

THE ORTHODOX IN THE RUSSIAN ULTRANATIONALIST MOVEMENTS

by Alexander Verkhovsky

Alexander Markovich Verkhovsky is Vice-President of the Information and Research Center PANORAMA located in Moscow (www.panorama.ru). The paper was presented at a panel on The Religious Factor in Contemporary Russian Ultrationalism at the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies convention in Washington DC in November 2001.

One should not be surprised that Orthodoxy shows a religious preference for radical-nationalist movements. Yet Orthodoxy does not dominate the movement unconditionally. On the one hand, there is the strong position of the neopagans (cf. the speech by Vladimir Pribylovskii, "Neopagan Clamour in Russian Nationalism") that is linked to the neopaganism of German Nazism, as well as with the search for national identity in the face of a "too Jewish" Christianity. On the other hand, Russian society is not very religious in the traditional sense of that word. One could just as well say, that some sort of vague religiosity is dominant, a mixture of elements from Orthodoxy, other religions, astrology, and other para-religious teachings.¹ Obviously, all of this has a bearing on the radical-nationalist movement.

Therefore the specter of the return of "church or secular self-determination", "Orthodoxy or paganism" viewpoints is more than fully met. We have already written about this earlier,² and the situation has not changed fundamentally during the most recent period.

Russian National Union (RNU) - Semi-Orthodox

¹See the interesting comments in Alexander Shchipkov, *Vo chto verit Rossia* [In What Does Russia Believe?], St. Petersburg, RKhGI Isdatel'stvo, 1998.

²Alexander Verkhovsky, "Tzerkov v politike i politika v tserkvi" [Church in Politics and Politics in the Church] in *Politicheskaiia ksenofobiia* [Political Xenophobia], Moscow, OOO Panorama, 1999, 101-107; Alexander Verkhovsky, "Ultra-Nationalists in Russia at the Onset of Putin's Rule", *Nationality Papers*, Vol. 28, no. 4, (December 2000), 707-722.

The largest radical nationalist organization in the country, the Russian National Union (RNU) split in the autumn of 2000. There now exist four relatively large and independent fragments of the RNU. In none of these did any information surface about a change in religious orientation. Obviously, all four parts of the RNU remain formally Orthodox.

Nevertheless, the program documents of the RNU lack the demand - very widespread in Russian political programs - for a strengthened role for the Russian Orthodox Church, a feature that signifies a notable bad will toward the latter. That should not really be surprising. The Moscow Patriarchate is loyal to the authorities, whereas the RNU is radically opposed to them. Not long ago the Patriarch himself formally judged the RNU to be a non-Orthodox movement.³

Further, the RNU confesses Orthodoxy in its own fashion. As stated in its current programme: "Members of the RNU conform their lives to a more ancient, medieval form of Orthodoxy, which served our forebears as spiritual basis for the formation and strengthening of the Russian government."⁴ Such forms of Orthodoxy the RNU determine themselves, for which they are regarded indeed as Orthodox nationalists.⁵

From a churchly and canonic point of view, the RNU groups are without question non-Orthodox, but that has not hindered them from having positive contacts to clerics of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC). Recently, on August 5, 2001, on the 10th anniversary of the return of the relics of Saint Serafim of Sarov, the Diveevo Monastery provided camping facilities for about 150 Barkashovtsy.

What Matters More - Orthodoxy or Nationalism?

It is impossible to sort out the organizations according to such precisely formulated criteria. There are of course those, for whom the answer is obvious: for the

³"Sviatoi krest ili svastika?", [Holy Cross or Swastika?] *Moskovskii Tserkovnyi vestnik*, No. 10, 1994.

⁴"Chto takoe RNE". [What is RNU?] cited from <http://www.rne.faithweb.com/teos.htm>

⁵See for example, Georgii Aleksandrov, "Chevo boitsia Barkashov?" [What is Barkashov Afraid of?] *Russkii pravoslavnyi patriot*, No. 1, 1999.

RNU nationalism is more important, and for the "Radonezh" society, Orthodoxy matters more. One can designate those also, for whom the question has not yet been decided, which leads to specific consequences.

Take for example the fully Orthodox Russian All-National Union (RANU) of Igor Artemov. Yet RANU considers itself as a secular, not a churchly organization. RANU is not well known, but at the parliamentary election in 1999 Artemov made a respectable political showing - he alone among the national-radicals did not boycott the elections. In his voting district in Vladimir Oblast he gained nearly 15% of the votes, which far exceeded the gains of other radical-nationalist candidates (who took only 1-3 %, or even less). He was only 1.6% behind the winner, Then in 2001 Artemov became a deputy of the legislative assembly in Vladimir Oblast.

Another example - the Orthodox monarchist celibate priest Nikon (Belavenets), raised to that rank by the Patriarch as recently as the beginning of 2000, continues to work closely with activists who are avowedly non-Orthodox, is close to the “New Right”, to anarchists and skinheads. If however, Father Nikon is known for his very unusual behavior, far less easily explained is the fact that Leonid Simonovich, chair of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods gave a speech at a meeting organized on August 17, 2001 by the party of anarchists and rock musicians surrounding the Nazi-like sect of Sergei “Spider” Troitsky.⁶

Such are the extremes in researching the combinations of nationalism and orthodoxy. Then there is also the main stream with its longer established formula for combining nationalism and orthodoxy.

