular priests and monks. Hence the willingness of the Sobor to join forces with General Kornilov in the attempted overthrow of the Provisional Government.

The sudden coming into power of the Bolsheviks took the Sobor by surprise. Unwilling to give up the prerogatives of the Church without a fight, the Patriarch declared open war on the new revolutionary government and the new social order, and was determined to fight it out to the bitter end.

This was the meaning of the Patriarch's first message to the Church, issued on January 19, 1918. The document censures the excesses of the revolution and the attacks against the Church. It threatens those who dare to harm the Church, with hell fire and excommunication. We quote the salient statements of the message:

"That which you do is not only a cruel deed: it is verily a Satanic deed, for which you are condemned to hell fire in the future life and to awful curses by future generations in the present life.

"By the authority which is given us from God, we forbid you to approach the Sacraments of Christ, we anathematize you, if you still bear Christian names and even by your birth belong to the Orthodox Church.

"We also conjure all you faithful children of the Orthodox Church not to enter in any kind of association with these monsters of the human race; put away from yourselves that wicked person. (Cor. 5, 13)."*

The message continues to enumerate the wickedness of "the monsters of the human race," the chief of which are: the secularization of marriage and the school, nationalization of Church lands and buildings, bombardment of the Kremlin churches during the taking of the city, and desecration of the chapel of the Savior in Petrograd. The appeal closes by entreating the faithful to support the Church by organizing sacred societies of defense. In demonstrating its spiritual strength it is

* Quoted from the *Acts of the Sobor*, Book VI, p. 4.

"mindful that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The message was enthusiastically received by the Sobor. One Sobor member hoped "that the first collision with the servants of Satan will serve as the beginning of saving the Nation and the Church from the enemy. Finally, he declared, "I would propose to call Bolshevism itself 'Satanism,' or 'Antichristianism'."* Another said: "The present Satanic attack upon the Church of Christ, these fratricides, pillages, and mutual hatreds we experience not from yesterday, not from the time of the Bolsheviks. In the very beginning of the revolution the authorities committed an act of apostasy. [Voices: "It's true."] Prayer was prohibited in the army, banners with the sign of the Christian cross were replaced by red rags. In this are to blame not only the present rulers, but also those who have already gone off the stage. Let us hope that also the present rulers, who shed blood, will get off the stage."† The feelings of the Sobor were very frankly expressed in the speech of one of its influential members who said: "The only salvation of the Russian people is a wise Orthodox Russian Czar. Only through the election of an Orthodox, wise, Russian Czar is it possible to place Russia on the right historic track and establish good order. And as long as we shall not have a wise Orthodox Czar there will be no order. . . ."‡

Such frank talking left no doubt on which side of the revolutionary struggle the church had taken its

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* From the speech of the Priest I. V. Tzvetkoff, *Acts of the Sobor*, Book VI, p. 40.

† *Ibid*, from the speech of A. V. Vasiliev. By the "gone rulers" the speaker meant the Kerensky Government.

‡ The priest V. S. Vostokoff, *ibid* p. 43.

stand. Both sides prepared for the battle, each side using the weapons which were at its disposal. The Church wielded its power of excommunication, not only against the members of the Government but against every Russian who in any way cooperated or rendered service to the revolutionary government. It organized mass demonstrations and appealed to the fanaticism of the ignorant masses. The Sobor appointed its special "general staff," which was to work out an offensive-defensive plan and organize the forces of the Church for battle. These forces were not a negligible quantity. There were 400,000 priests and monks, and millions of adherents among peasants and city folks. In addition, all the defeated enemies of the Bolsheviks, some of whom formerly had little or no use for the Church, now joined the ranks of the Churchmen in a united effort to cast off the victorious Soviet forces. Some generals and courtiers changed their military uniform and gilded dress suits for the cassock, and some became priests and even bishops.* The Sobor's "general staff" inspired every effort which was made for the overthrow of the new regime, and there were not a few priests and bishops who helped in the organization of the white armies. In the cities were set up monster street demonstrations and pilgrimages to the sacred shrines of the Church. The ringing of Church bells as alarm calls, special services and mass meetings, organization of brotherhoods for the "defense of the faith," and every other mass propaganda measure was put into use to frighten off the revolutionary forces and compel the Bolsheviks to "come to Canossa." At first it looked as if the Church would

* Thus Prince Oukhtomsky is now Bishop Andrew of Ufa; Metropolitan Peter of Moscow, Patriarch Tikhon's chief adviser and temporary successor, was formerly secretary to the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, a sister of the late Czarina.

get the better of the struggle and the revolutionary Government have to abandon its plan to separate the church from the State and nationalize its property. It was this economic loss which fired the wrath of the church and provoked its opposition. Occasional excesses and mob actions against unpopular monks and priests helped in an appeal for sympathy to the masses, but the cry of persecution concealed the real issue, which was economic and political, the diametrical differences in the religious and social philosophies added zeal and idealism to the struggle.

The Bolsheviks are uncompromising materialists and atheists. Religion is to them but a phantasy of the erring savage mind, or an actual fraud, an "opiate of the people." The church at its best they consider an historic anachronism used by governing classes to keep the ignorant masses in submission to their exploiters. The reactionary part which the Church had played in the education of the people and in the struggle for liberty of the toiling masses added zeal to the Bolsheviks' convictions, and the wonder is not that there were excesses against the monks and the clergy, but that there were relatively so few, incomparably fewer than under similar conditions in the French revolution. This relatively bloodless struggle between the Church and the revolutionary government was due to the wisdom of the latter, which quite well understood that any excesses and acts of violence against the Church and clergy would gain for their enemies the sympathy of the masses. Therefore it rendered the Church protection even at a time when anathemas were whirled against it by the Patriarch. The Soviet Government did not, however, shrink from carrying out its plans against the Church.

These plans were once and for all to exclude the

Church from politics, to break the power of the clergy and ban them from the social, educational, and economic life of the nation. Incidentally it was hoped that when the grip of the Church on the educational and social institutions was weakened and it was made economically impotent, religion itself would begin to disintegrate and lose its hold on the masses. The new revolutionary leadership had the head of a statesman which is prompted by expediency, but it kept the heart of a bolshevik who passionately strives to realize a Utopian dream of a new social order. Communism was to constitute a commonwealth where there should finally be no privileged classes, no government, no ignorance, no crime and disease, and where life should be regulated by science and reason and beauty. Naturally, in such a social order the Bolshevik feels that there is no room for the Church of the old social order. The passion of anti-clerical atheistic zeal acted at times rashly and even cruelly against certain persons and sects, and these acts can justly be called persecution. However, the head of the statesman has triumphed, and as in time passion subsides the wisdom of the statesman will alone control the situation.

We have already mentioned that the proximate purpose of the Soviet Government in regard to the Church was to render it impotent as a counter-revolutionary force which was praying for the return of a "wise, Orthodox, Russian, Czar." The ultimate end of the Bolsheviks was to destroy the Church altogether and to eradicate religion from the hearts and minds of the people. To attain its proximate end the State legislated out of existence the centralized power of Church hierarchy by destroying its old economic and political basis and watching closely every move of the reactionary leadership.

At the same time it followed a *laisser faire, laisser passer* policy in regard to opposition movements within the Orthodox Church and gave to the various anti-orthodox and heterodox sects, such as the Evangelicals, full liberty in their work of evangelization and proselytism. The policy of religious liberty is unparalleled in Russian history and tremendously favors the formerly persecuted sects which show a mushroom growth since this policy was introduced. This same tolerance is shown to local Orthodox Churches, whether of the old or reformed cult, and the heavy hand of the State interferes only where it notices the old reactionary episcopate seeking to reestablish its centralized authority. *Thus the State, in order to protect itself against ecclesiasticism, has created an unusually favorable situation for spiritual religion.* This seems to be in contradiction with the ultimate aims of the Bolsheviks to destroy religion and the church. Yes, this contradiction does actually exist and is inevitable in the dialectic process of history, nowhere more glaringly demonstrated than in the revolutionary Union of the Socialist Soviet Republics.

Now let us return to our sad story of the warfare between the Orthodox Church and the Soviet State.

A few days after the Patriarch's message of anathema, the Government replied with the publication of the famous decree "on freedom of conscience and religious societies" (January 23, 1918), which broke the bonds of a thousand years of organic unity of the Russian State and the Orthodox Church and laid down a new basis for the existence of organized religion in the Soviet Republics.

We quote it in full.

1. The Church is separated from the State.
2. Within the limits of the Republic it is prohibited

to publish any kind of local laws or orders which would hinder or limit the freedom of conscience, or would establish any kind of preference or privilege on the basis of denominational adherence of the citizens.

3. Every citizen may adhere to any religion or adhere to none. Any limitations before the law related to adherence to any kind of faith or non-adherence to any faith are abolished.

Note: From all official documents are excluded every reference to religious adherence or non-adherence of citizens.

4. All State and other public and social functions before the law are not to be accompanied by any religious customs or ceremonies.

5. Free practice of religious customs is safeguarded in so far as it does not disturb the public peace and does not infringe upon the rights of citizens of the Soviet Republic. Local authorities have the right to take all necessary measures to safeguard in all such cases public peace and security.

6. No one can shun his civil duties on religious grounds. Exemptions from these, on condition of substituting one form of civil service by another, in each separate case must be granted by a decision of a people's court.

7. The religious oath is abolished. In necessary cases only solemn promises are given.

8. Records of civic states are kept exclusively by the civil authorities, by departments of marriages and birth.

9. The school is separated from the Church; the teaching of religious confessions is not allowed in State, public, and private schools where secular subjects are taught. The citizen may teach or be taught religion in a private capacity.

10. All Church and religious societies are subject to the general status existing for voluntary societies and unions and do not enjoy any privileges or subsidies from the State, nor from local autonomous and self-governing bodies.

11. Compulsory collections or assessments for the benefit of Church or religious societies, as well as measures of compulsion or punishment on the part of these societies over their members, is not permitted.

12. No church and religious societies have the right to own property. They have no rights of juridic persons.

13. All property of existing church and religious societies are declared the people's property. Buildings and objects specially designated for divine service are given for free use to corresponding religious societies on the basis of special ordinance of the local or central state authorities.

This law, if compared to the laws and practices in other countries where the church is separated from the State, such as the United States and France, is seen to have a number of new elements which are unique and revolutionary in character.

Like the United States it recognizes the equality before the law of all religious cults, with preference to none, and tolerates every form of religious custom and ceremony as long as it does not disturb the public peace and does not infringe upon the rights of other citizens. It is more thorough than the United States in its principle of secularizing the State, excluding from its functions every vestige of religious customs and practice. In that respect it is more like the practice in France. Its exclusion of religious teachings from every school, public and private, where secular subjects are taught is a measure of secularizing education unparalleled in other

countries,* except recently in the primary schools of Mexico.

The real revolutionary significance of the law was, however, in its attitude towards the property of the Church. Here it must be noticed that in nationalizing the property of the Church, the State did not discriminate against it but treated it like other institutions and private enterprises such as industrial corporations, banks, great land holders and others whose properties were also nationalized.

In its practical sense it did not curtail the religious significance of the Church, since church buildings used for worship were left to their congregations free of rent, and only revenue-producing property was taken from the Church for the benefit of the people. Such property was enormous, consisting of arable lands, forests, factories, and city houses valued at hundreds of millions of roubles.†

Those most affected were the monasteries, the upper hierarchy, and the central administrative apparatus of the Church which received its income from the revenues of these properties and from state subsidies.‡ Nationalization meant making the Church economically impotent and thus weakening its influence politically. Finally, the law not only stripped the church of its wealth and state support it; it also made it impossible for

* In a later decree it was prohibited to admit to special schools of religion children under eighteen years of age. An exception is made to Mohammedans, for whom the admission age is reduced to fourteen on the ground that they have to learn a different language (Arabic) to pursue their religious instructions.

† The nationalized land of the Church is estimated at 4,000,000 desyatins (a desyatin equals 2.7 acres) besides buildings, and liquid capital to over 8 billion roubles.

‡ The Church received annually from the State a subsidy to the amount of 35,000,000 roubles.

the Church as a corporation to accumulate property. This is the meaning of the paragraph of the law depriving the Church of the rights of a juridic person.

In short, the revolutionary government proved itself as uncompromising towards the Church as it did towards the old economic and social order generally. To be consistent it could not do otherwise. It could not abolish private and corporation property generally and leave it to the Church. Naturally, like every law, its application was left to expediency. Had the leadership of the Church recognized the justice and inevitability of the social revolution it could have adjusted its affairs much less painfully, by conferring with the government and coming to an understanding. As matters stood, however, the gulf which divided the Church from the State was so wide that it could not be spanned by any bridge of compromise. Either one side or the other had to surrender its principles, since neither side was willing to surrender the war went on. This will become still clearer to us if we examine the point of view of the Sobor as regards the relation of State and Church which the Sobor thought reasonable. On December 2, 1917, it accepted the final draft of the resolution which was prepared for the constitution makers of the new state and which the Church considered fair. The document contains twenty-five paragraphs and asks:

That the Russian Orthodox Church should have a privileged position in the Russian State as compared to other churches, and yet be free and independent of the State;

That its legislation and the decisions of its courts be recognized by the State as long as they do not contradict the laws of the State, and that no law relating to the

Church be passed without previous consent of the Church;

That the State give to the Church hierarchy and the legislation of the Church the same interpretation as does the Church;

That the State minister of religious cults and his associates be Orthodox Christians, and that their functions be limited to observing the proper functioning of law as regards the Church;

That all possible religious functions of the State be of the Orthodox Church and that all the chief feast days of the Church be holidays;

That the freedom of practice and preaching of the Orthodox faith be safeguarded by the State, and that any attempt against it, such as open insult and slandering of the teaching of the Church, its objects of reverence and its clergy, as well as forced proselyting of members of the Orthodox Church, be made a criminal offense;

That voluntary leaving of the Church not be permitted before the age set for marriage, that before this age children be permitted to leave the Church only at the wish of the parents and together with them, and that of children above nine years of age their consent be asked;

That birth, marriage, and divorce of Orthodox Christians must be registered according to the practices of the Church;

That the teaching of the schools be in the spirit of the Orthodox faith and that the army and navy be supplied with Orthodox chaplains and the clergy be exempt from military service;

That any property of the Church be exempt from confiscation without the consent of the Church and that

it be free of all forms of taxation if not leased for revenue;

Finally, that the Orthodox Church receive from the State a subsidy to the extent of its needs, maintain its rights of juridic person, and extend the same to foundations of the Church at its own judgment.

This resolution of the Sobor is diametrically opposed to the law of the Soviet Government; in substance it maintained the old rights and privileges which the Church enjoyed under the Czarist regime and eliminated only that undesirable control and interference which the Czar had exercised through the office of the high procurator of the Holy Synod. Granting that the demand of the Sobor contained their maximum claims and left a margin for bargaining, it nevertheless shows that the Church in presenting claims which even the moderate Kerensky Government had legislated against (such as the maintenance of parochial schools) did not take the revolutionary changes in the country seriously. It did not believe in a possible triumph of the social revolution or the longevity of the Soviet Government, and it worked and legislated in utter disregard of the new regime, preparing its resolution rather for the regime to come when the Soviets were deposed.

After the publication of the Soviet decree of separation of Church and State, the Sobor expected drastic action on the part of the State in the application of the law. The Sobor General Staff was issuing orders and organizing defense along two lines: non-cooperation with the civil authorities and mass agitation against the law. The Government, however, wisely did not hurry with its nationalization program, except with regard to certain monasteries and particularly the monastic lands, which were taken over eagerly by the local peasantry.

The monks had little chance of finding sympathy and support on the part of the peasants in defending the property of the monasteries.*

The Churches as such did not notice any particular effect of the law upon their practices of worship. The property used for purposes of the cult was left to the congregations free of any charge, and all that the State demanded was that the congregations organize themselves and select a responsible body to become trustees of the buildings used. Against such arrangements nothing could be said, and therefore it was no easy task to move the masses into action for something they did not feel as persecution of their religion. The fact that the central church apparatus, the schools and publishing houses of the Church, were either closed or closing down for lack of financial support which they formerly received from the State, was difficult to bring to the attention of the masses, who had no contact with these institutions and were not educated to appreciate their importance.

For a while there was quite a stir about the discontinuance of religious instruction in the public schools, and efforts were made to continue it in spite of the decree. But here, too, the clergy was the first to lose its ardor when neither the State nor the Church had any funds to pay them for their work. Few priests had the will or the power to give their services as teachers without pay.

Then life itself demanded cooperation. No boycott of the Government could last without creating suffering among the populace. Moreover there were not a few clergymen who had suffered from the old princes of the

* By 1920 the peasants had received 827,540 desyatins (a desyatin equals 2.7 acres) of monastic lands from 673 monasteries.

Church. They were not so loyal to the Patriarchal regime as was desired. There were frequent desertions and laxity of discipline which threatened to weaken and to undermine the resistance of the Church to the State. In April 1918, just a few months after the decree of separation, the Sobor found it necessary to adopt repressive measures against "certain bishops, clerics, monks, and laymen who do not submit to, but rather resist, the authority of the Church, and turn in the affairs of the Church to the civil authorities, hostile to the Church, thus bringing upon the Church, its servants, its members, and its possessions many troubles."* The resolution condemns such as "enemies of God" and resolves:

1. A bishop who resists the supreme authority of the Church and who turns to seek aid from the civil authority is forbidden to officiate and is put on trial before the ecclesiastical court. If after threefold invitation he does not appear before such court he is unfrocked.

2. Clerics who resist their diocesan bishop and turn to a civil court are treated in like manner. . . .

3. Clerics who hold positions in anti-church institutions, and equally those who contribute to the realization of decrees hostile to the Church concerning liberty of conscience and the like are forbidden to officiate. If they do not repent they are to be unfrocked. Similar punishments are alloted to the lower clerics, monks, and nuns. Laymen are to be expelled from the Church and cannot hold any position in any of the institutions of the Church, and if a whole community has participated in acts of violence against the Church and particularly has shared in looting churches and monasteries or has taken over monastic lands, in these communities the Church must be closed and the clergy withdrawn until

* Resolution of the Sobor of April 19, 1918.

all repent and turn back the looted property to the Church.*

These rigid measures which the Sobor adopted show in themselves the difficulty which the rank and file of the clergy experienced in maintaining the uncompromising attitude of the Patriarch and the Sobor towards the laws of the State.

Slowly the resistance of the Church began to waver. The Soviet Government found rather unexpected support from exposing the frauds of which the church was guilty in falsifying relics of "incorruptible saints."

The large monasteries of Russia, in order to attract pilgrims, sought to acquire some wonder-working relics, particularly in the form of the "incorruptible body" of some local saint. As we have seen the idea prevailed that the body of a real saint should not see corruption. This idea was probably developed among the cave-dwelling hermits in the Kiev-Pechora Monastery, where climatic and other conditions favored the mummification of the bodies of some of these self-immured fanatics. Other monasteries who felt that their hermits were not less saintly than those of Kiev sought for them the same popularity and went so far as to substitute effigies made of wax and other materials for the bodies, leaving them in precious silver sarcophagi.

The frauds became known at the occasion of taking the inventory of the Alexander-Svirsky Monastery in the province of Olonetsk in October, 1918. It was discovered that the silver sarcophagus of Saint Alexander Svirsky contained, instead of an "incorruptible body," a wax effigy of the saint. The exposure caused indignation in large sections of the population, which demanded that all "incorruptible saints" be examined and the

* Resolution of the Sobor of April 19, 1918.

findings be published. The greatest scandal, however, was the exposure of the fraudulent relics of Tikhon Zadonsky and of Saint Sergius, whose shrine was one of the most popular pilgrimage places in Russia. The monastery of Sergievo (now a museum) was one of the richest in the country.

The revolutionary Government, of course, used these exposures to weaken the moral authority of the Church, not without success. The leaders of the Church and the Patriarch felt their defeat. Faint attempts were made to negotiate with the government and to persuade it to change its attitude towards the church, but apparently these efforts were belated and no results were obtained. The last session of the Sobor, which reconvened on June 15, 1918, did not add anything to change the situation. It prepared resolutions to rouse the sympathy of the masses in favor of the Church and resist the decree of separation, but its hopes of success were apparently on the wane. They did not so much trust in themselves as they hoped for the victory of allied intervention and the defeat of the Soviet Government in the civil war which was waged most intensively during the years 1919 and 1920.

CHAPTER VI

THE WARFARE OF THE CHURCH WITH THE REVOLUTION *(Continued)*

As the fortunes of the Civil War were turning in favor of the Soviet Government, the Patriarch and his advisers began to change their attitude towards the Revolution and commenced to talk about the Church being neutral in political questions. Locally some bishops sought to come to a more friendly understanding with the authorities, and on the whole the year 1921 promised to be a year of peace and of constructive work to repair the damages of the long wars.

The failure of the crops and the approaching famine changed the situation. Once more the Soviet Government was put to a severe test of its vitality and once more its enemies hoped for its downfall. The Church shared these hopes, and the Patriarch listened to those advisers who wanted to make political capital out of the national calamity.

In December, 1921, the Russian Church hierarchs abroad called a council of the Orthodox Church at Carlovitzy, Serbia. Its leader and inspirer was the famous Archbishop Antonius Khropovitzky, who thought that the famine situation was giving a favorable opportunity to rally the beaten white forces and attempt once more the overthrow of the Soviets. The Carlovitzy Council decided to reestablish the monarchy, and Archbishop Antonius was charged to find an heir to the

throne from the surviving remnants of the Romanoff dynasty.

Unquestionably these efforts of the Carlovitzy Council had their influence upon the leaders of the Church in Soviet Russia, particularly in regard to the question of famine aid. In the fall the Patriarch appealed to the Church to come to the aid of the starving people, but the contribution of the Church was insignificant. As the horrors of the famine increased, certain priests and laymen began to agitate in the press as to the necessity of realizing on the many valuables which were used for decorative purposes in the churches. Soon the idea was taken up by the press throughout the country, and progressive public opinion favored the idea of using the nationalized wealth in the churches for aiding the starving. This moved the Patriarch to respond, and about the middle of February in his message to the Church he suggested that unnecessary objects such as trinkets, jewelry, and broken objects of gold and silver which might be found in the churches be donated to the famine fund, with the consent of the congregation. This seemed to be the maximum that the Patriarch was willing to do and it did not promise to give large results. Then the Government took things in its own hands. By the end of February, at the session of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, a law was passed which said:*

"In view of the pressing need to mobilize all resources of the nation which may serve as means in the struggle with the famine in the Volga region and for seed of the fields, the VCIK (All-Russian Central Executive Committee), in addition to its decree about the use of objects from museums, resolves:

* Published in N46, *Izvestia*, February 26, 1922.

"To instruct the local Soviets within one month's time from the day of publication of the decree to remove from the church property which was given for use to various groups of believers of all religions, according to inventories and contracts, all precious articles of gold, silver, and precious stones, the removal of which does not essentially infringe upon the interests of the cult, and turn these over to organs of the Commissariat of Finance, specially designating them for the fund of the central committee for famine aid."

