Ryan J. Voogt
PhD Candidate
University of Kentucky

"Muscovite Intelligentsia, Orthodox Revival, and Late Socialism: The Limits of Acceptable Communist Religiosity, 1964-1987"

The Russian Orthodox Church in the time of the Soviet Union faced and adjusted to numerous changes in the society. Although efforts by churchmen from the 1920s until 1943 would be best described as designed for survival, this does not characterize the periods following Stalin's encouragement of the Orthodox Church during World War II (See Chapter II). Particularly under Leonid Brezhnev beginning in 1964 until Glasnost' under Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987, state and church leaders cooperated in attempting to establish "normal" or "acceptable" religious life and practices in communist Soviet Union, against which "abnormal" or "unacceptable" religious life also was defined. Because church and state leaders generally cooperated in defining and enforcing what was "normal" and "acceptable," those within the Orthodox Church attempting renewal or innovation would struggle against both bodies.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how several Orthodox priests in the Moscow region made attempts to enliven or renew church life in their parishes and among wider circles of the intelligentsia, but how such dynamic activity always led to heavy scrutiny and sanctions of those involved. This dynamic activity was regarded as problematic because it was essentially voluntary and communal in nature and ambition, rather than hierarchical and submissive. Church and state leaders seemed to agree that popular innovations were always potentially destabilizing for the existing socio-political order. Although all church services featured "religious propaganda," authorities only deemed those religious leaders and communities "unacceptable" for their pursuit of activity marked by enthusiasm, mutual authenticity, and openness instead of acceptably banal performances of a ritual to satisfy individuals' consciences. But Soviet authorities found effective ways to reduce communal strength by attacking one of the pillars—the leaders (usually priests), showing the relative fragility of these religious communities.

In 1964 Nikita Khrushchev was deposed by his rivals largely due to the capricious and aggressive nature of his reforms, and Leonid Brezhnev became the new General Secretary of the Communist Party. In the sphere of religion, the numerous church closings, imprisonments, and state-led propagandistic attacks against religion—sometimes even accompanied by defamation of church property, getting drunk

on sacramental wine, smashing and burning of icons and religious literature, and the sawing down of crosses—generated enough resentment that many considered Khrushchev's attacks on religion another one of his so-called "hare-brained schemes." The reputation of the state internationally and domestically suffered, as many believers and non-believers alike sympathized with the plight of the religious as victims. The attacks were in the name of replacing the darkness of religious superstition with the light of scientific truth, but they all too often resembled hooliganism. As Dmitrii Pospielovsky argues, these methods also harmed "civic and political loyalty," as many believers had to now practice underground, and "concealed, uncontrolled religious practices were socially more dangerous than an overt and hence controllable Church."[1]

Khrushchev's attacks were not only problematic for the reputation of the state, but for the representatives of the institutional churches as well. Even while acts that could be characterized as "hooligan" were occurring across the country (not to mention church closings and increased restrictions to religious practices), church leaders made no public condemnation but continued to tout religious freedom and the unmatched justice of the Soviet Union. Even while the state attempted to extinguish the flame of religion across the country, religious representatives were spreading the message abroad that all was well, and foreigners were invited to sample the Soviet Union's religious beauty in well-choreographed tours.[2] These brazen acts of duplicity would make many more Soviet citizens—religious or not—sympathetic to the criticisms leveled by an increasing number of religious non-conformists, most notably Gleb Yakunin and Nikolai Eshliman in 1965.

From the beginning of Brezhnev's leadership until glasnost' under Gorbachev (approximately 1964 - 1987), the features of the interactions among state and religious bodies and believers were fairly consistent: sporadic persecution of individuals and communities who were seen as too active or too dynamic in terms of participation; increasing interest in religion among intellectuals and youth; an overall

[1] Dimitry Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982* (Crestwood, N.Y: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984), 358.
[2] Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2003).

decrease in violent or murderous acts by the state toward religious enemies; increasing religious dissent featuring appeals to the law and democratic values; increasing reliance by the state on intelligence and surveillance; and pressure on religious leaders to promote Soviet propaganda abroad. Although these features will be represented below, the main focus of the chapter will be to demonstrate that what made religiosity unacceptable in the eyes of state and church authorities was when clergy and believers pursued communal religiosity, as opposed to simple church attendance in the name of personal conscience.

Changes in Soviet society created the conditions to make communal religiosity more desirable. The Brezhnev era and that of his successors Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko comprise the so-called period of the "gerontocracy." Even their successor Gorbachev labeled the period as one of stagnancy. Scholars, including Julianne Furst, have come to call this the era of "mature socialism," when revolutionary fervor gave way to enjoying the fruits of socialism,[3] while the system seemed to decline in vigor and in its ability to compete with the capitalism of the West.

If the economy and state ideology had lost momentum, it does not mean that all areas of Soviet life had become stagnant. "Mature socialism" left room for nascent movements to flourish, including youth sub-cultures and political, environmental, and even religious movements, necessitating that one of the main arteries of Soviet authority – the surveillance of the secret police – kept pumping, with no signs of slowing down. Both the Orthodox and Baptist Churches witnessed an effervescence during this period – but not from the offices of the bishops or denominational leaders. While the institutional churches mirrored the "aging maturity" of the state leadership, the organism of the church received new life from among its clergy and laity. The response of the state and institutional church to dynamic religious life remained constant: to alienate and marginalize those leading or participating in the bourgeoning and dynamic religious activity in service of the "greater" good. For the state, the greater good was the maintenance of control over the population by severing spontaneously created vertical and horizontal ties.

[3] Juliane Furst, *Stalin's Last Generation Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 2–4.

For the institutional church, the greater good was maintenance of its legality and privileges (however circumscribed they may have been), which religious non-conformists threatened.

One institutional change under Brezhnev was the institutional reorganization of the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs and the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults into the Council for Religious Affairs (CRA). The exact prerogatives of the CRA were not officially made known.[4] But evidence shows that CRA representatives had frequent interactions with church hierarchs, and the CRA functioned as the eyes and ears of state intelligence in religious affairs. They monitored religious activities and had a presence and relationship in every registered religious community. They made reports and distributed them to locally affected officials and agents.

Under Brezhnev, state organs put more emphasis on penalizing church communities for not registering by fining leaders and participants (while still not providing a path to registration), on youth involvement, proselytizing, and any religious activities beyond regularly scheduled services. The form persecution took in a world of Mature Socialism was largely bureaucratic. The CRA advocated church closures much more rarely, local representatives of the state almost never destroyed or defamed bell towers and icons, and when police arrested believers and clergymen, judicial organs typically gave them a trial before imprisonment and sentences were reduced compared to previous eras. Atheist propaganda continued. It appears that the state's goal was not to create a column of enemies so much as provide as many obstacles and annoyances as possible in the way of religious dynamism while hopefully tarnishing the appeal of religion. As Pospielovsky argues, under Brezhnev, persecution was not meant to end, "only to take more civilized forms."[5]

In addition, the state representatives continued to ensure that as far as possible, all leadership positions be occupied by compliant persons. Bishops and clergy knew they should maintain good relations with CRA officials, as their operations depended on it. Common courtesy and gifts were never a bad idea. If a local commissioner had a positive relationship with a clergyman, he might make certain

[4] Kathleen Matchett, "The Soviet Government and the Churches," *Religion in Communist Lands* 2, no. 1 (1974): 4.
[5] Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, 397.

allowances or overlook things, such as reporting declining participation even if it was going up.[6] If there was to be defiance, it almost certainly had to come from the laity or the clergy. And when it did, the state attempted to isolate or imprison such figures quickly, always under the guise of legality – either by having church leaders relocate the priests as part of routine clergy management, or, more aggressively, finding the clergy member guilty of some sort of infraction of Soviet legislation.

Because the state shifted its policies in favor of resorting to legalese and legal procedures, those inclined to public protest did as well. It is during this period that certain believers and clergymen gained notoriety (and were correspondingly harassed) for publicizing actions by the state or religious leadership deemed illegal, corrupt, or against the spirit of the Church or even the spirit of the state. This is the time of the Soviet dissidents Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's and Andrei Sakharov's fame, and many religious figures likewise gained notoriety publicly and through underground (samizdat) documents. The first Orthodox figures to make major waves were priests Gleb Yakunin and Nikolai Eshliman, who wrote an open letter in 1965 to heads of state about what they perceived to be wrongful involvement in church matters. Yakunin in particular continued to write numerous letters to various leaders both in the Soviet Union and around the world.[7]

The number of such outspoken persons grew in the 1970s, as did the diversity of the groups and movements that such persons belonged to or participated in. Even underground ecumenical movements began to form, and there was considerable cross-fertilization with other movements, like the Helsinki Watch Group. Furthermore, the outspoken religious few gained in numbers as intellectuals became increasingly interested in religion.

Policies changed minimally with the death of Brezhnev in 1982 and the subsequent rise of Andropov and then Chernenko. The head of the Council for Religious Affairs, Vladimir Kuroedov, retired in 1984 after nearly 20 years of service. His replacement, Konstantin Kharchev, showed no

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[6] Ibid., 401.

[7] Another important figure is Boris Talantov, an Orthodox layman from Kirov province who documented and spread the word of the extent of the effects of Khrushchev's attacks on the church there. Orthodox writer Anatoli Levitin-Krasnov gained fame for his critical essays, as he actively supported figures like Yakunin and Talantov in his writings.

noticeable change in method or policy. Yet when one takes a long view of this period, one finds that the number of registered churches, number of priests, and the number of those in monasteries declined steadily (yet not drastically). There were examples of growth, but on the whole, attendance and participation declined.

Even in Gorbachev's first years, no clear changes in the state-church relationship were made. It was not until Chernobyl's meltdown and the subsequent opening (glasnost') of the Soviet Union that the Church experienced any sort of remarkable improvements. By the late 1980s, hundreds of new parishes had registered, youth ministries were permitted, monasteries and seminaries re-opened, and there was a basic freedom from molestation by state officials. This opening coincided with a general opening in the Soviet Union and says less about changes in the state-church dynamic specifically than about the state-society relationship. The state, by Gorbachev's lead, was gradually taking a different approach toward its citizens and their activities, and the churches greatly benefitted from that.

Gathering and Division

The attacks of Khrushchev did not disappear immediately with Brezhnev, even if his religious policies were "hare-brained." Brezhnev and those who followed simply applied coercion and violence differently, as their rationale and end goals differed from Khrushchev's. Khrushchev attempted to act according to the dominant ideological narrative of socialism, namely that religion and socialism were incompatible, and that religion should disappear (either naturally or with "assistance"). The Brezhnev regime, somewhat like Stalin during World War II, wished to maintain stability via a compliant populace (whose religious "needs" were being satisfied), while religious actors simultaneously served foreign policy goals of demonstrating the freedom of conscience promised in the constitution. Brezhnev, in order to maintain stability and a façade of religious freedom, granted more freedoms to the compliant institutions and leaders and aggressively hunted the non-compliant, thereby meeting his goals.

The church service

The church service continued to be a problematic gathering after the Khrushchev era, as the tension between personal freedom of conscience and open church services and the official desire for a

religion-free public was not at all resolved. It appears that state officials in the Brezhnev era simply hoped that the "needs" of believers to satisfy their desire for communal religiosity would be done in as benign a way as possible (here you probably need to indicate what was benign from the state's point of view) and would naturally diminish without the state needing to formulate a specific strategy. Religiosity was at its most benign when participants were few in number, of advanced age, and were not animated beyond attendance at a religious service.