Russian Orthodox Fundamentalism

This formula, of course, exists in a variety of modifications. But in its essence it consists of the claim that the Russian “Orthodox Nation” (usually including Ukrainians

⁶“Pravoslavnyie khorugvenostsy ob’edinilis’ s anarkhistami i rokerami” [Orthodox Bannerbearers United with Anarchists and Bikers] N T V , R u . 2 0 . 0 8 . 2 0 0 1 (http://txt.ntv.ru/religy/20Aug2001/spkhorugv_print.html)

and Belorussians), is the bearer of the true faith (most probably meaning the one and only). Therefore even its enemies simultaneously intermix ethnic and religious terminology. Here in principle, the question of faith stands above the question of ethnicity, but at the same time the latter also supercedes (pogloshaet) it - a contradiction. Given a political understanding of the utility of contradictions, this makes it so much easier to fashion a product out of religious underpinnings.

Russian Orthodox fundamentalism (hereafter - fundamentalism) relies on the notion of a “golden age”, to which one must return - a return to a pre-revolutionary (pre 1905) Russian Empire. It proposes its restoration in all its basic features - full fledged autocracy, restrictions for foreign believers and (in part) for foreigners, the imperial structure for internal and external policy, a ruling status for the ROC, and a rigorous state-Orthodox paternalism.

Konstantin Dushenov, who is one of the best theoreticians of fundamentalism, though not the most influential, stated these views concisely. Dushenov, editor in chief of the periodical **Orthodox Russia** (*Rus' Pravoslavnaia*) and formerly secretary to Metropolitan Ioann of St. Petersburg & Ladoga, (who can rightly be regarded as spiritual leader for the forming of fundamentalism⁷), labeled his programme the “Doctrine of Metropolitan Ioann”. The opening lines of the programme are sufficiently substantive:

“The Russian Idea” - it is the tireless striving for holiness, justice and purity.

“Orthodox State” - it is a state, based on the highest truths of the Law of God [i.e. Scripture].

“Russian Democracy” - that is ‘sobornost’.

“Russian Ideology” - that is Orthodoxy.

“Russian Imperialism” - that is ‘derzhavnost’ (power).

⁷Metropolitan Ioann died November 2, 1995 and among the bishops of the ROC they have not found an adequate successor, though they could mention Met. Gedeon (Dokushin), Archbishop Iuvenali (Tarasov), Archbishop Tikhon (Emel’ianov), Bishop Veniamin (Pushkaria), Bishop Antonii (Masendich, who died July 8, 2001).

*“Russian State” - that is Russia in all its manifold historical forms of statehood.*⁸

There do exist a number of organizations, which to a very high degree of faithfulness and radicality embody these positions. In the first place are the Orthodox brotherhoods, among whom the society “Radonezh” (thanks in part to its radio station and newspaper) plays a basic role. Then follow the Union of “Christian Revival” (UCR), the Union of Orthodox Bannerbearers [Khorugvennostsev] (UOBB), Black Hundreds and others (more details see Stella Rock, “Militant Piety’: Fundamentalist Tendencies in the Russian Orthodox Brotherhood Movement”, pp1-17 in this issue).

Here is a citation from the text of Anatolii Makeeva, Elder of the St. Joseph of Volotsk Brotherhood. This text can be considered quintessential radical fundamentalism, since it reveals all the themes that preoccupied fundamentalists at the end of the 1990s (on changes in recent years, see below).

“Children, the Devil has conspired against our long-suffering fatherland.

Greedy foreign hordes pillage and destroy our lands, our people. With the help of the authorities, numerous sorcerers, witches, sectarians and heretics corrupt and destroy the soul of the Russian people.

The mongrel-democratic government is moving toward the elimination of the line “nationality” in our passports, is preparing to erase the Russian national past, that which remains of it - its home.

Cosy cosmopolitans, with the help of global elites, are usurping power in our country through fickle and traitorous means. Rootless democrats are trying to plunder and sell as worthless our source of food - the land.

Having lost their Russian nationality, their Russian land, the Russian people are losing their Orthodox faith and become easy prey for the New World Order. Instead of the Christian Orthodox Church stands the ecumenical church or Antichrist.”⁹

⁸Konstantin Dushenov, concluding essay to the collection *Problemy sovremennoi Rossii glazami russkikh arkhieriev* [Problems of Contemporary Russia in the Eyes of Russian Bishops] St. Petersburg, 1996.

⁹Anatolii Makeev, “Brat’ia i sestry!” (Brothers and Sisters!) *Shturmovik*, December 8-18, 1997 (With retention of original punctuation).

Mutual Relations Between Fundamentalists and Communists as Problem

Fundamentalism in contemporary Russia is still quite marginal. Meanwhile Orthodox national-radicals strive as before for inclusion in major politics. Understandably, for some of them, political success comes before ideological purity. Those who are ready for compromise are immediately confronted with the problem of what compromises to accept to join with the communists, as the basic anti-liberal opposition force. For the Orthodox in general, and for the nationalists in particular, a relationship to the communists is naturally quite undesirable.