The law further requires that the removal of valuables from the churches should take place in the presence of representatives of believers to whose care the property had been intrusted, and that these valuables should be used exclusively for the famine fund and publicly accounted for.

To this law Patriarch Tikhon replied with a message to the Church (February 28) strikingly different in tenor from his previous declarations which were sympathetic to the idea of aiding the starving with the surplus wealth of the Church. The Patriarch branded the law as sacreligious and noncanonical, and called upon the faithful to resist its realization with every available means. The agitation which commenced was carried on in much the same spirit as at the time of the publication of the decree of separation of Church and State in 1918, but with the difference that the issue was now of an entirely humanitarian nature, thus giving the Soviet Government a moral backing which it did not have in 1918.

To argue the question on the basis of Church canons and state laws in a country just emerging from a state of war and revolution and struggling for the very life of starving millions was a futile task. Even legally,

church groups could not refuse to return to the State that which they had received for use only and for which they had signed contracts to that effect.

Certainly the resistance of the Patriarch could not be justified from the humanitarian, not to speak of the Christian, point of view. Hence his policy was doomed to failure. The Government did not refrain from carrying out the decree, and crushed every resistance on the part of the leaders of the Church. The committees which were entrusted with the task of taking the valuables were instructed to use the greatest care in selecting the articles to be taken. No object should be removed which was needed for the cult, and in this manner no one could complain that his religious practices were interfered with. The amount of surplus wealth taken from the churches was enormous,* and yet it is hardly noticeable to the visitor of churches, for so much is still left.

The conflict which developed between the Church and the Government because of the Patriarch's resistance claimed not a few victims. There were some riots with bloodshed, followed by repressive measures on the part of the State. In Leningrad, for instance, many priests and laymen were put on trial and ten of these sentenced to death, among them the aged Metropolitan Benjamin. In Moscow also a number of priests and laymen were tried, of whom ten were executed and many were imprisoned. In all there were reported forty-five executions and two hundred and fifty long-term prison sentences. The Church throughout the country was in a state of anarchy. Large sections of it, particularly in the

* The published reports state that the amount of gold taken was 442 kg., silver 336,227 kg., other precious metals 1345 kg.; 33,456 diamonds weighing 13.13 carats; pearls 4414 gr.; other precious stones, 72,383 pieces weighing 28,140 gr.; 20,598 roubles in coins.

famine area, resented the Patriarch's stand. Priests and even bishops, who otherwise were loyal to the upper hierarchy, felt greatly distressed, and a few stout-hearted ones even dared openly to criticize the position of the Patriarch. In Leningrad a group of liberal clergymen, under the leadership of the priests Vedensky, Belkoff, and others, finally took the initiative. When it became known that the Patriarch was placed under house arrest and that many in Moscow were condemned to death for their resistance to the state in turning over the valuables of the Church to the famine fund, they came to Moscow, where they were joined by the liberal Priest Krasnitzky and Bishop Antonine. On May 12, the day before the execution of the Moscow priests, they appeared before the Patriarch and remonstrated with him that he was chiefly responsible for the terror and anarchy in the Church and that with his name was associated the whole counter-revolutionary policy of the Church of recent years.

They listed his errors: his message anathematizing the Bolsheviks; his order to resist the decree of separation of Church and State and the nationalizing of the Church property, which, said Krasnitsky, had produced throughout the country 1,015 excesses; the affair of sending to the ex-Czar at Ekaterinburg through Bishop Germogen a specially blessed host wafer dedicated to the "Czar"; his many ordinations to the episcopacy of men who were known as particularly favoring the return of the old political order; and generally his hostile attitude toward the Soviet Government. They concluded that these acts made it desirable that the Patriarch retire and till the call of the Sobor turn over the affairs of the Church to some other bishop. As a result of the remonstrance the Patriarch wrote a message to the Metropolitan of Yaro-

slav, Agafengel, asking him to take upon himself the office of Patriarch, and he sent as a delegation with this message the priest Krasnitzky and a layman. He then retired with his attendant to the Donskoy Monastery on the outskirts of Moscow, where he was kept under arrest.

Krasnitzky found the Metropolitan Agafangel unable to come at once, and then it was learned that he was arrested. As a result the Church was left without any Episcopal head. Upon this the priests Vedensky, Belkoff and Kalinovsky wrote a statement to the Patriarch in which they said:

"Although Your Holiness removed yourself from the administration of the Church till the call of the Sobor, turning over your authority to one of the oldest hierarchs, nevertheless the Church is at present without any administration. This acts very destructively upon the life of the Church, and of Moscow in particular, creating an extraordinary confusion of minds. We, the undersigned, have asked the civil authorities for permission to open the offices of your Holiness. Herewith we filially ask for your blessing upon this in order that this harmful arrest in the conduct of administration of the Church may not continue; at the arrival of your substitute he immediately may enter upon his duties. Into the work of the office we temporarily shall invite substitutes who are at liberty in Moscow until the final formation of an administration under the leadership of your substitute."

Upon this paper the Patriarch wrote this resolution:

"The above-mentioned persons would take over and transfer the Synod and Patriarchal affairs to the most reverend Metropolitan of Yaroslav, Agafangel, with the participation of the secretary Numerov, and the affairs of the Moscow diocesan administration to the most rev-

erend Innocentius Bishop of Klin, and until his arrival to the most reverend Leonid Bishop of Verninsk, with the participation of the office manager A. D. Nevsky. May 16, 1922."*

Since Metropolitan Agafangel and Bishop Innocentius could not reach Moscow, Bishop Leonid was the only active Bishop left in Moscow to administer the Church. The liberal Antonine, who had long since been forced into retirement, was also living in Moscow. Now he returned to service at the invitation of the progressive priests, and he became the actual Episcopal leader, for Bishop Leonid was too old and too feeble to do anything himself and he willingly relied upon those aggressive young priests into whose care the leadership of the Church had fallen.†

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* This document is quoted by A. Orlov in the publication of A. S. Vedensky's "To Christ," March 1923, N I, p. II Cf, "Living Church," publication of October 1922, N 10, p. 7. The original of this document is not found in the archives of the Synod, and is supposed to be in the personal possession of one of the signers.

† Another version of this event is told by one of the chief participants, the priest Vedensky: "We went to the Patriarch Tikhon, on Friday, the 12th, at eleven in the evening. The Patriarch received us in a friendly way, and when we told him what the Government was charging him with he said: 'I never wanted to be Patriarch; the partriarchate is burning me like a cross—this you know well. I shall gladly accept, if the Sobor relieves me altogether from the patriarchate, and shall transfer the power to one of the oldest hierarchs and go away from the administration of the Church.'

"The Patriarch went to the next room and after a few minutes brought a letter addressed to the Chairman of the VCIK (All Russian Central Executive Committee), Kalinin, in which he wrote that he transferred his power to Metropolitan Agafangel, the Metropolitan of Yaroslav. With this we left the Patriarch and gave the paper to Kalinin; but Kalinin declared that the Church is separted from the State, and therefore he accepts this as information, but let the Patriarch himself get in touch with Metropolitan Agafangel in order that he should replace him.

"We went a second time to Patriarch Tikhon, and he wrote a letter to Metropolitan Agafangel in which he asked him to come to Moscow immediately and become the head of the Supreme Church Administration. A priest and a layman—a whole deputation, carried the Patriarch's letter

Encouraged by their initial success and determined to make the most of their opportunity, they prepared an appeal to the masses which was published in the press * and reflects the state of mind of the progressive ministry of the Church. It says:

"Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

"In recent years, according to the will of God, without which nothing happens in the world, in Russia exists a Labor and Peasant Government.

"It has taken upon itself the task of removing in Russia the dreadful consequences of the world war, struggling with famine, epidemics, and other abnormalities in the life of the State.

"The Church actually stood aside in this struggle for truth and the welfare of humanity.

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to the Metropolitan. At the same time all affairs were at a standstill in Moscow. The Patriarch arrested, no one was admitted to the Patriarchal palace, the Supreme Administration did not function, and it is difficult to imagine what delay was taking place in all church affairs. And since Metropolitan Agafangel was still not arriving, we obtained a third interview with the Patriarch, and begged him somehow to settle the difficult situation in which at present the administration of the Church was found, equal to no administration. We presented to the Patriarch a detailed written statement in which we described all the difficulties of the situation, and begged him to bless us, together with some bishops, to work in the administration of the Church till the arrival of Bishop Agafangel. The paper was signed by the priests Vedensky, Belkoff, Kalinovsky.

"The Patriarch conversed with us for about an hour or an hour and a half and pointed out to us those tremendous difficulties which we have to encounter, particularly the Petrograd priests, if we even temporarily take upon ourselves the administration of the Church. We discussed the question in detail, and finally the Patriarch agreed that it was necessary to construct a Supreme Church Administration at once and wrote a corresponding resolution upon our paper, making it a condition that the oldest (in age) Bishop Leonid of Verninsk, at the time present in Moscow, participate in the Supreme Church Administration. This was on May 18. The Supreme Church Administration began to function and functions until now." (From a lecture of Vedensky on "The Church and Revolution," on June 4, 1922.)

* *Izvestia* and *Pravda*, N 106 of May 18, 1922.

"The upper hierarchs had taken sides with the enemies of the people.

"This expressed itself in the fact that the Church seized every opportunity for counter-revolutionary action.

"This happened more than once. And now before our eyes occurred this grave affair in connection with the effort to turn the valuables of the church into bread for the starving. This ought to have been a joyful service of love to the perishing brother, but it was turned into an organized attempt against the authority of the State.

"This called for blood. Blood flowed in order that the famished might not be helped.

"With the refusal to aid the starving, churchmen sought to attain the downfall of the State. The appeal of Patriarch Tikhon became the standard around which gathered the counter-revolution, dressed in Church garments and Church sentiments. The conscience of the people condemned those guilty of shedding blood. The deaths from starvation fall as a heavy reproach upon those who wanted to use a national calamity for their political ends.

"We, the undersigned ministers of the Orthodox Church, representing large sections of the Church, condemn the actions of those hierarchs and those pastors who are guilty of organizing resistance to the civil authorities in their work of giving aid to the starving and other undertakngs for the welfare of the toilers.

"The Church by its very nature should be a union of love and truth, and not a political organization, not a counter-revolutionary party.

"We consider it imperative to call immediately a territorial Sobor to try those guilty of the ruin of the Church, to decide the question of administering the

Church and of establishing normal relations between it and the Soviet Government. The civil war of the Church against the State led by the upper hierarchy must be ended."

This appeal of influential clergymen of the Church, coming out for peace and cooperation with the State and condemning unreservedly the old policy of the Church toward the Soviet State, marks the turning point in the warfare of the Church against the revolution and the Soviet Government. For five years the Church stood out solidly against the revolutionary State and the new social order, resisting it by every possible means and giving aid to its enemies. It proved to be the most powerful enemy of the revolution and was the last to yield. But when once its front was broken its surrender was inevitable. Those Church insurgents who finally refused to follow their hierarchial leaders and brought about the capitulation of the Church before the revolution, naturally became the objects of a most bitter hate on the part of the defeated ecclesiastical leaders, who considered them traitors and Bolsheviks, branding them as "red" priests.

The appeal of the progressive clergy against the policy of the Patriarch found ready response among the clergy, particularly the village clergy who for centuries had suffered from the heavy hand of those ecclesiastical feudal lords, the bishops. A veritable revolt took place throughout the Church. The clergy, who never before had had the right to organize and participate in the central administrative affairs of the Church, now began to organize. The initiators of the revolt were those progressive priests who now held the chief administrative center of the Church which the Patriarch had let slip out of his hands. This group was determined to use its

power to carry out certain reforms. It took for its slogan the words a "Living Church," and began to publish under this name a periodical which was to carry its appeal to the masses. It organized itself into a union of white priests, also called the "Living Church," whose chief leader became the Leningrad priest Vladimir Krasnitzky. Its first constitution, accepted on July 11, 1922, in Moscow, states as its purpose: "to guarantee to the Orthodox parish clergy liberty in carrying on their pastoral duties and freeing them from dependence on the economic ruling elements of society.

"To attain this purpose the group shall seek to obtain by means of organized action at the coming Sobor the following rights for the white clergy:

"1. The right of occupying Episcopal seats (i.e., becoming bishops).

"2. The right to participate in the administrative activities of the Supreme Administrative Organ of the Church and in diocesan administrations on a par with the bishops.

"3. The right to participate in the distribution of the funds of the Church which are to be united into a single diocesan Church treasury.

"4. The right to organize a union of the white parish clergy for further realization of their rights."*

We see that at this stage the "Living Church" organization was not much more than a clerical trade union striving for the improvement of its rights as clergymen and for economic welfare. Its enemy it saw in the monastic episcopal order, and it called for the right of the white or married clergy to be eligible to the episcopate. If we remember the centuries-long subjection of the white clergy to their monastic overlords and

* *Living Church*, publication N 4-5, pp. 18-19.

the suppressed bitterness which existed among them against these black princes of the Church, this revolt is not difficult to understand. Then the fact that the majority of the bishops were giving sympathetic support to every counter-revolutionary move, whether undertaken by the Patriarch or the white armies or foreign interventionists, the consequences of which fell heavily on the rank and file of the parish clergy, added zeal to their desire to become independent of their ecclesiastical tyrants.

The "Living Church" group feared a reaction. It knew that the old monks and bishops would not give up their privileges without a struggle, and signs of its coming were at hand. Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd excommunicated the leaders of the progressive clergy, among them the priests Vedensky and Krasnitzky. Demonstrations against them were organized by the Conservatives, and they were branded as traitors and bolsheviks. Fortunately there were among the old bishops a few who were sympathetic to the appeal of the "Living Church," and these agreed to create a new hierarchy of white, i.e. married, bishops, even before the meeting of the Sobor. On June 11, 1922, the Archbishops Leonid and Antonine ordained the first "white" bishops, the Moscow priest John Chancev, and the Petrograd priest John Albinsky, and thus was broken the system of the "Black" Episcopate which had existed in Russia for over a thousand years. Soon other "white" bishops were ordained, and the progressives felt that they now could start a "cleaning" of the Church from the reactionary Episcopate and replace them by more trustworthy leaders. Scores of bishops were retired so that at the time of the first conference of the "Living Church" in August, 1922, it was reported that of ninety-seven

diocesan bishops thirty-seven had accepted the "Living Church" platform, thirty-six were against it, and twenty-four were undecided. Then and there it was decided to retire those who were against the Living Church reforms and call upon the undecided to make their choice.

This first conference of the progressive Orthodox clergy which met in Moscow on August 6, 1922, was undoubtedly an event of great historical importance. Never before in the thousand years of history of the Russian Orthodox Church had such a conference been called. There were present one hundred and fifty priest delegates from every part of the great Soviet Republic. Most of these men had never seen each other and had never corresponded with each other, yet their common grievances and their common hopes gave them a sufficient tie of solidarity to commence far-reaching reforms in the administration of the Church. The chairman of the conference, the Leningrad priest, V. Krasnitzky, characterized this conference as the second stage in the revolutionary Church movement. He said:

"The first stage took place on May 12 of this year when a small group of progressive priests appeared before the Patriarch and demanded of him that he, as a partisan of the old politics which had long been outlived and as the one chiefly responsible for the ruin of the Church, should turn over his authority to a progressive group of clergymen, which he did by signing his abdication and transferring his powers to the Supreme Church Administration. The present conference is the second step along the way of the revolution in the Church. Our first task at this stage is to substitute for the old, reactionary, monastic episcopate a new progressive episcopate from among the ranks of the white,

toiling clergy. . . . The second task is to draw into the administration of the Church the laity, but only such as are toiling and not exploiters and oppressors of others."* There was no dissenting voice in regard to these measures, and the "cleaning" in the Church was carried on in a most thorough manner, so that by the time of the Sobor there were, according to the statement of Patriarch Tikhon, only fifteen of his old bishops left who participated at the Sobor; in fact eighty of the old bishops were dismissed.

Simultaneously with the cleaning of the dioceses from the reactionaries went on intense propaganda of "Living Church" ideas and the forming of Living Church Unions of parish priests who were to educate the masses regarding the impending reforms and prepare the ground for election to the Sobor. Thus the first moves of the progressive clergy were to get control of the central and diocesan Church apparatus and remove those counter-revolutionary leaders who were the cause of mistrust on the part of the Government towards the Church and were causing much suffering to the rank and file of the parish clergy. All these reforms which were undertaken were ecclesiastical and political, not religious. However, there were dormant within the Church also religious forces which until now found little opportunity for expression. Religious reformers had been compelled to silence or forced out of the Church. They had entered either the ranks of non-Church intellectuals or had become active in the various sectarian groups. But sectarian denominations rarely could satisfy them, because they lacked that aesthetic mysticism and profound spirit of worship which is peculiar to the Orthodox Faith.

The most thoughtful partisans of the Living Church

* *Living Church*, publication N. 8-9, September 6, 1922.

movement hoped that all necessary reforms, ecclesiastical and religious, would be realized after the Church got out of politics and was at peace with the State. All looked forward to the Sobor, which was to settle these problems, and the number of voices calling for it increased daily.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOBOR OF 1923 AND THE SCHISM OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

AFTER nearly a year of "cleaning" the administrative apparatus of the Church, of organizing the clergy, and of agitating for reform, the new leaders thought it safe to issue the call for the election of the Sobor which was to put into canonical law that which the revolutionary activities of the reformers had largely accomplished in fact.

The regulations for the election of delegates to the Sobor were essentially the same as those of the Sobor of 1917. Each local parish elected not less than two lay delegates and not more than the number of clerics in the given parish. The parish clergy and lay delegates attended the district meeting, which in its turn elected two laymen and three clerics to the diocesan meeting which elected the delegates to the Sobor, two laymen and two clerics, the diocesan bishop being a member *ex officio*. Besides these elected delegates, all members of the Supreme Church Administration were members of the Sobor *ex officio*. The Administration had also the right to invite twenty-five persons to participate in the Sobor on a par with the elected delegates.

"A little organization is a wonderful thing." The truth of this saying has fully proved itself in the Living Church movement, which had its organizations in most of the dioceses and easily put through its candidates.

The conservatives, who were rather disorganized by the "cleaning," were impotent, and their candidates could rarely get the majority. Only in some places, particularly in the Moscow diocese, which always had been the stronghold of the Conservatives, did they succeed in defeating the reformers. On the whole the reformers had a safe majority in the Sobor and could easily carry through their program.

The question has been frequently raised: Was the Sobor legitimate if the conservative opposition was put at such a serious disadvantage during the elections? The only reply which the reformers have to make is that at all other elections in Russia, both in State and Church, worse handicaps had been imposed upon the radicals. The Sobor of 1917 was dominated by the Monastic Episcopate and the nobility because they controlled the organization of the Church, and the rank and file of the parish clergy was taken little into consideration. The Sobor of 1923, on the contrary, was controlled by this heretofore suppressed mass of common clerics and laity, and therefore was a great deal more representative of the Church than the previous Sobor. This, however, did not justify the openly dictatorial attitude of the Reformers, which lost them many friends and sympathizers and prepared the ground for the reaction which set in shortly after the condemnation of the Patriarch.

The opening of the Sobor took place on April 29 in the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. It was much more modest than the gorgeous ecclesiastical spectacle of the previous Sobor. Metropolitan Antonine read the message of the Supreme Church Administration and sounded the key note of the Sobor. This key note was: sanctification of the new social order which the revolution had created. "Our Fatherland is accomplishing a reconstruc-

tion of life upon new principles.... This transformation lacked until now the blessing of grace which comes from inner faith," says the message.* After five years of anathemas and resistance to the revolutionary Government, the Church through the Sobor addressed a message to the Soviet Government in which it thanked it for the opportunity given the Church to meet in a Sobor and expressed its appreciation of the decree of separation of State and Church, in which it sees "a noble motive in granting the Church initiative, i.e. spiritual freedom in the religious sphere and emancipation from police service and servile submission to changing political interests."† In greeting the Sobor the old Metropolitan concluded: "Now has come the moment when our Church must show its principal relation to the national revolution, to its fundamental motive of toil, when it has to bless its achievements with Christian sympathy and direct into its stream moral forces which obtain their energy from religious sources." ††

Among the speeches of greeting which were given by some of the guests of the Sobor must be noted the address of Bishop Edgar Blake of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who had come to the Sobor together with Dr. L. O. Hartman,, Editor of "Zion's Herald" of Boston. The Bishop was representing the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church and carried a letter of greeting from that body to the Russian Orthodox Church.**

* *Bulletin of the Sobor*, p. 6.
† *Ibid*, p. 7.
†† *Ibid.*
** The Bishop had come in response to an invitation which the Supreme Church Administration had presented to the Methodist Church and the Federation of Churches of Christ in America at the occasion of the visit of Bishop John L. Nuelsen of the Methodist Episcopal Church to Moscow in the fall of 1922.

The personality of the Bishop and the message he brought made a deep impression upon the Sobor, which marks a historical change in the policy of the Orthodox Church towards the Protestant Churches of the west. Until the Sobor of 1923 the Russian Church held a quite exclusive and at times hostile position toward Protestantism. The efforts of the Young Men's Christian Association to work in cooperation with the Orthodox Church had some success, particularly in the army service during the war. The Church of England had at various times in the past also made friendly approaches to the Orthodox Church. But it was the first time in the history of the Russian Church that such a distinctly Protestant representative as Bishop Blake had ever been received as an honored guest of the Sobor by the unanimous vote of its delegates.

The visit had its beneficial and lasting effect. Since then the contact with Western, particularly American, Protestantism has never ceased and it promises to develop into larger fraternal cooperation and may pave the way to the long desired unity of Christendom. That this cooperation has not developed any faster is somewhat the fault of the Western Churches which, under pretence of neutrality in the inner strife of the Orthodox Church, but probably more out of political considerations, have been very reserved in associating with the Orthodox Church in Russia.

The Sobor of 1923, true enough, was called under most unusual circumstances. One may characterize it as a peace conference of the Church with the revolutionary State. One may even say that it was a Versailles of the Church, where the victorious revolution was dictating the terms upon which the Church was to be tolerated and permitted to continue its existence. The principal

condition was that the Church give up the monarchical system of government and become a republic in form. A second condition was that the Church sever its contact with the counter-revolution and dismiss every prelate who was politically incriminated. With the dogmatic or religious interests of the Church the State did not meddle, but upon these political aspects it was uncompromising.

The Sobor willingly accepted these terms and even went further. It assured the Government of its undivided sympathy and loyalty, declared capitalism a deadly sin, and pronounced the social revolution just. In this way it annulled the anathemas of the previous Sobor and recognized the decrees of separation of Church and State, of nationalization of Church property, and even those limitations on the rights of citizenship which were imposed upon the clergy and the Church as a punishment for counter-revolutionary activities.

The session of May third was planned to put into canonical law the state of peace between the church and the revolutionary Government and open a new era in the history of the church.

Since the Patriarch was under arrest the leaders of the Sobor did not seem to think it necessary to comply with the canonical provisions for a three-fold invitation of the accused to the trial. There were precedents in the practice of the Church, however, in which bishops had been tried and condemned without complying to this rule, as in the case of Archbishop Vladimir Putyata of Pensa, who was tried and condemned by the Sobor of 1917-18 without having an opportunity to be present, even though he might have come if summoned.