As we saw in Chapter II, large crowds were still attending church on feast days, and if churches were demolished, that only increased the concentration of people at the remaining ones. The best Council of Religious Affairs Commissioner of Moscow Oblast A. A. Trushin could do was to claim that "although not very significantly, some changes have occurred which in essence boils down to a reduction in religiosity," but nevertheless, "the church still ha[d] a marked influence over a certain part of the population." For example he noted that on Sundays and especially on holidays the churches in Moscow (more in the city than the oblast) were filled with believers.[8] Trushin claimed that from 1963 to 1964, fewer children were christened, fewer dead received church burials, and fewer weddings occurred in churches. Yet, even if this was the case, the changes were very modest at best, plus the reality was that "[i]ntelligentsia and even people belonging to the party and Komsomol celebrate religious rituals."[9]

Commissioners from the CRA pointed to several aspects of pronounced religious activity, including church choirs and monasteries. They noted that people who were "distinguished in the past," like retired teachers, professors, doctors, and engineers, were active in the choir and even in the life of the church.[10] The greatest religious hotbed in Moscow oblast in Trushin's opinion was the Troitse-Sergieva Lavra of Zagorsk (the Soviet name for Sergiev Posad), arguably the most prominent monastery in the Russian Orthodox Church, which Stalin had restored to the church in 1945. People, including youth, would visit there for religious inspiration or teachings. On the day honoring Saint Sergei, some 10,000

[8] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report," 1965. Archive file <KGB 54>, p. 93. Original archival source: TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 1, Del. 71.
[9] Ibid., 100.
[10] Ibid., 72.

believers came from the regions of Zagorsk and Moscow. Moreover, at the nearby seminary in Zagorsk, seminarians were not only being influenced by its monks and making like-minded acquaintances, but some evidently had met their wives there in the social interaction that visiting the Lavra afforded.[11] While KGB agents were a visible presence at the Seminary and they ensured the cooperation of professors and students, the Lavra did not have the same and afforded all kinds of uncontrolled interactions. But these were not the main issue. Although the Lavra was a sort of source of spirituality, it was only one location. The heart of the problem were the priests, who were the ones "activating" congregations across Moscow and the oblast'.

Trushin described the goal of the Council for Religious Affairs as "strengthening the control over observance of legislation on the cults," not "strengthening control over the cults." That is to say, it was supposedly their respect for law that drove them, not the desire to control. But divisions within the government impeded the elimination of violations. According to a report Trushin in 1965, not all local organs of power were as vigilant as others. In some districts (*raiony*) in Moscow city and oblast', clergy were baptizing children illegally, without anyone preventing this action. Plus, local governments were supposed to offer alternatives to religious holiday celebrations but not everywhere were "secular rituals and non-religious holidays" carried out with success. In 1964, representatives from the CRA delivered more than 30 lectures and presentations about soviet legislation on cults and measures toward control to various local organs, but Trushin could not be sure what effect they were having.[12]

Trushin also had to face the many complaints from citizens about what they considered the "unlawful" closing of churches. He admitted that "threats and intimidation" were used to close certain religious communities. He had identified examples of "straight meddling in internal affairs of churches" and of "rude" behavior by officials. One problematic consequence was that in certain cases complaints were distributed abroad, "which gave [foreigners] reason to strengthen slanderous propaganda in their own countries about persecution of the church and religion in our country." To rectify the situation, the

[11] Ibid., 76.
[12] Ibid., 83–84.

CRA took measures to "eliminate selected errors" and renew services in three different locations.[13] Government representatives were far from being of one mind and spirit about managing religion, and normalcy and predictability was wanting.

Priests and their unacceptable communal religiosity

For those who regarded religion as a dying custom, more concerning than mass participation on feast days was that certain priests were attracting crowds for ordinary Sunday services, for Vespers, and even during the week. It was usually sermons that distinguished priests. "As is well-known," CRA Commissioner Trushin remarked, "the church pulpit is the one place in our country for legal propaganda of ideology alien to us. And it needs to be noted that servants of cults of all religious very cleverly make use of this opportunity."[14] CRA Commissioners kept a list of problematic priests and reported them to their rectors, and local officials and security organs worked together in keeping track of their activities.

In January 1965, Trushin conducted an "on-the-ground study of the preaching activities of the clergy." Summarizing the situation of preaching in Moscow Oblast, he was concerned about this "opportunistic activity" within the church, and he could "not claim that on this the issue the situation is more or less alright."[15] Trushin was disturbed at their efforts toward "strengthening beliefs in god" (as though exceptional), the life of the church, and "ignit[ing] religious fanaticism."[16] Preaching was "igniting religious fanaticism," for example, when priests urged people to take part in rites that strengthened the church.[17] By definition, a priest was "fanatic" when he worked with energy toward enlivening church life or preaching with conviction. One priest was quoted as urging people to fast. Another encouraged them to draw closer to God. In 1964 during Lent in the city of Podol'sk, for example, the priest Kondratiuk said:

> Orthodox believers! When we already stand at the threshold of the Great Lent, - and feelings of being swept away and of fear appear in our heart, what does god see in our

[13] Ibid., 84–85.
[14] Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report, Archive file <KGB 87>, p. 17. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 62, 1968.
[15] Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report, 1964, Archive file <KGB 54>, p. 104. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally Fond 7383, Op. 1, Del. 71, 1965.
[16] Ibid., 105
[17] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report," 105.

> hearts, with what are we justified before him? We are weak and faint-hearted . . . . . / We wandered far from the lord, we hardly even thought about him. We need to look back and condemn the evil and dark sides of our lives. Let's look no further to the rear, but pray more diligently, but not pray just for ourselves, but also to remind neighbors about this, our children. And now let's pray that the lord god will grant us the cleansing tears of repentance.

To Trushin, this was an example of "adapting to modern conditions," i.e. finding ways for their sermons to better engage audiences, and he was disturbed at this call for "strengthening of belief in god" and "call[ing] those in attendance to pray more and to attract 'neighbors' and children to this act."[18] That such kinds of sermons were considered exceptional is in and of itself revealing. "Good sermons," by inference, were those that encouraged submission to church and state leaders, or were abstractions on purely religious topics that had little bearing on subsequent action.

Trushin was not fabricating his concerns – the young priests who were born and raised in the Soviet Union were not acting in the same way as those who witnessed the brutalities of the 1920s and 1930s. He was concerned about the 185 priests who had finished seminary between 1945 and 1965, most of whom were under 40 years of age. Such pastors had "replenished the clergy." These comprised the "strongest ideological opponent" since young clergy was "significantly more active than the old." Thus in statistics they used the age of 40 as an important factor, keeping close track of those under 40 with less concern for those over. They were also particularly concerned about new priests who had previous secular higher education. Among those was listed was Priest G. P. Yakunin, born in 1934, who finished Irkutsk Agricultural Institute.[19]

Trushin identified many priests from Moscow and the surrounding oblast' as worth mentioning as negative examples. Vsevolod Shpiller (see Chapter II) had been one of the few priests routinely named as causing problems in the 1950s, and his name was mentioned in CRA reports only until 1968, and only with vague references to "illegal activities" at his church, or the presence of a few children and youth at the Easter Service at his Nikolo-Kuznetskaya Church.[20] But authorities' concern for Shpiller declined as

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[18] Ibid., 107–108.
[19] Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report, Archive file <KGB 54>, p. 69. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally Fond 7383, Op. 1, Del. 71, 1965.
[20] TsGA Moskvy, 1966-1970, f. 3004, op. 1, d. 93, 30; d. 94, 25; d. 95, 14.

younger priests drew their gaze for the ways they were transgressing the lines of religious acceptability. Below, I consider in particular three well-known priests, Aleksandr Men', Mikhail Trukhanov, and Dmitrii Dudko, who have already been the subject of biographies and articles,[21] but I consider them in light of their pursuit of a particular kind of religious practice and how representatives from the Council for Religious Affairs and believers viewed their religiosity.

Aleksandr Men'

Already in the 1960s in Alabino, Men' had been doing the things that concerned state authorities. He recalled his early priesthood as a time when he wanted to "attract people" to the faith by "break[ing] the ice from the beginning, to find a new language for […] sermons, to tie them to issues which people [were] excited about."[22] He was "adapting to modern conditions," in the words of state observers, and they were taking note of his sermons, and identifying him as one of the priests problematically putting "emphasis on issues of morality." In 1964 he was transferred to Taraskova as a demotion for his activities as rector where he led the restoration of the church and enlivened the congregation. In Taraskova he was one of three priests under a very rigid rector, with less pay, no access to a car. Perhaps not coincidentally, no lodging or office for receiving guests could be found for him in the parish, so he and his family (wife and two young children) had to dwell at his wife's home in Semkhoz, over one hour away on the opposite side of Moscow.[23]

In Taraskova, Men still worked to enliven church life by his sermons and activities. His sermon note-taker focused on a line from one of his Eastertime sermons, when he linked individual spiritual vitality with that of the wider body of believers, saying "'In order to transform oneself, we have to be

[21] Yves Hamant, *Alexander Men: a witness for contemporary Russia (a man for our times)* ([S.l.]; London: Oakwood ; Cassell, 2000); Zoia Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men': zhizn' [Aleksandr Men': Life]* (Moskva: Zakharov, 2001); Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *Doubly Chosen: Jewish Identity, the Soviet Intelligentsia, and the Russian Orthodox Church* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.06617; Oliver Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia: The Struggle to Save a Dying Nation*, 2013; Nicholas Ganson, "Orthodox Dissidence as De-Atomization: Father Dmitrii Dudko and His Battle with Razobshchennost'," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 40, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 90–114.

[22] Aleksandr Men', *O sebe...: vospominaniia, interv'iu, besedy, pis'ma [About me...: memories, interviews, talks, letters]* (Moskva: Fond imeni Aleksandra Menia : Izd-vo "Zhizn' s Bogom," 2007), 85.

[23] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 202.

guardians of our own heart and of the heart of the person nearest to us.'"[24] In addition to preaching sermons on "modern" topics and trying to draw the congregants together, officials discovered Men' to be "actively working among youth, cultivating in them a religious spirit."[25] Judith Kornblatt retells the story of one young man who had planned to attend a party and even had a bottle of vodka in his pocket, but decided spontaneously to attend an Easter service, having heard about Men's parish in Tarasovka:

> I was riding this train and didn't even know where the stop was. Then all of a sudden, when the train stopped at a particular station, I saw that the whole compartment got up and went out. I realized that they were probably going to this church service, so I followed the crowd. And it turned out that they walked through a field, and I saw this huge cathedral in the middle of nowhere. When I arrived, I saw it was full of people. I still had this bottle of vodka showing out of my pocket [...] I decided to turn away. But just as I decided to turn, all of a sudden I saw [an acquaintance]. He came out and said, "Oh, it's good you came. Let me take you to the choir loft. You'll see everything from there" [...], from where I observed the whole service.[26]

Kornblatt argues that part of Men's appeal was his attempts to draw people together, to give them a new universal way of belonging as an alternative to the Soviet one (which for many people lacked universal bonding power).[27] Plus, Men' offered intellectuality and transcendence at once, a combination people evidently found attractive.

Trushin characterized Men's congregation in Alabino (and implicitly now in Tarasovka as well) not as an enthusiastic community of like-minded believers, but as something abnormal, complaining "In whatever 'parishes' made available for him to serve, he surrounded himself with hysterics, ignited religious fanaticism, interfered in church affairs, for which he was repeatedly expelled by executive organs."[28] What a believer might have described as healthy church life, state representatives diagnosed as antisocial, irrational, and a social sickness. Evidently to pursue communal religiosity was abnormal

[24] Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report, Archive file <KGB 87>, p. 20. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 62, 1968.
[25] Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report, Archive file <KGB 87>, p. 10. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 62, 1968.
[26] Kornblatt, *Doubly Chosen*, 76.
[27] Ibid., 79.
[28] Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report, Archive file <KGB 87>, p. 10. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 62, 1968.

religious practice, where normal religious practice was limited to one's personal convictions and individualistic participation in a church service.