Those organizations, for whom their orthodoxy plays a secondary role, do not oppose creating a Bloc with the communists (for example, Russian Party (*Russkaia partiia*), All-Russian Conciliar Movement (*Vserossiskoie sobornoe dvizhenie*). It is a different matter for the fundamentalists.

The first aggravation of the problem came in the presidential election of 1996, when the choice was between Boris Yeltsin and Gennadi Zyuganov. At the time only a small group of fundamentalists headed by archpriest Alexander Shargunov openly established a union with Zyuganov, for which they garnered abuse from other fundamentalists and from the Patriarch.

Though Yeltsin was a quite unacceptable figure, Konstantin Dushenov was prepared to establish a Bloc with him sooner, than with the communists. Immediately after the election he put forth a serious proposal to make the Russian Orthodox Church the motor of a new state ideology, as alternative to the 'old' ideology - 'red' or 'white'.¹⁰ But the rapprochement between the Kremlin and the ROC remained at an extremely limited level.

Then for the parliamentary elections of 1999 Dushenov seemed ripe for a union with the communists. The resultant declaration¹¹ was signed by Dushanov together with

¹⁰Konstantin Dushenov, "Soiuz nerushumyi Kremliia i ... Kresta?" [Union of the inviolable Kremlin and ... Cross?] *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, July 6, 1996.

¹¹"Vremia sobirat' kamni" [Time to gather stones] *Rus' Pravoslavnaiia*, No. 8, 1999.

a number of other fundamentalist activists, including the chief editor of the news agency *Russian Line* (*Russkaia liniia*) Sergei Grigor'ev, the editor in chief of the almanac *Orthodoxy or Death* (*Pravoslavie ili smert*) Andrei Riumin and others. The authors affirmed, that Zyuganov's National-Patriotic Union of Russia (NPUR) and the "communo-patriotic bloc" named Victory (*Pobeda*), as proposed by the communist general Valentin Varennikov were not simply a tactical union, the "lesser evil" in comparison with the parties of the "Yeltsin regime", but were a union, ideologically sufficiently compatible to publicize the idea of "Russian Orthodox socialism". This was the terminology of Dushenov, of course, not of Varennikov or Zyuganov, though one must recognize, that the CPRF [Communist Party of the Russian Federation] in fact had completed a serious evolution into an "orthodox-patriotic" ideology.

In this declaration the fundamentalists employed precisely this argument for forming a union with the communists - only a friendly power could help the fundamentalists triumph over their opponents within the church itself.

At the time, nevertheless, the "zealots for Orthodox piety" (now the self-designation of the Dushenov circle) did not slip into the electoral lists of the Zyuganov Bloc - the CPRF did not find it necessary to share seats with the minority in their union. Nor did a more radical variant of the communist-patriotic bloc come about, which some zealots planned to establish around General Albert Makashova, who was known for his extremism. Hegumen Aleksei (Prosvirin), editor in chief of the journal *Zealot for Orthodox Piety* (*Revnitel' pravoslavnogo blagochestiia*) and member of the board of editors of *Orthodox Rus'* (*Rus' Pravoslavnaia*), expressed full solidarity with Albert Makashov during the height of the scandal surrounding Makashov's antisemitic statements at the end of 1998. In Hegumen Aleksei's opinion, the word of the Apostle Paul that "in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew", that word is "not for all of us, sinners". So in terms of a political ideology both then can be included under the term

“Orthodox Stalinism”.¹²

In other words, in the majority of cases many fundamentalists were ready to renounce their anticommunism, but their concessions showed it was not necessary. Those who participated in the non-communist opposition bloc also did not succeed. Only the Union of “Christian Revival” (*Khristianskoe vozrozhdenie*) and the Black Hundreds really tried to seek votes as part of the bloc - Movement of Patriotic Forces - Russian Deed (*dvizhenie patrioticheskie sil - Russkoe Delo*). The bloc reminded voters only that the first three on the list of candidates were named Ivanov, Petrov, and Sidorov. They received 0.17% votes.¹³

Putin’s Appearance and New Hope

The poor results of the 1999 campaign did not reduce the activities of the fundamentalists. Rather, while the parliamentary elections were proceeding, they were already preparing for the election of President Putin. It was while conducting the propagandistic campaign that many national-patriots began to think that a change in governmental direction could be welcomed by them.

As to the election of the president, the orthodox national-radicals were divided among themselves. One could say that the UCR were definitely for Putin, but the Black Hundreds and the RNU were against him. Those who were against, however, did not urge members to vote for Zyuganov, but “against all”. Yet after the elections, in one form

¹²“Monakh i voin. Beseda generala Al’berta Makashova s igumenom Aleksiem (Prosvirinnym)” [The Monk and War. Conversation between General Albert Makashov with Hegumen (Abbot) Aleksei (Prosvirin)] *Rus’ Pravoslavnaia*, No. 1, 1999.