The topic given for the order of the day on May third was: "The Orthodox Church, the Social Revolu-

tion, the Soviet State, and Patriarch Tikhon." The reports were made by the Fathers Alexander Vedensky and Vladimir Krasnitzky, who in passionate addresses which lasted several hours traced the historical development of the Orthodox Church which finally brought it to this crisis. After denunciations of the anti-social activities of the pre-revolutionary Church and the counter-revolutionary activities of the Patriarch in particular, the following resolution was accepted by the Sobor, with but one dissenting vote and five delegates not voting. The resolution read as follows:

"Having listened to the reports of the Archpriest A. Vedensky and the Archpriest Krasnitzky, the All Russia Territorial Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church testifies before the face of the Church and of all humanity that at present the whole world is divided into two classes: capitalist-exploiters and proletarians upon whose toil and blood the capitalist world is building its welfare. In the whole world only the Soviet Government of Russia has ventured to struggle with this social evil. Christians cannot be indifferent spectators in this struggle. The Sobor declares capitalism a deadly sin and to fight it a sacred duty of the Christian. In the Soviet power the Sobor sees a world leader for brotherhood, equality, and peace among nations. The Sobor brands the international and national counter-revolution and condemns it with all its religious and moral authority.

"The Sobor calls every honest Christian citizen of Russia to step forward in a united front, under the leadership of the Soviet Government, to fight the world evil of social injustice.

"The holy Sobor of the Orthodox Church of 1923, having discussed the situation in the Church during the revolution, *resolves*:

"1. Beginning with the summer of 1917 the responsible leaders of the Church took a definitely counter-revolutionary point of view. 'The Church must reestablish the unity of Czarist Russia'—under this slogan the Church, which had previously been the tool of czarism, began its independent life. The Sobor of 1917, which was composed mainly of representatives of the reactionary clergy, also of the upper nobility, of property owners, and members of reactionary political parties, from the very start became a definitely political counter-revolutionary gathering, covering all these activities with the name of Christ the Savior. The Sobor struggled against the revolution. It did not even recognize the Provisional Government, and after October this struggle reached unusual dimensions.

"After the Sobor, Patriarch Tikhon continued in counter-revolutionary activities. He became the leader and the standard bearer of all enemies of the Soviet Power. He dragged the Church into counter-revolutionary activities.

"The Holy Sobor of the Orthodox Church of 1923 condemns the counter-revolutionary struggle and its methods—the methods of human hatred. Particularly the Sobor of 1923 grieves for the anathematizing of the Soviet State and all those who recognized it. The Sobor declares these anathemas null and void.

"2. The Sobor of 1923 condemns all those who followed this way and led others behind them. This chiefly concerns the responsible leader of the entire life of the Church—Patriarch Tikhon, since Patriarch Tikhon, instead of genuinely serving Christ, served the counter-revolution. He who should have correctly guided the whole life of the Church led the broad masses of the Church into error; therefore the Sobor considers Tikhon

an apostate from the true commandments of Christ and a traitor to the Church; on the basis of the canons of the Church it declares him deprived of his Office and of his monastic state and returned to his original state of layman.

"3. The leaders of the reform church movement have severed themselves from the counter-revolution and for this have gained the disfavor of the reactionary churchmen.

"The Holy Sobor of 1923 declares all these measures of interdiction null and void. On the contrary the Sobor blesses the courage of these people and their devotion to the Church, which it plucked from the hands of the counter-revolution, and passed on to the only Christ the Savior.

"4. The Holy Sobor calls upon all Church people to abandon all efforts to use the Church in their worldly political interests. There should be no place for counter-revolution in the Church. The Soviet power does not appear as a persecutor of the Church. The constitution of the Soviet State provides full religious liberty. The decree of the separation of the Church from the State guarantees this liberty. The freedom of religious propaganda (on a par with the propaganda of anti-religious ideas) gives the believers opportunity to defend the values of their purely religious convictions. Therefore church people must not see in the Soviet State a power of Antichrist; on the contrary the Sobor calls attention to the fact that the Soviet power is the only one which attempts by state methods to realize the ideals of the Kingdom of God. Therefore every believing churchman must not only be an honest citizen, but with every measure must work with the Soviet power for the realization upon earth of the ideals of the Kingdom of God.

"5. In condemning the former Patriarch as a leader not of the Church but of the counter-revolution, the Sobor recognizes that the very act of reestablishing the patriarchate was a definitely political, counter-revolutionary move. The Ancient Church knew nothing of a patriarchate and was governed jointly; therefore the Holy Sobor herewith revokes the reestablishment of the Patriarchate. From now on the Church must be governed by a Sobor.

"6. In condemning the counter-revolution in the Church, in punishing its leaders, in revoking the very institution of the patriarchate and in recognizing the existing power of the State, the Sobor creates normal conditions for the peaceful life of the Church. From now on the life of the Church must be built upon two principles: (1) In regard to God, upon the real devotion of church people to the true commandments of Christ the Savior; and (2) in regard to the State, upon the principle of separation of the Church from the State.

"In basing itself upon these two principles the Church will become what it should be—a community of believers in God, His Christ, and His truth, working together in love."*

With the passing of the resolution the leaders of the Sobor thought that they had cut off the Church from its inglorious past, and had opened the way for a brighter future. Much depended upon the new leadership, particularly the Episcopate. All realized that the monasteries could no longer supply these leaders. Few of them had remained in existence; most had been swept away by the revolution. Also the old monastic episcopate was too discredited. The only proper and safe way seemed

* *Bulletin of the Sobor*, pp. 11-13.

to be to choose the episcopate from among the white clergy, and to have them as far as possible elected by the people themselves. We have seen that the reform leaders had introduced this practice soon after they had established themselves at the helm of the Church, and now the Sobor was to sanction this practice and put it into canonical law, which it did with practically no opposition.

Related to this measure was the provision permitting widowed or divorced priests to marry again.

The decision to accept the new (Gregorian) calendar was a much belated reform and one which met with the greatest opposition, particularly on the part of the peasants, who regulated their seasonal work by the old church calendar.

Finally, the Sobor defined to what extent relics could be venerated and under what conditions monasteries could continue their existence. All these measures were passed almost unanimously, confirming the absence of the conservative opposition which heretofore had blocked all these reforms.

The Sobor, however, did not dare to go further and introduce any reforms in the cult or the doctrines of the Church. All such proposals were referred to committees and recommended for further study and discussion throughout the Church. In order to prepare the new leadership and ministry of the Church, the Sobor recommended that, so far as the means of the church would permit, the former theological training schools be reopened, and their program of education be adapted to the new needs and problems of the Church.

On May eighth, before adjourning its sessions, the Sobor elected a governing body of eighteen members which was to form the Supreme Church Council and

administer the Church until the next session of the Sobor. In this council all the three Church parties were represented according to their approximate strength. The Living Church group received ten seats, the "Old Apostolic" group six seats, and the Union of Regeneration" two seats.

The Sobor of 1923 will be the best remembered in the history of the Russian Church. The decisions which were made there affected the unity of the Church and brought about the schism which at first seemed a great calamity but in time will prove to be for the good of the Church.

The decision to make peace with the revolutionary State and recognize the justice of the social revolution also had its beneficial effects. To-day the Orthodox Church is no longer considered an enemy of the State. No sane churchman, to whatever faction he may belong, wishes to return to the state of war which existed before the 1923 Sobor. It is true that the price of peace was the unity of the Church, but before the Sobor this unity was maintained at the cost of strangling the vital forces of the Church. The "white" married Episcopate, elected from worthy pastors by the people themselves, has shown its worth and will give the Church a new leadership. The 1923 Sobor may, of course, be criticized for its rough manner in disposing of the old leadership, for the lack of judicial form in conducting the trial of the defeated Patriarch, and generally for the lack of sympathy and courtesy to its former leaders. This may all be true, but it cannot be denied that the Sobor was canonical and that its decisions, good or bad, are as much law as the resolutions of any other previous council of the Church and can be annulled only by subsequent Sobors, not by the will

of any one person or group of persons. In this fact lay the error of the former Patriarch when he bolted the decisions of the Sobor instead of appealing his case to a new Sobor.

After these decisions of the Sobor came interesting developments and, finally, a schism in the Church. Many friends and advisers of Patriarch Tikhon felt that the Sobor had not treated him justly, that his enmity toward the Communist leadership of the country was fully shared by the majority of the Church people, and that he was really suffering as a martyr for the Church. This feeling was particularly strong in the Moscow churches, which were almost entirely under the control of people who in one way or another had suffered from the revolution and could not reconcile themselves to their defeat and humiliation. This class of people hated the reform leaders as traitors to their cause, and branded them as heretics and agents of the Bolsheviks.

At the same time these people realized that, being defeated, they had to come to terms with their victorious enemy, and this was probably the chief reason why they welcomed the Patriarch's move to regain his freedom even at the humiliating price of his sudden "confession." It is also possible that his former advisers and followers had suggested this to the Patriarch.*

Whatever the motives, the "confession" of the former Patriarch was a surprise to the world and not less to the reform leaders of the Church. The confession says:

* It was the author's privilege to interview the former Patriarch on this subject. At the question as to whether he had been coerced by agents of the Government to make the confession (this theory of coercion was much in circulation in Russia and abroad) he replied that he had not been coerced in anything and that in writing his confession he was following the dictates of his conscience. However, he added, suggestions were made to him of the advisability of this move to regain his liberty.

"In presenting this statement to the Supreme Court of the R. S. F. S. R., I consider it to be the duty of my pastoral conscience to state the following:

"Having been brought up in a monarchist society and having been until my arrest under the influence of anti-Soviet persons I actually was hostile toward the Soviet power. This hostility at times passed from a passive state into active functions, such as the appeal regarding the peace at Brest in 1918, the anathematizing of the Government in the same year, and finally the appeal against the decree of taking the Church valuables in 1922. All my anti-Soviet actions, with the exception of a few minor errors, are summed up in the statement of accusation of the Supreme Court. Recognizing as correct the decision of the court to hold me responsible for anti-Soviet activity, according to the statutes of the Criminal Code indicated in the summary of accusation, I repent of these my transgressions against the State order and ask the Supreme Court to sever my isolation, i. e., to free me from arrest.

"Simultaneously I declare to the Supreme Court that I am from now on no enemy of the Soviet power. Permanently and definitely I reject the foreign as well as the inner monarchical white guard counter-revolution (Signed) PATRIARCH TIKHON

June 16, 1923. (VASSILY BELAVIN)."

The leaders of the reform movement hoped that after such a confession before the State Tikhon would make a similar apology to the Church, which had severely suffered by his political errors. Not a few had lost their lives and freedom in following those very orders of which he just had repented before the State authorities. This, however, he was not inclined to do. On

the same day of his liberation (June 27, 1923), when interviewed by representatives of the press, he said: "The Sobor has condemned me for counter-revolution, but it could not do this. Only the Soviet State can try me for counter-revolution, and it is going to try me.

"Besides this, in conformity with the Apostolic rules, in order to try a bishop it is necessary to send three bishops to him three times; only after a three-fold refusal to come has the court the right to try him in his absence. The Sobor did not even inform me that it would discuss my activities."

This refusal to submit to the ruling of the Sobor or even to appeal his case, which would have been the canonical way of doing, made a split of the church inevitable.

To begin with, the Moscow Churches rallied about their former Patriarch. The old reactionary elements of the Church again began to surround him and started a calumnious campaign against the reform leaders and the Sobor of 1923. The dictatorial manner in which the reformers had treated many of the old bishops was now used against them.

The efforts on the part of the reform section of the Church to introduce the new calendar set the village church folk against them. This aversion to the new calendar on the part of the peasants was skillfully used by the Tikhon party. Although the former Patriarch had welcomed the reform of the church calendar as the only reform of the Sobor he would recognize, he quickly reversed himself on this question, declared the old calendar still valid for the Church, and got the peasants' support.

A bitter controversy ensued between the two factions. The Tikhon party called itself the "Old Church

People" and condemned any reform effort as heresy and time-serving. The reformers, hard-pressed, were driven to retract themselves, particularly on the calendar issue. At present it is left to each congregation to decide this question locally whether the old or new calendar shall be used. Thus the city churches of the reform wing generally adhere to the new calendar, whereas the rural churches hold on to the old.

Again it was felt that the party differences within the reform movement were confusing to the mind of the common churchman. Some understood that "Living Church" and "Old Apostolic" and "Regeneration" parties were different sects. The antagonism which existed between these groups added to the confusion, and the propaganda of the Tikhon party did the rest.

The difference between the reformers led to a break with the old Bishop Antonine who left the post of Chairman of the Supreme Church Council and established his followers as an autocephalic Church.*

The reformers decided to fill this vacancy by calling to the Chairmanship Metropolitan Eudokim of Odessa, formerly Archbishop of the North American Orthodox Church. This prelate, although a monk, was considered a progressive and was one of the first among the old Episcopacy to join the Living Church movement. He agreed to take the leadership of the Church on condition: (1) That the various Church parties would dissolve their organizations and give up their names; (2) that the Supreme Church Council be renamed the Holy Synod; and (3) that preference should be given to monastics for the Episcopal office to offset the propaganda of the Tikhon party. In the beginning of August 1923, a plenum conference of members of the

* June 29, 1923. See Chapter VIII, p. 130.

1923 Sobor was called. They met and discussed the situation. Krasnitzky, the leader of the Living Church Group, was against giving up his organization, but the majority of his group did not support him. Vedensky, who after the Sobor took on Episcopal orders and with this gave up many of his former radical ideas, was in favor of dissolving his organization. After a heated discussion for several days the plenum voted in favor of Metropolitan Eudokim's program. It declared all church groupings and parties dissolved, renamed the Supreme Church Council into the "Holy Synod of the Orthodox Russian Church," elected Metropolitan Eudokim Chairman, and decided to call into the Synod some of the oldest Bishops of the Church who still had not returned to the Tikhon camp. As a result of this victory of the moderates Krasnitzky, with the remnant of his Living Church organization, withdrew and since has kept an independent position of a rather hostile attitude towards the Holy Synod.

This Plenum Conference was the beginning of reaction from the radical 1923 Sobor. The state of mind of the Church was not in favor of any innovations, and to placate these feelings a peculiar rivalry of conservatism commenced between the reform wing of the Church with its "Holy Synod" of venerable old bishops and the Tikhon wing. A special premium was put on the age of the Bishops, and the Holy Synod boasted that it had in its ranks the "oldest" bishop, at least in years.

The Holy Synod published* an appeal to all Orthodox Christians, in which it censored the schismatic activities of the former Patriarch and called for peace and unity

"Being concerned for your sufferings and seeking

* In *Izvestia* for August 12, 1923.

peace and union in the Church, your oldest bishops and pastors undertake at this important moment the sacred task of bringing God's Church out of the abyss of agitation and human passions. We declare that henceforth at the head of the Church administration is the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Russian Church instead of the Superior Church Council. We declare that there should be no groupings, division of parties, and Church organizations of different names, but a Sole Reformed Holy Sobor and Apostolic Orthodox Church. We enter into communion with the most Holy Patriarchs of the East whose representatives have already called on the Chairman of the Holy Synod with an official welcome. This they did not do in respect for the Ex-Patriarch after his liberation. In a fraternal union with the most Holy Eastern Patriarchs we shall guard our saintly Orthodoxy. We stand on the ground of the acknowledgment of the necessary reforms in the life of the Church, reforms pointed out a long time ago by our best and oldest bishops, professors, and theologians who were members of the pre-Sobor conferences which were created at the Sobors of the years 1917 and 1923. We have kept strictly, firmly, and steadily, and shall keep till the end of our life the purity of the doctrines of the Orthodox faith."

It was hoped that this display of old names (Holy Synod), old men, and old ideas would make the masses rally around the Synod and thus compel the Tikhonites to come to terms. Nothing of this kind happened. Those who wanted the old and stagnant found full satisfaction in the Tikhon cult; as a result the period under the leadership of Eudokim did not attain the desired unity, but rather alienated and discouraged many of the progressives and reformers.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STRUGGLE FOR UNITY IN THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

TIME cures everything. It will cure also the schism in the Russian Church. For, after all, the real underlying causes of the split are not religious or even doctrinal; they are political and social. It is the same struggle which characterizes the whole progress of the revolution in Russia. It is a conflict between the monarchical and the republican idea: the struggle between the remnants of feudalism and capitalism on the one side and the peasant and proletarian dictatorship on the other. When the social revolution swept out of power the old feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, the defeated leaders hid in the Church and shielded themselves behind the Cross. To attack them in that stronghold could be interpreted as an attack upon the Church and religion, which the revolutionary Government did not desire. This attitude was not because of fear of criticism on the part of the capitalist world. The Government quite well knew that it could not satisfy its class enemies in any such way, for if the world bourgeoisie decided to try another armed intervention it would find occasion for it and manufacture enough atrocity news such as socialization of women, persecution of religion, and so forth, to justify its interventionist designs.

The revolutionary Government was cautious in its struggle with the counter-revolution in the Church because it did not want to offend the great mass of the

peasant population and a considerable part of the city proletariat which still clung to the Church in spite of the intense anti-religious propaganda. In time the conviction ripened that the counter-revolutionary spirit could be driven out of the Church only by the revolutionary elements within the Church itself. For this reason the Government gave a free hand to the reform groups in the Church and at the same time prevented the former Patriarch, after his liberation, from organizing a central government of the Church. Apparently the Bolsheviks considered a state of semi-anarchy and inner dissension to be the safest means of paralyzing the Church and increasing its impotence. This was well understood by those intelligent churchmen whose critical faculties of mind were not altogether eclipsed by class hatred and prejudice and who put the good of the Church above the political and social ambitions of their class.

This was also understood by the former Patriarch, particularly after passions had subsided and the fact of a split church was clearly before him. He sought a way out. He appealed to the State authorities to permit him to call a Sobor and form a government of that part of the Church which still recognized him as leader. But he was clearly given to understand that unless he gave up his alliances with such elements in the Church as were known to be bitterly opposed to the revolution, and unless he surrounded himself with men whom the Government could trust, it would not permit him to organize a Central Church administration and call a Sobor to legitimize him as head of the Church. As a practical solution it was suggested that he should unite with the remnant of the Living Church group and make the priest Krasnitzky vice-chairman of his administration.

The documents related to this incident are a letter

written by Father Krasnitzky and the reply of the Patriarch. Krasnitzky wrote under date of May 19, 1924:

". . . Enclosing herewith a declaration to the members of the group of Orthodox white clergy and laymen —the Living Church—I beg your Holiness to receive me and my brethren who would wish to follow my example into prayerful canonical association and bless us in toiling for the reestablishment of peace in the Church and preparing for the next Territorial Sobor in the Church Administration which is being organized by Your Holiness, and to cover with your Arch-pastoral love all that in which I have sinned during the period of the Church reform movement."

Upon receiving this letter the Patriarch wrote the following resolution: "May 19, 1924. For the sake of peace and the welfare of the Church and in harmony with Patriarchal mercy, I agree to accept into association the Protopresbyter Vl Krasnitzky. I propose to the Holy Synod to discuss the question of including him in the membership of the Supreme Church Council which is now in formation." The endorsement of four members of the Patriarch's Synod followed a few days later.

Next a provisional administration of the Church was actually formed which was to prepare the call of the Sobor. This administration named itself the Supreme Church Council and was composed of twelve members. Six places were given to members of the Living Church group, with Krasnitzky as leader, and five were appointed by the Patriarch to serve with himself. There was also to be formed an upper house or Synod of Bishops to be called and presided over by the Patriarch.

This Supreme Church Council held several sessions in which the plans for the call of the Sobor were discussed. But the pressure on the part of the reactionary ele-

ments in the Church and of the Patriarch's former advisers was too strong. Tikhon was given clearly to understand that if he remained in a coalition with the Living Church he could not count any longer upon the support of that part of the Church which had stood by him throughout the crisis. If the conservatives should drop him he realized that the Living Church men would do likewise, for they had no personal attachment to him and went into this bargain only to make capital of his personal popularity.

This whole affair showed, however, that the popularity of the Patriarch was maintained rather artificially by that powerful conservative group in the Church which wanted by all means to prevent the revolutionary elements from penetrating into their stronghold. Tikhon seemed to have felt his impotency and once more gave witness of the instability of his character. He declared that the effort to form a joint administration of the Church, together with the Living Church group, had failed. Krasnitzky and his associates withdrew, and the struggle between the parties continued.

So far as practical results were concerned, this incident proved a soap bubble, but in principle it demonstrated a very important fact: namely, that the claim of some of the Tikhonite leaders, that the "heresy" of the Living Church was the real cause of separation, was unfounded. The Patriarch demanded no repentance on the part of the Living Church men, and no formal ceremonies were observed to bring them back into the fold, as would have been the case had they been considered heretics.

The rival Synod leaders, who at first were somewhat alarmed by this whole affair, were rather glad of the failure and tried to make capital of it for themselves.

They interpreted the attempt to form a coalition as a sign of weakness on the part of Tikhon and the Living Church faction, and claimed that they alone were the canonical Church, holding in ecclesiastical politics a central position and therefore the natural center around which the whole Church could unite.

At the pre-Sobor conference, called in the summer of 1924, efforts were made by a number of the delegates to resume negotiations with the Patriarch, but without results. The conference passed a resolution: "to continue the struggle with Tikhonism in the same implacable manner, considering every compromise with Tikhonism equally dangerous from the political and the ecclesiastical point of view."* This resolution was not particularly comforting to the friends of unity, but they realized that as long as the Patriarch was unwilling or unable to compromise nothing could be done.

The death of Tikhon occurred on April 7, 1924. It came rather unexpectedly, except, perhaps, to those who were near him. His funeral was a great demonstration of his popularity when tens of thousands pilgrimaged to the Donskoy Monastery where he had lived and where he now lies buried.

The question which naturally occurs to one is: What merits did he possess which earned for him his popularity? It was not the gift of oratory, for he never spoke in public, nor did he preach. He could be called the "Silent Patriarch," save for the words read by him in the liturgy. It was not the power of his pen, for he leaves no book nor even an article which claims his authorship, save certain proclamations to the Church which bear his signature but probably were written by his advisers. He was not a strong leader or a martyr.

* *Messenger of the Holy Synod*, N 2, 1925, p. 2.

In critical moments he always wavered and was easily influenced by the people who surrounded him. This he himself says in his letter of confession, the authenticity of which is not questioned. In my opinion there were two things which made the Patriarch popular: to his narrow circle it was his joviality and kind-heartedness. I happen to know intimately the priest who for years was first secretary when Tikhon was Archbishop of Yaroslav. This priest told me that Tikhon loved to have a jolly good time with his priests and vicary bishops, and was kind to everybody. He disliked to read long reports and official papers, and signed most of the papers in his office without reading them. He was liked by his fellow bishops and the influential people in the Church for he was a good majority man. He never opposed the upper hierarchy and was a willing tool of the ecclesiastical machine. This made him a candidate for the Patriarchate, though everyone who voted for him knew that he was the weakest of the three nominees.