Authorities also found Men' suspect for his circle of friends. As introduced in Chapter II, Men' had been meeting with certain fellow priests with some regularity since 1962, an ad-hoc group which included at various times priests Nikolai Eshliman, Gleb Yakunin, Dmitrii Dudko, Georgii Edel'shtein, writer Anatolii Levitin-Krasnov, and another half dozen or so. They had earnestly been discussing writing letters against the decisions of the 1961 Synod[29] (which severely limited the power of priests; see Chapter II), but when Khrushchev was replaced by Brezhnev, they waited to see if a new religious line would emerge. Not satisfied by any changes, Eshliman and Yakunin decided to proceed by sending an open letter of more than 40 pages in which they described in detail what they regarded as unacceptable government interference in church life and unacceptable submission by the church hierarchs, made most evident by the decisions of the Synod in 1961.[30] Church hierarchs almost universally condemned the letter publicly, but many younger priests and active believers were "inspired," and some even collected money in support of the courageous priests. The patriarch eventually demanded Eshliman and Yakunin rescind their views to continue serving, but they did not.[31]

Because of his association with Eshliman and Yakunin, state authorities began to scrutiny Men' more intently. In 1965 agents searched his parish in Tarasovka and his home Semkhoz in 1965 for samizdat of Solzhenitsyn, but they did not find it (it was there, in fact), and he was not arrested.[32] Illegal literature would have been a simple way to remove Men', but now his influence among likeminded priests and laypersons would have to be dealt with through "normal" church avenues. The rector of his church in Tarasovka, priest Serafim Golubtsov, became increasingly "quarrelsome" and was constantly

[29] Interview with Georgii Edel'shtein July 3, 2004 for Voice of America Radio program, http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/a-33-a-2004-07-03-5-1/657892.html. Also on Krotov's library: http://krotov.info/spravki/history_bio/20_bio/2004_Dudko.htm. Retrieved 9/30/2014.
[30] Nikolai Eshliman and Gleb IAkunin, *Ego Sviateishestvu, Sviateishemu Patriarkhu Moskovskomu i Vseia Rusi, Aleksiiu: otkrytoe pis'mo [To His Holiness, Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia, Aleksei: Open Letter]* (New York: All Slavic Pub. House, 1965); Nikolai Eshliman and Gleb Yakunin, *A Cry of Despair from Moscow Churchmen* (New York: Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, 1966).
[31] Men', *O Sebe*, 151–152.
[32] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 207.

producing scandals and "absurd denunciations."[33] Finding the working relationship unbearable, Men' cited "non-brotherly relations with the Rector" and requested that Metropolitan Pimen transfer him to a parish near his home in Semkhoz. The congregation protested his departure from Taraskova with a petition to Pimen, but their demands were ignored.[34] Men's was transferred in 1970 to Novaya Derevnya, a very small parish some distance from Moscow.

Mikhail Trukhanov

If the fantasies of Khrushchev were replaced by the more "mature," sober policies of Brezhnev, this transition clearly did not stop the appearance of "fanatic" religiosity. Trushin concluded based on a "comprehensive" study on "the state of the clergy" in 1968 that priests "of all religions" were mainly "loyal" to Soviet authority, but that "most of their ideological character and mindset [were being] formulated in a different light" than a scientific-materialist one. This "mindset" resulted in the situation where "they actively [were trying] to spread an anti-scientific religious worldview, and strengthen faith in god in the surrounding population, and ignite religious fanaticism."[35] Among those named were Men', Mikhail Trukhanov, and seventeen others across the oblast, but there were "many others" whose names were not listed in the report.

Although he had been serving for several years already, Father Mikhail Trukhanov finished seminary in 1967, and he was given a small parish outside Moscow in Pavshino. He had a black mark against him due to his imprisonment during WWII for organizing a bible study and in 1953 on false charges of conspiracy, and he attracted church and state leaders' attention when he served temporarily at All Saints in Moscow several years prior (See Chapter II). A small parish outside the city was probably the best he could hope for.

Yet here, too, Trukhanov did what he had done before: he preached with feeling, and he met with those who wanted to meet with him. A local woman heard about him not long after he had arrived, in 1968. A relative told her, "We have a new priest - Father Mikhail, and he's quite good. Come - you'll

[33] Ibid., 218.
[34] Men', *O Sebe*, 82, 175–176.
[35] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report," 9.

like him." Taking the recommendation, she attended the service. Trukhanov gave a sermon, and "from his service and his sermon [she] was just in heaven."[36] She eventually became one of his spiritual children. According to the custom within the Orthodox Church, believers may request a priest to take them under his tutelage for further teaching and study of Orthodox belief and practice, and a priest and believer in such a relationship refer to one another as "spiritual father" and "spiritual child. " Trukhanov became the "father" to many spiritual children. One spiritual child met him when she was a young teenager. She recalls that Fr. Mikhail had "a variety of spiritual children - people of different classes: teachers, professors, and the most simple of the poor."[37] Trushin painted a darker picture, saying Trukhanov skipped work often due to "illness" but then would be seen with "some kinds of women," calling them his "slaves of god." One of these happened to be a doctor who confirmed Trukhanov's "sickness," providing him with a note justifying his need to rest from work. Trushin saw Trukhanov's monk-like asceticism as "pretending to be disinterested" in money, and officials claim he gave it to these "slaves of god."[38] According to Trushin, this explained his popularity. It was common for officials to slander priests as immoral, as using their position for sordid ends.

After only two years of service in Pavshino, the CRA instigated Trukhanov's disciplinary transfer in 1969 to Podol'sk for "violations of Soviet legislation on cults," such as "gross interference in financial-economic activities of religious communities, blackmail, igniting fanaticism among parishioners," and "excessive use" of alcoholic substances. Like Men', Trushin found Trukhanov guilty of "igniting religious fanaticism" because he "often t[old] of the lives of different holy saints, summoning his listeners to renounce worldly things, remain more in prayer." His sermons, Trushin said, "sometimes slipped into anti-Soviet fabrications," and he passed along a report from local informants who noted that Trukhanov was "comparing the bible with literature," and declared that "100% of truth is in the bible, but in literature

[36] Mikhail Trukhanov, *Vospominaniia: Ne Mogu ne Govorit' o Khriste: Besedy, Propovedi, Vospominaniia: Materialy k Zhizneopisaniiu, Chast' II 1956-2006 gg [Recollections: I cannot not Speak of Christ: Conversations, Sermons, Recollections: Materials for a Biography, Part II, 1956-2006]*, ed. V. A. Zvonkova, vol. 2, 2008, 106.
[37] Ibid., 2:108–109.
[38] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report" Archive file <KGB 88>, p. 16. Keston Archive and Library, Baylor University. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 65.

it is only fiction and its truth is just 1%." In addition to expressing "anti-Soviet moods," Trukhanov's other problem (like Men's), was that "youth and all kinds of hysterics concentrate around him, [and he was] closely linked with the group of [Orthodox intellectuals headed by critical writer] Krasnov (Levitin)."[39]

In Podol'sk Trukhanov ran into trouble immediately. After only six months, the rector had asked him to leave due to bad relations between them. The protests of the people did not help. Trukhanov wrote to the Bishop, "Because of the virtual impossibility of properly conducting worship services in conditions of constant expressions of boyish rudeness and irritability on the part of the rector, I hereby request Your Eminence about defining me as temporarily on leave [*za shtat*]."[40] Despite his very short stint in Podol'sk, he had already gained spiritual children, as well as further attention from state observers. Trushin reported on the situation from a different perspective. As he reported it, the bishopric "was forced" to place Trukhanov on leave in 1969 because the executive organ of the church in Podol'sk terminated the contract. His reason was that Trukhanov had "surround[ed] himself with different sorts of hysterics, ignited religious fanaticism in the parish," the same complaint as in Pavshino. The "Commission of facilitating control of the Ispolkom Executive committee of the Podol'sk City Soviet gorsovet" provided information on his "illegal activities":

> From the first days of service in Podol'sk church, Priest Trukhanov arrived in the city of Podol'sk with his numerous admirers, who together with him ignite religious fanaticism in the church and create disorder. Trukhanov delivers incomprehensible sermons, in which he often expresses that 'the people do not have a leader and the people are like a herd without a shepherd', 'From all diseases only god heals', and so on.

Although his contract was not likely terminated due to the "incomprehensibility" of his sermons (more likely the opposite), it is true that his presence created "disorder," even if the "order" that was disrupted was predictably banal services and no community dynamism.

While on leave, Trukhanov applied yearly for positions from 1970 until 1976, but somehow he received the same reply each time from the Metropolitan: "There are currently no vacancies."[41] Finally in

[39] Ibid., 15–17.
[40] Trukhanov, *Vospominaniia: Ne Mogu ne Govorit' o Khriste*, 2:112.
[41] Ibid., 2:127.

1976 he was permitted to serve, for a measly few weeks. In April 1976 he received a temporary appointment that lasted nearly four months due to the rector's illness. His rector praised him for his service, reporting "of him it's only possible to speak well." But once the rector recovered, he had no more need for Trukhanov to serve there, though he recommended him as worthy to serve in another parish.[42] In early August he was given a place in Ozyory, not far from one of his first parishes in the early 1960s. He only lasted a week. He immediately suffered verbal attacks in church from a woman who yelled that he was a "bandit and a Baptist," repeating accusations she made of him years before when he was there, that he was a "sectarian" and "'not from our faith.'" These scenes were enough to have him suspended and require him to give a report to the metropolitan.[43]

In September, it was another parish for Trukhanov. Someone found out about his past in the Gulag and spread rumors that he was "mentally ill" and a "bandit capable of murder."[44] He served three days in November at another parish, and in another in late November, and another in January. He wrote to the secretary of the Patriarch, complaining that "assignments for one-three days—this is not service."[45] Soon after, he was given service in the village of Pushkino, March of 1977, his last place of service before retirement, where he served for two years. Even though he had influence here, the years of inactivity, short stints, and transfers had truly limited his reach. Once retired, he could do even less. State authorities had found Trukhanov's tendency to enliven church life unacceptable for the way in which he heightened the importance of the supernatural in everyday and communal life. They found that keeping him from service limited the possibility of such a community from forming.

Dmitrii Dudko

While Trukhanov's influence was being contained by refusing him a job, priest Dmitrii Dudko's influence was reaching across Moscow. When Brezhnev came to power in 1964, Dudko was in his second parish at the Church of Saint Nikolai, his first having been demolished due to Metro construction in

[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid., 2:129.
[44] Ibid., 2:130.
[45] Ibid., 2:133.

Moscow. His preaching was attracting crowds. One evening he had decided to cut the sermon from an evening service, and a woman said to him sadly that she had even left her child at home and traveled across town so that she could properly listen. Thus he decided that at no service would he go without giving a sermon, despite having been advised by the bishop to be "a little less zealous."[46]

People heard about Dudko and came to see what the rumors were about. It was not uncommon for non-church goers to express something like the following about Orthodox Churches: "Those that operated were largely a formality, where old women attended sterile services rushed through by ignorant priests."[47] But in his quest for religious life, one student, Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, heard about a priest in Moscow who "was actually preaching to parishioners," Father Dmitrii Dudko. Ogorodnikov decided to attend one of these services, and he kept coming back: "In his services, in these talks, it was like being alive […]." Ogorodnikov contrasted Dudko's sermons with the usual ones: 'Sermons were [generally] censored and had to be as abstract as possible. Priests had to talk in an incomprehensible language in the sermons. It was like they were not addressing the people….'"[48] He, like many others, found themselves at Dudko's church week after week.