¹³For details on the elections of 1999, cf. Vladimir Pribylovskii, “Natsional-patrioty na vyborakh v III Gosudarstvennuu Dumu” ; Ekaterina Mikhailovskaia, “Itogi parlamentskikh vyborov 1999 goda dlia natsional-patriotov (v tom chisle imperskoi napravlenosti). Otschet utoplennikov; Alexander Verkhovskiy, “Itogi parlamentskikh vyborov 1999 goda dlia radikalnykh natsional-patriotov. Odnomandatnye okruga”, all in *Natsional-patrioty. Tserkov’ i Putin*. Moscow: OOO Panorama, 2000. Abbreviated English version: Vladimir Pribylovskiy, National-Patriots within the Framework of the Election for the Third State Duma; Ekaterina Mikhailovskaya, “Results of the Parliamentary Election 1999 for National-Patriots (Including the Pro-Empire Oriented Ones). Drowning by Numbers; Alexander Verkhovskiy, “Results of the Partliamentary Election - 1999 for Radical National-Patriots. Single-Mandate Districts”; in *National-patriots, Church and Putin*. Moscow: Center Panorama, 2001.

or another the majority expressed their readiness to support the new president in his proposed imperial policy.¹⁴

Putin, of course, was not ready to deal with the radical nationalists. But the tone of the governmental propaganda did indeed become more authoritarian (*derzhavinisheskoj*), which gave them some reason for hope. On the other hand, the further rapprochement of the state with the ROC, which many were awaiting, did not come about, and Putin's Orthodoxness (*pravoslavnost'*) seemed unconvincing. Putin visited monasteries more often than did Yeltsin, but that in itself does not show him to be an Orthodox person. (There was a rumor, that archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov) was his spiritual adviser, but there was no confirmation and the rumor died out.)

Fundamentalist Propaganda on the Rise

In recent years, the radical-nationalist movement within the Orthodox sector has made notable changes. The basic form of radical opposition activity has traditionally been that of propaganda. Here the larger role is played not by the simple Orthodox, but by those in the fundamentalistic circles. No doubt this is due to their much higher intellectual calibre, but it is also due to a greater integration into the Church.

Sretenskii monastery, headed by archimandrite Tikhon (Shekunov) transformed itself into one of the church publishing houses and supports the fairly popular website *Pravoslavie.ru*. The "Radonezh" Society publishes periodicals popular in the parishes, and also runs a popular radio station. The most regular radical-nationalist periodical, *Russian Herald* (*Russkii vestnik*), is also orientated toward Russian Orthodox fundamentalism. The very active Petersburg "Zealots for Orthodox Piety" have been producing a whole palette of publications, the basic one being the periodical *Orthodox*

¹⁴For details, cf. Vladimir Pribylovsky, "Natsional-patrioty no prezidentskikh vyborakh-2000" [National-patriots in the Presidential Election of 2000]; and "Otnoshenie natsional-patriotov k Putinu posle 26 marta" [Relationship of National Patriots to Putin after March 26]; in *Natsional-patrioty, Tserkov' i Putin*. Moscow, OOO Panorama, 2000. Abbreviated English version: Vladimir Pribylovsky, "National-Patriots at the Presidential Election 2000"; "The Attitude of National-Patriots towards Vladimir Putin in the Aftermath of March 26, 2000"; in *National-patriots, Church and Putin*. Moscow: Center Panorama, 2001.

Rus (*Rus' Pravoslavnaia*) and the website *Russian Line* (*Ruskaia liniia*). (In general, the fundamentalists are very active on the internet.)

In addition, the fundamentalists are carrying forth their offensive not only in secular society, but also within the Church. The views of the fundamentalists are, of course, not those of the Patriarch, but they are widespread among the clergy and laity of the church, since there is often a nostalgia for lost status. Moreover, we are not speaking here of a natural conservatism, since the mindset of these persons is predominantly that of neophytes of the last 10-15 years. The poverty (and guilt) of the Patriarchate lies in the fact that it did not at the time give a sharp enough rebuff to the rise of fundamentalism in the church. Now, quite possibly, it is already too late.¹⁵

The sharpest attack on the fundamentalists came in the speech of Patriarch Alexsei II at the Moscow bishops conference of December 23, 1998, resulting in the resolution of the Synod on “junior elders” (*mladostarsakh*). Although no one was named specifically, it was clear to all that the speech was directed at fundamentalistic priests.¹⁶ While this was happening,¹⁷ there began in autumn of 1999 a massive campaign, though smaller than a year earlier, against the barcodes and the INN (individual tax number), about which more below.

The canonization of the tsarist family at the Jubilee Sobor in August 2000 signaled an apparent defeat of the Patriarchate in the face of powerful pressures from below.¹⁸ The Patriarchate had dragged out the question for many years, and then, when

¹⁵For a survey of the relations between the Patriarchate and the fundamentalists till the end of 1998, see Alexander Verkhovsky, “Tserkov v politike i politika v Tserkvi”, 65-100.