So much for the inner circle, but what about the mob which acclaimed him? There, of course, the usual means were employed to make a hero out of a mediocre human being. Consider that at every service in tens of thousands of churches, year after year, his name and title were mentioned in the most solemn prayer of the service! Imagine him appearing silently with a retinue of bishops and clerics, robed like a Byzantine Emperor with an unusual headdress worn by no one else in his retinue but himself. Then remember the thousands of people who formerly were of the upper classes and who now had lost everything in the revolution except a fanatical hope that by a miracle and the interference of God Almighty the hateful Bolsheviks would be driven from power and the Patriarch, as in the days of old,

would regain and reinforce their old privileges. Finally, think of the millions who hoped for a millenium through the revolution and now had to struggle hard to eke out a living. Their earthly disillusionments were fertile soil for apocalyptical hopes and for the recognition of apocalyptical persons, and the late Patriarch was continually suggested to them as such a person.

Buried under the altar of the Church of the Donskoy monastery, Tikhon is a symbol of a short but utterly tragic era in the Russian Church. He left a will as to the future administration of the Church, which was produced by his closest associate, the Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk (Moscow). It says:*

"In case of our death our Patriarchal rights and duties, until a *constitutional election of a new Patriarch*, are provisionally transferred to the Most Reverend Metropolitan Cyril. In case it should become for any reason impossible for him to enter upon the said rights and duties, they are passed on to the Most Reverend Metropolitan Agafangel. And if he also should be unable to accomplish this, then our Patriarchal rights and duties are transferred to the Most Reverend Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsk.

"Making known this our order to all Archpastors, pastors, and believers of the Church of Russia, we consider it our duty to explain that this order *replaces* our order made in the month of November 1923.

"TIKHON, *patriarch of*
"*Moscow and of all Russia.*

"December 25, 1924
"January 7, 1925.

"Donskoy Monastery, Moscow."

* Quoted in the Pastoral letter of Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsk, of April 12, 1925.

This "will" was rather unconstitutional, for the Sobor of 1917 provided that "In case of death of the Patriarch . . . his place in the Holy Synod and the Supreme Church Council is taken by the oldest hierarch present in the Synod; but the rights and duties of the Patriarch as a diocesan Bishop pass on to the Archbishop of Kolomna and Mozhaisk."* Also, the ancient canons of the Church distinctly forbid passing on by will the administrative power of the bishops to any other bishop.†

The reason why Tikhon made this innovation not provided for in the constitution of the Church was probably due to the actual non-existence of a Synod and a Supreme Church Council. As he ruled autocratically he must have thought he had the right to appoint his successor. There were thirty-seven Bishops present at his funeral who were willing to submit to this "will" of the former Patriarch. And since of the three Metropolitans mentioned in the will Peter of Krutitsk was alone present he was recognized as "Keeper" of the Patriarchal Throne and took the reins of the Church, or to be more exact he continued to rule the Church, for during the illness of the Patriarch and even before he had been the actual executive of the Church.

This Peter Polyansky became a priest during the revolution (1919). Formerly he had been closely connected with the Court. For many years he was the secretary

* Resolution of the Sobor of December 8, 1917, stipulating the rights and duties of the Patriarch.

† The twenty-third rule of the Council of Antioch distinctly provides that "The Bishop is not allowed to place another as his successor even if he be at the close of life and if this should be done such act is not valid. Keep therefore the rule of the Church which provides that Bishops must be placed not otherwise than by a council or a court of Bishops who are authorized to advance a worthy man after the death of a Bishop."

of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, a sister of the Czarina and widow of the assassinated Grand Duke Sergius, who was an uncle of the Czar and the much hated Governor of the Moscow province. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth became Mother Superior of the Martha-Mary Society of Sisters of Charity which she had founded in Moscow, and Peter became liaison official between the Society and the Holy Synod and also held a position at the Synod under Patriarch Tikhon. After taking orders he quickly advanced, and in 1920 was made Bishop and Vicary to the Patriarch for the diocese of Moscow. Later he received the title of Metropolitan of Krutitsk. In this position he had tremendous influence upon the administration of the Church and the person of the Patriarch. This explains why, quite contrary to the traditions of the Church, he as a young Bishop was made candidate to succeed Tikhon and after the death of the Patriarch actually became dictator of the Church.

Just a week after the death of Tikhon, Metropolitan Peter made public* the "will of the late Patriarch which was supposed to have been written by the Patriarch on the same day he died," April 7. This "will" is a declaration of loyalty on the part of the Patriarch to the Soviet regime and a fervent appeal to his following to give up their counter-revolutionary hopes. After praising the Government for its religious toleration on the basis of the decree of separation of State and Church, he continues: "It is time that the believers begin to understand the Christian point of view that the fate of nations are determined by the Lord—and accept all that has happened as the expression of God's will. Without transgressing against our faith and Church, without changing anything in it, in a word without entering

* *Izvestia*, April 15, 1925. N 86.

upon any compromises in the sphere of doctrine, in our civil relations we must be loyal to the Soviet Power and the work of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics for the good of all. We must adapt our policy to the new structure of the State and condemn any association with the enemies of the Soviet State and any open or secret agitation against it." Then, calling on the faithful to join him in prayer for the workers and peasants, he appeals to the parishes not to permit any anti-government agitation and "not to nourish any hopes for the return of the monarchical order, but to convince themselves that the Soviet Power is actually the people's power and therefore firm and unshakable," etc., etc.

This "will" was at the same time something of a declaration to the Government of the policy of the new ruler of the Church, and was to assure it of his intention to carry through this "will" of the late Patriarch. Many suspect that the "will" was written by Metropolitan Peter himself and given to Tikhon to sign before he drew his last breath. The reason, it is thought, was to make it easier for Peter to present the issue both to the Church and the State authorities. For Peter, according to the January will of the Patriarch, was only to be "Keeper" of his throne until a constitutional election of a new Patriarch, which could be held only by the Sobor.

The reformers in the Holy Synod acclaimed this "will" as a justification of everything that they had done at the Sobor of 1923, such as the declaration of loyalty to the new social order and the condemnation of counter-revolutionary activities by leaders of the Church. The "will" also threatened to excommunicate those hierarchs who would not follow the Patriarch's admonitions and give up their counter-revolutionary ac-

tivities. In short, the reformers claimed a full triumph for their position of 1923 which now the Patriarch fully endorsed. Naturally their conclusion was: if there is no longer any difference as to the main issue which split the Church in 1923, why continue the schism? Why not call a Sobor which would settle the differences still left unsolved?

The Holy Synod took the initiative in calling the Third Sobor for the purpose of reestablishing the unity of the Church, but it was very cautious in doing this. It proposed to the leaders of the Tikhon party that they form a joint commission for issuing the call. Several parleys were held, but no understanding could be reached. The leaders of the Tikhon party demanded assurance that they would receive first places in the joint government of the Church. To this the representatives of the Synod could not agree, but they were willing to submit to the will of the majority at the Sobor.

Then the call for an election was sent out by the Synod. This call provided for equal rights and representation for every portion of the Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Peter of Moscow sent out a counter-order to boycott the elections, and demanded unconditional surrender of the Synod and all the other reform groups to his personal jurisdiction as the keeper of the patriarchal throne.

Nevertheless, the elections were held. Seventeen thousand parishes took part, representing several million members, 17,000 priests, and 200 bishops. On October 1, there gathered in Moscow 334 delegates. From Great Russia there were 78 bishops, 105 priests, and 131 laymen. Seven fraternal delegates—three bishops, three priests, and one layman—were sent from the Church of White Russia. Thirteen fraternal delegates

—nine bishops, three priests, and one layman—were sent by the Church of the Ukraine. There were also ten visitors with the right of advisory vote.

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople was represented through his legate in Moscow. There was also a fraternal delegate of the Roman Catholic Church, a French Jesuit, Monseigneur D'Herbigny, whose arrival from abroad was quite a surprise to the Sobor. It shows that Rome watches closely the happenings in the Russian Church.

As to their affiliations and sympathies, the majority of delegates stood upon the planks of the Synod. But there was a minority group of forty-two which was rather Tikhonite in its sympathies, or at least inclined to go more than half-way to make peace between the contending parties.

That the great bulk of the people of Russia want unity in the Church is not to be questioned. The masses do not understand the issues underlying the conflict. Therefore, unity was the key-note of the instructions which the delegates brought to the Sobor. Yet at the first session it was seen that unity was impossible. A delegation that called on Metropolitan Peter came back disappointed. The Metropolitan refused to come to the Sobor and gave the following reasons for his attitude: (1) The reformers had usurped the power of government in the Church when the Patriarch had abdicated. (2) Bishop Antonine had been at that time in retirement and had no right to emerge from it to organize the Administration of the Church. (3) The Supreme Administration of the Church retired several bishops in 1922, which it had no right to do. (4) The marriage of bishops, since it was introduced by the reformers before the Sobor of 1923, was not canonical.

(5) The Sobor of 1923 had no right to depose Tikhon from the patriarchate and unfrock him. (6) The second marriage of widower priests is non-canonical. (7) The Sobor of 1923 distorted the rules of the Church. (8) In the publications of the Living Church self-devised doctrines were preached.

The reformers' reply to this was that they did not claim infallibility; that under the pressure of circumstances certain errors were committed, but that this was done by both of the contending parties; that the Sobor was called to right these wrongs and that for the good of the Church they would abide by the decision of the majority; and finally, that they were willing to submit their case to the judgment of the Ecumenical Council and accept its decision. Willing thus to meet the other side more than half way, they nevertheless would not surrender to the ecclesiastical dictatorship of Metropolitan Peter. They claimed further that the reasons given by Peter were but an excuse; that the real reasons for his obstinacy were his contact with the monarchist movement abroad and his hope to use the Church for political ends in case an attempt should be made to overthrow the Soviet system. The Synod claimed to have documentary evidence proving the connection of the Tikhon Church with the monarchists.

In addition to the issue of unity, the work of the Sobor was directed to improving the organization of the Church upon true democratic principles. The leaders of the Church, bishops and parish priests, are to be elected by their flocks, the administrative bodies of the Church reserving to themselves only the right of ratification. The much attacked innovation of the 1923 Sobor admitting married men to the episcopacy and al-

lowing the second marriage of widower priests was reaffirmed.

The educational work of the Church in preparing a new leadership was highly applauded, and an appeal for more liberal support of this work was endorsed.

Interesting was the effort of the Sobor to reestablish contact with other Eastern Orthodox Churches. A proposal to invite the Ecumenical Council of the Eastern Churches to Moscow received enthusiastic support. If this Council is realized, it will mean a great deal in strengthening the Orthodox Churches in Russia.

The boycott of the Sobor by Metropolitan Peter and his general dictatorial attitude in the administration of the Church were resented by many friends of unity and peace who were still of the Tikhon wing of the Church. Since the Sobor of 1925 there has been developing a disintegrating and stratifying process which sooner or later will reunite large sections of the Tikhon Church with the reformed Synod Church as the new social order becomes more and more firmly established. The Synod Church also will grow to be the Church of the New Soviet. But, as in France, where almost a century and a half after the great revolution there are still Catholic Royalists, so in the Soviet Union there will be a section, though probably only a small section, of the Orthodox Church which will remain traditionally royalist long after the Romanoffs have passed definitely into the limbo of history's lost causes.

The fact that at present there is no authoritative head which administers the Tikhon Church increases the process of disintegration. Soon after the Sobor of 1925 evidence was produced that the late Patriarch and Metropolitan Peter had actually participated in the en-

dorsement of Grand Duke Cyril, a cousin of the late Czar, as heir to the throne and "Emperor" of Russia. As a result Peter has been sent to Tobolsk province where he resides at some monastery.

Upon his departure Peter appointed Archbishop Sergius of Nizhny Novgorod to be his successor, who in turn passed on the office to someone else, but practically there is no administration at all and this but adds to the confusion. Certain bishops who did not agree with the Metropolitan and particularly resented his political activity declared him deposed and themselves independent and organized a separate administration. Among these a certain Bishop Boris of Mozhaisk is taking the lead, but he does not enjoy any particular popularity.

The saner men in the old Tikhon Church feel very keenly the abnormality of the situation and begin to gravitate toward the reformed Synod which continually increases in strength and recognition.

For the fall of 1927, the Synod plans to call a Sobor which, like the 1925 Sobor, shall attempt to heal the schism of 1923. To give the Sobor greater moral authority its organizers have sent a special invitation to the ecumenical Patriarch of the Eastern Church whose presence, it is hoped, will attract many to come to the Sobor.

Thus is the present situation in the Russian Orthodox Church. Badly battered during the last decade of revolutionary turmoil, it still lives and by its vitality has surprised its enemies as much as its friends. It is now struggling to regain its unity, and developments seem to give assurance that it will succeed.

CHAPTER IX

TOWARDS REFORM IN RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY

LONG before the revolution turned affairs Russian upside down and forced the Orthodox Church to travel the hard road toward righteousness which we have described, there were those within the Church itself who cried aloud for reform. The Patriarch Nikon, for example in the sixteenth century. From the modern Western viewpoint his reforms may seem unimportant, relating as they did to practices of the cult; but they had their tremendous effect upon the religious life of all Russia.

After Nikon, the formal education of the clergy was begun and the ethical preachings of the great Patriarch found wide vogue. Dissenters who opposed Nikon were forced to depend upon lay preaching and the dissemination of strictly puritan morals. When the first evangelical sects such as the Molokans appeared upon the Russian scene in the seventeenth century and began making serious inroads upon Orthodox congregations, the established church was again pushed into reformist action.

The revival of nationalism that followed Napoleon's conquests brought to the front a group of slavophile philosophers, spiritual predecessors to Dostoievsky, Tolstoy and Soloviev, who vigorously attacked what they termed "the sterile orthodoxy" of the Church and laid in train the intellectual assault upon the subjection of the Church to the State, the Church preoccupation with mysticism to the exclusion of any social programs and

in general the entire ideology of what corresponds in America to "Fundamentalism."

It was, however, the abortive but far-reaching revolution of 1905 that first set the Church on the road to wholesale reform. The attempts to start a Christian Socialist labor movement, the activities of the Petersburg Committee of thirty-five priests who sought to bring the Church nearer to the needs of the common man and finally the revolutionary attitude of Bishop Antonine, who, while Vicary Bishop of Petersburg refused to pray for the Czar as the "absolute monarch" of the Russian people—all indicated that an aggressive and widespread movement was afoot to bring the Church to earth. To be sure none of these bold adventures into liberalism had a long lease of life. The black reaction crushed them, as it crushed every other revolutionary manifestation and not until the '17 revolution did the church liberals again dare to raise their bloodied heads. Then came the break-down of the Patriarchal regime in 1922 and the chance for the liberals to come to grips with the central problems of church reform.

They came together, these enthusiastic reformers of an institution hoary with years and revered by millions; in a conference on August 1922, resolved to strike a body blow at what they deemed the chief evils of orthodoxy. These they generally held to be: subjection to the State, rule of monastic overlords, the strangle-hold of the Bishops over the rank and file of the clergy, lack of self-expression on the part of the masses of believers, doctrinal sterility, and finally and probably most sinister, the ascetic philosophy of life, heritage from decadent Byzantium of a thousand years back.

They named their undertaking "The Living Church",

drew up a program, called upon the people to support it and went home to discover, as progressives from the beginning of time have discovered, that division rather than addition is the norm of reformist mathematics.

It must be remembered, however, that theirs was no simple task, to be solved by the passing of resolutions. They were cutting at the roots of Russian life. The Soviet decree of the separation of Church and State had, to be sure, ended one great evil but still there remained the intangible and very subtle matter of freeing the mind of the Church from the thousand-year-old monastic philosophy of life. This called for nothing less than a far-visioned, laborious job of evangelization, education and socialization of the masses of believers.

The first gesture of the liberals at the August Conference was to annul the excommunication of Count Tolstoy who had been condemned as a heretic by the Czarist Synod. Then came the arduous drawing up of a program that should cover reforms dogmatic, ethical, liturgical, canonical and administrative. With this result:

DOGMATIC REFORMS

1. Reestablishment of the Evangelical teaching of the early Christians, with an emphatic development of the doctrine of the humanity of Christ the Savior and the combatting of the scholastic perversions of Christianity.

2. Development of the Christian teaching of God, as the source of truth, love, and mercy as opposed to the old Hebrew conception of God as a wrathful revenger and chastiser of sinners.

3. Development of the teaching regarding the origin of the world as due to the creative will of God with participation of the productive forces of nature.

4. Development of the teaching concerning man as the crown and culmination of the acts of wisdom in the creative forces.

5. Development of the teaching of salvation as God's reestablisment of the sonship of man through love at the cross.

6. The Christian Church as a divine-human union for the purpose of realizing God's truth upon earth.

7. Eternity as an organic development and culmination of the moral perfection of human personality.

ETHICAL REFORMS

1. Development of the moral teaching of salvation within the world in the common environment of a toiling life of humanity.

2. Rejection of the monastic teaching of individual salvation by means of denying the world and scorning the natural demands of human nature, leading to moral decadence and the annihilation of the human race.

3. The sanctity of the family as a guaranty of sociableness and morality. The moral and social equality of woman.

4. Work as a joyful expression of the fullness of life and a guarantee of social prosperity.

5. Equality of all toilers in the use of the bounties of the world as a basis of the State.

6. Moral and material support of State measures directed for the welfare and the improvement of conditions of unfortunate invalids, widowers, and orphans.

7. The justice of the social revolution and a world-wide union of toilers for the defense of the rights of workers and of exploited humanity.

Among the liturgical reforms the Conferences recom-

mended the exclusion of everything from the service books and practices of the cult which is of "unchristian" origin and represents remnants of pagan rites and superstitions. It also called for a broad participation of the laity in the services and teaching of the Church and a cardinal reform in the practice of preaching, making it an imperative part of the service, thus driving out scholasticism and returning to evangelical simplicity.

In questions of canonical law the reforms called for thorough revision of the historical canons of the church and exclusion of all such rules as have outlived themselves or are of a narrow, nationalistic conception of Christianity.

Finally, the program demanded a thorough reform of the congregational life of the church, asking for close cooperation and participation of the laity in the work of the church, with rights to elect its pastors, all sharing in the support of the Church and having one general treasury, developing works of charity, re-instituting deaconess work, giving religious education to the young, opening widely the opportunity for worthy laymen to enter pastoral activity, and curtailing the despotism of the Episcopate as contrary to early Christian practices.*

Here is reform with a vengeance but still reform fully orthodox. Nothing basic in the doctrines of the Church is touched. Rather there is evident an attempt to revive the spirit of the fundamental resolutions of the first councils of the early Church and give them life and meaning in a modern world. "The Living Church," it was plain, was not to be a new sect but rather a society of progressive clerics and laymen pledged to reform upon an evangelistic basis.

* *Living Church*, publication N 10, October 1922; p. 17-18.

Of course such a program did not satisfy all of the divergent elements among the progressives. It was the old revolutionary Bishop Antonine who was first to break way, setting up his own group which he called the "Union of Church Regeneration." He found the attitude of "The Living Church" entirely too passive in regard to the wiping out of the monastic Episcopate and not sufficiently vigorous in hitting at the time-hardened cults and practices of the Church. So signing himself "Humble Antonine, Metropolitan of Moscow and of All Russia" he sat down and wrote a fiery declaration of independence. The old "Tikhon Church" he denounced as "sclerotic and paralyzed, unsocial, clerical and counter-revolutionary." "The Living Church" was a prey, said he, of "rapacious popery" and he turned from it in disgust. "Regeneration apart from the people and without the people is unthinkable and immoral" and so the soul of the Bishop finds no peace with any extant organization and forms one for itself. This church never won a large following and since the death of Antonine in January 1927 its future is doubtful.

Revolt against the revolters appears again in the movement led by the Priest (now Metropolitan) Alexander Vedensky, a revolt manned mostly by parish priests, though Vedensky himself is an urban intellectual. The purpose of this group which calls itself, "The Union of Congregations of the Old Apostolic Church" is avowed as "the realization of the principles of life of the old Apostolic Church in the present age." It looks to a primitive communism as the "Good Life" and for awhile was a formidable rival to "The Living Church" because of the appeal of its program to the peasants.

Among these three opposing groups of the reform elements and other less important ones, such as the na-

tionalist Ukrainian Church movement, there was constant bickering to the great detriment of the whole work of reform. Many organized and many sporadic reform undertakings have drifted off the scene since the '17 revolution. The significant fact remains that throughout all the religious areas of Russia there is going on a great, silent, slow-moving breaking down of dogmas and cults, superstitions and the rule of priests. The Patriarchal regime is gone. The Orthodox Church of Russia to-day is without any Episcopal leadership. I have talked with many rural priests who do not know even the name of their diocesan Bishop, who ever since the revolution have received no sort of supervision in their work. Forced to live their own lives, without outside contacts, whole congregations have begun to express themselves and compel the priests to apologetic study and preaching.

At the present time there is more lay activity and more preaching in the Orthodox Church of Russia than at any time in the history of that institution. The revolution, hard-boiled, proletarian, atheistical, has paradoxically enough not only released the Church from the rule of both Czar and Episcopate but has given pace and go to the latent religious forces of the common man. Now, of all institutions that came down from the old regime, the freest thing in Soviet Russia is the right to worship. Everything else is censored, the theatre, the cinema, the press, even concerts and public lectures on any secular subjects. But the freedom of the pulpit is thus far secure. Shut out by official mandates from active participation in the political and public life of the country, the priests are performing their forgotten functions of teachers and prophets of social righteousness and performing them everywhere with vigor. Here, for

example, is the Metropolitan Vedensky going through the various dioceses with hard-hitting lectures before great crowds, challenging atheist opponents to debate. Here is the official organ of the Church *The Messenger of the Holy Synod* enjoying a large circulation. Here are theological schools, (helped to their feet by such American supporters as Bishop Edgar Blake, Dr. L. O. Hartman and Bishop John Nelson) sending out reformist preachers with progressive programs. Even the bitterest opponents of reform are agreed that these schools are the hope of the Church, forces which will prevent it from sinking back into the religious barbarism from which it has risen since Nikon's time. Students of the Old Church and students with reformist theories are welcomed alike to the schools. Many believe that in them is the chance for the hoped-for reunion of the split and the Orthodox Church.

Life is in rude collision with the Church in Russia these days. Almost overnight, in the world of religion, as in the world beyond the monastery walls, "the old order changeth giving place to new." Whether it wants it or not, reform is being forced upon the Church, from without and within.

CHAPTER X

SECTS AND SCHISMS

RUSSIA swarms with sects. Even America with its thousand and one expressions of religious eccentricities is no rival to a country where it is estimated that fifteen to twenty million people choose to worship in other than the ways of the orthodox churches. Out of self-defense, under the Czar, Church and State joined hands in vigorous repression of sectarianism. For Russian sectarianism, unlike American, is frequently revolutionary in its character, and time and again, unable to organize and educate a ministry, has been forced underground. With the coming of the revolution and the granting to the sects of equal rights with the Orthodox Church, the dissenters have been robbed of their martyrs' haloes and much of the glory of sectarianism has departed. So long, however, as mysticism, ecstasy that is often sheerly sensual and the strange delights of asceticism continue to intrigue the nature of man, so long will these sects continue. In the back country, down remote alleyways of the cities, men, women and children are writhing and moaning, crying aloud in anguish, entering into weird sexual orgies in socialized Russia to-day just as they are in the Tennessee mountains and the Los Angeles living-rooms of capitalized America.