The church warden, which was a position that had to be approved by the CRA and not the rector since 1961, had complained to the commissioner of the CRA about Dudko, saying that he was the kind of priest "who gives a sermon every day." To the warden's surprise, the commissioner responded that the warden was "appealing to the wrong place," and should discuss the problem with the rector of the church.[49] Technically, this was an "inner-church issue," and the general approach of state representatives was to try to keep it that way, encouraging superiors to discipline underlings within the church by sanctioned church avenues, without direct state involvement. The commissioner, in most cases, would have judged wisely. Usually, church staffs had discord aplenty, and most zealous priests simply yielded to their rectors when scolded or pressured. But Dudko was particularly determined.

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[46] Dmitrii Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga: Kniga v Piati Chastiakh [Gift from God: A Book in Five Parts]* (Moskva: Izd. Sretenskogo Monastyria, 2002), 151.
[47] Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia*, 82.
[48] Ibid., 83.
[49] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 151.

By October of 1969, CRA Commissioner of Moscow (city) Plekhanov and the KGB were tracking Dudko,[50] but Dudko's troubling religious activity was just beginning. By the 1970s, Dudko was even baptizing intellectuals who were known in broader circles, often doing so in private. Writer Zoya Krakhmal'nikova was the first of her circle to be baptized by Dudko in 1971, and her husband and writer, Feliks Svetov was also baptized by him not long after.

By 1971-1972, Dudko was already quite well known across Moscow, and the state had to be careful not to make itself look bad by martyrizing him. As usual, attacks on Dudko began with fellow clergy and believers, to make the problem seem internal to the church. Authorities pressured the warden and the rector to curb his influence.[51] Relations deteriorated as the rector made a schedule to minimize Dudko's influence by keeping him from interactive roles, thus putting more duties on other priests. He forbade Dudko from preaching, saying that his sermons were by nature "agitation," but Dudko would stand up to preach when he served, counting on the fact that the people would support him in case the rector made a scene.[52]

The warden also attempted to reign him in. Although she generally let him "do what he wanted" she complained, "Why do you give such sharp sermons, they [officials from the Council for Religious Affairs], well, call me in." She was getting an earful from several directions, as sometimes an atheist "aktiv" would observe the service, asking her, "what are these sermons that this priest is giving?" State authorities pressured her in hopes that Dudko would be sensitive to her plight. He told her to tell them that her "job" was not "paying attention to sermons" but to "the housekeeping part of the church."[53]

When these avenues for pressuring Dudko did not bear fruit, authorities confronted him directly. CRA Commissioner Plekhanov sent a letter to the procurator about Dudko with accusations that Dudko might have officiated at an illegal wedding in his apartment and disseminated a "slanderous work" entitled "I believe, Lord" to a young woman whose mother filed a report.[54] In July 1972 the procurator

[50] TsGA Moskvy f. 3004, op. 1, d. 95.
[51] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 160.
[52] Ibid., 162.
[53] Ibid.
[54] TsGA Moskvy f. 3004, op. 1, d. 97, 164.

did summon him, and the main questions centered on Dudko's interactions with youth. As Dudko defended his actions and told them that "everyone" was tired of atheistic literature and looking for something else, he touched more than one sensitive nerve.[55] Not only was he asserting the value of religion to society, he also was insinuating that the official ideologies were losing attraction and that the next generation was looking for something else. Those in the procurator's office brought up a complaint a mother submitted about her daughter's growing interest in religion due to Dudko's influence, but Dudko accused the mother of "antireligious obscurantism."[56] When he would not give information about his wider network of people, the authorities warned him that they were tracking his activities.[57]

Soon thereafter, the warden reported that "a complaint was submitted about you from the procurator; they're ordering me to terminate your contract." Dudko was determined to "tell everything from the pulpit" the following Sunday, "when there will be a lot of people" in order to expose state meddling in church affairs.[58] He did so, and Commissioner Plekhanov interrogated him, saying "How dare you use a church platform for personal goals?" Dudko defended himself: "And how do you dare interfere in internal affairs of the church?" "We don't interfere," he replied, "we cannot order [priests to be removed,] we only requested." Plekhanov brought up complaints by citizens and reports of baptisms and marriage ceremonies outside the walls of the church, and he suggested Dudko ask the Patriarchate for a new parish, but Dudko was determined to remain.[59] Surprisingly, authorities allowed Dudko to continue to serve at the same church.

Dudko's defiance only increased his prestige among the risk-loving and religiously curious, and his popularity increased yet more when he attempted something entirely new. For some time he had preached on social issues like depression, alcoholism, abortion, violence, and the lack of trust between

[55] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 174–175.
[56] Ibid., 175.
[57] Ibid., 179.
[58] Ibid., 182.
[59] Ibid., 188–189.

people.[60] He decided to go beyond preaching about topics of concern to holding question-and-answer sessions, inviting people to submit questions that he would answer in public.

The sessions began in December, 1973. The first question for his first talk dealt with the very people in the audience, where the questioner complained that old women "interfere with the young people coming to church," and Dudko tried to reconcile generational differences.[61] Many questions centered on apologetics, like the existence of God. People invited others for the second talk.[62] He read testimonies of recent converts to Christianity from atheism, generating excitement of a growing community.[63] By the third talk, the church was "full to capacity." There were many youth there, even many non-believers. Some of his acquaintances said that as they were exiting the subway, "many asked how to get to our church."[64] Dudko commented to his audience, "the atheists maintain that questions of religion are already obsolete, of interest only to the elderly. Now here's proof to them that religion is not something obsolete, but something always new, something vitally necessary for everyone - both young and old alike."[65] When one questioner expressed concern that the events were becoming political, he tried to maintain that "religion and politics are two different realms." He was wrong about this, of course, and he must have known it: managing religious practice had long been the prerogative of the Soviet state.

Speakers were installed outside for the hundreds attending, and typed transcripts were distributed, even abroad. The fourth, fifth, and sixth talks "had such a wide response that people came from everywhere: from Kiev, Leningrad, Gorky, Lithuania."[66] They were popular because they were different: participants found them genuine. His goal, he said, was not to answer all questions, since he knew his limitations, but to "arouse interest," to get people to seek further. Also in contrast to Soviet propaganda, Dudko made it his goal to avoid giving a "stock answer," as this would "dry up religion" and make it

[60] Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia*, 83.
[61] Dmitrii Dudko, *Our Hope* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977), 14.
[62] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 191.
[63] Dudko, *Our Hope*.
[64] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 192.
[65] Dudko, *Our Hope*, 40.
[66] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 192.

"seem boring and obsolete."[67] As Alexei Yurchak argues, Soviet propaganda had been losing traction and was repeated pro forma, taken lightly.[68] One submitted question stated, "Father Dmitrii, why engage in polemics with atheists? It's a needless waste of time and energy because no one is interested in their doctrine. It's antiquated and obsolete. Better, tell us about faith."[69] The questions were far from the safe theological abstractions expected of religious gatherings.

Such a move "astonished" youth like Ogorodnikov, who responded with great enthusiasm. By answering questions they never otherwise asked in public, he saw it as something new and authentic. Plus it was thrilling to see "people you never saw in church," like "serious intellectuals" and Western correspondents.[70] People of various faiths came too, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, making the gathering feel as though it had universal appeal.[71] Highly problematic for Soviet authorities, Dudko was attempting to forge a communal religious identity: "Our main object is to find a common language, to find a language of love and truth [...]," something he felt contrasted with the experiences at other parishes. A fellow priest had complained to him, saying, "'we've lost our common language with our flock. Quick, perform the service—bang! bang! bang!—and home again as fast as possible!'"[72] Even his introductions to his sessions were in terms of "we." He observed the audience and described them; he made an "us" out of individuals, commenting that even if they do not think alike, they had unity because they were coming together.[73] He believed that "these discussions are uniting us, that a kind of unwritten brotherhood is forming" among believers of various confessions and even non-believers. He tried "to emphasize that it's not *I* who am holding a discussion, but *we*."[74]

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[67] Dudko, *Our Hope*, 63.
[68] Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Furst, *Stalin's Last Generation Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism*.
[69] Dudko, *Our Hope*, 126.
[70] Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia*, 84.
[71] Ibid., 89.
[72] Dudko, *Our Hope*, 85–86.
[73] Ibid., 138.
[74] Ibid., 161.

But despite the numbers, Dudko was vulnerable. In his ninth speech, he made a slip-up: while trying not to condemn the patriarch as his questioner provoked, he did note that the patriarch was "surrounded by thousands of rows of informants," which apparently was a "mistake" that authorities could "quibble" with.[75] To the great disappointment of those who traveled from far away, he did not do the tenth session because the Patriarch had forbidden him from continuing his service as a priest and requested a meeting.[76]

In Dudko's defense, prominent mathematician, Igor Shafarevich, was angry not that Dudko would be summoned by state authorities, but that the church leadership would forbid religious activity which was attracting people to the faith and give him no support, even of "a moral kind."[77] At disciplinary meetings in the office of the patriarch, the first issue they mentioned was that it was "not church form" to conduct questions and answers. It was the form, not the content that church leaders emphasized.[78]

Metropolitan Serafim justified Dudko's suspension as a result of his "non-fulfillment of the requirements of obeying the hierarchy, violations of the Stavlenicheskaya oath, and the ignoring of church discipline, in concurrence with the apostolic canons 36 and 51." Those reciting the oath would promise to serve in "a spirit of humility and meekness," and to not take part in any political movements or parties. That he did not readily submit to authority and that he dabbled in political discussions made him vulnerable to such accusations. Only "repentance" would lift his prohibition from the clergy.

In a report to CRA Chief Kuroedov, Trushin noted that Dudko would no longer serve in Moscow, as a result of his "hostile activities, expressed in the systematic pronunciation of anti-Soviet sermons in front of a large collection of believers, the constant surrounding of himself by extremist youth of Jewish nationality, as well as the violations of legislation on religious cults" (issue of Jewish nationality discussed below). Dudko evidently "repented" to Serafim and promised to only preach "'on Gospel

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[75] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 193.
[76] Ibid., 196.
[77] Valery Chalidze, ed., "In Defense of Dmitry Dudko," *A Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR* 10 (August 1974): 23–24.
[78] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 198. Shpiller, by the way, also was granted a trip to the United States in 1975, where he defended the state of religion in the USSR. TsGA Moskvy f. 3004, op. 1, d. 100.

themes.'" On the basis of this repentance, in September 1974 Serafim gave Dudko another chance in the priesthood as assistant priest in the village of Kabanovo, boasting around 2,000 inhabitants and at the far eastern edge of the Oblast, a minimum two hours' travel from the heart of Moscow.

But the local CRA commissioner for Kabanovo, when he heard about Dudko's "anti-Soviet activities," refused to approve a contract for him. Only by certain "influence" of the CRA office in Moscow and the agreement of the "organs of State Security" (KGB) was his position there ratified.[79] They wanted him to work there, even if the local representative did not want the problem on his plate. Upon arrival, he met with the local commissioner of the CRA, who grilled him about his past and threatened him with a "talk with Trushin." The warden there tried to comfort him, saying, "'Batyushka, don't worry. It won't be bad here with us. Certainly, he's not pleased... Now just talk a little less with the people [than you did in Moscow].'"[80]In short, he was advised to mimic those priests who kept their head down and did just the minimum. To be acceptable was to not stand out.

Parish Life

Priests were not the only ones responsible for religious activity, however. Although state authorities preferred to view religious animation as the product of a priest "activating" a congregation, believers acted according to their own energy as well. As the case of Naro-Fominsk shows below, there were still groups of people working together to get churches opened, and as the case of Grebnevo demonstrates, parishioners had to negotiate to make the best of the congregations they had. Not everything depended on clergy.

Naro-Fominsk

When Father Men' had been a priest in Alabino, many believers attended from Naro-Fominsk,[81] about 30 kilometers and at least 45 minutes of travel time away. There was no Orthodox Church in Naro-Fominsk, and after Men's departure from Alabino, their efforts to get one reached a critical point.

[79] GARF, January 4, 1976, f. 6991, op. 6, d. 989, 7.
[80] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 220.
[81] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 185.