¹⁶The themes of the resolution on “Junior Elders” accused them very broadly of politicization and opposition to the Patriarchy. The “Junior Elders” were guilty of carrying out their pastoral tasks poorly, and under rating the wishes of their spiritual children. Incidentally, the list of charges were similar to those usually applied to “totalitarian sects”. cf. <http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/sr291281.htm>

¹⁷The situation was described by one of the known “zealots”, Hegumen Aleksei (Prosvirin). “Krestonostsy” [Cross-bearers], *Rus' Pravoslavnaia*, No. 7, 1999.

¹⁸For an assessment of the event: Aleksandr Kvrlezhev, “Tubileleinyi Arkhiereiskii Sobor Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi” [Jubilee Bishops Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church], *Ruskaia mysl'*, August 31, 2000; Maxim Shevchenko, Oleg Nedumov, Elena Smirnova, “Tserkov' kanonizirovala poslednego tsaria” [The Church Canonized the Last Tsar], *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, August 15, 2000.

it yielded in the end, not wanting the disagreements to become an open scandal, this filled the fundamentalists with optimism. Moreover, they continued to call Nicholas II a saint, quite rightly, although the Sobor canonized him at a different rank - as passion bearer.¹⁹ That is, even on this question there was no reconciliation.

The Patriarchate continued its policy of contradictory compromises. Two years after the speech on “junior elders”, during a regular Moscow bishops conference, the Patriarch complained that the problem had in no way been resolved. But then, literally two weeks later on January 10, 2001, he sent a letter of congratulation to the radical national Orthodox periodical *Russian Herald* (*Russkii vestnik*) on its tenth anniversary.

Nor does the quality of staff changes within the Patriarchate enable us to draw conclusions about any change in its policies. Recent examples are the appointment in July 2001 of archpriest Dimitri Smirnov as acting chair of the Moscow Patriarchate’s department for cooperation with the military and judicial branches, and the August (2001) appointment of Sergei Chapnin as editor in chief of the patriarchal periodical *Moscow Church Herald* (*Moskovskii tserkovnyi vestnik*).

Chapnin, an independent Orthodox journalist, had been supporting the liberals, from the point of view of the church. Until very recently he was the editor in chief of the independent internet journal *Sobornost’*.²⁰

Archpriest Dimitrii, on the other hand, was the spiritual leader of a group of fundamentalist oriented priests in Moscow. Here are some excerpts from his recent radio broadcasts:

“Take for example in Moscow - are there not enough bricks to smash all the sexshops? But so far no one has so much as smashed a window of such an establishment. ... Or take the example of the sects. Suppose that say 800 people would chase out

¹⁹For details see, Aleksandr Kvrlezhev, “Utverditsia li v Rossii novaia eres’?” [A New Heresy in Russia Confirmed?] *NG-Religii*. November 15, 2000; Andrei Voitovskii, “Pravoslavnye izdaniia o tsare i Rasputine” [Orthodox Publication on the Tsar and Rasputin], *NG-Religii*, November 29, 2000.

²⁰Now the journal has ceased publication. Cf. <http://www.sobor.ru>

the sects. To disperse a crowd of 800 - how many police do you need? And then, no prefect nor any other official likes it, that the people revolt.

... progress also has its shadow side. Had they not invented jet airplanes, no one would have smashed into a strange building, people would not have died... They say: "I need to fly there!" But why fly there? You live in your village, and that's it. Twice a year you go to the market - that's enough."²¹

Politicization of "Moralism" as Legal Manifestation of Fundamentalism

Before his recent appointment, archpriest Dimitrii played no more than a marginal role in the church, just like Dushenov or Grigor'ev above. As prorektor of the St. Tikhon Theological Institute and closely tied to the Orthodox medical-educational center *Life* (*Zhizn*) of Father Maksim Obukhov, he headed the struggle against abortion, contraception, etc. The Patriarchate did not simply condemn these activities, rather it supported them fully. The unique feature of the organized moralists in the *Life* center and of the public committee For the Moral Revival of the Fatherland (*Za npravstvennoe vozrozhdenie Otechestva*) of archpriest Alexander Shargunov lay in the fact that their propaganda was coordinated with politics and ideology.²²

For example, the church-societal council for biomedical ethics, that was associated with the Life center, in a statement of April 2, 2001, on the demographic problems, based its concerns on the grounds that "that we will soon no longer be in a position to defend our territory".²³ Father Aleksei Kagirin, one of the prominent activists

²¹"Prot. Dimitrii Smirnov otvechaet v priamom efire na voprosy slushatelei" [Father Dimitrii Smirnov answers questions directly on radio] (efir radio 'Radonezh' ot 17.09.01; http://www.radonezh.orthodoxy.ru/news_text.asp?id_news=3208)

²²See for example, the sixth collection of *Antikhrisť v Moskve* [Antichrist in Moscow] by the Shargunov Committee. This one, as well as other materials circulated by the committee are accessible at their website: <http://komitee.chat.ru>; for details on the activities of the moralists see Alexander Verkhovsky, "Tserkov v politike i politika v Tserkvi", 96-97.