Before the sixteenth century there were but few sectarians in Russia and those who existed, as, for example, the Judaisers, originated not within the fold of the

Church but had an independent origin, descending from Jewish proselytes who later were influenced by Christian ideas. They maintained many of the Jewish customs, particularly the keeping of the Sabbath. The sect survives to this day and its two factions are known as the "Old Israel" and the "New Israel." Several thousands of the "New Israel," to escape persecution in Russia just before the beginning of the Great War, emigrated to America and settled in Uruguay.

It was the great schism fomented by the Patriarch Nikon in the middle of the sixteenth century which started sectarianism rampant in Russia. Nikon, a man of education and taste, enriched and corrected the ritual of the Church. The Old Believers protested somewhat more intensely than the English critics of the newly revised prayer book of the Anglican Church. The grounds of their protest often seem ridiculous to us.

This priest is chanting, "O, Lord have mercy upon us." The correct version of course is, "Lord have mercy upon us." Presto! A schism. The Old Ritual spelled the name of Jesus, "Issus." The followers of Nikon insist that the correct Greek is, "Iissus." Another schism. The Old Ritualists crossed themselves with two fingers but Nikon demands that three fingers be used to symbolize the Holy Trinity. And so these "tremendous trifles" pile up to the multiplication of sects if not the glory of God.

Behind these liturgical dog-fights, however, there was evident a very real clash of ideas. "The Old Believers" identified Nikon's reforms with an attempt to "Romanize" the church. The masses of the people were in rebellion against the ever-growing oppression of the State and the nobility, which sought to control the church. To "The Old Believers," Nikon was the em-

bodiment of Antichrist. When the General Council met at Moscow in 1666 to excommunicate "The Old Believers," those apocalyptical folk saw in the numbers 666 sure token of the conquest of Antichrist and the end of the world. Inhuman persecutions on the part of the police, aided and abetted by the Nikon followers, added to the zeal of the schismatics. Thousands were executed but the spirit of the survivors was not broken. They went on stronger than ever in their belief in symbolism and ceremony.

There was too an economic background to the spread of mysticism. The peasants robbed of land and freedom had no other channel for their expression of despair than the religious one. No wonder the coming of a Messiah who should liberate them from their yoke was an engaging idea. The rebel peasant leaders of the seventeenth century, Stenka Rasin and Pougachev and their Cossack followers were "Old Believers" and their popularity was largely due to the Apocalyptic missions which they had taken upon themselves.

When Peter the Great brought the Church firmly under the control of the State he made a mighty contribution to the schismatic cause. Here was "The Child of Adultery," the illegitimate son of the hated Nikon, the Antichrist, and to have anything to do with his works was a deadly sin. No true "Old Believer" would allow himself to be counted in the census. No passports stamped with the "Seal of the Antichrist" could be carried by your dyed-in-the-wool "Old Believer." Rather than pay taxes or yield in any way to the demands of the State, he and his family would flee into the wilderness or submit to brutal extinction. Thus a movement, with every surface indication of black reaction, developed oddly enough into religious, social and

political radicalism, bordering on philosophical anarchy. It is no exaggeration to say that here were the dim beginnings of the revolutionary movement in Russia, which after centuries of struggle destroyed that hated reign of the Antichrist—the autocratic State.

One and only one Bishop, Paul of Kolomna, was excommunicated with "The Old Believers." This holy seccessionist was imprisoned and died in captivity without having had a chance to consecrate a successor who would perpetuate the Apostolic succession of the Orthodox hierarchy. By this tragic incident "The Old Believers" were left without an Episcopate, and consequently without a priesthood which could consecrate and administer the sacraments. What was to be done? Some of "The Old Believers" contended that Christianity is impossible without a priesthood, and they suggested, in order to perpetuate the Old Faith, that they call priests from the State Church, "for having followed Nikon's heresy," they argued, "has not forfeited the apostolic power, the succession, the right of consecrating bishops and ordaining priests by the imposition of hands. Their ordinations being valid, all we have to do in order to have a clergy is to bring back to us and to the ancient rites the priests of the official Church." The more radical faction argued differently. "Not so," they said, "by giving up the ancient books, by anathematizing the ancient traditions, the Nikonians have forfeited all rights to the Apostolic succession. The official clergy is no longer a Church, it is Satan's synagogue. All communion with the ministers of hell is sin, consecration at the hands of these apostate bishops, pollution. By sanctioning the anathemas hurled by the Russian prelates against the ancient rites, the Eastern patriarchs have become participators in their heresy. With the

fall of the Episcopate, Orthodoxy has perished. There is no longer any apostolic succession, any lawful priesthood."

Upon this issue the Old Believers split. One party, holding to the hierarchy were called *Popovtzy*, (Priestly) the other *Bespopovtzy* (Priestless). The *Popovtzy* decided to have priests, be it by hook or crook, from the official Church. By means of bribes, or by harboring fugitive priests, they actually were able, although with great difficulties, to obtain enough priests to continue the Church services and the sacraments, until in the middle of the last century they were greatly relieved by securing an independent priesthood. In their ignorance, "The Old Believers" thought that the Orthodox Church of the Near East had remained true to the "old faith," and thus they searched for a bishop in the ranks of the Serbian and Greek prelates, after great effort securing the services of the former Bishop of Bosnia, a Greek, Ambrose by name, who for some reason was deposed from his office by the Patriarch of Constantinople. They established and richly endowed a monastery in Bielo-Krinitza in the former Austria, near the Russian frontier, which became the seat of their bishop and from which center their Church was administered. In this manner the "priestly" faction of the Old Believers was able to maintain itself and not deviate from its traditions and beliefs. "The Old Believers," who were puritanic in morals, became very prosperous and established many richly endowed monasteries, convents, schools, and orphanages. They have been particularly active since the beginning of this century. And when after the 1905 revolution the old restrictions against their building churches, publishing literature, and openly agitating for their ideas were re-

moved, they flourished greatly. The strength of "The Old Believers" was largely due to the fact that, unlike the State Church, their work was almost entirely carried on by the laity. Their priesthood existed only to administer the sacraments and render such services as the canons forbade to the laity. The great wealth, particularly of the Moscow "Old Believers," permitted them to give a good education to their children. In the beginning of this century there was a generation of young "Old Believers" who presented an unusual blend of ancient piety with modern liberal ideas and high cultural standards. Some of the noblest creations of Russian art, such as the Moscow Art Theater, were founded and financed by the cultured "Old Believers." In politics and social reforms they united with the liberals and gave not a few able fighters to the revolution.

Related to the priestly "Old Believers" and as a connecting link between them and the State Orthodox Church is the movement of the *Edinovertsy* or "United Faith."

It dates back to the year 1800, when under the tolerant reign of Alexander I a group of Moscow "Old Believers" appealed to the State Church to permit them to have churches in Moscow with a bishop and priests given them from the State Church. They were willing to accept them without the usual anathemas upon the Nikonite heresies as long as the priests consented to conduct the service according to the old cult.

The Government recognized in this compromising proposal an opportunity to drive a wedge into "The Old Believers'" ranks. It therefore agreed upon the compromise, and supplied priests, but did not keep the promise to give them a special bishop. This was done by

the Sobor of 1918, over a hundred years later than the original agreement.

There were relatively few outside of Moscow who voluntarily joined the *Edinovertsy*. So the Government tried to force membership in the new church. Under Nicholas I, who persecuted "The Old Believers" most cruelly, the clergy of "The Old Believers" who refused to enter the *Edinovertsy* Church were exiled and their churches turned over to priests of the State Church, who began to function as *Edinovertsy* priests, that is, according to the old rites. This was a hard blow upon "The Old Believers." Nevertheless, many would not submit and they continued their services in secret places and with fugitive priests.

The "Priestless" (*Bezpopovtsy*) faction deviated much further from the Mother Church and split into numerous sects, some following very radical tendencies. Their slogan was "Flee the world, no compromise with Antichrist." Having repudiated the priesthood, they inaugurated a lay leadership of elders who were conducting Church services as far as the traditions of the Church permitted. This consisted in the reading and expounding of the Scriptures and in baptizing the converts. These functions were always recognized as admissible to the male laity of the Greek Orthodox Church. The *Bezpopovtsy* went further and permitted women to conduct the services. Baptism was generally maintained as a sacrament, although there was divergence of opinion as to its mode. Some maintained the Greek Orthodox form of three-fold immersion of infants, but refrained from the unction with holy chrism because they could not consecrate it; others required immersion of adults at night in a running stream; others again baptized themselves with their own hands. The remaining sacra-

ments* were either abandoned altogether or interpreted spiritually. Thus certain sects confessed to an ikon in the presence of an elder who acted as adviser and spoke these words: "May thy sins be forgiven thee."

The rejection of the priesthood and the sacraments prepared the way for all kinds of radical ideas, particularly in regard to marriage. Some repudiated it altogether and demanded absolute celibacy. Others permitted concubinage as a means of protecting the weakness of the flesh; others again argued that marriage is not at all a sacrament, but a civil union for the propagation of the race, which is to be extended with the consent and blessing of the parents and kept sacred by solemn oath of the man and woman.

The lay marriage regulations of "The Old Believers" did not lead to the immorality that many of its critics suspected. The lack of legal constraint to make marriage indissoluble was offset by custom and the patriarchal form of family life which largely survived among "The Old Believers." Among those of "The Old Believers" who demanded absolute celibacy reversion into licentiousness occurred frequently and in turn reacted into fanatical asceticism, which finally culminated in the radical sect of the Castrators or Eunuchs. The Priestless were much more antagonistic to the established order and the State. From their ranks arose movements to "flee from the world and the reign of Antichrist." The extreme faction was led by a certain Theodosius (1706), whose call was: "Save yourself by flight into the wilderness, and if you are sought for by the authorities burn

* The Greek Orthodox Church recognized seven sacraments: Baptism, Chrism (also applied to baptized infants in place of Confirmation), the Eucharist, Penance, Orders, Honorable Marriage, and Unction of the Sick.

yourself, or perish by starvation, and you will gain the crown of martyrdom." The idea of redemption by suicide and "fiery baptism" took hold of large masses of extremists. They interpreted literally the Bible text: "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." To save their children from the accursed reign of Antichrist, these fanatics killed them, and whole families and communities volunteered to sacrifice themselves unto God as burnt offering. They shut themselves into barns and houses and then set them afire, guarding one another from escaping the ordeal. Others fled to the wilderness and perished of starvation and cold. It is estimated that 20,000 men, women, and children exterminated themselves in this manner. Many other thousands perished at the hands of their official enemies.

"The Old Believers" found their adherents mostly among the North Russians, to whose morbid nature a religion demanding so much sacrifice had a special appeal. Fleeing from their persecutors the "Old Believers" pushed farther and farther north, settling finally in the forest region of the Upper Volga, the Ural, and along the coasts of the White Sea. Others migrated to the southwest towards the Polish border, some crossing the frontier into East Prussia, where they are living in communities to this day. The more restless went further east into Siberia, and they also found adherents among the Cossacks of the Don region and the Caucasus. Wherever they settled in the wilderness, they established villages of a more or less communistic type, and by hard work and cooperation quickly prospered. Their accomplishments as pioneers and colonizers were extraordinary, and to them principally was due the Russianizing of the great area of the North and of Siberia, which until then

was populated only by widely scattered Finnish and Tartar tribes.

Catherine II, who prided herself on her religious liberality, was lenient with them and permitted them to have their settlements even in Moscow. Wealthy "Old Believers" endowed cemeteries near Moscow, for they are very particular to bury their dead in a ground specially consecrated for this purpose, in conformity with their creed. Within the cemetery walls they built churches and around those sprung up settlements, to which the faithful Old Believers flocked, and which to this day are the principal centers of their movement. For the Priestly there is the *Rogozhsky* Cemetery and for the Nonpriestly the *Preobrazhensky* Cemetery, both near Moscow.

Around the year 1770, a certain Euphimius rose up in protest against the compromises of the settlers in Moscow. He denounced city life as the modern Babylon and called the faithful to abandon landed property, which he considered to be the chief tie which held people down to settled life. "The land was, is, and ought to be God's," he declared, "man, should use it collectively, but never own it."

Under the slogan "Leave thy father and mother, take up thy cross, and follow me," the disciples of Euphimius incited the faithful to flee from the towns and villages and take up a nomad life. They were called *Beguny* (Runners) or *Straniki* (Wanderers), and no doubt their preaching had much to do with the spread of communistic and anarchistic ideas among the Russian peasants. The convert who entered the community of "true Christians," and became a "wanderer" was initiated by a ceremony of the "Wanderer's Baptism," which was performed at night in out of the way places. He de-

stroyed his passport and received in its place a piece of paper on which was drawn a cross and some sentence like: "This is the true passport, endorsed at Jerusalem." The "wanderer" carried a wooden bowl and spoon and a small ikon. They were supposed to be celibates, but in case of "weakness of the flesh" they tolerated illicit relations which, they argued, are better than marriage, "for a married man gives himself up to evil forever."

As the sect spread, it appeared impossible for all its adherents to take to the road; besides, they had to have friends where they could obtain food and shelter, and thus they developed a second category of "residents" or hospitalers whose duty was to assist the "Wanderers" with food and protection against the police, who had strict orders from the government to arrest these "holy tramps" and those who aided them. The "residents" were considered as novices of the sect and they did not attain perfection until they abandoned their homes and took the wanderer's staff, which often they did only in old age or when feeling that their life was coming to an end. The government tried its utmost to exterminate this sect, but the more the "Wanderers" were persecuted, the more adherents they gained, as was the case during the oppressive reign of Nicholas I. Here was an inevitable reaction to the existing social order with its serfdom, long military service, and bureaucratic oppression. The "wanderers" were rustic revolutionists, who slowly undermined the authority of the State and the Church, with their philosophy of Antichrist and the communistic ownership of the land.

Besides the radical "Wanderers," many other sects and groups formed within "The Old Believers" movement. Thus there were the "Gapers," who believed that God cannot deny to the faithful the flesh and blood of His

Son. At their Holy Thursday Service they stood with their mouths wide open, expecting that angels would come and feed them with the Holy Sacrament for which their souls were hungry.

The sect called "Molchalniki" (The Mutes) demanded vows of silence, but otherwise pursued a life similar to the "Wanderers" and probably was but a variety of them. Many of them were arrested, and in spite of the severest tortures they could not be forced to speak.

The "Nyemoliaki" (Nonprayers) were a mystical sect carrying the spirit of denial to its logical consequences. They rejected every outward form of worship and ritual and gave to scripture but an allegorical and rationalistic interpretation. They looked on everything as "spiritual" and believed they lived in the age of the Holy Ghost, where worship and understanding may be carried on only through the Spirit.

Similar to the "Nonprayers" were the "Denyers," who believed that since the reign of Antichrist commenced on earth all sacred things have been removed to heaven and therefore worship is possible only in direct communion with the Savior.

Akin to the mystical sects which developed within the ranks of "The Old Believers" is the widely spread spiritualistic sect of independent origin known as the "Hlesty" or "Christ's." They were first heard of at the end of the sixteenth century. Unlike the Old Believers they were from the beginning radically opposed to the ritualism of the Church, and all of their teachings have little in common with the doctrines of historical Christianity. Some students of this sect believe that it has many ideas in common with early Gnosticism.

"Hlesty" means flagellation, and the name has been attached to them because of their habit of whipping

themselves into a frenzy at their "spiritual" orgies. They prefer to call themselves *Ludy Bozhye* (People of God) or *Kristovtchina* (Community of Christ). The *Hlesty* have no books in order not to hamper the freedom of inspiration and revelation. "The book of life," they say, "which we must learn to read is written within our hearts." According to their tradition, the true faith was brought down by God Himself from heaven during the reign of Peter the Great. God descended to a Mount in Vladimir, and there took human form. In his state of incarnation, God became known as Daniel Philippovitch, who had said of himself: "I am the God announced by the prophets, come down on earth the second time for the salvation of the human race, and there is no God but me."

Daniel Philippovitch was a soldier in the army, and having deserted he declared himself the new incarnation of "Lord God Sabaoth." When a hundred years old, says the tradition, Daniel begot a son, the Christ, and then reascended to Heaven. This son was known by the name of Ivan Suslof, a serf of the Narishkin family, and appears to be the principal prophet of the sect. He selected twelve Apostles and decreed twelve commandments, which were handed to him by "Lord God Sabaoth," i. e. Daniel Philippovitch. Ivan Suslof, the first Christ, according to the tradition of the *Hlesty*, was flogged and persecuted and twice crucified, but rose every time and lived long on earth till he ascended to heaven to reunite with his father. The *Hlesty* believed that every man or woman may aspire to divinity and become either a "Christ" or a "Mother of God." Divination is the result of a holy life, and the sect has produced already many Christs. The commandments of the *Hlesty* form an ascetic code, prohibiting the use of

alcoholic drinks, attendance at feasts and weddings, marriage, and sexual intercourse; also, they forbid stealing and taking an oath.

The principal ceremonies of the sect are secret rites accompanied by great excitements and ecstasies. They gather at night in secret places in white garments. Forming a circle, the participants begin to sing and revolve, at first in measured time and slowly increasing in velocity until they work themselves into frenzy and exhaustion. The convulsions, screams, and sobbings of the hysterical men and women are taken for manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit. That these nightly orgies of emotional excitement end at times in immoral practices is probable, and mainly upon this suspicion they were suppressed by the authorities.

The lure of the *Hlesty* practices was so enticing that they found their way into convents and monasteries, and even into the drawing rooms of higher society and the Court. Lifeless Orthodoxy among the masses and the equally lifeless scepticism in higher circles made high and low alike receptive to any such cult.

Similar to the *Hlesty* are the *Skakuny* (The Jumpers). They appeared at first in Petrograd, and their origin is traced to foreign influence. They spread first among the Protestant Finns, but later also among the Russian population. The *Skakuny* worked themselves into ecstasy by singing and leaping. They also were accused of sexual licentiousness. Their custom was to come to their secret meetings in couples, and when they had reached the point of ecstasy they gave themselves to the celebration of the "Love of Christ" in darkened rooms. The Government investigation of these sects found that there were tendencies towards both asceticism and sensualism. The ascetic groups were a variety of Quakers whose

services consisted, according to their testimony, "in sacred singing and reading of the Bible, accompanied with salutes of brotherly love and endearments of Christian charity; in pious discourses from preachers whom the Spirit moves to stand up before the meeting; lastly, in prayers with quaking of the body, bending of the knees, and prostrations with weepings, groaning, or invocations, according to the feelings called forth by the preacher's words." Other groups, consisting mostly of younger people, had little of the mystic flavor and gave themselves over to sexual licentiousness under cover of a religious meeting.

These sects organized themselves secretly into lodges which the *Hlesty* called *Korables* (Ships). Each "Ship" was presided over by a prophet or a prophetess, and the whole movement was governed by a "Christ."

A more recent offshoot of the *Hlesty* is the sect of the *Sholopats*, first heard of about 1850. They were pronouncedly communistic and held all things in common.

The *Pliassuny* (Danders) are also related to the *Hlesty*, although outwardly they remained within the Church. There are many other varieties of the same tendency.

As a reaction to the sensualism of the *Hlesty* and *Skakuny* must be considered the ascetic sect of self-mutilating eunuchs, called *Skoptsy* (castrators) or "White Doves," as the adherents of the sect preferred to call themselves. They made their appearance about the year 1770. The founder of the sect was a member of the Petrograd community of *Hlesty*, an illiterate peasant, Selivanoff by name. He proclaimed himself "God of Gods and King of Kings," who had come to gather the faithful and with their aid and under their tutelage establish the Kingdom of the Messiah in Russia.

Selivanoff added to his divine honors also the honors of the "Czar of Russia," for he was considered the reincarnation of Peter III, who came to claim his throne usurped by Catherine II. The fundamental doctrine of the *Skoptsy* was based upon the literal interpretation of a few Bible texts; Matth. xix, 12, being the basis of their faith and practices: "For there are some eunuchs, who were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, who were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it."

They hold that the carnal union of the first parents of mankind was the "original sin." They preach and practice self-mutilation, believing that by means of a surgical operation they can attain perfect holiness and purity and become like angels. Their zeal for converts knows no obstacles. Like most Russian sectarians, the *Skoptsy* are millenarians; they believe that Christ will come and the reign of the "White Doves" will commence when their converts will have reached the prophetic number of 144,000. They zealously work to complete this number and spare no means to attain their goal.

Being continually watched by the police, they organized secretly, and like the *Hlestsy* call their lodges *Korables*. The Petrograd lodge, which is headed by a "Christ," is being entitled the "Royal Ship." Like the *Hlesty* they clad themselves in white gowns and employ the rotary dance to attain their ecstasy. Women are admitted to the sect on an equal basis with men and are very prominent, some of them being titled "Mothers of God." Their mutilation consists in cutting off the breasts, which is to make them unfit to nurse children.

The bloody initiations take place in hidden places at night, the victims being operated on when the ecstasy reaches its highest pitch. The *Skoptsy* are generally prosperous and they help one another in business.

Outwardly they appear to conform to the social order. They marry and sometimes have children before they submit themselves to the expiating sacrifice. After emasculation they are, of course, readily recognized by their flabby faces and effeminate voices. They know how to keep out of jail by bribing the police. They bloodily revenge themselves against those who dare to betray them. There is now a movement among them which repudiates physical mutilations and seeks to interpret the Scriptures spiritually. This promises to convert the *Skoptsy* into a community of voluntary celibates and make an end to their savage practices.

The seventeenth century, so prolific in religious movements, called into life also a number of sects which in their doctrinal ideas are not unlike those of the Quakers. The Russian *Dukhobory* (Wrestlers of the Spirit) is a sect which probably deviated from the *Hlesty* movement. Tolstoy became interested in them when he learned of their doctrines of the Kingdom of God within man and of their communistic principles, at which he had arrived himself in his search for the true religion. The *Dukhobory* believe that God is inseparable from man and that independent of man He does not exist. The Holy Trinity is memory, reason, and will. They deny the supernatural life and seek to make their paradise on earth. They worship God in man and their services consist in reverential bowing and mutual salutations. In the earlier history they also had their "Mothers of God," and even their present leaders enjoy much the same respect as the "Christs" of the *Hlesty*.

They repudiate the authority of Scriptures and believe in the "living book" within the hearts of men. They are vegetarians, pacifists, and mainly communists. Because of their resistance to the State, they have been severely persecuted. With the aid of Tolstoy, a considerable number of them emigrated to Canada, where they live prosperously and maintain their communistic order. The victorious Russian Revolution has awakened great hopes in them for a better day in Russia. Some of them now wish to return to their former homes to help establish the communistic social order in Russia.

Just as the revolution has thrust a rough and sudden hand into the ordered affairs of the Orthodox Church, so too it crashes bewilderingly into the obscure activities of these many sects. Within them, too, there is the struggle between the younger and the older generations. "The Old Believers" have their progressive youngsters who would make common cause with the reformers within the Orthodox Church, while the elders threaten to join hands with the reactionary elements of the Tikhon faction. However the conflict goes, no student of modern Russia who would go behind the scenes can afford to neglect the tremendous influences wrought by the sects on the life of the people.