According to the law of 1929, if there were twenty or more who requested to form a religious association, they would be permitted registration. Of course, bureaucrats could make each step difficult. There had to be proper documentation, including local authorities' approval to use an existing building or build a new one (which should meet all fire and sanitary requirements), and the appropriate representative of the Council for Religious Affairs should approve it as well. The group in Naro-Fominsk made all efforts to successfully register over the course of the late 1960s. Their application spent months being ignored, despite repeated attempts to discover the reason for non-response by local bodies. Finally, local authorities responded by telling them they did not have proper documentation of suitable "accommodations" for their religious association. When that was addressed, the problem was that they did not prove "dire need" for such a society. This, too, was addressed. There was a church that was not in use, but if they would be refused that one, they promised to build one "by their own strength" and money.

When they still could not get local authorities to agree, in 1970 nearly 1,500 believers made an appeal to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR, complaining that "local powers" had been using "any pretext" for refusing their applications, and that the city council "could not be but mistaken" in its assessment of the "measure and degree of [their] need," concluding that their treatment was "nothing other than the display of brute force, flouting our right which is granted by the Constitution and Law."[82]

Trushin noticed that this process of trying to open a church resulted in the "activation of believers," as the nearly 1,500 signatures made evident. He complained that this effort was instigated by 30 church "activists," who went from "home to home, from apartment to apartment" to collect signatures. The commissioner found it "very surprising, that to such an unlawful activity of churchmen in the city no one reacted in any way." It was laypeople rather than clergy who usually undertook attempts to open churches, although customarily state representatives blamed clergy for any activation. Trushin felt that the proper reaction was for state representatives "to give corresponding guidance about strengthening ideological work among the population, as well as monitoring the activity of churchmen in the

[82] Samizdat Archive Association and Radio Liberty (Munich, Germany), *Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata [Collection of Samizdat Documents]* (Munich: Samizdat Archive Association, 1972), AC 764.

aforementioned regions."[83] Rather than recognizing this as a need for a church, Trushin saw it as a need for increased state presence. The local paper, the *Banner of Ilich*, called these activists "'charlatans on the fringes of religion.'" To want a church was one thing, but to be energized enough to try for one was cause to be ridiculed as a "fringe" movement perpetrated by deceivers.[84] Their petition was not granted.

"Normal" Parish - Grebnevo

Church life in more "normal parishes" was not as animated as in the parishes of Dudko, Men', or Trukhanov, and incidents like 1,500 signatures for a church were also rare. One can consider the village church of Grebnevo to be "typical," insofar as typical is possible. Until 1976, it had nothing that would be considered out of the realm of the ordinary for parish churches in Moscow Oblast in the Brezhnev era.

Parishioner and Orthodox believer Natalia Sokolova felt even in Grebnevo, there was little "separation of church and state," as the regional commissioner for the CRA "meddled in all affairs of the church." The churchwarden had to apply to the commissioner for everything, and he either refused them or attempted to take advantage in some fashion, such as by demanding excessive payments or bribery. By now, people learned to "keep quiet" and were "accustomed to all sorts of harassment."[85]

In the forty years Natalia Sokolova lived in Grebnevo, only twice did a priest serve more than a few years at her nearby Orthodox church, which had at least two priests at a time - one served for fourteen, another for nine, but otherwise one or two years was the norm. She felt it was not accidental: "Such was the policy, they didn't let people get used to a spiritual father, didn't let a priest come to know his flock. How could there be a community there?"[86] The one who served nine years, Father Dmitrii, was loved by the people. He did much to improve the conditions in the church, but this brought the ire of the

[83] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report," Archive file <KGB 40>, p. 9, 12. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 70.
[84] Amnesty International, Research Department and Amnesty International, International Secretariat, *A Chronicle of Current Events* 20 (1971): 247.
[85] N. N. Sokolova, *Pod Krovom Vsevyshnego [Under the Blood of the Most High]* (Moskva: Izd-vo, Pravoslavnoe bratstvo sviatogo apostola Ioanna Bogoslova, 1999), 303–304.
[86] Ibid., 270.

regional executive committee (*raispolkom*), who tried to "discredit" him with libel in the newspaper and the like. He was eventually moved.[87]

There were all kinds of factors that shaped church life, other than having a particularly zealous or talented priest. Much depended on personnel, from priests to the churchwarden to local authorities to the ability of parishioners to get along. Sokolova's husband, Father Vladimir Sokolov, was a priest in nearby Losinoostrovskii raion on the edge of Moscow. Father Sokolov was fortunate because the churchwardens he worked with tended to be believers who cooperated well and did not work independently of the rector's blessing. Even the local executive committee expressed surprise that members of the church staff weren't all submitting complaints against each other. But in Grebnevo, the situation was otherwise, where an older woman ruled as warden somewhat tyrannically. Sokolova complained that her speech was barely intelligible, and the "church fell into decay." In addition, "spirituality came to a standstill," as people "made noise" during services, had conversations, "none of the priests dared give sermons," and confession was rare - the priest would often just cover the "confessor's" head with the stole in silence, after which he or she could receive communion. The combination of priests and warden made the church unsatisfactory for the kind of religious life Sokolova was seeking, and she avoided the church in Grebnevo for a couple of years altogether.[88] For the time being, Sokolova made do with the company of some of the spiritual children of her husband, who would come to their home and help the family with their five children.

Men' at Novaya Derevnya

If the parish at Grebnevo was on life support, Aleksandr Men's parish in Novaya Derevnya was bustling with activity. He was trying to form a community out of his parish, not satisfied with having believers isolated from each other. As for his own community of priests and intellectuals, the pressure authorities put on it had effectively destroyed it. The Eshliman-Yakunin group had been broken up, and writer Levitin-Krasnov had been arrested in 1969 and was in prison until he emigrated in 1974. Men'

[87] Ibid., 271.
[88] Ibid., 358.

found his friend Eshliman quite "transformed" after the open letter affair, and relations became "superficial."[89] Yakunin had found his own place in the political-dissident movement. He and Men' met from time to time and kept track of each other's activities, but now their spheres no longer overlapped.[90] Men's friend and intellectual-priest Mikhail Meerson-Aksenov had also emigrated in 1972.

Thus, Men's pursuit of an intellectual community marked by meetings and discussions waned. He shifted his focus to his new parish, Novaya Derevnya. Moreover, there was no shortage of people coming to his parish, including local parishioners, locals curious about the new priest, and scores of Muscovite spiritual children.[91] One such new attendee from Moscow, Olga Bukhina, recalls how "this little church, as many other churches of that time, had been pretty much filled with the local old ladies, but suddenly it was occupied by a bunch of young boys and girls in their early twenties." It was awkward, especially at first, as the young people came without knowing the customs. "The old ladies" of the church looked at them, she felt, with "severe disapproval," making the parish "clearly divided into two parts which had nothing to do with each other." Men', she says, was "in the middle of this."[92]

For Bukhina, as well as for many of those gathering, the awkwardness gradually diminished, as she found acceptance there. She felt that "Simple human relationships emerged from our being together in the church." It was becoming more than an accidental gathering of disconnected individuals (which would have been an acceptable religious gathering in the state's eyes), but "a place of tolerance and love, a place where people of different sorts could be together without killing each other, physically of morally." To her, it was a clear contrast to the rest of social life:

> The situation in the 1970s was quite depressing, politically and socially. But for me and for many others, I believe, the little church in Novaja Derevnja was an oasis of joy. There were no other place in the world for which I would be ready to get up at 5 in the morning, in the Russian winter, awfully cold, pitch dark, take the subway to the commuter train, forty minutes in the train without heat, another twenty minutes in the bus, and eventually walk through the snow to the church. It would still be totally dark, not yet dawn.

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[89] Men', *O Sebe*, 172.
[90] Ibid., 174.
[91] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 222.
[92] Olga Bukhina, *For the Jews like a Jew, for the Greeks like a Greek: the Parish of Novaja* Derevnja, August 2004. http://www.alexandermen.com/Father_Men%27s_Parish_of_Novaja_Derevnja, retrieved September 17, 2014.

> Obviously, something very warm existed there if I was able to do all of that on a very regular basis.[93]

For people like Bukhina, this was a community, a gathering of people that she chose voluntarily, and for which she sacrificed gladly and told others about. Numerous people went to Men' for counsel and prayer, sometimes waiting in line for confession as many as six hours, and others found somewhere to stay overnight in order to attend the early-morning confession slots.[94]

Authorities were suspicious of Men's influence, they questioned those close to him, and they even suspected him of being an agent of the Catholic Church. KGB agents cast his attempts at bridging denominational barriers as his participation in an "anti-Soviet organization," according to KGB head Yuri Andropov in 1974.[95] Men' also drew a large number of people with Jewish ancestry to the church, probably due to his Jewish ancestry. Bukhina, herself a Jew, recalls that the gatherings at Men's church "looked very strange" when compared to the "'normal' church crowd." Bukhina felt that "in Russia everyone can quite easily tell who is Jewish and who is not. Russian Jews look very different from ethnically Russian people, and as a result, they are quite visible and easy to recognize in the crowd. The old ladies in the church unmistakably knew who we are."[96] The 1970s and 1980s was a time when being Jewish was a particularly marked issue, as Jewish life experienced something of a revival of interest in Jewish identity and religion. Interest in Zionism was on the rise, as were Jews' requests to emigrate. They claimed the existence of systemic anti-Semitism in Soviet society, but the scores denied emigration were

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[93] Olga Bukhina, *For the Jews like a Jew, for the Greeks like a Greek: the Parish of Novaja* Derevnja, August 2004. http://www.alexandermen.com/Father_Men%27s_Parish_of_Novaja_Derevnja, retrieved September 17, 2014.
[94] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 232, 241.
[95] March 25, 1974, Letter from State Security Organs to Central Committee, signed by Yuri Andropov. Made available through private collection of Pavel Men'. In 1974, the head of the KGB, Yuri Andropov (who later served as General Secretary after Brezhnev), sent a letter to the central committee regarding an "ideological battle" the Vatican was waging against the USSR with "special interest" in "expand[ing] links with the Russian Orthodox Church." As a result of efforts by the Vatican to reach out to the Orthodox Church, certain Orthodox clergy were "gradually slipping into a pro-Catholic position, accusing the leadership of the ROC of too much loyalty to the state and unwillingness 'to use their right of protest against illegality, perpetrated by an atheistic power with respect to the church.'" To Andropov and his agents, Men' was not just a priest pursuing relationships with kindred spirits, he was at the center of a great conspiracy: "The group of pro-Catholic minded priests, headed by A. Men (Moscow Oblast), in his theological works smuggles in the idea that the ideal of church life can only be in Catholicism." They wrote that some of his writings were illegally sent to Belgium, where a Catholic press was printing them in Russian and distributing them in the USSR
[96] Olga Bukhina, *For the Jews like a Jew, for the Greeks like a Greek: the Parish of Novaja* Derevnja, August 2004. http://www.alexandermen.com/Father_Men%27s_Parish_of_Novaja_Derevnja, retrieved September 17, 2014.

labeled "refusenik." Not only was the revival of Jewishness met with increased anti-Semitism, but Jews who desired to leave were sometimes branded as disloyal to the state.