²³"Tserkovno-obshchestvennyi sovet po bioetike pri Moskovskoi Patriarkhii vystupil s zaiavleniem" [The Church-Societal Council for Bioethics of the Moscow Patriarchate Makes a Statement] *Strana.Ru* 07.04.2001 (<http://www.old.strana.ru/society/religion/2001/04/07/986642314.html>).

of the “moralist” movement stated the following:

“The word “Kike” (*Zhid*) refers to those persons who hate Christ. One could abstract from contemporary Judaism and imagine a Jew, who knows nothing about Christ - such a Jew (*Iudei*) would not be a Kike (*Zhid*).”²⁴

In the past five years, politicized moralism became an integral part of fundamentalist activity, together with the denouncing of ecumenism, opposing secular and churchly authorities and with nationalist propaganda. Here we see the basis for cooperation with the non-churchly radical-nationalists.

On March 20, 2001, for example, in the Kuzminki Park in Moscow the RNU, the Union of Orthodox Bannerbearers, the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods and the Union of the Russian People conducted a new *Auto d’a Fé*. They burned a broad assortment of items: the journal *Playboy*, the neopagan book by V. Istarkhov, *The Stroke of the Russian Gods (Udar Russkikh Bogov)*, *Sexual Encyclopedia for Children*, the books of Edward Radzinskii and Mikhail Gorbachev, the periodical *Moscow Komsomolets*, and pornographic videocassettes. Those gathered called for the adoption of the law “On Spiritual and Moral Censorship”.²⁵

Union of Orthodox Citizens(UOC)

“*Life*” is in fact one of the projects of the Union of Orthodox Citizens (UOC) - a broad coalition of Orthodox nationalists. It is so broad that its participants are practically incompatible in quality and degree of radicalism, including for example, the economist Sergei Glaz’ev (one time member of the Gaidar Cabinet, now a deputy of the CPRF) and the leader of the UCR, Vladimir Osipov.²⁶

²⁴A. Kagirin, sviashchennik. “Nenavidiashchie siona” [Zion-haters] *Russkii vestnik*, No. 7, 1999.

²⁵“Natsional-patrioty ustroili autodafe v Kuz’minkakh” [National-patriots made an Auto d’a Fé in Kuz’minke], *Mir religii*. 20.03.2001

²⁶On the formation and activities of the UOC till spring of 1999 see Alexander Verkhovsky, “Tserkov’ v politike i politika v Tserkvi”, 106-107.

The UOC, in spite of its motley staff, retains a completely friendly relationship with the Patriarchate. We cite only one illustration. On June 11, 2001 on the occasion of presenting the Church's order of the holy saint Prince Daniil III of Moscow to Valentin Lebedev, the coordinator of UOC and editor in chief of *Orthodox Conversations* (*Pravoslavnaia Beseda*), journalist Natalia Babasian observed a somewhat comic scene. On the eve of organizing a church procession in Kiev against the papal visit to the Ukraine, Valentin Lebedev announced to Metropolitan Kirill (Gundiaev), chair of the department of foreign relations of the Moscow Patriarchy, "We carried out your charge". In answer, Metropolitan Kirill merely said that "about that there is no need to speak before the TV cameras."²⁷

The fundamentalism of the UOC is less extreme than that of the Black Hundreds or UCR, but is fully consistent:

"The nation, in contrast to the contemporary secular state, may be considered Orthodox.

*... Not to recognize the fact, that a country where there are many Orthodox must be declared Orthodox, is discrimination on the basis of religious confession."*²⁸

*"The boundaries of Rus extend as far as the boundaries of the Russian Orthodox Church."*²⁹

*"In the present time, this governmental chaos can lead only to a dictatorship, one based on moral and national consciousness, on state prerequisites." Further, such a dictatorship must develop into a full fledged autocracy.*³⁰

²⁷Nataliia Babasian, "Dlinnaia ruka iz-pod omofora" [The long reach from under the Ohmmeter] *Grani.Ru* 12.06.2001 (<http://grani.ru:8101/denominations/articles/protests/>)

²⁸Cited from Mikhail Sitnikov, "Soiuz grazhdan pravoslavnoi natsional'nosti" [Union of Citizens of Orthodox Nationality], *Ruskaia mysl'*, 19-25.02.1998.

²⁹Kirill Frolov, press-sekretar' Soiuzu pravoslavnykh grazhdan. "Mirotochivaia ikona tsaria muchenika" [Weeping icon of the martyr Tsar], *Novosti "Russkoi linii"*. 17.06.2000 (http://www.rusk.ru:8101/News/00/6/new17_o6a.htm)

³⁰Prot. Vladislav Sveshnikov, "Ob INN I ne tol'ko" [On the INN but not only] *Strana.Ru*. 25.03.2001 (<http://old.strana.ru/society/religion/2001/03/25/985520648.html>). Father Vladislav is spiritual confessor to UOC.

