6-1982

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SOVIET RELIGIOUS POLICY IN THE UKRAINE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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In retrospect, Soviet religious policy in the Ukraine has to be viewed from two main vantage points: The first is that of the centrally formulated program on religion which the regime attempted to implement throughout the USSR; the second vantage point is that of the peculiar ecclesiastical situation and the nationality and peasant problems in the Ukraine which led to modifications and occasional aberrations in the application of this central church policy to Ukrainian conditions. In analysing these twin facets of the regime's ecclesiastical policy in this second-largest Union Republic, we shall focus mainly on its majority denomination -- the Orthodox Church -- which during most of the inter-war period was split into three major groupings -- the Patriarchal¹ and the Renovationist² Churches (the local extensions of "All-Union" churches), and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC)³. Since World War II, our discussion will also involve the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church in the Western Ukraine.

I

In terms of its ultimate objectives and long-range policies on religion, the Soviet regime has displayed a striking consistency in aiming at the complete elimination of religion in the USSR in both its institutional and its subjective, psychological aspects. The invariability of the regime's position on this point can easily be traced to the Leninist variety of Marxism with its commitment to "militant atheism" rather than the slow-working, social-economic mechanisms of secularization. At no time, since 1917, has this view of religion been effectively challenged within the Bolshevik Party, and no departure from this long-range objective can be detected in the Soviet church.

* The author wishes to express his appreciation to the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and the Shevchenko Foundation in Winnipeg for their support of research leading to this publication. A brief biographical note about the author is provided at the end of the paper on p. 16.
policy in the Ukrainian SSR.

However, in their choice of means designed to realize this ultimate goal and in the timing and application of their short-term religious policies to individual churches, nationalities, social strata and regions, the Bolsheviks have shown both considerable flexibility and contradictory tendencies. To be sure, the regime's guide in translating long-term policy into a short-term tactical line has been the Leninist formula subordinating the antireligious struggle to the larger political and economic objectives of the Party. However, differences over the interpretation of these major objectives and their successive re-interpretations have allowed for considerable vacillation between the two extremes: the "leftist," "anarchist" tendency stressing violence and "administrative methods" in suppressing religion; and the "rightist," "opportunistic" tendency advocating reliance on the anti-religious effects of objective, socio-economic processes.

Accordingly, two not entirely consistent trends can be detected in the Soviet church policy. On one hand, at least until 1938, the Bolshevik leaders pursued a line aiming at the progressive weakening, strangulation, and destruction of organized religion in the USSR, alternating increasingly severe repressions with periods of relatively relaxed pressure whenever accumulating resentment on the part of the believers or hostile reaction abroad threatened the political or economic position of the regime. On the other hand, however, the Bolsheviks persistently strove to "Sovietize" the religious organizations, not merely for the sake of establishing official control over the internal affairs of these organizations, but in order to use them for the purposes of both domestic and foreign policy and propaganda. The advent of the "New Religious Policy" with the outbreak of World War II marked the beginning of a shift in Soviet emphasis, from the destruction of religion to its exploitation as a political weapon, especially in the area of foreign relations and propaganda - a tendency which was not abandoned after Stalin's death despite a marked intensification of antireligious pressures in the USSR.

These two trends in the Soviet church policy have had their spokesmen from the very beginning of the Bolshevik regime: the "fundamentalists" (especially vocal in the Komsomol and, obviously, the League of Militant Atheists (S.V.B.), arguing against any official distinctions between the religious groups and advocating an indiscriminate struggle against all forms of religion; and the "pragmatists," to be found among "practical" state officials and the secret police -- who were favoring the tactic of "rewarding the friends and punishing the enemies", varying the treatment of the individual religious groups in
accordance with their respective attitudes towards the regime and the kind of contribution they could offer to the achievement of Soviet goals. Indeed, it could be argued that these two positions complemented rather than excluded each other, for the repressive measures against religious groups "conditioned" them into plain tools of the official policy, just as the constant threat to resume such repressions helped to dissuade them from using the concessions obtained from the regime for purposes unacceptable to the Kremlin. 5

II

The arrival of the Soviet power in the Ukraine in 1919-20 brought it face to face with a complex ecclesiastical situation which defied a simple, clear-cut solution. Neither their ideological arsenal nor their recent experience with the church-state conflict in Russia had equipped the Bolsheviks with a ready-made, tested solution to the church problem in the Ukraine. At the heart of this problem was a rampant religious nationalism, manifested in the two-year old Russo-Ukrainian struggle for control of the local Orthodox Church. The roots of this struggle reached far back into Ukrainian history to the traditional Orthodox pattern of church-state "symphony," the merger of religious and national consciousness in the Cossack Ukraine, the subsequent imposition of Moscow's ecclesiastical supremacy over the Kievan Church and its transformation by the nineteenth century into an instrument of national and social oppression. It was inevitable that, with the resurgence of Ukrainian nationalism its demands for emancipation from Moscow came to be projected onto the ecclesiastical sphere as well. First assuming an organized form with the 1917 revolution and attracting into its ranks elements of radical and reformist clergy and laymen, the Ukrainian church movement challenged the Russian leadership of the Orthodox Church in the Ukraine during 1917-18, demanding the introduction of Ukrainianization, conciliar administration, and autocephaly. Denied, however, any effective or timely assistance from the short-lived national Ukrainian government and encountering uniform hostility from the church hierarchy in the Ukraine, the movement failed to achieve a canonical realization of its goals. In frustration, it turned in 1919 to more radical means -- by taking over and "Ukrainianizing" individual church parishes from below and bringing them under the jurisdiction of the All-Ukrainian Church Rada (Council) in defiance of the local Russian episcopate. Not yet significant numerically, largely confined to Kiev and a few other urban centers, the Ukrainian church movement nevertheless found enthusiastic support among the Ukrainian intelligentsia and could count upon
a broad base of support among the Ukrainian peasantry in the future.