Men' and one of his spiritual children (and biographer), Zoya Maslenikova, felt that the old congregation was effectively split in two: there were those who were "captivated by the kindness, openness and eagerness of a young priest," and those who opposed him, often articulated with tones of "anti-Semitism."[97] In fact, it was not uncommon that if people noticed a particularly lively or active priest or believer, some might sneeringly suggest that he or she was likely a Jew, purporting that such a one was secretly trying to lure people away from "true [re: complacent?] orthodoxy."[98]

His diverse circle of friends, acquaintances, and parishioners made him an easy target for slander and epithets. Agents conducted a few searches, but there weren't any "direct confrontations." Those who only knew him a little, he says, used varying labels to describe him: "occultist, Zionist, Catholic, modernist, an agent of the authorities."[99] It did not much matter that these labels by definition preclude one another; such labels served to sow mistrust among the people, that such an "extremist" clearly is not one of "us." As Judith Kornblatt argues, Men's religiosity "was couched in the language of inclusiveness and universalism," something attractive to an intelligentsia in search of ideals and universal values that many felt were missing from society. The problem was, however, that some saw his gatherings as a collection of 'outcasts,' including dissidents, Zionists, and Christians.[100] Certain representatives of these groups could easily clash, as the coincidental factor which brought them together (Men') was not enough to erase all of the tensions and issues that separated them.

Despite the efforts a new rector in 1976 to reduce Men's influence,[101] Men' was not deterred in his quest to build a religious community by the slander and pressures. Because he noticed how people waiting to go to confession "saw in each other undesired opponents costing the father valuable time" and that "connections among his spiritual children were accidental and chaotic," he decided to "organize the

[97] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 222.
[98] Kornblatt, *Doubly Chosen*, 98.
[99] Men', *O Sebe*, 177–178.
[100] Kornblatt, *Doubly Chosen*, 79, 82.
[101] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 250–251.

unreasonably sprawling, loose parish."[102] The idea was to group seven to twelve people together for regular gatherings of prayer, study, and aid as needed. Because such gatherings would certainly be more fodder for wild conspiracies, they adopted secretive practices: meeting places were constantly changed, and the timing of a gathering always corresponded with an alibi (state holidays, birthdays of a member or of a relative, etc.). They could not arrive in a group, nor could they leave as a group. Father Men' assisted in picking group leaders and supplying topics for study as well as reading or visual material. Evidently, the idea "caught on" and the groups were "viable," but the extent and duration is not known.[103] Like participants in the Seminar, Men' and his group of believers attempted to transform individual conscience into communal religious practice.

"Extra-curricular" religious activities – The Christian Seminar

Just as Men' attempted to forge a religious community, elsewhere in the oblast, people were looking for more than just a church service. The 1970s was were marked by new, ad-hoc religious gatherings, inspired by priests like Dudko and Men'. Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, who became a frequent participant where Dudko served, was raised an atheist but had gone on a hunt for "truth"—first rejecting ideology, adopting a hippie lifestyle, then believing that he found the truth in the teachings of the Orthodox Church. But finding a suitable religious community was not easy, as simply going to church did not satisfy him. In the words of Levitin-Krasnov, seekers like Ogorodnikov, having no religious background, were "confused" by things like an unintelligible Church Slavonic and the many rituals. They "rarely" went to Church at first, preferring to read religious literature and have discussions with each other. [104] Ogorodnikov's first attempts at church were full of mutual incomprehension:

> 'Before us the Church was all old people, old people, and we were the first swallows [of spring]. One time, I went into a church in one of the provinces, and the old women tried to force me out of the church. "We won't let you close the church [...]" they said. In the understanding of these old women, a young man could go into a church with only one aim, to smash things up, to close the church. It was only when I went up at the end of the

[102] Ibid., 235.
[103] Ibid., 235–236. Men' called them "communions." I have not succeeded to date in discovering more on these formations.
[104] Alexander Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry* (Keston: Keston College, 1986), 6.

> liturgy to receive communion that the old women understood. All the church was crying, they were crying. I was a new generation [...]'.[105]

Admittedly struggling against the "intellectual pride" that kept him resistant to attending church, he also struggled against "the lack of a flourishing religious community life within the Russian Orthodox Church, which deprived us of the opportunity to serve the Church actively, while the official hierarchy made no response to our appeals."[106] He found that "in the Russian Church the parish is not like a brotherly community where Christian love of one's neighbor becomes a reality, the State persecutes every manifestation of church life, except for the performance of a 'religious cult.' Our thirst for spiritual communion, religious education and missionary service runs up against all the might of the State's repressive machinery."[107] As Yakunin put it at the time, the Orthodox case was singularly problematic:

> In the present Orthodox parish, as in the communities of no other confession, the feeling of Christian brotherhood is weakened. Paradoxical cases are encountered in the large cities. People who have stood next to each other in prayer and have taken communion from the same chalice for decades, who have watched from the corner of their eyes how each other's children and grandchildren grow, how they themselves are aging, turn out to be personally unacquainted.

As for priests, and their activities, Yakunin felt that the Orthodox Church as a whole was "turning more and more into a 'cult-performing' sect," and that "many priests do not even preach, as this is not encouraged by the Patriarch, and their performance of the sacraments has been reduced to pure ritualism."[108]

This was Ogorodnikov's opinion too, and he looked for a new avenue. "Dissatisfied with the mere 'performance of a religious cult,' having no opportunity to receive a religious education, and in need of brotherly Christian relations," he set up the Christian Seminar as a study group.[109] In August 1974 Ogorodnikov was working as a janitor at a clinic, and he used the janitor's small and poorly heated sleeping quarters as the rooms for the Seminar. Anyone could come, and there was a variety in age,

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[105] Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia*, 82.
[106] Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry*, 5.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Gleb IAkunin, Lev Regel'son, and Jane Ellis, *Letters from Moscow : Religion and Human Rights in the USSR* (Keston; San Francisco: Keston College, Centre for the Study of Religion and Communism ; H.S. Dakin, 1978), 29–35.
[109] Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry*, 5.

lifestyle, education, and views.[110] Some would even spend the night there, as some traveled from great distances to attend. Branches emerged elsewhere in Leningrad and Smolensk, and, as time went on, also in Ufa, Odessa, Christopol, Kazan, Minsk, Riga, Pskov, and Novosibirsk. The first meeting saw 25 people from Moscow and from other major cities, and 20-40 people typically gathered in this janitor's quarters, but as many as hundreds attended all the branches combined. Word was spread by mouth among trusted acquaintances, and strangers were not accepted without the permission of trusted members.[111]

The purpose was discussion of wide ranging topics, with a focus on Orthodox religious and philosophical thought, much in the style of Dudko's talks. The Seminar was not a gathering of political "dissidents," as they had no ambition to making or proposing changes to politically empowered bodies. It was, says Ogorodnikov, "a self-organised, informal group of friends, who wanted to get together to learn."[112] The discussions were lively, and the energy from these meetings spread. In contrast to some church services characterized as "uninspired and wooden," participants found this seminar to be fresh.[113] Attendee Vladimir Poresh remarks, "Those conversations, that way of life, took hold of me completely; it was all so sound, so full of meaning and depth, so full of the warmth and genuine feeling which you cannot confuse with anything else."[114] One of the most regular attendees was a language teacher, Tatyana Shchipkova. The meetings gave her something she didn't find elsewhere: "warm Christian fellowship, completely untrammeled thinking, and total immersion in the spiritual realm." Rather than being a curiosity to "real" life, religion now took center stage. Shchipkova was satisfied to find that "Social questions were discussed only in connection with religious ones."[115] Community and togetherness were so central to the themes and talks that one of the great conclusions that many of them came to was that

[110] Ibid., 8.
[111] Koenraad de Wolf, *Dissident for Life : Alexander Ogorodnikov and the Struggle for Religious Freedom in Russia* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2012), 67.
[112] Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry*, 5.
[113] de Wolf, *Dissident for Life*, 70.
[114] Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry*, 7.
[115] Ibid., 10–11.

"true freedom" was not pursuing one's own desires, but "to bind together in 'living forms of Christian community.'"[116] They did not accept the Soviet view of faith as limited to individual conscience.

The State Attacks Communal Religiosity

State representatives had been doing their best to cast any dynamic religious communities as "marginal" or "fringe" and leaders as opposing "our" social norms. Thus, authorities could deal with them as though they were pursuing criminal activity. As Trushin put it in 1974, when summarizing the cases of priests and wardens stripped of registration, he applied the blanket accusation that they were all "fanatics and extremists."[117] Fanatics and extremists are abnormal, undeserving of "normal" treatment and warranting discipline.

Seminar participants as Psychiatrically Abnormal

As part of its crackdown on bourgeoning communal religiosity, state authorities acted aggressively against the Christian Seminar, which had been meeting for two years since 1974. Authorities labeled their meetings "anti-Soviet." In addition to its principal leader, Ogorodnikov, the authorities began hounding the attendees as well. Detachments of police would often break in and demand evidence that they had permission to meet as well as their identification documents.

Participants were being persecuted, as usual by the divide-and-conquer (or isolate-and-alienate) strategy. In 1976 they searched participants for literature or other incriminating material, and some were interrogated, threatened, and mocked. One was failed in his exams. One member, Eduard Fedotov, was taken to a psychiatric hospital and diagnosed with "schizophrenia." No visitors were permitted, but Ogorodnikov persisted and was eventually granted a meeting with a certain Dr. Levitsky, who reportedly told him, "'I'm not against belief. Belief is a matter for a man's conscience. But [...] for him [religion] is an obsessional *idee fixe*. Your Eduard is living in a world of illusions, and I want to bring him back to real life. [...] You can go into a church, pray, take communion - but why preach?'" Levitsky's comments are

[116] Ibid., 7.
[117] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report," 1974, Archive file <KGB 175>, p. 3. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 82.

telling: it was labeled a social disorder to have religion move beyond the limited and private realm of conscience. Authorities also interned another participant, Aleksandr Argentov, and he was given powerful drugs against his consent. He was told his religious enthusiasm was a "result of a mental illness."[118]

31 participants of the Christian Seminar were hauled in and interrogated between September 1976 and April 1977. Another participant was expertly and cruelly beaten. A woman participant was followed across town, pushed, harassed. Another was sent to a psychiatric institution where he was told by a psychiatrist that "'We'll beat your religion out of you.'" He was repeatedly drugged.[119] The pressure worked on some, causing some to discontinue their attendance.[120] Meanwhile, state newspapers slandered public figures like Ogorodnikov and Dudko.[121]

The Seminar still tried to meet in 1976 and early 1977, even attempting to publish some essays in a new journal of theirs, that they called *Obshchina* (*Community*), again highlighting its centrality to their existence. It was produced in samizdat form, but nearly all copies were confiscated by the authorities. A second issue was written and disseminated in 1978. Ogorodnikov was eventually fired and later arrested for "'the leading of a parasitical and anti-social way of life.'" He was given a prison sentence, beaten, and harshly treated.[122] Two friends, Aleksandr Kuzkin and Sergei Yermolaev, made public utterances protesting his arrest, and they were arrested. Kuzkin was sent to a psychiatric hospital, and Yermolaev and his friend Igor Polyakov were charged with "hooliganism."[123]Many accusations were made of Ogorodnikov, including of rape (fabricated by a woman who later confessed that agents promised her a house).[124] He was eventually charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" in May 1980.

[118] de Wolf, *Dissident for Life*, 77–78.
[119] Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry*, 16–17.
[120] de Wolf, *Dissident for Life*, 79.
[121] Ogorodnikov, *A Desperate Cry*, 20.
[122] Ibid., 24.
[123] de Wolf, *Dissident for Life*, 100.
[124] Ibid., 121.