*“Never before were the European West and America set so openly hostile against Russia, as now.”*³¹

Many UOC activists voted in the parliamentary elections of 1999, but generally without success, since only Sergei Glazev, who was not that tightly integrated into the union, got elected. Instead everyone noted that Valentin Lebedev himself and still another activist, Viktor Selivanov, editor in chief of the periodical *Desnitsa*, appeared on the lists of the Bloc “*Spas*”, which was founded by the RNU, and the first on that list was Alexander Barkashov. Such action by the chief editor of the nonpolitical *Orthodox Conversations (Pravoslavnoi Besedy)* looked most unusual, but it is too circumstantial to be considered fundamental.³²

Such electoral losses were quickly compensated for with powerful public campaigns (UOC gained support through such a campaign - against showing the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*). Until August of 2000 the UOC fought actively for the canonization of the tsarist family. Then in spring and in June 2001 they carried out a massive campaign against the Pope’s visit to the Ukraine. On December 26, 2000 during the break there took place the founding conference of UOC as independent public movement.

Then on May 12, 2000 the UOC together with the LDPR, but also with the participation of the movements - Orthodox Russia (*Rossia Pravoslavnaia*), Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, Union of Orthodox Bannerbearers, Union of Christian Revival plus other organizations - conducted an anti-papal march with 1500 marchers (so the

³¹“Prot. Vladislav Sveshnikov predlozhit kontseptsiuu vozrozhedeniia Rossii” [Father Vladislav Sveshnikov presents concept of Revival of Russia] *Strana.Ru* 25.03.2001 (<http://old.strana.ru/society/religion/2001/03/25/985524595.html> and <http://www.old.strana.ru/special/dossier/2001/03/25/985533435.html>)

³²For details on the campaign see Aleksandr Verkhovskii, “Religioznyi faktor v parlamentskoi kampanii 1999 goda”, *National-patrioty, Tserkov’ i Putin*. Moscow, OOO Panorama, 2000. For English Translation: Alexander Verkhovsky, “Religious Factor in the Parliamentary Election Campaign of 1999”, *National-patriots, Church and Putin*. Moscow: Center Panorama, 2001.

estimate of the police).³³ For Orthodox nationalists, those are very large numbers.

During this same period the UOC and the Sretensky monastery began to initiate close relations with the main pro-Kremlin propagandistic web-server *Strana.Ru*, whose religious department became the mouthpiece of the fundamentalists. But then at the end of August the department was closed entirely and the cooperation was broken off.

Orthodox Anti-globalism...

The main societal campaign, however, which had unfolded rather broadly in the fall of 1999 and continued a bit more quietly during the summer of 2001, were the wave of protests against the commercial bar code and the assigning of an identification number to taxpayers, the introduction of machine readable signatures in future passports and other such measures which, it would seem, had no special principled significance. The personal tax number (*individualnyii nomer nalogoplatel'shchika* - INN) became the symbol and bugbear of the campaign.

For the full details for what Grigor'ev aptly named the "INN Jihad", see my paper "Radical Orthodox Anti-Globalism in 1999-2002".³⁴ It contains a short description of the chain of events before the artificial calm in the summer of 2001. The essence of the campaign concerned not only the fostering of amazing prejudices, but also of the formation of a specific conception of Orthodox anti-globalism, in which the West once again appeared as the mysterious enemy of Russian Orthodoxy. The more moderate anti-globalists were prepared to ignore such "technical" problems as the introduction of the INN numbers, but the radicals insisted on drawing the line here, for a resistance unto

³³ Soobshchenie OVTsS. 11.05.2001 (<http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/nr105111.htm>) It is worth noting that it is a rare and hence significant event, when the OVTsS (Department for Foreign Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate) in a sympathetically neutral tone gives information on the activities of such a group, like the UOBB and UCR.

³⁴ The paper was presented at a seminar "Christian Fundamentalism, Racism and Antisemitism", in University of Sussex, April 10, 2002. Further details in Maksim Shevchenko, "Apokalipsis segodnia." [Apocalypse today] *NGR*. 17.01.2001; Aleksandr Verkhovskii, "Problema INN grozit raskolom ne Tserkvi, a pravoslavnyim fundamentalistam", [Problem of INN threatens split not for the Church but for Orthodox fundamentalists] *Polit.Ru*. 19.02.2001 (<http://www.polit.ru/documents/401411.html>)

death.³⁵

Important for us is that the “INN Jihad” pulled in practically all Orthodox oriented groups, yes even a wide circle of monks, who in recent years have constituted the basic bulwark of fundamentalism in the Church. The more educated in Orthodoxy that this or that group was, the more moderate was the position they took. So for example the RNU published a leaflet in which they devised quite bizarre things - some mole would insert into the barcode “all the data about you, even the most intimate”.³⁶

In so doing, the radicals responded to the arguments of the theologians, bishops and even respected elders (Startsy) with the elegant argument: “we need to defend our real needs, not our idealist and spiritual needs.”³⁷

On the other hand, the “INN Jihad” demonstrated, that among the Orthodox nationalists there existed not only an intellectual leadership, but that it had moved from non-church groups to inner-church groups.