On the other side of the Ukrainian ecclesiastical "front" was the predominantly Russian episcopate, equally nationalistic in attitudes, still in firm control of the Church, protecting the *status quo* with canonical barriers and dismissing the demands of the Ukrainian church movement as "unchurchy," "s eparatist" designs upon the unity of the Church and "Holy Russia". In the background, wavering between their dislike of the conservative rule of the monastic bishops and their distrust of Ukrainian nationalism, were a handful of local church "liberals" and "reformists," defeated by the conservative majority at the 1918 All-Russian Sobor, *largely deserted by their Ukrainian following* which now joined the national church movement.

With the Bolsheviks entering the Ukrainian scene in 1919, the configuration of the forces that were to dominate the ecclesiastical life of the Soviet Ukraine for the next two decades took final shape. Poised against each other and yet drawn into passing tactical alignments, reaching for support into different strata of Ukrainian society, were the Ukrainian and Russian nationalisms, ecclesiastical liberalism, and the atheistic regime holding, by its preponderance of physical power, the key to the respective fates of the other three contenders for the spiritual allegiance of Ukrainian population.

III

From 1919 on, five principal considerations evidently entered into the formulation and execution of Soviet church policy in the Ukraine; the respective weight of each of these considerations depended on the changing balance of power at the center and in the Soviet Ukrainian leadership, the larger policy objectives of the moment, and the contingencies of the situation in the Ukraine. One of these considerations, of course, was the militant atheism inherent in the Marxist-Leninist world-view and intensified by the traditional hostility of the Russian Left towards the established Church as the chief ideologist and potent political instrument of the Tsarist autocracy. Another, indeed the overriding, determinant of the religious policy was the political survival of the Soviet regime in the Ukraine. Closely connected with the latter were two other considerations: the delicate and yet acute national question arising from the national and social alienation of the new regime from the majority of the population; and the related peasant problem deriving from the absolute numerical predominance of this
traditionally religious stratum of Ukrainian society, the peasants' national-cultural aspirations, and the vital importance of Ukrainian agriculture to the Soviet economy. Finally, the anticipated or perceived foreign reaction to Soviet policies on religion and the possible advantage of employing churches for external propaganda purposes also influenced Soviet policy makers, particularly in restraining their anti-religious zeal. The varying weight given at different times to these considerations by the regime in its treatment of the chief ecclesiastical factions in the Ukraine, makes it possible to identify the several stages of Soviet church policy in the Ukraine, roughly coinciding with the six major periods of Soviet political history: the Civil war; the NEP; Stalin's 'second revolution from above'; the 'Great Retreat' since the outbreak of World War II until Stalin's death; Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization"; and the post-1964 restoration of bureaucratic stability under the Brezhnev rule.

IV

During the first three years of the Soviet rule (1919-1921), the immediate problem of political survival overshadowed all other considerations underlying the regime's religious policy in the Ukraine. The well known hostility of the Russian Orthodox Church towards the Bolsheviks, collaboration of its leading hierarchs with the Volunteer Army, and its open defiance of the Soviet decrees on religion made the former Established Church the main target of the Communist antireligious measures. It was primarily to weaken and split the Russian Church, and not because of any sympathies for the Ukrainian church movement that the latter initially received qualified support from the authorities in its efforts to resurrect a national Ukrainian church, the efforts which by October 1921 culminated in the formation of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC), canonically and hierarchically separate from the Russian and other Orthodox Churches. But the hopes which the Bolsheviks may have had that the UAOC would evolve into a "progressive", "Living", "Soviet" church never materialized. Before long, the phenomenal growth of the new church, its intensely national orientation, and its appeal to those strata of Ukrainian society which would not accept the new regime or were not acceptable to the latter, evoked, in the eyes of the Party and the GPU, a spectre of a "Petliurite-kulak counterrevolution" in ecclesiastical disguise.
From 1922 on, the authorities centered their efforts on the implantation in the Ukraine of a collaborationist "Living Church" (later "Renovationist Church")\(^{10}\), after the latter managed to seize, with the help from the police, the Patriarchal administration in Moscow. To this end, massive propaganda and administrative measures were employed to break the resistance of the Patriarchal Church in the Republic. Meanwhile, unable to force the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church into a merger with the Renovationists, the authorities attempted to launch a "progressive revolution" within the UAOC by manipulating factional and personal tensions in the Autocephalist ranks.\(^{11}\) Having failed again, the authorities turned to administrative and police repressions against the UAOC. In 1923, the Church's leading organ - the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council - was declared illegal and, in 1926, the GPU arrested Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivskyi and a number of other Autocephalist leaders. In the meantime, the government-supported Renovationist Church in the Ukraine proclaimed a token autocephaly in the hope of attracting followers from the ranks of the UAOC.\(^{12}\)

The continued unpopularity of the Renovationists among the rank-and-file believers led the regime to shift its tactics in the direction of the "Sovietization" of the Patriarchal and Autocephalous Churches in the Ukraine. In July 1927, after repeated arrests, the Acting Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Sergii, issued his well known Declaration pledging on behalf of the Russian Church an unconditional loyalty to the Soviet state; this act of submission to the new regime restored legal status to the Patriarchal Church in the Ukraine. At the same time, under police threats and promises of concessions, the 1927 Sobor of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church dismissed Metropolitan Lypkivskyi and other "politically compromised" Autocephalist leaders. Under its new canonical head, Metropolitan Mykolai Boretskyi, the UAOC pledged itself to a loyal but apolitical course and accepted a much more pervasive governmental control over its activities.\(^{13}\)