The Demise of the Dudko Gatherings

After being dismissed from Moscow and placed in Kabanovo, Dudko did not accept the advice he had received from his new warden to avoid the limelight.[125] He was not reluctant to bring up "sensitive" topics.[126] Some ten or twenty friends, supporters, or "like-minded" people regularly came to his services in Kabanovo, carrying on "discussions," and even staying overnight in the church lodgings. State agents noticed that "before long, here too" Dudko engaged in "anti-Soviet activities," and that "according to tone and content" of his sermons, that he was "malevolently adjusted in relation to Soviet society and the state system, being a slanderer and calumniator." He was not only delivering such messages in sermons after the liturgy, but even after Vespers, contrary to Orthodox custom.[127]

The warden tried to dissuade him, mentioning that she was sometimes summoned and questioned about Dudko, and that she was asked why he was preaching about "drunkenness and hooliganism" when he should stick to more biblical topics. When he defended his actions as necessary considering the situation, the warden told him that it was her duty "to warn him" about his sermons and "their" concern that "too many people gather at your place."[128]

Then, in December 1975 the warden terminated Dudko's contract since she had warned him of his "antisoviet sermons" and that he shouldn't "speak out against the state, but obey."[129] Some of his friends, including well-known writers and literary critics Feliks Svetov, Zoya Krakhmal'nikova and mathematician Igor Shafarevich attempted to defend him, saying that the warden of the church was to blame. Her "behavior served as a constant and bitter seduction for the believers" to distrust him, and this behavior prevented the "flock" from drawing near to Dudko, even while he drew the "heart-felt love of thousands of believers" to Kabanovo."[130]Yet some local believers were also upset, arguing his sermons

[125] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 220.
[126] Ibid., 221.
[127] GARF f. 6991, op. 6, d. 989, 7-8.
[128] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 225.
[129] Ibid., 257–261.
[130] Samizdat Archive Association and Radio Liberty (Munich, Germany), *Sobranie Dokumentov Samizdata [Collection of Samizdat Documents]*, AS 2504.

were not "anti-Soviet" but even helped some of the men leave behind their drinking problems. They made a petition on his behalf, but to no avail.[131]

At this time, Trushin advocated to his boss Kuroedov that they ensure Dudko no longer serve in Moscow oblast, or even better, to put the question to the Patriarch, "who ha[d] every reason to deprive Dudko of the priestly rank."[132] Kuroedov in January 1976 in *Izvestia* wrote an article about Dudko, claiming that the parishioners of the church in Kabanovo "refused the services" of Dudko, "dismissing him from the church for sermons of an anti-Soviet content" and that parishioners from his two previous churches had done the same for "the same reasons." This "'pastor,'" Kuroedov noted, had the support of the "West," who declared him a "'true fighter for the faith.'"[133] The subtext of Kuroedov's declaration was that "we" rejected Dudko, since he merely belonged to "them," the Westerners. Though parishioners did support Dudko, Kuroedov's assertions demonstrated that communal religiosity was not an acceptable path to belonging, and that Western sympathy was a path to marginalization in the Soviet Union.

Yakunin was in the same situation as Dudko: jobless, but winning Western sympathy. "The West" was a double-edged conceptual sword. Gaining Western sympathy irritated Soviet authorities due to their concern for Soviet reputation, but anyone seen as "pro-Western" by definition could be labeled "anti-Soviet," since the two were theoretically diametrically opposed. Yakunin was trying to advocate on Dudko's behalf, but both were seen as too pro-Western.[134] Had the situations of Yakunin and Dudko

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[131] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 262.
[132] GARF f. 6991, op. 6, d. 989, 9.
[133] Ibid., 29.
[134] GARF, April 4, 1976, f. 6991, op. 6, d. 1192, p. 4-5. Yakunin had been prohibited from priestly work since 1970, but priests on probation were, according to "Orthodox tradition and church canon," guaranteed work in the church in some other capacity. He had been working at various posts, primarily as a watchman, at a church in Moscow until halfway through 1975 when the warden there dismissed him from work "'on the grounds of redundancy.'" He managed to find employment as a lector in another church later that year, but the warden there terminated him after only one and a half months because Trushin had called her in and demanded of her Yakunin's "immediate dismissal." In his letter of protest to CRA Chief Kuroedov, Yakunin found it "remarkable" that Trushin did not even find it worth mentioning to the warden to not refer to him in connection with the dismissal or "not convey the details of their conversation." He also did not consider these episodes "incidental," but as the expression of the "desire to suppress any free speech in the church," as—among numerous open letters he wrote and contacts established with people interested in political freedoms—he had been making efforts to establish contacts with delegates to the World Council of Churches gathering in Nairobi in 1975. That this issue of freedom to speak within the churches was central, Yakunin argued, was confirmed by the dismissal of "the famous preacher, Priest Dmitrii Dudko" of Kabanovo, an order that apparently came "from Moscow," not really from the warden. Also, GARF, f.6991, op. 6, d. 989, pp. 2-3, 28-30. Trushin wrote a report on Yakunin to Kuroedov, providing an ugly profile on him and a

remained obscure, state or church agents would have had little motivation to resolve their jobless status. But news of their ordeals had reached sympathetic ears in "the West," and Orthodox Church representatives were receiving an earful at international gatherings and by mail from people protesting that these two were denied employment. State and church representatives had an international reputation to maintain, and these two priests had become political footballs in a much larger "East-West" game of reputation.

After Dudko's termination in Kabanovo, a warden of another church approached him independently and asked him to come to their church. He signed a contract with her, and although the Metropolitan responded in anger, he nevertheless permitted the new appointment.[135] The church was in Grebnevo, and when he arrived, he realized that this town was in a restricted part of Moscow oblast, where no foreigners were permitted due to the presence of certain "factories of particular importance."[136] With foreign broadcasts and samizdat discussing the plight of Dudko being "deprived" of a parish, perhaps state representatives considered this a pragmatic solution.

Dudko's position in Grebnevo began in April 1976. It was closer to Moscow, and overall a nicer parish than that of Kabanovo. Again people came, and in large numbers. Local believer Sokolova recalls that people, "starving (after a long silence)," gladly "stood for a long time and listened hard" to the words of Dudko. No one was in a hurry to leave, she recalls, and Dudko "was pelleted by questions." Not just on holidays or Sundays, but even on weekday services the church was filled with people; youth were ubiquitous. In nice weather, tables were spread with samovars and food for a meal under the trees. During

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history of his activities. He described young Yakunin's "cherished dream" of pursuing the fur trade, and his later rejection of that training for the priesthood. But once he switched, Trushin claimed he became a "speculator," dealing in jewelry and pornographic literature and maintaining "criminal" contacts. He was also noted to be friends with Lev Regel'son, whom Trushin labeled as unemployed and "anti-Soviet." Together, these two were engaged in attacking the hierarchy of the Church, accusing them of a primary allegiance to the state. Metropolitan Serafim advocated taking "more severe measures" against Yakunin, something that depended on an act by the Patriarch. On March 20, 1975, Trushin reported to his boss Kuroedov on the latest comments from people protesting from "the West" in order to keep him aware of the fact that people took issue with the plights of the two priests. In Yakunin's case, the CRA replied to his "protest" of being denied work that this was the domain of the church hierarchy. When Yakunin applied to Metropolitan Serafim, his response was that he handled appointments only for clergy, not church staff positions, and that Yakunin would need to find an executive committee of a church to hire him.

[135] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 268.

[136] Ibid., 273.

winter months, people gathered in Dudko's lodge for a meal and the reading and discussion of Scripture. Many people of unchurched background came to faith. Thus, in the "normal" parish of Grebnevo, the local situation—in the words of Sokolova—"changed beyond recognition." For those new to him, what they heard was "long, exciting, well-aimed preaching," and they saw people from all over, from nearby towns, from Moscow, and from other more distant places as well.[137]

The more authorities had tried to marginalize him, the greater his appeal became to disaffected youth. One such young man, "stultified by the official culture dished up to Soviet citizens like prison slop on a tray" had variously explored rock music, yoga, Buddhism, and so forth, but had heard about the renegade priest now in Grebnevo. This man remarked later that people who feared the system would go to him, since he seemed courageous: "'They had heard of this priest that you could talk freely to.'"[138] Another one remembered that Dudko's parish was "'like a place of pilgrimage. People would pray, eat, sleep, then stop for the night.'" Locals contributed food.[139]

One man felt he was in a "family…, with people I could trust." Since there were always sixty or more people, they would have to eat in shifts to fit at the table, which only fit seventeen. If they came before the services on Saturday, they would sleep there. He recalls that one morning Father Dmitrii "'came out and laughed, there were so many of us. You could not even turn over in bed.'" Discussions would usually last the entire afternoon on Sundays.[140] Even though Dudko now lived inconveniently outside Moscow, the "discussions, and conversations, and meals'" were worth the effort for Ogorodnikov and others, who felt that there in Grebnevo, "'we created an independent Christian society. It is not just that we had lunch or something, we lived the life [...]'"[141] In addition to preaching on themes from the gospels and saints' lives, he tried to preach on "modern life." To accommodate the large numbers of his spiritual children and the spiritually curious, he again adopted a question-answer style. In short, he was way beyond the boundary of acceptable religiosity by the way he fostered a communal religiosity that was

[137] Sokolova, *Pod Krovom Vsevyshnego [Under the Blood of the Most High]*, 360.
[138] Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia*, 105.
[139] Ibid., 109–110.
[140] Ibid., 120.
[141] Ibid., 91.

firmly situated in contemporary life, far from what state authorities regarded as safe religiosity, individual participation in rituals.

Church and state authorities put significant pressure on this community, appointing and recalling three rectors in turn until they found one reliable or firm enough.[142] The tension surrounding Dudko in Grebnevo only increased in 1978 and 1979. The KGB regularly planted agents, appearing as interested youth. Police raids and searches were common. Some of his followers were arrested and held for a time. The rector made the schedule such that Dudko never served on Sundays or feast days, when there would be more people expecting a sermon.[143] Malicious or slanderous articles frequently appeared about Dudko or his followers, and one issue that became troublingly common was a Jewish-Russian tension.[144]

With Ogorodnikov and Yakunin arrested by 1980, Dudko was the final outspoken high-profile Orthodox figure standing. His followers began to break up and avoid him as fear and suspicion abounded. In January of 1980, Dudko was arrested. Agents searched his lodgings, many of his books were burned, his lodging was dismantled "brick by brick," and they dug deep in his basement, the local Sokolova recalls, "looking for any sort of installations by which Father Dimitrii could have been linked with foreigners." Nothing was found, "except a supply of potatoes for the winter." A sad picture of the erstwhile dynamic community in Grebnevo remained: a broken-down lodging, burnt texts, and the still-unrepaired church building, which had been charred by a fire in its interior some four years ago.[145]

Once Dudko was arrested in 1980, they kept him in the Lefortovo Prison of Moscow for some time, probably to plan their moves and give him ample opportunity to fear what fate might await him.[146] Although it is unknown what precisely transpired within the walls of Lefortovo, the next time Dudko's friends and fans saw him was on television, June 20, 1980. Millions of people watched him that evening

[142] Sokolova, *Pod Krovom Vsevyshnego [Under the Blood of the Most High]*, 362.
[143] Dudko, *Podarok ot Boga*, 289.
[144] Ibid., 298–299.
[145] Sokolova, *Pod Krovom Vsevyshnego [Under the Blood of the Most High]*, 363. The exact timing of the fire is unclear. Dudko does not mention it, although Sokolova has it as September 1976.
[146] Bullough, *The Last Man in Russia*, 172.

as he denounced his previous activity and "admitted" his crimes, that he worked against the Soviet state by giving the West false information about the Soviet Union.

His "confession" was devastating, as he had baptized thousands, and thousands had met him and heard him. To many, he was a solitary beacon of truth and resistance.[147] Some of his followers despaired so much they contemplated suicide. Even before the TV appearance, some of the previous community members, like Ogorodnikov and Krakhmal'nikova, had broken ties with Dudko and lost faith in him due to his handling of the pressures put on their community.[148]

Thus Dudko largely passed from the limelight of religion seekers, but the authorities continued to pay attention for a time. Since Dudko had "fully recognized" his anti-Soviet activity in print and on Television in June, by September 1980, he was now second pastor in the village of Vinogradovo. Guests came there, too, for talks and discussions, but in fewer numbers.[149] Trushin still found Dudko engaging in "extremism" by his sermon content, preaching "with the goal of the excitation of religious fanaticism," and by his talks, which were "full of malicious slander on the position of the church and of believers in our country, on our reality." All of this was evidence that "as a matter of fact," Dudko's admission of "errors" last year did not mean he had changed.[150]

But, the attractiveness of Dudko waned, and these were perhaps the glowing embers of a fire that was dying out. From information supplied by the Rector and members of the church's executive committee, he was having many conflicts with his spiritual children.[151] Yakunin and Ogorodnikov had broken with him for his failure to stand up for either of them at their trials. His community, his "spiritual family," was crumbling around him.