CHAPTER XI

BAPTISTS AMONG BOLSHEVIKS

THERE is something faintly ironic in the thought of a Seventh Day Adventist delivering his doctrines to citizens of the first proletarian state. But he is there in Russia to-day together with Baptists, Molokans and Methodists, and the presence of these evangels is the cause of no little perplexity both to Soviet officials and the Orthodox Church. In fact the Evangelical Movement in Russia is growing so rapidly as to become an important factor in the religious life of the country.

So long as illiteracy was prevalent and the Bible a rare and expensive book, evangelism had little chance, but when at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, the vernacular Russian Bible was published by the Holy Synod under the patronage of Alexander I, the Evangelical movement became almost a mass movement. At present the various Evangelical sects have no less than five or six million adherents in Russia. These Evangelicals are to be distinguished in origin and spirit from the schismatic mystical or rationalist bodies previously described.

The oldest of these are the Molokans, "the milk drinkers," so called because of their habit of drinking milk on fast days, a custom prohibited by the Orthodox Church,

Quakers who have visited the Molokans say that in many respects the beliefs of the Russian evangelists are

similar to those of the Friends. The Molokans claim as their spiritual fathers Semenov, first martyr for the Evangelical faith in Russia, who was executed in Tambov during the Sixteenth Century, and Dr. Tverentinov of Moscow, who in the reign of Elizabeth felt the influence of Protestantism from the west. His extracts from the Bible serve as a religious text-book. The organizing work for the Molokans was done by Simon Ukleyn, a peasant who agitated against the Orthodox cult and called upon his followers to "live the life of the spirit" and become "Spiritual Christians." Ukleyn denounced all sacraments and any formal cult. He recognized the Bible as the source for apocalyptic hope and accepted it in its allegorical rather than literal sense. Ukleyn won his thousands. Alexander I looked upon his teachings with tolerance and in response to a petition from the Molokans permitted them to settle in remote districts along the Volga and in the Taurien Province. Later the Molokans suffered renewed persecutions and many of them were exiled to Siberia where their descendants still live in close communities. Some of them migrated to the United States. A Molokan community, by reason of its pacifist religious views, furnished some of the most notable American conscientious objectors in the World War.

The growth of the Baptist movement in Russia was largely at the expense of these Molokans. It began with German pietist colonists, Stundists and German Baptists in the eighteenth century. Energetic, well-organized, aflame with prophetic zeal, the Baptist missionaries were able to take over the running of religious affairs from the hands of the easy-going Molokans. As a result, you rarely come upon a Molokan meeting-house without finding a Baptist chapel next door.

With the restrictive measures against Evangelism removed as a result of the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the Evangelists have turned their missionary fire upon the Orthodox Church itself, much to the alarm of the latter. The way was cleared by the split within the Orthodox fold and, paradoxically enough, by the anti-religious propaganda of the Communists.

Anti-religious speakers entering a community would find ready listeners. When they left, more often than not the priests were driven from the villages and the Orthodox church building was turned into a club. But sooner or later an itinerant missionary, Baptist or Molokan or one of some similar belief would show up with his message of salvation, his preaching of the "True Gospel" and within a few months, a community apparently safely atheized, from the Communist standpoint, would be shouting the Slavic version of our familiar gospel hymns.

So effectively did these holy outriders prey upon the ranks of the Orthodox that in 1925 the Synod of the Orthodox Church called a special conference to discuss the distressing situation. The conference gave a number of reasons for the success of the evangels, chief among them the disorganization of the Orthodox Church. It set up a Home Mission Department to look into the matter more closely and study the methods of the evangelists. It is significant that one of the reasons attributed by the Orthodox conference for the acceptance of evangelistic teachings by the masses was that the Baptists, Adventists, etc., used "social and political slogans which are akin to the Communist ideas, for which they were formerly prosecuted but which now are looked on with tolerance by the new regime."

At present the Evangelical movement is marching on

triumphantly with little or no resistance on the part of the Orthodox Church or the Soviet Government. It probably will continue for some time to grow at the expense of the Orthodox Church, but not forever, and it must look forward to the training of the new generation which now is coming up in its midst.. This is recognized by some of the leaders of the movement, but so far they are little prepared for the task.

There is now noticed an inner stratification going on within the various sects, and new ones are springing up continually. Thus the Evangelical movement has quite definitely separated into the Baptist Church of the U. S. S. R. and the "Union of Evangelical Christians," led by I. S. Prokhanov, who originally was a Molokan and later a Baptist. The Evangelical Christians doctrinally differ little from the Baptists, but refuse to accept their name and are antagonistic to the Baptist organization, probably upon personal grounds. This union is numerically probably the largest, or second only to the Molokans who claim a membership of about two million.

In recent years the Seventh Day Adventist sect has also grown rapidly, drawing its membership probably more from the Baptists and Evangelicals than from the Orthodox Church.

Similarly, sects are growing which have highly mystical inclinations, such as the practice of "Speaking in Tongues" and expecting "a speedy consummation of things." They are known as the "Pentecostal Sect," the "People of God," the "Molevans," and so forth.

The Methodists also have their adherents, both of foreign and indigenous origin. The latter, having come from the Molokans, accept, as does the Methodist Church, child baptism and place their emphasis upon a

conscious experience of salvation and a striving for Christian perfection.

Throughout the century and a half of its history the Evangelical movement has steadily grown, overcoming the severest obstacles of persecution and every other handicap. It has sprung up wherever the Bible was placed in the hands of the people. In this respect the Bible societies working in Soviet Russia have rendered the movement a great service.

The Russian Orthodox Church, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, has never opposed the distribution of the Bible, particularly the New Testament, and there were millions of copies of Holy Scripture produced and sold by the publishing concern of the Holy Synod. The Soviet Government, which otherwise has introduced a rigid censorship upon books, has allowed the publication and distribution of the Bible, and there is now a new edition which was produced with the aid of the American Society.

The policy of the Soviet Government toward the sectarian movement has, on the whole, been favorable to them, and to no small degree accounts for their success. The reason for this is clear. The sectarians were severely persecuted under the old regime. Many of them were imprisoned or exiled to remote places, together with those revolutionists who at present are governing the country. In exile the Communists learned to appreciate these revolutionists of the spirit, and when the old regime collapsed and the Communists came to power they naturally could not but be sympathetic toward the sectarians.

Then some of the sects had communistic tendencies and the Government favored them for this reason. A declaration of the Soviet Department of Justice says:

"These sects adapt themselves quite readily to the common civil Soviet laws and regulations and organically unite as agricultural nuclei into the Soviet organizations, in spite of the religious form which their communistic tendencies, by force of historical conditions, have adopted. The task of the Soviet organs in regard to these organizations consists pre-eminently in seeing that these communistic organizations, developed and fortified with the aid of science and superior technic, continue in their adopted habits and modes of communistic organizations as industrial agricultural groups. Raised to a superior form, they will serve as practical examples of the possibility and advantage of Communism for the toiling population."

The Soviet Government recognizes that these religious communistic sects are experienced communists, and it intends to use them as an example to the people. Of course it hopes that education will slowly disintegrate their religious beliefs and that they will become good Marxists.

One of the problems of the Government in dealing with the sectarians is the latter's attitude towards military training and service in the Red Army. The pacifist sects under the old regime were treated with little concern and frequently brutally persecuted. During the civil war the Soviet Government had to face the problem of the conscientious objector. Its legislation is quite definite on the problem. In principle all citizens are subject to military service, but exemptions can be made by decision of the People's Court. The law reads:

"Persons who, due to their religious convictions, cannot take part in military service, after the decision of the People's Court are given the right on the stated term of call to substitute this service by hospital service, pref-

erably in hospitals for infectious diseases or by some other corresponding useful work according to the choice of the recruit himself.

"In view of the fact that the Courts receive petitions for exemption from military service from religious persons who not only officially belong to organizations which permitted active participation in imperialistic wars of the past and present, but who themselves have participated in them, the following principles must be adhered to:

"(a) According to the decree of 1/4 1919 they are subject to expert examination, which means that the given person (and not the religious group) must be known (by the expert) personally, or there must be a thorough inquiry into the life and activity of such persons, because the decree considers the activity of such persons in their past life and their struggle for freedom of religious convictions during the past period of czarism.

"(b) The People's Court has the right to call experts to the trial or to transfer the case to a corresponding Moscow Council of People's judges.

"(c) It is necessary that the case be brought to decision at the nearest session.

"(d) The Court may in its decision refuse to acknowledge the opinion of the experts as satisfactory and refuse the petition. If the Court observes, on the basis of the testimony of the petitioner or of his witness, that his adherence to a religious sect or creed of antimilitary religious opinion is not duly proven, it can be taken for granted that the person attempts to use the decree as a favorable means for him to avoid his civil duties in the Soviet Republic."

In trying cases of conscientious objectors the courts

pay due attention to the denominational affiliation of the objectors, and only those are considered entitled to exemption who belong to denominations which before the World War stood upon a non-resistance platform. Thus a considerable number of Baptists have been refused exemption on the ground that the Baptist Church did not advise its members to refuse service in the World War and hence should have no scruples in rendering service to the Red Army. In recent years the attitude of the Government toward conscientious objectors has been less and less lenient. There have been cases when members of sects which formerly were exempt are now compelled to render military service, even though without arms. The Government fears that by favoring certain religious groups it will encourage others who were not traditionally pacifists.

There also has been trouble between certain sectarian groups and the Government on the land question. A century ago, when the sectarians settled in the remote unpopulated places where there was no shortage of land, they developed their farms on a scale much larger than the usual allotment of the Russian peasant. Now, when a shortage of land makes itself felt and the Government is compelled to cut down on the old sectarian settlers, they are discontented and some desire to emigrate.

The question of religious education of the young has in some places been another cause of conflict between the sectarians and the Government. The law prohibits systematic religious instruction outside of the home before the age of eighteen. To this restriction some sectarians objected. On the whole, however, the question is settled by local mutual compromises and will adjust itself by the dictates of expediency.

The central problem which the Evangelists in Russia, as everywhere else in the world, have now to contend with, is the adjustment of the "old-time religion" to the workings of the "new machines." They have no educational facilities with which to train a leadership able to cope with the skilled propagandists of the Soviets, despite the fact of their temporary emotional successes. Remember that in Soviet Russia to-day every school child of twelve is taught the most advanced doctrines of evolutionary science. Naturally such teaching is in relentless opposition to the archaic doctrines of the sectarian theologians. The theological schools of the Evangelists have so far ignored this menace. They have no men who can satisfactorily reconcile the teachings of the "simon pure Gospel" with the materialism of a machine age. If coming generations of Evangelical Christians are to continue to flourish they must somehow work out this difficult formula. It seems as though they were to pass through an even more painful readjustment of opinions than is the apparent fate of their fellow Fundamentalists in the United States.

CHAPTER XII

THE RELIGIOUS TRAGEDY OF THE INTELLECTUAL CLASS IN RUSSIA.

THE religious history of the intellectual class of Russia is a tragedy. First of all, it is a severe indictment of the church of the old regime which, because of its unholy alliance with reactionary Czarism, has not even made so much as an attempt to win over to its fold the intellectual class, with its restless seeking after God and a more harmonious and better way of life. The clergy, with very few exceptions, had no understanding and no sympathy with the restlessness and spiritual cravings of intellectual youth. It adapted the policy of repression of free thought and free discussion, and thus altogether alienated the religiously-minded intellectuals from the Church.

The reasons for this alienation arose largely from the prostitution of the Church by the State. At present, when the Church has been set free from its three hundred years of State captivity, the main obstacle to the reconciliation of the intellectuals with the Church has been removed, at least for those who have no sympathy with the social revolution and the Communist dictatorship, and who are not infected by rationalistic scruples and theological modernism. But for those who still cherish modernist ideas there are serious obstacles in the ancient and immutable traditions and doctrines of the Church. These dogmas will not be abandoned, and all

that one may reasonably expect is that they will be revaluated and finally driven into obscurity by the new life of the Church.

Very many of the religiously-minded intellectuals felt deeply their estrangement from the Church. They complained that the Church had no message for the modern age, that it had become suffocated by its old traditions and doctrines. They bewailed this situation, and some serious attempts were made for reform within, but with little or no results.

Their grievances briefly stated were: that the Church had an ascetic view of life; that it despised the "flesh" as intrinsically evil and opposed to the spiritual man. It split man in two, and taught that in order to save the soul the body must be sacrificed. "Sinning," under this theory, meant the abuse of the body in lustful unrestrained living; "saving the soul" meant "despising the world and mortifying the flesh." Either way meant some hurt to the body.

To speak of a "Christian athlete," as would a Western Christian, would sound blasphemous to the pious Russian Orthodox. Piety in the Russian sense means the cross, sorrow, mortification of the flesh, and death. One of the able contemporary apologists* of the Russian Orthodox point of view says:

"Asceticism is the foundation of historical Christianity. It is its principal peculiarity; it is its pillar of truth, and in Russia it has received a particular emphasis. . . . In asceticism—in the merging of the body into the mystery of Christ, in this beautiful sorrow lies the true life of a Christian; besides such mode of life he does not want any other, for his Kingdom is not of this world. Death and the Russian soul are inseparable. . . .

* Zakrzhevsky's *Religion*, Russian, 1913.

Christianity, particularly contemporary Christianity, is exclusively construed upon the idea of death, and if there were no death, there would be no Christianity. *The Church could not receive the intellectuals and unite with them, for this would have meant to betray its eternal traditions, it would have meant to pay tribute to the prince of this world.*" * This frank statement of the position of the Church lifts the curtain upon the religious tragedy of Russia's intellectual class.

The Russian religious thinkers—who could not accept the traditional asceticism of the Church but who craved for a religion of the abundant life, a religion of joy and harmony, a religion of the unity of man—were hopelessly at odds with the Church, which at its best was willing to wink at the flesh and graciously forgive it, but never sanctify, never harmonize it with the spirit. Another grievance of the intellectuals was that the Church was discouraging the efforts of the social reformer who wanted to see Christ's Kingdom established on earth. The Russian Church looked at the world as hopelessly lost. Its message was to flee the world, save one's soul, and prepare for the Kingdom in heaven. In this connection it frowned on worldly learning, art, and science as anti-Christian, and thus deepened the gulf between the intellectuals and the Christian Church.

The beginning of this alienation dates back to the foundation of the Russian universities, particularly the University of Moscow, where in close fraternal circles students, professors and scholars met to discuss the great spiritual and social questions which troubled their minds. "What is the meaning and purpose of life?" this was the great issue of the thinking Russians. It became the

* The italics are mine.

pivot around which questions of Theism and Atheism, Individualism and Socialism turned. The revolutionary movement in Russia, particularly of the last century down to the 1905 revolution, is closely related to this spiritual movement of the intellectuals. To them it was an outlet for the idealistic impulses which stirred their souls. The young men and women of the universities sought a field of service, of sacrifice, of self-expression. To a certain extent the successive revolutionary movements in Russia were somewhat analogous to the religious revival movements in America. Young men and women, often from families of nobility and wealth, cut loose from the home ties and society privileges and went among the common people, suffering persecution from State and Church and the ingratitude of the ignorant and superstitious peasants whom they sought to benefit.

These revolutionary revivals were regularly crushed by the brute force of the Russian autocratic regime until it finally destroyed itself during the World War and the great revolution.

Each defeat of the revolutionists was followed by spiritual depression and general disappointment and expressed itself in all kinds of religious and moral perversion. The more mystically inclined drifted into extreme religious individualism and mysticism; others sought refuge in the Marxian philosophy of historical determinism; others turned cynics, despising the world and their own spiritual consciousness. These periods of depression were also characterized by moral decadence and general social disintegration.*

* The spiritual loneliness and moral despair after the failure of the 1905 revolution showed itself in the increases of suicides of university students: in 1902 there were 10 cases; in 1904 (year of revolution)

The moral decadence of the Russian intellectuals reached its climax after the failure of the revolution in 1905, following the debacle of the Russo-Japanese War. Feeling themselves impotent to obtain political and economic freedom, the Russian youth rose in revolt against the moral law. The philosophy for this revolt was given them by Artsybashev in his sensational novel *Sanine*, which appeared in 1907. Artsybashev, speaking through *Sanine*, ridicules the struggles for political rights and advocates individual happiness through unrestrained gratification of desire. He considers it superfluous to have any theory of life, or to be guided by any principle, or to ask about God, or to have any regrets or prickings of conscience. Drunkenness and adultery are nothing to be ashamed of, and there is no such thing as sin. Love of strong drink and the lust for women are manly and natural passions, and what is natural cannot be wrong. Christianity, he claims, teaches that man must live contrary to his natural instincts, and therefore "Christianity has played an abominable role in history, and the name of Jesus Christ will for some time yet oppress humanity like a curse." This immoral anarchism was immediately put into practice by the intellectual youth. Some young men and women were invited into societies for "unrestrained gratification of natural desires," so that speakers in the Duma alluded to this situation as "sanine-morals," which the government did not suppress because *Sanine* was not politically dangerous. Only a few remained faithful during these years of trial, and upon these faithful lay the obligation to become the leaders of a new religious-revolutionary re-

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20 cases; in 1906 (beginning of reaction) there were 71 cases; in 1908 (growth of reaction) there were 160 cases; and in 1908 (climax of reaction) there were 237 cases.

vival which repeated itself with every new generation.

This is the background for the religious tragedy of the Russian intellectual class. Religion and political and moral revolution may be considered as synonymous in this movement, or at least as inseparable. The creative religious impulses precipitated into revolutionary outbreaks against the forces of injustice and oppression, and at times developed into a large mass movement. In defeat the intellectuals turned to self-analysis, to self-abnegation and despair, or to the messianic-apocalyptical hope for a better world to come.

The Church in Russia either stood aside or was openly hostile to these successive spiritual awakenings among its intellectual young people who were destined to become the future leaders of the New Russia. No wonder that when finally the Revolution succeeded, but little sympathy was shown to the Church by the leaders of the Revolution. During this period of prostitution of the Church by the State there were but few priests who lifted their voices in warning the Church, and they were quickly silenced by the all-powerful hierarchy, so the Church remained deaf to the spiritual need of the age.

Among the few prophetic personalities of the Church it is no more than just to mention Father Gregory Petroff. He was a remarkable man with a clear prophetic vision. He entered the priesthood out of conviction and did not belong to the clerical caste, from which the priesthood is generally recruited in Russia. His parish was in a Petrograd factory district. Moved with compassion for his poor parishioners he commenced to preach a social gospel, and the common people and some intellectuals flocked to hear him. He was powerful and fearless as speaker and writer, and his religious tracts and periodicals were read widely. Some of the

courtiers took an interest in him and called him as instructor to certain members of the imperial family. He did his utmost to convince those in power of the need of thorough reform, but he found no response among them.

Then he returned to the people, but the hierarchy of the Church had already decided to silence him. He was to be tried for heresy and disloyalty to the Church. Knowing that he could not expect any justice from the clerical court, he wrote an open letter to his Archbishop which is a remarkable document and gives in brief the message he had fearlessly proclaimed—a message which has not lost its significance even to this day. In this letter he compares the Russian Greek Orthodox Church to its mother Church, the Cathedral of Saint Sophia at Constantinople, which for centuries has been desecrated by the Turks. He says, "The famous temple of the wisdom of God is sunk into the ground by piles of rubbish, it is surrounded by all kinds of extensions and superstructures so that only with great difficulty can one make out the original idea of the architect." The same thing is true with the Russian Church. "The foundations, the walls, the principles of Jesus Christ and his Gospel, are still there, but how have they sunk into the ground, how are they barricaded with all kinds of superstructions, and extensions—it is but with difficulty that one can get at the Living Christ." Then he fearlessly censures the prostitution of the Church by the State, whose Czar has made himself Lord over the Church, even with a capital "L."

"We have to-day, after nineteen centuries of preaching, individual Christians, separate persons, but no Christianity; there is no Christian legislation; our customs and morals are no longer Christian; there exists

no Christian government. It is strange to speak of the Christian world. The mutual relations of the various people are altogether contrary to the spirit of the gospel; the most Christian states maintain millions of men for mass butcheries, sometimes of their neighbors and sometimes of their own citizens.

"To justify these monstrous butcheries the very soul of the mystified population is sapped away. The same butcheries are erected into a science. They are the object of the military art, the art of killing. In what way are these relations of Christian people distinct from the relations of the people of pagan antiquity? . . .

"The ruling regular clergy, with its cold, heartless, bony fingers, has stifled the Russian Church, killed its creative spirit, chained the Gospel itself, and sold the Church to the Government. There is no outrage, no crime, no perfidy of the State authorities which the monks who rule the Church would not cover with the mantle of the Church, would not bless, would not seal with their own hands. What power would the voice of the Church possess were it raised in genuine Christian words, if it should speak them to the rulers and to the people, to revolutionists and to reactionaries, if it should speak to the whole country! Such words would become the voice of the eternal Gospel truths addressed to the conscience of the country. They would chime above the thunders of revolution, above the clamor of execution, like the voice of a church bell through the howling of the tempest. . . .

"In the Church the creative power of truth became withered, dried, and anaemic; separated from life, the thought of the Church was condemned to turn about in the world of abstract dogma and theological discussions. . . . God was reasoned about without being introduced

into life itself. A sort of special Atheism was created, practical Atheism. Certainly in words and thoughts the existence of God was recognized, but life activity went forward as if it was not so, as if God was only an abstract word, a sound without meaning. . . ."

It is needless to say that this letter aided the Holy Synod in condemning and exiling Father Petroff. Today the reformed Orthodox Church recognizes Father Petroff as one of its precursors and martyrs.

The religious tragedy of the intellectual class of Russia has been understood by its best literary geniuses and philosophers: Gogol, Dostoievsky, Tolstoy, Soloviev, Berezhkovsky, Berdyaev, Rosanov, Alexander Block, and many others, who were deeply religious men. Their literary works tell the story of their spiritual struggles and of their almost desperate search for God and the meaning and purpose of life. They were called at times the "God-wrestlers and seekers after God." Almost all "were reconciled to God through Christ," whom they laud as the only hope of the world. Few, however, reconciled themselves to the historical Church. The majority looked either towards a social theocracy which would follow some world cataclysm, or towards the invisible Church of a universal Christian civilization.

Dostoievsky is without question the most dramatic personality in this company of God-seekers. He found God by way of Gethsemane. Being condemned to death for belonging to a secret society of liberal men of letters, he actually lived through the agonies of death, his death sentence being changed to Siberian exile only a few moments before execution. He knew how to appreciate the religion of sorrow, the mystery of the death of Christ, and the crucifixion of self for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. He knew this aspect of the Russian religion

and he loved it. But he also knew the other side. The struggles of the Russian soul for the fullness and joy of life were not alien to him. He himself lived through the fearful conflict of the flesh and the spirit. He knew the intellectual difficulties of the Russian student, his aspirations of the mind and his cravings of the heart. The heroes of his great novels are all God-seekers and God-wrestlers; they speak his mind, and at the same time introduce to us the various religious and intellectual types of the Russian people.