Limited concessions secured by the Patriarchal and Autocephalous churches in the Ukraine in return for "normalization" of their relations with the state, proved to be short-lived. By the end of 1928, a major turning point was reached by the Soviet religious policy, as the Stalin regime embarked on a massive attack against the "survivals" of the old social-economic order and culture. Simultaneously with its collectivization drive, the Party opened a broad, frontal attack against all religious groups in the country, including
the hitherto favourized "Renovationists". In the Ukraine, where "bourgeois nationalism" was now recognized as the "greater danger" (than the "great power chauvinism" of the Russians), the main blows were aimed at the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church as perhaps the most massive institutional expression of popular "Ukrainization" movement. By early 1930, approximately three-fourths of the Autocephalist parishes were suppressed by the authorities; a number of bishops and lay leaders of the UAOC were arrested by the GPU on fabricated charges of "counterrevolutionary activities", with the authorities denouncing the Autocephalous Church as allegedly a branch of the recently "unmasked" "Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine" (SVU). Without waiting for the show trial of the "Union", the GPU hastened to stage the so-called "Extraordinary Sobor" of the UAOC in January 1930, which "voted" for "self-dissolution" of the Church as a "nationalist, political, counter-revolutionary organization."

Nevertheless, in December 1930, remnants of the UAOC were allowed to reorganize under a new name as the "Ukrainian Orthodox Church", now headed by Metropolitan Ivan Pavlovskyi of Kharkiv. The new church organization had to dissociate itself formally from the three principles of the UAOC--autocephaly, Ukrainianization and conciliar self-government--and to commit its members to Soviet patriotism and an unconditional loyalty to the regime. This involuntary "Sovietization" did not save Metropolitan Pavlovskyi's Church; by 1936 the authorities suppressed, in Kharkiv, the last parish of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, imprisoning its remaining bishops, including Pavlovskyi. Early in 1938, the NKVD arrested the now retired Metropolitan Lypkivskyi who, too, was never to be heard from again.

The Great Purges of 1937-38, virtually destroyed also the Patriarchal and Renovationist organizations in the Ukraine leaving behind only a handful of scattered and unorganized local parishes. Completely shattered were the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Judaic communities.

While the entire hierarchy of all three Orthodox factions in the Ukraine had been wiped out by 1938, the Patriarchate and the Renovationist Synod in Russia escaped annihilation. This seeming inconsistency may be explained at least in two ways. Firstly, with foreign opinion focusing its attention on developments at the center, the survival of and suitable pronouncements by the leaders of the Patriarchate and the Synod could demonstrate to the world the continued "freedom of conscience" in the USSR. Secondly, both of the "controlled churches"--but especially the Patriarchal Church, even if reduced to
skeleton apparatus—could prove useful in facilitating Soviet control over the still-large believing portion of the population and in promoting the foreign policy objectives of the Soviet government, especially in dealing with the churches outside the Soviet Union.

V

Though the period of Stalin's "New Religious Policy" is usually dated from the celebrated meeting of Stalin and Molotov with the three senior hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate in September, 1943, it is clear that the genesis of this paradoxical "symphony" between the remnants of the Russian Orthodox Church and the atheist regime goes back at least to 1939. It was the Nazi-Soviet partition of Poland and Moscow's annexation of the Western regions of the Ukraine and Belorussia, followed by the occupation of Bukovyna, Bessarabia and the Baltic States—that gave a new lease on life to the near moribund Moscow Patriarchate. Suddenly, the Kremlin found political use for the intimidated loyal churchmen as instruments of Sovietization and Russification of the numerous and vigorous Orthodox communities in the newly annexed territories. Through the extension of the Moscow Patriarchate's jurisdiction over the dioceses in the annexed areas, the latter were to be purged of disloyal or suspect leaders; the emissaries of the Patriarchate were entrusted with the job of policing the "reunited" church organization so as to prevent it from offering asylum to the dislodged anti-Soviet political forces, especially in the Western Ukraine with its history of intense Ukrainian nationalism. Accordingly, during 1939-41, Patriarchal exarchs Panteleimon Rozhnovskii and Nikolai Iarushevich carried out, with the regime blessings, "reunion" of the Volyn and Polissia dioceses, eliminating the Ukrainian language from liturgical usage, and even laying out plans for the future "conversion" of the Ukrainian Greek Catholics in Galicia.

The Kremlin's shift towards a more pragmatic religious policy was nevertheless of a limited and tentative nature. No concessions were extended to the Church in the "old" Soviet territories: by June 1941, probably no more than one dozen Orthodox churches remained open in the Ukrainian SSR east of the Zbruch river. Nor were the Western oblasti spared from exposure to vulgar anti-religious propaganda. Within months of Soviet invasion, all landed property of churches and monasteries was confiscated; theological schools, religious publications, charitable institutions and lay organizations were
summarily suppressed, and all Catholic monasteries and convents were disbanded in the Western Ukraine. Excessive, discriminatory taxation was imposed upon the clergy and a number of them were arrested, deported or executed. Nevertheless, for the time being, the new authorities stopped short of implementing in the Western oblasti some of the most destructive provisions of Soviet ecclesiastical legislation, most likely due to their still insecure position in the occupied territories and their growing anxiety about the Nazi designs upon the USSR.