Thus the resultant balance between the moderates and radicals was not entirely

³⁵On the positions of the moderates, see Arkhimandrit Tikhon (Shevkunov), “Vystuplenie v peredache “Radonezh” 29.01.2001” [Statement on Radio Radonezh] *Pravoslavie.Ru* (http://www.pravoslavie.ru/jurnal/society/arhimtihon_radonezh.htm); Arkhimandrit Amvrosii (Iurasov), “Antikhrista boitsia, a Boga - net?” [Fear of Antichrist, is there no God?]; Sergei Grigor’ev, “Chevo khotiat protivniki INN?” [Where are the opponents of INN headed?]; Konstantin Dushenov, “Tsarskii put’” [Tsarist path] *Rus’ Pravoslavnaia*. No. 1, 2001.

On the positions of the radicals: “Otkrytoe obrashchenie k Prezidentu Rossiiskoi Federatsii Putinu V.V., Ministru MNC Bukaevu G.I., Konstitutsionnomu Sudu RF ot pravoslavnogo dukhovenstva, tserkovnogo prichta i mirian Vladimiro-Suzdal’skoi eparkhii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi, 20.12.2000. [Open letter to President Putin, Minister G.I. Bukaev, & the Constitutional Court from Orthodox clergy, staff and laity of the Vladimir-Suzdal Eparchy of the ROC] Opublikovano na saite *Dvizheniia “Za pravo zhit bez INN”* (<http://infolab.spb.ru/anti-inn/text002.htm>); “Iarko vyrazhenyi demonicheskii kharakter”... Obrashchenie bratii Sviato-Vvedenskogo monastyrja Optinoi pustyni k pravoslavnym khristianam”, [Striking expression of demonic character... Open letter from the brothers of the St. Vvedensky Monastery of Optina Pustyn to Orthodox Christians] *Rus’ Pravoslavnaia*. No. 1, 2001; “Globalizatsiia i lichnye kody kak problema mirovozzrencheskogo vybora sovremennogo cheloveka”, [Globalization and the personal codes as problem of worldview choice for contemporary humans] *Novosti “Russkoi linii”*, 27.01.2001 (http://www.rusk.ru.News/01/1/new27_01a1.htm)

³⁶Leaflet of RNU entitled “INN - pechat’ Antikhrista” [INN - imprint of Antichrist], archive of author.

³⁷“Obrashchenie k Bogoslovskoi komissii Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi” [Appeal to the Theological Commission of the ROC], site “Stoiane v Istine”, 14.02.2001 (http://orthodoxy.newmail.ru/apostasia/articles/whithout_inn/obrashchenie1.htm)

clear. It would seem that the moderates won out through a resolution of the Theological Commission of the ROC.³⁸ They had already worked for some time on a document representing the ROC, which was approved at the conference “Spiritual and Social Problems of Globalization” (May 3-4, 2001.). Yet it looked acceptable enough for both the fundamentalists and for the Patriarchate.³⁹

...And Its Potential

But the radical fundamentalists were in no way routed. The campaign against the INN elicited activists “among the people”, till then unknown, such as Konstantin Gordeev, editor in chief of the periodical *Holy Rus* (*Sviataia Rus*’, formerly *Serbskii krest*.) Above all, this campaign managed to bring society as a whole to comprehend the fundamentalist ideas for the first time as points for general national consideration (compare this with the problem of the canonization of Nikolai II which was debated in society mostly as a political matter). Then over time the campaign moved all of the Orthodox nationalists out of their traditionally marginal status.

It is of course not obvious, how they will manage to build on their success. Currently there is a consolidation of the positions of the moderate Orthodox anti-globalists, which to some extent is due to the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other hand, the anti-Western and antiglobalist tones brought forth by the attack on USA on September 11, a sentiment sufficiently widespread in Russia, may give the radical-nationalists new stimulus. Thus far much depends on which groups will play the more active role in the ideological maneuvers inside the Church.

One must keep in mind, that the arguments of the radical fundamentalists have the advantage, that they, like most radical systems, are internally very logical and tend toward simple and clear answers. When one of the radical ideologists, archdeacon Avel’

³⁸Summary document of the enlarged meeting of the Theological Commission of the ROC February 19-20, 2001. Cf. [Http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/nr102206.htm](http://www.russian-orthodox-church.org.ru/nr102206.htm))

³⁹Final document of the conference was published on the website of the movement for “Right to Life without INN”: <http://infolab.spb.ru/anti-inn/info09.htm>

(Semenov), shows throughout his book⁴⁰, that globalization is antireligious and, that therefore “no compromise with it is possible”, it sounds sensible, much more so than the proposals of archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), initiator of the many campaigns against the barcode. Archdeacon Avel’ pays scant attention to the INN or the barcode, but protests against globalization as a whole.

There remain, of course, non-church nationalists, for whom the arguments of the radical fundamentalists sound too churchy, and there are the church nationalists, for whom these arguments sound too extreme with reference to the present church. We do not really expect the triumph of the radical fundamentalists. But with their “INN Jihad” they have already changed the ideological landscape of Orthodox nationalism.

[*translated by Walter Sawatsky, 06/02*]

⁴⁰Ierodiakon Avel’ (Semenov), “INN, kak sostavliaiushchaia globalizatsii.” *Otnoshenie INN k pechati antikhrista*. [“INN fosters globalization”, Relationship of INN to the Mark of the Antichrist] Moscow, 2001.