There is Kirilov (hero of the novel *Demon*) who revolts against the Church and the established order, yet is not anti-religious and not a blasphemer as may appear on the surface. He says when questioned about prayer: "I worship everything. Do you see that spider creeping on the wall? I look at him and am thankful to him that he creeps." His religion was something of a homotheism, a deification of man, of the abundant life. It was a protest against the humiliation of sickness and death, and he kills himself rather than be subject to this humiliation. Kirilov is not an imaginary nor isolated character among the Russians. We shall recognize some of his characteristics among such Russian "Neochristians" as Merezhkovsky, Berdyaev, and Rosanov.

Religion to Dostoievsky was a life necessity. It was a supernatural power which gave life a meaning, in spite of its contradictions, its sufferings, and death. Dostoievsky did not trust reason, he trusted the heart, and no one could read the secrets of the human soul so well as he.

In his *Brothers Karamazov* he portrays the principal characteristics of his people. There is the rationalistic intellectual in Brother Ivan Karamazov, who has reasoned himself out of religion and out of morality,

turning the God-man into a man-God. Dostoievsky shows how this pure intellectualism may become a-moralism among his people. Ivan takes great pleasure in teaching his atheistic ideas to his valet Smerdyakov, which finally lead the latter to crime. Smerdyakov, following the reasoning of his master, says: "Since there is no God and no immortality, it behooves modern man to take the place . . . and, if it be in his interest, light-heartedly to leap over the former moral barriers of the former man-slave; for God there exists no law! Where God is, he owns the place. Hence where I am, I am first. . . . All is permitted. That is the end of it." And he light-heartedly kills his old master who got in the way of his interests.

Dostoievsky firmly believed that the Russian people were unable to live without God, that no reasoning, no sin, no crime, could crush out their religious sentiment. The characters of his novels who profess atheism are always unhappy creatures, and either end their lives by suicide or insanity, or repent and get reconciled to God.

Dmitry, one of the brothers Karamazov, a passionate carnal fellow, is accused, although innocent, of the murder of his father. Sentenced to go in chains to the horrible prisons of Siberia, he cries out: "Oh, yes, we shall be in chains, there will be no freedom; but there in our great sorrow we shall anew be resurrected to joy, without which no man can live. God must be, for he gives joy, this is His great privilege. . . . How could I be down there underground without God? . . . If God be driven from the earth, we shall meet him under the earth. A Siberian convict cannot live without God, even less than those who are not convicts. We underground

beings out of the bowels of the earth shall sing a tragic hymn to God, who has joy. Long live God and His joy! I love him."

Dostoievsky's ideal Christian is portrayed in his *Idiot*. This character, by no means fictitious, is an epileptic, like Dostoievsky himself. He is sweet-tempered, an incarnation of beauty and holiness. "Just as a mother is happy when she sees the first smile of her nursling, so God experiences joy every time when, from the light of heaven, He sees a sinner lift towards Him a fervent prayer." Such language is peculiar to his *Idiot*. Folks who came to be amused by him and scoff at him left in a mood of prayer. His simple life without pride, deceit, revenge, or ambition was a wonderful synthesis of beauty and prayer. A later character, Aloesha, the youngest of the brothers Karamazov, is as beautiful a character as the "Idiot," and is, besides, healthy and strong, not suffering from epilepsy. He is interesting as a link of reconciliation to the spiritual Church, for he wanted to be a monk but finally decides to return to the world, for he loves life. Dostoievsky felt deeply the corruption within the Church, and yet he realized an imperative need for it as a bond of the spiritually minded and as a means of saving the State and society from disintegration. The Church and the common people were to Dostoievsky almost synonymous. He calls them the God-bearers (*Bogonoscy*). He believed that they had the Kingdom of God within them and would keep alive an unsophisticated idea of God.

Dostoievsky abhorred dogmatism and clericalism. He clung to Christ not because of any categorical imperative or necessary principle in a system of thought. Christ was to him the giver of life, the great liberator

from sin, and the founder of the Church as a spiritual Kingdom. In a letter to a friend* he says: "If somebody should prove to me that Christ is outside the Truth, if it actually should appear that the Truth is outside Christ, nevertheless I should prefer to stay with Christ rather than with the Truth."

Today, as never before, Dostoievsky is the spokesman of that remnant of the old Russian intellectuals who either live in exile throughout the world and feel that they are atoning for the historical sins of their class, or live under the dictatorship of the proletarians deprived of their former privileges. Many of them have accepted the social revolution and see in it an opportunity for unselfish service to the toiling people. They do not mourn the loss of their wealth and privileges, and, like their teacher, Dostoievsky, they have reconciled themselves to God and mankind through suffering. Many also have returned to the Church, and today the old enmity between the Church and the non-communist intellectuals has ceased.

The religious tragedy of the intellectual class which Dostoievsky and, in a certain way, Tolstoy, also,† had experienced in their own lives and which was reflected in the lives of the heroes of their great novels, manifested itself at the beginning of this century in an open religious movement, which some of its critics labelled as

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* Mme. N. D. Von Visin.

† I do not analyze Tolstoy's religious teachings in this treatise, because they are already quite well known. He is usually classified as a religious anarchist. He took the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's prayer as the basis of his religious belief, emphasizing Christ's commandment of non-resistance to evil. He believed that evil could be overcome only by the good and by an unselfish love. He has left some followers who continue to advocate his doctrines and form something of a sect of their own, although because of their anarchistic principles they do not maintain an organization.

the "Neo-Christian movement." It had two distinct trends: (1) individualistic, culminating in religious anarchism, and (2) social, developing finally into religious socialism.

Merezhkovsky, Berdyaev, and Rosanov are the brilliant representatives of the individualistic trend. Bulgakov, A. Block, and, in a way, Lunacharsky are religious socialists.

D. S. Merezhkovsky * is a typical modern Russian intellectual, a poet and an individualist, who abhors the utilitarianism of modern industry, science, and art as much as the commonness and mediocrity of the social democratic movement, the asceticism and spiritual dullness of the Church, and the moral and religious nihilism of his own intellectual class. In utter despair at the spiritual and cultural bankruptcy of modern civilization he leaps into the unknown and becomes an ardent seeker after God, a maker of a new religious philosophy.

In telling the story of his spiritual bankruptcy, he says: "We come to the end of the historical highway; to go any further is impossible, but we know that when history ends then religion begins. At the edge of an abyss we naturally and inevitably get thoughts of wings, of flight, of a superhistorical way—religion." He is conscious that his search for God, for a religion, is as yet a part of his egotism, a supreme desire to save himself from a life of despair and eternal death. He knows it and fervently prays to God to give him a heart of love for all mankind. During this period of desperate

* To the English reader he is known through his critical character study *Tolstoy and Dostoievsky*, a book which has received considerable attention among students of Russian character and literature; other works in Russian from which I quote are *Revolution and Religion*, *Not Peace but the Sword*, *The Last Saint*, *The Coming Serf*, *The Struggle for Doctrine*, *About the New Religious Functionings*, etc. He now lives abroad, having been unable to reconcile himself to the Communist dictatorship.

struggle for a new life he wrote a number of lyrics, all of them heart-rending prayers. To quote one stanza:

"I am frightened for I have loved no one all my life;
Is it possible that my heart shall be dead forever?
Give me strength, O Lord, to love my brother!"

In his desperate struggle for a way out of his spiritual darkness he knocks at the door of the Church. In 1902 he gave the initiative for the founding of the Religious and Philosophical Society. He called upon his fellow intellectuals to be reconciled to the Church, to come and learn from it. But these efforts failed. He complained that the Church did not understand them, that it had no message for them. When the teachers and prelates of the Church and the God-hungry intellectuals met, they talked in languages strange to one another. Says Merezhkovsky: "Out of old habit the Church saw in us, people from the world, only unbelievers whom they needed to convert. But we, or at least some of us, believed not less than all these monks and priests. For us, faith was a wonder, to them almost wearisome; to us a depth of mysticism, to them a positive standard; to us a holy feast, to them a week-day; to us a holy vestment which we did not dare to wear, to them an old every-day robe. The words of the Holy Scriptures which sound to us like the thunders of the holy mountain were to them at the best liked mechanically learned texts of the catechism, with a meaning like the rattling of a counting board or hammerings upon a soundless keyboard. We wanted that the face of Christ should be like the shining sun in its full power, and they were contented with a tarnished old ikon in which no one could detect real features. . . . They could not understand that we

did not want that the Church should pardon the sinful flesh but that it should bless and sanctify the body." Thus, the historical Church proved a disappointment to Merezhkovsky's intellectuals. It had no actual contact with real life and seemed surrounded by a Chinese wall of the past. Its pretended asceticism, which considered sex at its best as a necessary evil and not as a revelation of God, was particularly repulsive to the intellectuals. They knew from experience how degrading an influence it had upon morality, and so Merezhkovsky set out to formulate his own religious doctrine. He felt the need of doctrine, which may seem strange to us who are accustomed to a non-dogmatic point of view in religion. But Merezhkovsky is a Russian intellectual, and as a Russian intellectual he cannot act unless he is guided by a clearly-defined principle. He called doctrine a diamond-edged sword.

Present-day Russian Christianity seemed to him something like a tomb of Christ. He called it a sterile religion. He abhorred asceticism, which he believed incompatible with the Christian message. Christ had risen not only in the spirit but in the body. Hence the ultimate mystery of Christianity is not the separation of body and soul, but the union of the body and the soul into sacred harmony. "If the flesh," argues Merezhkovsky, "is the absolute impurity, a negation of God and the pure spirit, why then was Christ, the Word, manifested in the flesh? Why the resurrection of the body? Why the sacrament of the body and the blood? . . . The Word which was made flesh and dwelt amongst us is a revelation of the very essence of God, incarnated in the world, and becoming immanent in the world." He believes that the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, between individualism and socialism, can be solved through the

Christian idea of the Trinity. To him the Trinity corresponds to three Kingdoms, the Kingdom of the Father, the Kingdom of the Son (New Testament), and the Kingdom of the Spirit, which unites these three Kingdoms into one. In the Kingdom of the Father, truth was revealed as the power of God, in the Kingdom of the Son truth was revealed as love, in the coming Kingdom of the Spirit love is revealed as liberty. He believes this doctrine of the Trinity solves the unbelievable metaphysical dualism of flesh and spirit, of heaven and earth, of the world and God. The opposites become one through the metaphysical interpretation of the Trinity. Merezhkovsky looks forward toward an apocalyptical Church, a Church which Christ will gather round himself at his second coming, which may appear outwardly anarchistic, inwardly socialistic, but in its synthesis will be the unlimited liberty of the individual held together in the congregation by the unlimited ties of love. By the aid of this dogma Merezhkovsky hoped to give the intellectuals a metaphysical working hypothesis for religious action and social expression.

When Merezhkovsky took the thorny path and went forth "seeking God," he believed that there existed two truths: a Christian truth about heaven and a pagan truth about the earth. The ideal religion of the future, he thought, would unite these two truths. But before he got very far he began to realize that the hope for unity of Christ and Antichrist is a blasphemous lie. "I learned," he says, "that both truths, that of heaven and that of earth, have been already united in Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, in the same Christ who is witnessed of by Catholic Christendom, that in Him alone is not only the perfect, but the ever-growing truth, and that there shall be no other except in

Him. . . ." His voluminous works which, he believes, in spite of their seeming variety, are but links in one chain and have but one purpose, he dedicates to that generation of Russians "who will understand that Christianity is not only a thing of the past, but that it exists now and will exist in the future; that Christ is not only the truth of the past and the present, but an endlessly growing truth; that the liberation of Russia and the liberation of the world cannot be realized except in the name of Christ."

Berdyaev* is another of the leading Neo-Christians of modern Russia. Like Merezhkovsky he turned to religion because he could see no sense to life in the whirlpool of modern civilization. Science and the materialistic philosophy which dominated the minds of the intellectuals at the beginning of this century could not satisfy the religious cravings of his sensitive, self-conscious soul. "I need religion," he confesses, "because I want to live eternally, I want to assert my personality in the common life. I want to identify myself with the world unrestrained, and not by fatal necessity."

Like Merezhkovsky, he is disappointed in historical Christianity which, by its ascetic view of life, has disrupted the harmony of body and spirit, of the individual and society. His hope is riveted on the second coming of Christ, which, unlike Merezhkovsky, he understands mystically. The spirit of Christ, he believes, will establish the harmony of body and spirit, of the individual and society. It will also emancipate the creative impulses in man which now are fettered by a false materialistic

* N. Berdyaev's principal works are: *The Philosophy of Liberty, Sub specie aeternitatis, The Spiritual Crisis of the Intellectual Class, The Metaphysics of Sex and Love, Christ and the World*, etc. All are in Russian.

determinism and a wrong social order. As much as the democratization of society he wants to see the aristocratization of the individual. He says: "I believe that a spiritual aristocracy is possible in a democratic society, and it will have little in common with the trend of political and social standardization. It must be an aristocracy which raises itself above all class and group morality and will give new impulses for further progress; without such a class there would be stagnation and the rule of the herd."

There can be no spiritual aristocracy, however, as long as the mind of man is fettered by philosophical, ecclesiastical, and moral tradition. Ethical ideals, he contends, must be free from social control. The first condition of spiritual and ethical progress is profound respect for the spiritual man; it is liberty. The common, every-day morality must be overcome by a new religious regeneration, which by its very nature is above every code of morals.

The new religious consciousness is attracted as much by Calvary as by Olympus. "We are drawn," he says, "not only by the suffering God who died at the cross, but also by the God Pan, the God of earthly elements, the God of the joys of life, by the old Goddess Aphrodite, the Goddess of plastic beauty and earthly love." The new religious consciousness craves for a synthesis of Olympus and Calvary. It wants the fullness of life; it wants to unite the opposite poles of the religion of suffering and the religion of joy and beauty.

This synthesis Berdyaev hopes to see realized in the messianic Church, which is to be a free theocracy headed by the returned Christ. "We seek a church," he concludes, "which will embrace the fullness of life, all of the world's experience which has proved of actual value

in history. Outside the walls of this church should be left nothing except non-existence. Inside the church should be all of our values, all that we have gained by suffering in the world; all our love, all our thoughts and poetry, all our creativeness which so far has been excluded by the historical church. All our great men, all our elevating impulses and visions, and all which heretofore was thought of as only transcendental."

In Berdyaev we have an incarnation of the religious tragedy of the Russian soul with its deep desire for reconciliation of the carnal and the spiritual impulses in which his life is so rich.

In analyzing the individualistic trend of the Neo-Christian Movement in Russia, one must mention also Rosanov,* who in many ways is the most original of the modern religious thinkers of Russia. Like Merezhkovsky and Berdyaev, he struggles to find a solution to the conflict of body and spirit, or individual and society. But unlike them he is against dogmatism: "Why make over the wonderful words of the Gospel into relatively rotten words of dogmatism? Dogma is something deadening. Christianity during the period of the 'Church fathers' and the construction of creeds has lost its simplicity, its charm, its affection, and its power of attraction. . . ."

Like Merezhkovsky and Berdyaev, Rosanov revolted against the asceticism of the Church. To him all that is human, all that appears to be a source of life, is sacred. Religion to him is a joyful wedlock of God and man. He considers sex the greatest and perhaps the

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* V. V. Rosanov was a conservative in politics. His principal works on the religious question are *Near the Walls of the Church, The Dark Image, In the World of Obscurity and Indecision, The People of the Moonlight, Loneliness, About the Nondogmatism of Christianity.*

only existing miracle. It is the great mystery. And yet, he complains, "historical Christianity is sexless." In Christ the world was embittered. Into the joyful life of the flesh Christianity injected the poison of death.

Rosanov believed that the solution of the religious tragedy of the Russian soul lay in the deification of sex. "There is no life outside of sex." It may seem on the surface that Rosanov is a materialist and a sensualist; but his materialism is different, it is mystical. The "flesh" becomes in his mind almost spiritual, and in this peculiarity lies the force of his appeal. Although Rosanov was considered by the official clergy as the most heretical among the Neo-Christians, he himself, in spite of his bitter criticism, has alienated himself least from the Church. In his book "Loneliness," he says: "The Church is the only poetical, the only profound thing on the earth. My God, how could I for eleven years continually attack it? . . . How beautiful it is that in the Church we are all brothers."

That which was felt by Rosanov during the trials of the revolutionary period has become quite general with the remnants of his class. They have returned to the Church to spend in it their last days and to die in it. This is one aspect of the tragedy.

The leaders of religious thought in pre-revolutionary Russia whom I have mentioned, whatever their deviations from orthodoxy may have been, expressed a positive and optimistic view on religion and life and hoped for a regeneration of society through the divine power as revealed in Christ. There are, however, other thinkers whose approach is altogether pessimistic and negative, but because of their incurable religiousness they have given their spirit of negation a religious interpretation in order to save themselves from inevitable despair.

Interesting in this respect is the religious nihilist, N. M. Minsky,* who was one of the first to revolt against the soullessness of the materialistic philosophy adhered to by his generation of intellectuals. The truth he believed to have discovered was: "If there is any purpose in life, it is to be attained not in the interests of everyday life but in something deeper and mysterious which is to be sought not outside of self, but within oneself." Minsky's philosophy is not a product of pure logic, it reflects the deep spiritual suffering of a sensitive soul and the despair of helplessness in the face of death. Turning his back on the utilitarianism and materialism of his age, he retreats into his own self and becomes an egocentric pessimist. He recognizes nothing as real but his own unhapppy self. He subjects all existing values to a destructive criticism, and rejects art, love, self-sacrifice, beauty, modern science, in short, all values, both good and evil. But when he faces the phenomenon of death he cannot reject it, and it hurts him as a painful and horrible reality. "Death is not only cruel, but it is unjust and revengeful." In his complaint, in his despair, in his ruthless spirit of negation, he grasps at the idea of God and constructs a peculiar religious philosophy which he believes does guarantee him inner liberty and peace of mind.

He calls his philosophy "meonism." Meon is a Greek term by which Plato signified the nonexisting. To facilitate the understanding of his theory I shall briefly retell the myth of *Meon*: In the beginning there was no world, no existence. There was only *God—Meon*, the substance of all being, knowledge, and beauty. All

* N. M. Minsky expressed his religious ideas in *The Religion of the Future*, *In the Light of Conscience*, and *Serenades*. All works are in Russian.

forms of existence were potentially present in him but could not enter into conscious existence as long as *Meon* existed only in himself. Then in his loneliness he decided to sacrifice himself by the utter negation of self in order to bring forth the world. He said: "Let there come forth a world which will be an opposite of myself; a world in which there shall be no greatness and no goodness, but only things larger and smaller, better and worse; a world which moves endlessly and is full of innumerable disrupting beings, unequal but comparable to each other, different but passing one into the other, struggling yet burdened by one another. I want to resign my being to the many, to give them freedom, reason, the joy of existence, and the grace of self-sacrifice; I want to live and die in the many and become the object of their unselfish love and yearning." Thus Meon sacrificed himself and created a pluralistic universe having the characteristic of no beginning and no end, with a yearning for unity and yet because of its plurality unable to attain it.

Thus Meon is no more than a memory of what he once was. He no longer exists, for if he did the universe would cease to exist. Minsky exalts this memory of Meon as his God. He worships him, aspires unto him, yet is always conscious that he, the non-existent, cannot be reached. Because the ideal is out of reach, therefore it is desirable and holy! This fantastic religion of the non-existent Meon will not be taken seriously by philosophers, but it demonstrates the deep-seated yearning for religious comfort even in the nihilistic type among the Russian intellectuals.

These Neo-Christian philosophers had considerable influence among the intellectuals until the revolution upset their dreams. The Bolshevik appeared to them as

the incarnation of Antichrist. Their aesthetic sense of life could not reconcile itself to the rough and ready ways of a proletarian revolution. They emigrated to Western Europe and thus shut themselves off from directly influencing the new generation of proletarian intellectuals, who hardly know them by name.

In fact, one can no longer speak of an intellectual class in Soviet Russia. As a class it was broken up by the revolution and a large part of it fled to Western Europe and America, where it lives like a plant which has been torn from its native ground. It does not feed on the joys and woes of its people from which it is severed, and it cannot make available to the people the fruit of its labors. This exile of the intellectual class from its native land is the culmination of its tragedy. How long will it last? A decade has passed already. A new generation is growing up which has new ideas and new hopes. Sooner or later the old intellectuals will return, or at least their literary works will become available to the new generation. But will they understand them and appreciate them? Who can tell?

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION: TO BE OR NOT TO BE

THERE are two forces which at present struggle for the spiritual hegemony of the people of the U. S. S. R. They are the religious, predominantly Christian, conception of life and the Materialist-Marxian.

Religion: is it to be or not to be in the new civilization which the people of the Soviet Union are developing? This is the question which above all interests us now. What are the forces in the scales of history which will determine the spiritual future of the Soviet nation?

First of all, one may definitely state that a return to the past is just as impossible as it is for America to abandon the automobile or the railway and return to the horse cart. Whatever may be said in criticism of the Russian Revolution, one thing is certain: it has swept away permanently the old order of things, and out of the revolutionary chaos emerges a new type of civilization.

Bolshevism, with its dictatorship of the proletariat, is unquestionably a despotism, perhaps more ruthless than that of the old regime. But, whereas, Czarism was a despotism with a closed and barricaded door to progress and democracy, the proletarian dictatorship has a wide and open door to true democratic progress.*

* Many who criticize the Bolshevist movement because of its dictatorship must remember that the existing class stratification in Russia left no alternative. There was practically no middle class in Russia, and therefore the choice was between the hopeless Czarist despotism and

The forces at work in the creation of a new type of civilization in Russia are plainly visible and may only be diverted into the dangerous channels of militarism and bureaucracy by the continued dangers of new interventionist wars.

That Russia would develop a new type of civilization was the common belief of all its sociological schools. Slavophils and Westerners * prophesied it, and for a century these thinkers looked for the collapse of the old Europe and the rise of a new type of civilization which was to spread all over the world and thus rejuvenate the old social order. Some eight decades ago one of the brilliant Slavophil-philosophers † wrote these prophetic words: "Western Europe presents a strange, saddening spectacle. Opinion struggles against opinion; power against power; throne against throne. Science, art and religion, the three motors of social life, have lost their force. We venture to make the assertion, which to many may seem strange at present, but which will be

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the dictatorship of the proletariat. Those who hoped to build a government in Russia around the small nuclei of a liberal group of politicians representing the intellectual middle class did not realize that this was impossible because these liberal intellectuals were but a handful and had no backing from either the old military caste, the nobility and bureaucracy, or the peasantry and the proletariat. The peasantry, which represents 85 percent of the population, was politically indifferent, and in joining the revolution sided with or to be more exact, tolerated, that governing party which gave them the much-coveted land held by the crown, the Church, and the nobility. None but the organized proletariat could be expected to turn the land over to the peasants, and therefore they were able to maintain themselves in power against the coalition of the former governing classes and the liberals, who could not carry out these reforms.