The major turning point came with the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941. The spontaneous revival of religious life in the Ukraine and other Nazi-occupied territories was undoubtedly one of several factors that led Stalin's regime to suspend antireligious propaganda and to allow limited restoration of church organization and religious activities in the Soviet-held areas, especially those threatened by further German advance. At the same time, war crisis made it imperative for the Kremlin to seek support from all sections of Soviet population, including the masses of the long persecuted believers. The regime's appeals to Russian nationalism, the rehabilitation of the old Tsarist symbols and heroes for the purposes of the "Great Patriotic War" made it easier for the Russian Orthodox Church to rationalize its new alliance with the Soviet Government, while the latter could now more readily rely on the loyal Church as an instrument of national policy and external propaganda. The process of reconciliation between the Patriarchate and the Kremlin culminated by September 1943 in a whole range of concessions given to the Russian Orthodox Church: the latter was now accorded a paradoxical position of a "quasi-established church" in an atheist state, including direct access to Soviet leaders, a separate agency for the management of its relations with the Government (all other recognized churches were placed under a separate "Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults"), exclusive right to "missionary" activities among the non-Orthodox believers, as well as the permission to reopen a number of theological and monastic institutions (and to retain those found in the reoccupied territories) on a scale denied to any other beneficiary of Stalin's "new religious policy." Secretly in 1945, the Church was restored juridical rights, including the right to own property, but with a significant exception of the houses of worship and their contents.24

The developments in the Ukraine after it was retaken by the Soviet
armies in 1943-44 offered the most striking demonstration of the overlapping interests of the Russian Church and the Soviet State. The two joined in the liquidation of the remnants of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church which was revived during the German occupation; the Autocephalist parishes were taken over by the Russian Church while the state authorities took care of the "recalcitrant" clerics. The Moscow Patriarchate welcomed back into its ranks the remaining episcopate and clergy of the pro-Russian Autonomous Church in the Ukraine, granting immunity from prosecution to those "reunited" churchmen who happened to collaborate with the German occupation authorities.

By 1945, following a meeting between Stalin and the newly elected Patriarch Alexii, the state and the Church joined in a massive assault against the central national institution in Galicia and Transcarpathia—the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church, in a pattern closely resembling the Tsarist suppression of the Uniates in the 1830s. Soviet anti-Uniate propaganda was synchronized with the Patriarchate's appeals to the Ukrainian Catholics to abandon Rome. As the entire Uniate episcopate was arrested in April 1945, the Russian Church dispatched its bishop to Lviv to mastermind the so-called "reunion" campaign. With the decisive assistance from the administration, the secret police and the military a pseudo-Sobor was staged in Lviv, in March 1946, to supply a semblance of a "voluntary" and "canonic" dissolution of the Union with Rome and the so-called "return" of the Uniates to the Russian Orthodox Church. Numerous Greek Catholic priests who could not be persuaded by Orthodox and police "missionaries" were given lengthy prison and forced labor camp sentences for their alleged "bourgeois nationalist" and pro-German activities during the war.25

To the Russian Church the ecclesiastical conquest of the Western Ukraine meant the realization of its long-standing objectives of bringing all Eastern Slavs under the Moscow Patriarchal See. To the Soviet authorities, the destruction of the Uniate Church appeared to be an integral part of their battle against formidable Ukrainian nationalist resistance in Galicia, as well as a major step towards the cultural integration of the Western Ukraine in the Soviet Russian empire. To be sure, the formal "reunion" of the Ukrainian Uniates completed by 1949, with the suppression of the Union in Transcarpathia, was more apparent than real; while the decimated Greek Catholic Church was left with an aura of martyrdom that helped it to retain the loyalties of the West Ukrainian believers, no amount of propaganda could "legitimatize" the Russian Church in the eyes of its involuntary "converts", with most of the "reunited"
The Russian Orthodox Church was the principal but not the only beneficiary of Stalin's religious NEP in the Ukraine. Several Protestant groups were allowed to resume their activities, though at a price of merging into the government-supervised Union of the Evangelical Christians (and) Baptists (ECB). Separate Ukrainian Protestant organizations which existed in the Western Ukraine prior to Soviet annexation were suppressed and their flock forced into the new Union. The Seventh Day Adventists and Hungarian Calvinists were being tolerated by the authorities, but not those Pentecostalists who refused to give up "speaking in tongues" or the "subversive" Jehovah's Witnesses. After the repatriation of most Poles from the Western Ukraine, only small number of Roman Catholic parishes were permitted to continue, but without a bishop or even a vicar general of their own. The survivors of the Nazi Holocaust were able to reopen a number of synagogues and minyanim in the Republic; by 1949, following the suppression of all secular Jewish organizations, they remained the only institutional expressions of Jewish culture. Compared with other Union Republics, the post-war Ukraine displayed the greatest diversity and concentration of religious communities in the USSR. Though accounting for only 19% of the total population, the Ukrainian SSR contained the majority of all Orthodox and Pentecostalist congregations and approximately one half of the Evangelical-Baptist communities.26

Before long, however, the regime began to tighten up screws on religious activities. Already in 1944, a Central Committee resolution ordered the Party to resume what has then been euphemistically described as "propaganda of natural-scientific views." By 1947, the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge (renamed later Society "Knowledge") was explicitly entrusted with the task of "scientific atheist" propaganda. From 1948 on, virtually no new churches, monasteries or theological school would be allowed by the authorities. Apparently, the regime had now less use for the Russian Church and other "loyal" denominations as instruments of political integration and external propaganda.

VI

Stalin's death and the subsequent emergence of Nikita Khrushchev as the dominant figure in the ruling oligarchy, could not but affect the
future course of Soviet church policy. As the new leadership undertook
selective de-Stalinization, Stalin's "new religious policy" undoubtedly
came under review. The short-lived anti-religious campaign of 1954 with
its two conflicting Central Committee resolutions very likely reflected
the still unresolved differences within the Kremlin over this aspect of
Stalin's legacy. Khrushchev's victory over the so-called "Anti-Party
Group," signalled the beginning of a new, "fundamentalist" stage in Soviet
religious policy, in line with the Khrushchevite "return to Leninism"
campaign, and the new emphasis on the mass resocialization measures to
compensate for the weakening of coercive social controls.

Coinciding with the announced start of "the building of Communism,"
massive and occasionally violent anti-religious campaign began in 1958. The "loyal" religious leaders were now compelled by the regime not only "voluntarily" to restrict the activities of their denominations and to
close down the majority of churches, theological and monastic institutions,
but also to reassure the world outside that there was absolutely no truth
in the multiplying reports about the new persecution of religion in the
Soviet Union. Servility and lying did not help the official religious
leaders to protect their respective churches from massive loses, while at
the same time they seriously eroded the credibility they have had in the
eyes of the harassed believers. Along with the gross violations of legality
accompanying the mass "deregistration" of congregations and the clergy, this
loss of trust in the state-approved church leaders contributed to the emergence
of religious dissent movements, at first among the Evangelical Christians
[and] Baptists, and the Orthodox, later in other denominations as well.

In the Ukraine, about one-half of churches were closed in the
course of the 1958-1964. The number of Orthodox parishes in the Republic
was reduced from a 1950 total of some 8,000 to 4,500, by 1976, amounting
to 65% of all "registered" churches in the USSR. The greatest losses
were suffered by dioceses located in the eastern regions of the Ukr.SSR;
e.g., the number of Orthodox churches in the Poltava-Kremenchuk diocese
fell between 1958 and 1964 from 340 to mere 52. Two out of the three
Orthodox seminaries in the Ukraine (in Kiev and Lutsk) were closed down.
The only surviving theological school, in Odessa (118 students in 1974-75),
has been able to fill in only part of the vacancies in the ranks of the
parish clergy. Of the 134 new clergymen ordained for the Ukraine during 1974,\(^{35}\) the larger part must have graduated from the theological schools in Leningrad (which has had a disproportionately high percentage of Ukrainian students) and Moscow. As most applicants to theological seminaries come from the Western Ukrainian dioceses (and many of them are suspected by the authorities of harbouring Ukrainian nationalist sentiments or even of being secret Uniates), the Council for Religious Affairs introduced a restrictive quota for admission of West Ukrainians to all theological schools.\(^ {36}\)

Khrushchev's antireligious campaign was particularly destructive of monasticism in the Ukraine. Of the 38 monasteries and convents,\(^ {37,29}\) were closed down, including the Kievo-Pecherska Lavra (the Kievan monastery of the Caves)--the oldest and most revered monastery in the land. Reporting, in 1975, to the CPSU Central Committee about the C.R.A. activities, its vice-chairman V. Furov admitted that:

Guided by instructions from the leading (direktivnye) organs, considerable work was carried out locally during the last years to reduce the network of monasteries. To this very end, the Council for Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (the predecessor of C.R.A.) used also its increased influence on the Patriarchate and the bishops. With the hands of the churchmen, several tens of monasteries [and convents] were closed down. In 1963, under a useful pretext (landslides in the caves, the necessity to examine the soil and make repairs), the Kievo-Pecherska Lavra was closed: it used to attract each year close to 500,000 pilgrims.\(^ {38}\)

Only 9 monastic institutions survived in the Ukraine (16 in the entire USSR): monasteries in Pochaiv (with 45 monastics in 1970) and Odessa (39); and seven convents (including two in Kiev) with a 1970 total of 755 nuns and novices.\(^ {39}\) Since the late 1950's severe restrictions have also been imposed on admissions to monasteries and convents, their activities and income, and the accessibility of monastic shrines to pilgrims.\(^ {40}\)

Paradoxically, "de-Stalinization" which so detrimentally affected the once privileged "patriotic" Church, brought some benefits to the largest of the banned churches--the Ukrainian Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church. Though the authorities ignored numerous Uniate appeals for the rehabilitation of their Church, Khrushchev's penal reforms enabled a number of the Ukrainian Catholic
priests who have refused "conversion" to Orthodoxy—those who survived their lengthy imprisonment and exile—to return to the Western Ukraine. Among them were two surviving bishops of the martyr Church, under whose guidance the Catacomb Church was able significantly to revive its activities in Galicia. Though the imprisoned Primate of the Church, Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj was not allowed to rejoin his flock, in early 1963, he was released from imprisonment and sent away from the USSR in response to Papal-American intervention on his behalf, a concession which Khrushchev hoped would encourage further development of détente between the Vatican and the Kremlin.

VII

Khrushchev's sudden removal in Fall 1964 soon brought to halt the country-wide attack on religion. Though the new "collective leadership" would not restore to religious organizations their lost rights, churches, monasteries, and theological schools, from now on the emphasis of Soviet church policy was to be on gradual, more subtle and indirect attack on institutional religion. The emphasis was now to be placed primarily on atheist "conversion" of the flock and the replacement of religious holidays, rites and ceremonies with Communist substitutes, with the natural attrition of the clergy expected to progressively shrink the churches' institutional base.