* The Slavophil and Westerner Social-Philosophical Schools were divided: that is, the Slavophils rejected everything that Western civilization had created and believed that Russia had all the culture and social forces she needed to create a new type of civilization. The Westerners, on the contrary, appreciated Western culture and hoped to synthesize it with Russia's social institutions.

† Prince Odoevsky.

only too evident in a few years: Western Europe is on the high road to ruin; we, Russians, on the contrary, are young and fresh and have taken no part in the crimes of Europe. We have a great mission to fill—our name is already inscribed on the tablets of victory; the victories of science, art and faith await us on the ruins of tottering Europe." Such language reminds one of the present prophecies of Oswald Spengler* who also believes that the Western peoples have exhausted their spiritual dynamic. The Slavophils pointed to the peasant commune, the Church, and the "benevolent" autocracy of the Czar as the forces which were to evolve something of a theocratic-communistic type of civilization. The Westerners rejected the Church and autocracy, but clung so much the more to the peasant commune which, enriched by Western science and culture, they hoped would be the nucleus of a new communistic type of civilization.

Alexander Hertzen, a contemporary of the above-quoted Slavophil philosopher, expressed lucidly the Westerners' position. "How fortunate for Russia," says Hertzen, "that the peasant commune did not perish, that personal property did not dissolve the property of the commune; how fortunate for the Russian people that it was omitted from all political movements of European civilization which, without doubt, would have undermined the commune and which has now reached, in Socialism, the stage of self-renunciation. In fact, should Socialism prove unable to reestablish decaying society and complete its destiny in Western Europe, Russia will complete it. . . . In Russia there is nothing fixed, nothing fossilized; everything is in a plastic stage of preparation, and, therefore, the *revolutionary idea of*

* In his work, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes.*

Socialism can become with us an idea of the people [the italics are mine], whereas in Europe Socialism is taken for the phantom of disorder and terror, with us it appears a prophetic vision of the future development of our people. National Russian ways of life and the science of the West—these two, synthesized, will become our power, our future, our prerogative."

This vision of a Communist republic remained the apocalyptical hope of the Russian revolutionary movement, and the heavy yoke of Czarism but strengthened the belief in its speedy realization. Lenin and his following of revolutionists inherited these traditions, and, although they were Marxists in their social philosophy, they believed that Russia was in no need of passing through the capitalistic era but could leap over it, grafting the socialist order directly upon the ancient peasant commune of Russia. The ruling class of Russia, they argued, is small. There is hardly any middle class, which is the backbone of capitalism, and therefore even a small, but thoroughly revolutionary, class-conscious and well-led and organized proletarian class can easily overcome the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, and by establishing a temporary dictatorship can reorganize the State and the social order according to socialistic principles and establish a communistic type of civilization.

Inspired by these convictions, Lenin seized the power during the chaos following the breakdown of Czarism. And now his followers are in a grim struggle to maintain their power and by a rigid dictatorship gain time to establish the new social order and lay the foundation for a communist type of civilization. Will they succeed, and what are the forces which are aiding them in the realization of these hopes? These questions I shall now attempt to answer.

By civilization I mean that organized effort on the part of society which strives to transform the surplus economic resources and human energy into social and cultural values according to some guiding idea. Civilization is controlled and directed by social evolution. It is weaving the fabric of society according to a pattern designed by master minds. It may be questioned whether civilizations can be made to order. I believe they can so long as "the pattern" is not contrary to the latent social forces and cultural ideals of the people. Thus Germany was easily transformed into an imperialistic-military civilization according to the pattern designed by a Bismarck. He succeeded because of the militant temperament and national idealism of the German people. This is even more true of Japan, which in less than two generations has transformed its semi-barbarian people into a modern imperialistic nation. Social evolution is different from organic evolution; the former depends for its progress largely on economic surplus, efficiency of organization, and intelligent leadership, whereas organic evolution depends upon exceedingly slow biological processes which can be speeded up but little by artificial means.

Our study of Russian sectarianism has shown that for three centuries a communistic ideology was disseminated among the rural population as a religious doctrine. One could safely say that the best elements among the peasants are communists, at least in a religious sense. This is also true of the revolutionary proletariat and to a degree also of the intellectuals, who, with all their differences as to tactics and organization, nevertheless looked forward towards communism as the ideal type of civilization. We need but mention such names as Hertzen, Bakunin, Tchernishevsky, Tolstoy, Lavrov, Kro-

potkin, Lenin, and a host of others. These thinkers and leaders differed greatly as to how to attain the goal, but never as to the goal itself. Bakunin, the blood and thunder direct-actionist, and Tolstoy, the practitioner of the Sermon on the Mount—no greater difference in men could be found, yet both were striving for the same goal. Thus, whether we turn to the common people with their hazy religious communistic ideals, or to the city proletariat, or to the revolutionary intellectuals, everywhere we meet with the same aspiration, the same hope to create a communistic type of civilization. Therefore, if Russia fails to reestablish communism, it will not be because of a lack of this type of idealism.

Lenin and his followers are adherents of the Marxist philosophy and therefore they turned their attention first to the economic problem of reconstructing Russia as a communist state. Their ultimate goal, like that of their anarchist kinsman, Prince Kropotkin, was to liberate individuality and permit the widest possible differentiation in the spiritual and intellectual realm. But they hoped to attain the bond of solidarity through economic equality, and therefore their first effort was to crush the capitalist class and eliminate private ownership of industry and the country's natural resources, including land. They succeeded to a degree in socializing production, transportation, and distribution. The immediate result of such a radical change was, of course, a general decline in production, which was made worse by the destructive work of the civil war, the blockade and later the famine. As a consequence, there is a general lowering and simplifying of the standard of living. When, some time ago, a visiting American inquired of a Soviet government Commissary where the poor people of the city were living, the Commissary answered proudly that

there were no poor among them. He would have been more truthful had he said that there were no rich people among them and that almost all Russians are to-day equally poor. Fortunately, this simplification of the economic standard is now becoming a social habit even among the educated classes of Russia. The luxury-loving and high-living class of the wealthy bourgeoisie and the Russian nobility has practically become extinct. The dangers of the "N. E. P." (New Economic Policy) which threatened to revive the bourgeois fashions of life have not proved serious. The few foreigners who live in relative comfort in Moscow or Leningrad are not much noticed. Thus social imitation will tend to maintain the habit of simplicity. The leaders of the Soviet Republic, who receive no higher wages than those of a good working-man and who, besides, fear the criticism of their proletarian comrades, will no doubt attempt to appear simple and refrain from open luxury. Thus the greatest problem which is demoralizing the Western world so far does not exist in the USSR. It is true that the Soviet Government is doing its utmost to reorganize its industries along modern labor-saving lines and, by increasing efficiency to increase production. It does this, however, for the sake of making shorter working hours possible and to free itself from dependence upon capitalist countries. It is apparent that this system of standardization and simplification of the economic necessities of life will yield an enormous surplus, not only in material goods but also in intellectual and spiritual energies, which may be transformed into real cultural values. The Revolution, which deeply stirred the emotions of the masses, has swept away many traditional ideas and has practically made the young generation a cultural *tabula rasa*, upon which the aroused creative impulses of

the gifted, young, and daring nation may inscribe almost anything, whether it be old or new.

The communistic economic order is naturally very favorable to the development of the cultural life. In the Western world the greatest genius in science, art, education, and even philosophy, easily becomes commercialized. In America, for example, the talented painter is soon degrading his art for commercial purposes, either as a popular magazine illustrator or as an advertising artist, for "there is money in it," and everybody needs money to keep up with the fashions and fads of the day. The lower the artist descends to the perverted taste of the mob, the more money he is likely to get. This is equally true of the stage, of musical compositions, of education, of literature, of invention, and even of philosophy—all must work together to produce the "best sellers," which, as a rule, means lowering the standard to accommodate the larger market and give a larger profit to the entrepreneur.

In the Soviet Union, on the contrary, the utilitarian motive in the cultural realm has been greatly weakened. The stage has been converted into a true patron of art; jazz dancing and the spectacular motion picture are being suppressed. The film is being used principally for educational and propaganda purposes.

Is there room in this type of civilization for religion, and, in particular, is there a place of honor for the Christian religion?

The Communist says, definitely, "No." The future, he believes, belongs to the materialist philosophy, according to which all things, visible or invisible, tangible or spiritual, including man, are an expression of cosmic energy or matter. Man cannot be separated from the planet upon which he lives; he must determine his own

destiny; he cannot expect any help from gods or demons; he is his own God and is master or slave of nature. There are no other lives to come for him and therefore he must make the most of *this life* upon *this earth.* His means are science and cooperative toil and his goal is beauty and the good life, where there is no exploitation of wealth and no privileged class, but where all races live and work in cooperation with each other for the common good. Religion, he believes, is a reactionary phenomenon inherited from the period in the history of man when he was helpless in the struggle against nature and lived in an imaginary world of fear and baseless hopes. Historically, religion has been one of the chief weapons in the exploitation of classes and in the oppression of the poor, of which the Czarist regime is a most glaring example.

The Communist is a militant materialist and atheist. He not only demands a confession of atheism from the members of his party, but he most zealously preaches his atheism and materialistic philosophy to non-party members and shapes the program for the education of the young in such a way as to prepare the new generation for a materialistic conception of life.

At the intitative of the party there has been founded a special propaganda society, "The Union of the Godless," which accepts non-party members and carries on intense anti-religious propaganda by methods very similar to those of religious organizations. They work with the aid of literature, special study classes, regular lectures and discussions, and so forth. The Society forms its locals wherever it can get hold of a group of followers, and particularly directs its efforts upon the factory workers and the peasant population. It also has special

sections for work among the non-Christian religions and the sectarians.

The Union of the Godless gets the full support of the Communist party and is actually but one of its propaganda organizations. It publishes a weekly paper, an illustrated biweekly, and a monthly magazine, giving direction and help for the work of teachers and agitators of atheism.

Has its work been successful and is atheism popular among the masses and the members of the Communist party? According to the statements of the leaders of the Atheist movement,* their propaganda faces great difficulties, on the one hand because of the disinterestedness of the party members, who think they have done their duty if they "subscribe" to atheism and show no outward signs of affiliation to any religious cult, and on the other because of the protests of the population. Thus in the Ukraine the party found it politically inexpedient to continue the existence of the Union of the Godless and closed it, seeking different and more indirect ways to continue their propaganda.

The crude mockery of religion as depicted in the cartoons of the atheistic press, the *Comsomol* (Communist Youth) Christmas carnivals, and the frequent unfair attacks on the Church had, on the whole, a result opposite from that desired. Many indifferent elements, who until then were rather apathetic, sided with religion. All this was quickly recognized by the party, and at its Thirteenth Conference (1925) it introduced a new policy of religious propaganda. The resolution outlining this policy says:

* See proceedings of the April 1926 conference in the *Anti-religionist*, No. 5, 1926.

"It is necessary definitely to cease any kind of effort to fight religious prejudice by administrative means, such as the closing of churches, mosques, synagogues, and prayer houses. The anti-religious propaganda in the village must have exclusively the character of a materialistic interpretation of the conditions which the peasant is familiar with. To explain the origin of hail, rain, storm, drouth, the appearance of harmful insects, the character of the soil, the role of fertilizers, and so forth, is the best kind of anti-religious propaganda. The center of such propaganda ought to be the school and the cottage-reading room under the direction of party organizations.

"It is necessary to watch with particular care that the religious feelings of believers should not be hurt. A victory over these can be obtained only through a long period of years of persistent educational work. Such care is particularly necessary in the eastern republics and provinces.

"Particularly close attention must be paid to the sectarians, many of whom were subjected to most cruel persecution under Czarism, and among whom is observed great activity. It is necessary to direct them into the channels of Soviet activity by tactful approach, for among the sectarians there is a considerable economic-cultural element. In view of the great mass of sectarians, this work is of great significance. This problem must be solved in relation to local conditions."

As a result the character of the anti-religious propaganda changed greatly. There is less of the vulgar mockery and a more real, though of course strongly biased, interpretation of nature and the history of man. The anti-religious papers are now publishing articles in popular sciences, anthropology, history of religion, and

biblical criticism. Much of it can be welcomed by any religious person who is not over-fundamentalist in his theology. This kind of propaganda will stimulate thought, and will rouse the conservative theologians to adjust their thinking. It is also clear that such propaganda has no danger for real spiritual religion, but rather is an indirect ally to it.

The question has frequently been raised: How about Communism itself becoming a religion? There was a time when it looked as if it were on the road leading to that end. A. Lunacharsky wrote before the revolution a two-volume work, "Religion and Socialism," in which he claims that "Marxism as a philosophy appears to be the new, deeply critical and purifying, and at the same time synthetic, religious system."* "It is no argument," he says, "for Socialists to try to excuse their indifference or hostility to religion because of the stain of reaction which is attributed to the word religion. Words are pure from pure lips, and social democracy would win out if it would say: 'Yes, I am a new and mighty religious force and carry within me a religion which will absorb and replace all others and raise religion to a higher power.'"

Maxim Gorky, the well-known novelist and member of the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik party, wrote in the same spirit, and there were other Marxists who felt the need of religion and wanted to give the socialist movement an organized religious expression. This trend of thought was strongly opposed by Lenin, who felt that any talk of religion would lessen the class conflict and divert attention from the actual revolutionary struggle. He says: "The proletariat is the leader of our anti-bourgeois democratic revolution. Its party must be the

* *Religion and Socialism*, Vol. II, p. 213.

spiritual leader in the fight against all remains of medievalism, including the old official religion, and all attempts to renovate or reconstruct it, either on a reformer basis or a completely new one."

After his death an effort was made to develop something of a cult about his personality. Thus in every institution and club was established a so-called "little red corner" which contained a bust of Lenin upon a pedestal covered with red flags, and some of his sayings decorated the wall. About this shrine of the great leader members of the institution gather to study his writings and discuss their problems.

There is also an effort to introduce into village and factory communities "red christenings," "red weddings," and "red funerals," which takes the form of a special communistic cult. Trotzky strongly supports these efforts, recognizing the spectacular and theatrical family customs as something very necessary in the rather monotonous life of the average human being. He says: "The need of an outer expression of feeling is most powerful and legitimate. . . . The creation of a revolutionary social cult, . . . placing it in opposition to the cult of the church, is possible not only in social and State celebrations but also in family events."*

The missionary zeal of the convinced communist has also something of a religious drive. Even their atheist propaganda is preached very much in the same spirit as has been peculiar to the religious missionary. It is told of the writer Belinsky, who is considered the father of the revolutionary intellectual movement and of whom it is said that he had a Christian heart but a pagan mind, that he was once discussing with Turgenieff some philo-

* L. Trotzky, *Questions of Social Custom*, p. 51, 1923 edition.

sophical problem and forgot, in the heat of the discussion, the dinner hour. When Turgenieff reminded him that it was time to eat, Belinsky exclaimed: "What, we have not as yet decided the existence of God, and you want to eat!" Belinsky claimed to be a materialist, and yet he was one of Russia's most spiritual sons.

In this respect one could also call the Communist movement religious. But since the Communist party strongly objects to such honors and suppresses every effort within its ranks which attempts to make it a religion, it is useless to call it such. The Communist party has taken upon itself to govern a large nation, and it has been so absorbed in administrative responsibilities that little religious psychology has permeated among its members. As the party continues in power, which is probable, it will more and more become a recruiting and training center for the administrative personnel of the State, and persons with a religious psychology—at least of the mystic sort—will keep out of it, seeking other organizations in which to express their positive or negative feeling towards religion.

What, then, is to be the future of religion in the Soviet Union? Is it doomed to extinction as most Communist leaders think, or, as one may conclude from our study of the religious mind of the masses, have the Russian people but commenced a creative period in religion, in which, under pressure of the atheist propaganda, they will express their latent religious impulses? It is a risky matter to be a prophet, but to even a casual observer it seems unthinkable that a people who have produced a Tolstoy and Dostoievsky in literature, a Soloviev and Scovrade in philosophy, a Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in music, a Polenov and Vasnetzov in painting—in short, a people with a culture the best

products of which are profoundly religious, should all at once lose its soul and surrender to an alien and rather superficial, though militant, materialistic philosophy of life.

There is at present a severe clash of modern scientific hypothesis with the remnants of scholastic theology. The latter undoubtedly will have to yield to modern science, and those sects and churches in the Soviet Union which cling to an uncompromising fundamentalist theology have a painful process of readjustment before them.

Fortunately, the Orthodox Church which emphasizes mystic symbolism in an aesthetic cult will not suffer so much from rationalistic and scientific criticism, because these do not and cannot attack the actual source of religious emotions. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church will probably never become a factor of any importance in educational and social service activities, for education is zealously guarded as a monopoly of the State and the Communist party. The sectarians will probably make a substantial contribution in moral control and in economic and social cooperation, stimulated by religious emotions. They and the "Old Believers" are becoming the wealthiest and best organized section of the rural population, and as such will carry their influence into building up the moral fiber of the Soviet commonwealth. Thus, a puritanic Evangelical Sectarianism and a mystically aesthetic cult of the Orthodox Church will continue to exist alongside the proletarian revolutionary idealism.

Whether ultimately the Communist materialistic philosophy of life will triumph over the religious emotions and practices of the people will, in the final analysis, depend upon human nature itself. If the religious

emotion is a real, integral, basic part of human nature which cannot be supplanted by science, art, and social activities untiringly developed by Communists, if religion is a spirit of universal reverence and communion with God (known or unknown) then there will be religion in the U.S.S.R. If there is no living God in the universe and religion is a self-delusion, then this delusion will be exposed in the fires of materialistic criticism; if, however, atheism is an error, the Communist philosophy will undergo a metamorphosis and either become a religion itself or narrow down to functions of politics and economics very much like the other political organizations of the world. Whatever the future has in store, all lovers of truth cannot but welcome the great experiment of the Social Revolution in the Soviet Union which fearlessly questions and retests in the fires of revolutionary criticism every value, including that most subtle of all values—religion.

APPENDIX

NON-CHRISTIAN AND ALIEN RELIGIONS IN SOVIET RUSSIA

It was our purpose to treat in this book such religious conditions as are directly related in larger or smaller degree to the Russian people. To go beyond this limit and describe the religious life of the various races which are living in the U.S.S.R. as well as the religions of foreigners is impossible and hardly necessary within the scope of this small volume. Besides the Christian religions there are about three million Jews and fifteen million Mohammedans, Tartars and other Turkish races, such as the Ardserbadjans, the Usbeks, and many so-called pagan religions. Before the law of the Soviet Union all religions are treated alike. However, an advantage has been granted to the Moslems by special provision of the Soviet government permitting them to commence religious education of their children in special schools of religion from the age of fourteen upward. All other confessions, Christians, Jews and pagans are allowed to have systematic religious education only from the age of eighteen upward. The fourteen year age limit permitted to the Moslems is explained by the argument that the Moslem children have to learn the Arabic language to understand the Koran and need a longer period of time to master it.

Of the foreign Christian confessions the Lutheran and Roman Catholics should be particularly mentioned.

In the old Russian empire there were many adherents of the Lutheran Church, particularly in the Baltic provinces, in Finland and some of the German colonies along the Volga. Of these only the Volga Germans have remained within the limits of the U.S.S.R., besides some scattered smaller German and Scandinavian communities who are adherents of the

Lutheran Church. The position of the Lutheran Church before the law is the same as that of all other religions in the U.S.S.R., but due to the fact that the well-to-do classes among whom there were a good many Germans have ceased to exist, many of the Lutheran congregations, particularly in the larger cities, can hardly maintain their existence.

The Roman Catholic Church, which in the old empire of the Czar was very strong among the Poles, has with the independence of Poland ceased to be a factor in the U.S.S.R. There are, however a few Polish communities of the Roman-Catholic faith along the border, particularly in White Russia and the Ukraine, and there are also a considerable number of Catholic parishes in the larger cities, particularly Leningrad and Moscow.* Nevertheless, they cannot be considered a factor in the religious life of the Russian people since their adherents are almost exclusively Poles and other foreigners. In spite of great efforts on the part of Catholic missionaries to proselytize the Greek Orthodox, they had no success among the Russians. They were able to gain some following among the Galicians, where the Catholic missionaries under the protection of the Polish Government and later the Austrian Government compromised with the Greek Orthodox by maintaining their old ritual, and were satisfied when the Galicians consented to recognize the authority of the Pope of Rome. This Church in Galicia is known as the Uniat Church, but it never spread to any extent among other Ukrainians who lived in the territory of the Russian Empire.

There was always a strong animosity between the Roman Catholic and the Russian Orthodox Church. The reasons for this were partly political enmity towards Poland, and partly racial and psychological, the Latin language and cult being rather distasteful to the psychology of the Russian people who have merged their cultural development with the Byzan-

* There are no statistics kept by the State on the religious affiliation of the population, hence the estimates of the number of adherents to various creeds are hard to obtain. Catholic authorities claim there are about 500,000 Catholics in the Moscow and Leningrad provinces.

tine type of Christianity. Under the Czarist regime the Roman Church was but tolerated as one of the alien religions, but no propaganda of Catholicism was allowed among the Russians, particularly among the common people. Efforts made by Jesuit missionaries to proselytize among the Russian aristocracy had some success, e. g. conversion of some members of the family of princes Galitzin, Martynov and Gagarin, all of whom were exiled by order of the Czar and lived abroad.

The October Revolution gave equal rights to the Roman Church but it also demanded that the Roman hierarchy recognize Soviet legislation regarding the Church. At first for the sake of expediency the leaders of the Roman Church agreed to submit to the Soviet laws, but later under the leadership of Archbishop Cieplak they changed their mind, and on the occasion of the confiscation of the Church treasures for the famine fund the Catholic hierarchy came into open conflict with the Soviet Government. This ended with the unfortunate execution of Budkevicz and the imprisonment of Bishop Cieplak and twelve of his priests. Since then the situation has changed for the better. The imprisoned Bishop Cieplak and his priests have been either liberated or exchanged for political prisoners in Poland, and the Catholic Church at present has submitted to the laws of the Soviet State. Its churches are open and services are held, but there is, however, no Bishop appointed for the U.S.S.R. and the episcopal functions are carried on by occasional visits of bishops from Poland.

Editor's Note

After this volume had been written the Acting Patriarch Sergei of the All-Russian Orthodox Church issued a statement signed by the six members of his Patriarchal Synod in which among other things he said,

"We church workers are not affiliated with the enemies of the Soviet Government nor are we working with the senseless

weapon of intrigue but we are working with our people and with our government. . . .

"Today the Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union has not only full canonical but civil legality. . . .

"We must show that not only in words but in deeds we can be as true citizens of the Soviet Union, as loyal to the Soviet Power, as non-believers. . . .

"Every blow against the Union whether it is war, boycott, or any general calamity, or secret murder like that in Warsaw, impresses us as a blow directed against us. . . .

"We demand that all priests who are serving abroad should give written proof of their complete loyalty to the Soviet Government in all their general outside work. Those who do not give such proof or those who violate their declaration will be excluded from membership in the clergy."

The above declaration was signed July 29, 1927, and was published in the *Izvestia* on August 19, 1927. It apparently marks the end of any official opposition to the Soviet Government on the part of the central administration of the Russian Orthodox Church.

JEROME DAVIS.

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