Despite the losses suffered by religious groups in the Republic, the Ukraine has retained after 1964 its predominant share of religious congregations in the USSR. Within the Republic, its Western oblasti with 20% of population now held over 60% of all Orthodox congregations as the authorities were reluctant to close many churches in areas where their flock may rejoin the banned Uniate Church; at the same time, the concentration of anti-religious measures primarily on urban areas has restricted Orthodox Church mainly to rural areas where 98% of all still open churches were now located. This shift in its regional and social base has had somewhat unexpected ethno-cultural consequences for the Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukraine; it now made it dependent on the Ukrainian peasant strata, least affected by Russification, and on the Western Ukraine, with its intensely nationalistic population. Not accidentally, the once solidly Uniate Lviv-Ternopil diocese with its 958 churches and 609 priests in 1978, represents the largest (and least decimated during 1958-64)
diocese of the entire Orthodox Church in the USSR. 44

To adjust to its changed social base, the Russian Orthodox Church in the Ukraine had to undergo limited Ukrainianization, a process which has been associated since 1966 with the activities of the new Patriarchal Exarch of the Ukraine, Metropolitan Filaret Denysenko (*1929), the first Ukrainian in more than 150 years to be appointed Metropolitan of Kiev and Halych. During his tenure, the Orthodox episcopate in the Republic became predominantly Ukrainian, with more than half of bishops recruited from the Western oblasti which were annexed since World War II. 45 Since 1968, the Exarchate has resumed publication of its Ukrainian-language monthly, Pravoslavnyi visnyk (The Orthodox Herald), suppressed during Khrushchev's antireligious campaign; it has also produced a Ukrainian prayer book, and started annual publication of Ukrainian Orthodox calendars. It appears that the continuing threat faced by the official Orthodox Church from the catacomb Uniate Church in the Western Ukraine, 46 Moscow's hopes for the eventual "reunion" of the Ukrainian Orthodox abroad, and the Patriarchate's desire to neutralize the influence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the West have supplied additional motives for this limited ecclesiastical Ukrainianization. It is important to note, however, that this Ukrainianization tendency has not touched the sole surviving theological seminary in Odessa, 47 that Russian language still prevails in sermons and church administration in city churches outside the Western oblasti, and that even in these oblasti Ukrainian may not be used as liturgical language.

Despite the incessant harassment by the police and slanderous propaganda attacks suffered by the banned Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church, the latter continues its activities in Galicia and the Transcarpathian oblast as well as in the areas of resettlement and deportation of West Ukrainians. While its exiled primate, Cardinal Josyf Slipyj, resides in Rome, the Uniate flock is being served by several secretly or dained bishops and three to four hundred priests as well as several female and male monastic orders. The political and ecclesiastical "détente" which has characterized the Vatican-Moscow relations since the early 1960's while probably averting more severe Soviet repressions, has severely tested the Uniates' loyalty to Rome and their Church's morale and cohesion.

Lookings in retrospect at the effect of Soviet policies on religion
in the Ukraine one can list such regime "successes" as the establishment of effective external and internal controls over the Russian Orthodox Church, the Union of Evangelical Christians and Baptists, and other "loyal denominations; the suppression of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church; and the driving into the catacombs the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church. On the other hand, the regime failed, despite massive propaganda and police measures, to eliminate growing religious underground or to stem the tide of religious dissent. Neither were the Communist authorities entirely successful in their efforts to displace religiosity in society with the so-called "scientific atheism." While the majority of the Ukraine's population today may be considered a-religious, secularization has been due more to the rapid socio-economic and demographic changes than to the atheist indoctrination, though the permeation of the school curriculum with antireligious orientation undoubtedly has not been without effect on children and youth. The problem is that secularization has also undermined the credibility of the official ideology, generating scepticism and pragmatism rather then "militant atheism."

What more, the increasingly manifest linkage between atheist indoctrination and Russification ("internationalist education") in the Ukraine, has brought home to the nationally-conscious Ukrainians a much greater realization of the fundamental inter-dependence of traditional religion and national culture.

It is futile to speculate about the future fate of religion in the Soviet Ukraine beyond the obvious assumption that so long as the regime will continue to pursue its antireligious struggle without relenting on its monopoly of political and moral "truth", it will actually contribute to the survival of religion against the onslaught of modernization, as religion remains the only readily available, alternative belief-system, the sole stable set of moral values, and the unfalsified link with the nation's past.

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1. The Russian Orthodox Church (R.O.C.) or the Moscow Patriarchate headed again, since November 1917, by "Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus." In the Ukraine, a title of the "Patriarchal Exarch of the Entire Ukraine" has been attached to Kievian Metropolitans of the R.O.C. since August 1921.

2. Renovationism (Rus. obnovlenchestvo), an offshoot of the frustrated reform movement within the R.O.C., which joined forces with the Soviet regime in 1922 to seize the central administration of the Russian Church. Comprising predominantly the "white" (married) clergy, the Renovationist movement sought to introduce "progressive" reforms in the Church, incl. the replacement of the Moscow Patriarchate with a synodical form of church government, to bring the Church doctrine and political orientation in line with Soviet policies and to purge the Church of "reactionaries", while hoping to improve the legal and material position of the clergy under the Soviet regime. Though it enjoyed active support from the Soviet authorities, the Renovationist Church failed to attract any significant following among believers and was largely disowned by the authorities, after the Moscow Patriarchate was forced in 1927 into political submission to the regime. On the rise and fall of the Renovationist Church in the Soviet Ukraine, see this writer's "The Renovationist Church in the Soviet Ukraine, 1922-1939," in The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Science in the U.S., IX (1961), No. 1-2 (27-28), 41-74.

3. For the most extensive treatment of the UAOC available, see I. Vlasovskyi, Narys istorii Ukrainskoï Pravoslavnoï Tserkvy, IV, Part I (New York-Bound Brook, 1961).


6. The All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council was first formed by the Ukrainian autocephalist movement in late fall 1917 to convene an All-Ukrainian Church Sobor. It was re-established in 1919 and, with the movement's secession from the R.O.C. in May 1920, it assumed the leadership of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church.

7. The Autocephalists were the first to recognize (and take advantage of) the new Soviet legislation on religion.

8. Unilateral revision of Orthodox canons undertaken by the First All-Ukrainian Sobor of October 1921, incl. the introduction of married episcopate and its consecration by Sobor, without canonically-ordained bishops, isolated the UAOC from all other Orthodox Churches and exposed it to condemnation by the R.O.C. as "schismatic" and "sectarian," while alienating from the new Church some of the original leaders of the Ukrainian national church movement.

10. The "Living Church"—the most radical and pro-Soviet of the several factions comprising the Renovationist movement, which led the 1922 attack on the Patriarchate. It lost control of the movement by 1923 to the more conservative wing of the movement—"The Union of Congregations of the Ancient Apostolic Church" (SODAT) led by A. Vvedenskii.

11. In particular, the differences between supporters of radopraviie (conciliar, lay-dominated church government) and the more conservative episcopate of the UAOC. See Sukhopliuev, op. cit.; Vlasovskyi, op. cit.; and Metropolitan Vasyl Lypvskiyi, Istoriia Ukraiinskoii Tserkvy, Rozdil VII: Vidrozhennia Ukraiinskoii Tserkvy (Winnipeg, 1961).

12. Though it declared itself "autocephalous" at its May 1925 Sobor in Kharkiv, the Renovationist Church remained predominatly Russian and retained its membership in the Renovationist Holy Synod of the Orthodox Churches of the USSR; in December 1934, the latter nullified the "autocephaly" of then moribund Renovationist Church in the Ukraine (A.A. Shishkin, Sushchnost i kriticheskaia otsenka 'obnovlencheskogo' raskola russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi [Kazan, 1970], 273).


14. At the peak of its influence, the UAOC might have had as many as three to six million followers. See Archbishop Iosif [Krechetovich], Proiskhozhdenie i sushchnost samosviatstva lipkovtsev (Kharkiv, 1925), 1; and Archbishop Serafim (Ladde), "Die Lage der Orthodoxen Kirche in der Ukraine," Eiche, X (1931), No. 1, 11-40.

15. See the communique of the GPU of the Ukr. SSR, in Izvestiia, Nov. 22, 1929. The alleged connection between the UAOC and the SVU appears to have been a crude fabrication on the part of the Soviet police and the procuracy, to provide a pretext for the suppression of the Church.

16. The "Extraordinary Sobor" was forced to condemn the fundamental principles of the UAOC: "it was completely logical that autocephaly should become a symbol of Petliurite independence, that Ukrainization should be exploited as a means of inciting national enmity, and that conciliarism (soobornopravnist) should transform itself into a demagogical means of political influence . . ." (emphasis supplied). D. Ihnatiuk, Ukrainska avtokefalna tserkva i Soiuz Vyzvolennia Ukrainy) (Kharkiv-Kiev, 1930), 30-31.

17. Ibid.

18. See the "Appeal" of the All-Ukrainian Church Provisional Organizational Committee" of June 9, 1930 (Archive of Archbishop Ievhen Bachynskyi, Bulle, Switzerland).


20. At the time of the Soviet invasion of Poland in Sept. 1939, there were only four active bishops left in the entire Russian Orthodox Church. For an "inside" account of the Moscow Patriarchate on the eve of World War II, see Metropolitan Sergii (Voskresenskii), "Tserkov v SSSR pered voinoi," in Rossiia (New York), Oct. 9-13, 1945.
21. The Sept. 4th meeting, attended by the Patriarchal Locum Tenens, Metropolitan Sergii, and Metropolitans Aleksii of Leningrad and Nikolai of Kiev, was followed by a succession of major concessions to the Russian Orthodox Church.

22. See the Moscow Patriarchate's ukaz No. 167/a of March 1941, announcing the appointment of Archimandrite Panteleimon Rudyk as Bishop of Lviv for the solidly Uniate Galicia, to direct "reunification" efforts there. Such appointment, preceded by a visit of Metropolitan Nikolai Iarushevich to Lviv (Feb. 22-23, 1941), could not have occurred without the approval of the Soviet authorities who, characteristically, wiped out Uniate missionary organization in the Orthodox Volyn and Polissia. An original copy of the decree is held in the Museum Archive of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in U.S.A. at South Bound Brook, N.J. (Prof. I. Vlasovskyi Archive, File No. 142).


24. The respective resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR dated August 22, 1945, was announced to Patriarch Aleksii in a letter of August 28, 1945, from the Chairman of the Council for Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, G.G. Karpov. For the text of the letter (still unpublished in the USSR), see D. Loeber, "Die Rechtsstellung der Kirche in der Sowjetunion," in WGA--Die wichtigsten Gesetzgebungsakte in der Laender Ost-, Suedeuropas und in den ostasiatischen Volksdemokratien (Hamburg), VII, No. 5 (Oct. 1966), 272. Subsequently, in an unpublished decree of August 29, 1945, liberal taxation benefits were granted by the Council of People's Commissars to churches and monastic institutions (ibid., 274).


26. V. K. Tancher, Prychyny isnuvannia relihiinykh perezhytkiv v SRSR (Kiev, 1959), 4; Vsesoiuznoe obshshestvo obshshestvo po rasprostraneniiu politicheskikh i nauchnykh znani, Nauka i religiia (Moscow, 1957), 396.

27. Secret CC Resolution "On Major Shortcomings in the Scientific-Atheist Propaganda and on Measures to Improve It" of July 7, 1954 (first published only in 1961); and published CC Resolution (signed by Khrushchev personally) "On Errors in the Conduct of the Scientific-Atheist Propaganda among the Population" of Nov. 10, 1954.
28. For some of the still unpublished Party and government orders and instructions of the two councils on religious affairs attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, which guided this antireligious campaign, see V. A. Kuroedov and A. S. Pankratov (eds.), Zakonodavstvo o religioznykh kultakh (Sbornik materialov i dokumentov), 2nd ed., rev. (Moscow, 1971) which was issued for internal (sluzhebnyi) use only; its equivalent in the Ukrainian SSR appeared two years later: K. Z. Lytvyn and A. I. Pshenychnyi (eds.), Zakonodavstvo pro relihini kulty (Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv) (Kiev, 1973). Characteristically, both Kuroedov and Lytvyn (who are chairmen of the Councils for Religious Affairs at the All-Union level and in the Ukrainian SSR, respectively) have recently published articles on the status of religious organizations in the Soviet Union which directly contradict some of the secret official documents reproduced in volumes they edited, documents which attest to the far reaching, arbitrary and discriminatory regime intervention into affairs of religious organizations.


30. Ie. V. Safonova, Ideino-vykhovna robota Komunistychnoi partii sered trudiashchykh vyzvolenykh raioniv Ukrainy v roky Velykol Vitchyznianoi viliny (1943-1945 rr.) (Kiev, 1971), 117. Citing a document from the Archive of the Institute of Party History, CC CPU, Safonova lists as of July 1, 1945, 6133 Orthodox churches and 2326 Uniate congregations (subsequently forced into the R.O.C.) within the Ukrainian SSR.

31. K. Z. Lytvyn, "Svoboda sovisti--nevid'iemne pravo liudyny," Visti z Ukrainy, No. 15 (920), Apr. 1976. The figure appears to apply to 1966; the present total is likely to be lower.

32. According to a confidential report for 1974 submitted to the CPSU Central Committee by V. D. Furov, vice-chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, the Russian Orthodox Church had by Jan. 1, 1975, 7,062 "registered" churches and only 5,994 "registered" priests and 594 deacons, i.e., 70.2 percent of the clergy it has had in 1961. The report was leaked to a Russian religious quarterly published in Paris. See "Iz otcheta Soveta po delam religii chlenam TsK KPSS," Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniia, Vol. 54, No. 130 (IV-1979), 289, 297.

33. As stated by Bishop Feodosii (Dykun) of Poltava in his appeal to L. I. Brezhnev of Oct. 26, 1977, in which he complained about the illegal interference of the oblast CRA plenipotentiary with the purely religious activities in the diocese and the plenipotentiary's "administrative" methods of combating religion in violation of the constitutional "guarantees of the freedom of conscience". See "Zvernennia Iepyskopa Feodosiia do Brezhneva," Suchasnist, Vol. 21, Nos. 7-8 (July-Aug. 1981), 160.


35. Ibid., 300.
36. Ibid., 317.

37. Of which 16 were reopened in the Central and Eastern Ukraine during the war-time German occupation. See the published section of V. D. Furov's report for 1970, Vestnik Russkogo Khristiinskogo Dvizheniia, Vol. 55, No. 1313.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 363-365.

40. Ibid., 363, 370.

41. Mgr. Mykolai Charnetskyi, Apostolic Administrator for Volyn, who was allowed in 1956 to return to Lviv where he died in 1959; and Mgr. Ivan Liatshevskyi, Vicar Bishop of Stanislav (now Ivano-Frankivsk), who returned to Stanislav in June 1955 and died there in Dec. 1957.


43. A. O. Ieryshev, Dosvid sotsiolohichnykh doslidzhen relihiinosty (Kiev, 1967), 68.

44. According to Metropolitan Nykolai (Iuryk) of Lviv, in an interview given to The News from Ukraine in 1978.


46. See this writer's "The Catacomb Church: Ukrainian Greek Catholics in the USSR," Religion in Communist Lands, V, No. 1 (Spring 1977), 4-12.

47. In 1973-1974, the Odessa Seminary had a total enrollment of 117 students out of a total some 1200 for the entire USSR (incl. 600 correspondence students); R. Oppenheim, "Russian Orthodox Theological Education in the Soviet Union," Religion in Communist Lands, II, No. 3 (May-June 1974), 4-8.

48. In the mid-1960's, Ieryshev (op. cit., 68-69) estimated the share of believers in the population of the "new" oblasti of the Ukrainian SSR at some 60 percent, twice as many than in the eastern oblasti of the Republic. Within the urban population, believers are said to constitute between some 30 per cent for the Western oblasti, and about 10 to 15 per cent in the rest of the Soviet Ukraine. For the entire USSR, a more recent estimate placed believers at 25.9 per cent of the rural population in eastern oblasti, as against 60.6 per cent in the areas annexed to the USSR since 1939 (I. N. Iablokov, Krizis religii v sotsialisticheskim obshchestve [Moscow, 1972], 14).