Writer Zoya Krakhmal'nikova had listened to Dudko's sermons for about a decade, was baptized by him, and at one time considered him her spiritual father. She had been collecting religious writings and

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[147] Ibid., 176.
[148] de Wolf, *Dissident for Life*, 123.
[149] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report", Archive file <KGB 93>, pp. 9-10. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 100.
[150] Ibid., Archive file <KGB 94>, pp. 11-12. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 104.
[151] Ibid., Archive file <KGB 47>, p 7. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 113.

finding ways to publish them abroad or in samizdat form in a journal called *Nadezhda* (*Hope)*. She was arrested in 1982, but her relationship with Dudko had been faltering even before his arrest (which then fatally wounded it), and he gave false evidence against her in her trial. Her publication, *Nadezhda*, contained writings on Church Tradition, Biblical figures, miraculous icons, Saints' Lives, sermons, letters from "New Martyrs" to their spiritual children, some articles she wrote on "the need for Christian sermons in culture." After her arrest, one of her interrogators reminded her,

> 'If you had only sat quietly and prayed,' the chief of the Lefortovo prison admonished in a fatherly manner. If you had only sat under your bed and prayed so that no one saw you. Or, if you had to, if you had simply gone to church. 'Like my grandmother; she is a believer,' said my interrogator. 'My grandmother is a believer,' said another official of the same department when he came to see me in exile. Apparently, they all, everyone has grandmothers who are believers. And they want us to believe the way their grandmothers do... [...] 'Had you behaved, no one would have imprisoned you.'[152]

The interrogator made clear the line between acceptable and unacceptable religious practice. Had she kept her religious practice confined to her personal conscience, she would have been left alone.

The Divisions in Novaya Derevnya

State authorities managed to all but extinguish the flame of religious community life among this assortment of Muscovite intellectuals. Krakhmal'nikova's husband, writer Feliks Svetov, was also arrested, even in the surprisingly late year of 1986. Ogorodnikov and many others were finally released only in February 1987 in a general amnesty as part of Gorbachev's glasnost'. As for Men', he had been awaiting his arrest. Like them, he was the subject of numerous rumors, near-scandals, and slanderous news articles. He was labeled a closet Catholic, a Jewish conspirator, and a foreign agent, among other things.[153] The commissioner claimed that the "extremist" Men's parishioners had complained about him "many times over the last year," and if true, their complaints revealed a division in the community. They claimed that Men' sided with his personal "adherents" against members of the church executive committee and other active believers.[154]

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[152] Zoia Krakhmal'nikova, *Listen, Prison!: Lefortovo Notes, Letters from Exile* (Redding, Calif.: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1993), 110.
[153] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 261.
[154] Keston Archive, "Council for Religious Affairs of Moscow Oblast, Report", Archive file <KGB 94>, p. 13. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 104.

The factions undercutting the Orthodox community there even took on a sordid nationalistic tone. Not only was Men' linked to "dissidents and extremists like Krasnov-Levitin, Eshliman, Yakunin, and others," now he "carefully conspires" by way of "grouping around him youth and in particular of Jewish nationality, who systematically gather at the church on days of his service."[155] They were meeting after the service, usually in his home. Some believers supposedly wrote to the Council, saying, "'Our appeal to you is due to concern for the fate of our state. We, believers, often call attention to the suspicious behavior of pr. Men', since visiting the church where he serves is a large collection of Jews, who arrive with their fat briefcases, surround Men', and after the liturgy meet with him.'"

The rector also wrote to the Metropolitan that Men' was "occupied by feverish activity" in his reading, writing, and meeting with guests, such that "sometimes the altar looks like a work office." He too, mentioned the guests with their "luggage and briefcases," and these may have insinuated illegal merchandise or literature. The rector noted that with increasing frequency "adult Jews" were baptized, having been "converted by Men'." In the next sentence, a seeming non-sequitur, but perhaps implying ill dealings, he noted that "three times" the church "was subjected to robbery." The church's executive committee forbid Men' from holding gatherings in the lodging or enclosure, but he apparently "did not always" comply. The warden complained that on days of his service there tended to be "a stream of increasingly new unknown people." She mentioned that those entering did "not always cross themselves." She also found it "strange" that these "30-40-year old people visit our church during the week, when they should be at work."[156]

Men' was searched and interrogated several times during the 1980s, but he managed to keep from arrest. Not only was his parish not a faction-free, safe community, but his community of like-minded friends or supporters was far from stable. Those that came to him were typically transient: they would come for a time, and then fade away.[157] They were like spiritual tourists, luggage and all.

[155] Ibid., Archive file <KGB 95>, pp. 25-26. Originally from TsGAMO, Fond 7383, Op. 3, Del. 108.
[156] Ibid., 26.
[157] Maslenikova, *Aleksandr Men'*, 243.

With glasnost', much changed for Men'. He became an enormously popular speaker and appeared in all kinds of public settings and media. But it all came to an end, however, when he was brutally murdered by an unknown axe-wielding assailant in 1990 while he was walking through the woods on his way to church. All that has surfaced has been a litany of conspiracies: that the murder was done by an anti-Semite, that conservatives within the Church instigated it, that the KGB ordered it, or some combination thereof.

Community and Division in Grebnevo

The crowds receded after Dudko's dismissal from Grebnevo, but the charred church and dugout basement did not linger for long as a bitter symbol of a paralyzed church community. Father Ivan Zaitsev would eventually serve a six-year stint as rector (unlike the stints of his predecessors which were more commonly counted in months), and along with a new, "not yet old, and energetic" warden, they helped restore the church building. The warden also invited Sokolova's daughter to help lead a choir. During the colder months, the choir rehearsed in the Sokolova home, had dinner together, rehearsals, "discussed issues," and it seemed to Sokolova that "once again a Christian community was born."[158]

People, even the young, were once again attending church, Sokolova recalls, as a couple of the priests after Dudko were also preaching "excellent sermons." One, Father Mikhail, had a long line of people waiting for confession with him and to talk to him after the service. Despite the fact that Rector Zaitsev had helped with a lot of the repairs, people were flocking toward the younger Father Mikhail and away from him. But "they took [Mikhail] away too," another "blow on the souls of the parishioners," until Father Arkadii arrived, whose "strong voice …, heartfelt words of his preaching, … and look in his deep eyes" ultimately "won the hearts of the congregation." Once again, people began "to fill the church," young people too, "who followed Father Arkadii everywhere, using every minute to meet with him."[159]

Suddenly, rector Zaitsev was replaced by another, but it is not clear whose idea this was. This time, the parishioners decided to speak out. Even though crowds had not surrounded Zaitsev as they did

[158] Sokolova, *Pod Krovom Vsevyshnego [Under the Blood of the Most High]*, 380.
[159] Ibid., 380–381.

Fr. Arkadii, they appreciated what he had done. They did not like the replacement rector, so they protested, sent letters, and when these went unanswered, every member of the "staff" – the warden, the cleaners, the watchman, the treasurer, the administrator, acolyte, altar boy, the choir, the baker of the communion bread, and the repairmen – quit, everyone except the "fire stoker." This did not impress the bishop, who told Father Arkadii simply to find others for the tasks.

On the advice of Sokolova's husband, Father Vladimir, Father Arkadii called a meeting of the *dvadsatka*.[160] The problem, however, is that there wasn't much of a *dvadsatka* in Grebnevo—some had died, others had moved away, and still others were sick or unable to get out of bed. With the help of Father Arkadii's spiritual followers from nearby Fryazin, they elected new members to the *dvadsatka*, whom locals claimed they "d[id] not trust," since they were not "our own," of the local village. In fact they were conspiring to keep the positions unfilled in hopes that the bishop would respond to their grievances. But, the new people filled the ranks of the *dvadsatka*, including Sokolova. The new *dvadsatka* then proceeded to nominate replacements for the positions, in the presence of "hissing old women."[161]

As can be seen in this "normal village," the problems of church community life were not caused simply by meddlesome state officials. Church hierarchs, local leaders, and personal differences contributed problems of their own for the local church community, and individuals could do some things to change their situation, but not without significant negotiation. Although the parish was to elect the executive body (as was done in Grebnevo), the local commissioners, according to their instructions, "should participate in the selection of the executive organ's members, and choose people *who carry out our line.*"[162] It appears the state sometimes ignored this level of complexity and opted for the simpler, streamlined method of control, where commissioners and secret service agents, together with church

[160] As discussed in Chapter II, if people desired to have a religious society of some sort, they were to form what was called a "*dvadsatka,*" or "twenty," the number needed to form a religious society as well as the group who effectively held the powers for the parish. In theory, this group was elected locally, and a *dvadsatka* would in turn elect the chairman, assistant, and treasurer for the parish executive committee and approve other staff positions.
[161] Sokolova, *Pod Krovom Vsevyshnego [Under the Blood of the Most High]*, 384.
[162] "Secret Instructions on the Supervision of Parish Life," *Religion in Communist Lands* 1, no. 1 (1973): 33. Italics in original Russian text. See Chapter II for more "secret instructions" which were disseminated in the early 1960s under Khrushchev.

hierarchs, simply moved dynamic leaders and found ways to get the appropriate level of submission. State authorities did not as a rule hound every incidence of communal religiosity the same, and they did not always identify a leader worthy of arrest. Dynamic religious communities could fall apart with a simple transfer of a priest, but religious communities also struggled to get along amongst themselves in the ordinary business of religious life.

Conclusion

As introduced in Chapter I, dynamic communal religiosity was potentially problematic for the state in several ways. First, the spectacle of a crowded room or church weakened state claims that religion was disappearing. Second, the participation of youth weakened the claims that religious practice as it existed was nothing else but a dying vestige perpetuated by the elderly. Third, the participation of intellectuals weakened the claim that religion was reducible to superstition, and that any serious scholar would find it only fodder for mockery, or, at best, an object or topic of sociological or psychological inquiry. Fourth, the occurrence of large numbers of people gathering spontaneously and enthusiastically stood in uncomfortable contrast to mandatory and largely unenthusiastic state-sponsored gatherings. Last, grassroots gatherings represented a potential political threat, as alternative identities and ways of belonging could be mobilized in the future.

The methods used by state and church officials to keep Orthodox gatherings comfortably predictable and small centered on isolation and alienation. They attempted to divide clergy from each other, publicize, permit, and even provoke church scandals, weaken the influence of clergy by poorly training, harassing, moving, or retiring them, or by finding ways to deter the participation of certain laity (especially youth and intellectuals) to limit religion's communal appeal.

Compared to the Baptists, for example (see Chapter V), community life among Orthodox believers was distinctive for the role of the priests, who had enormous influence in shaping communal religiosity by the way they conducted services, preached, and interacted with parishioners. Orthodox clergy influenced who came to church, how often, and from where. Priests set the tone for the degree of community among believers, but this community scarcely lasted beyond the charisma of the priest.

Certain priests were so attractive, that not only would the church be filled by local parishioners, but veritable religious tourists would come too, to hear preaching, receive a blessing, confide in the priest, pursue him as a spiritual father, and so on.

The custom of the Orthodox Church of "spiritual father" and "spiritual child" is one example of how Orthodox communities are configured. The relationship is often defined in terms of father-child, not only in terms of shepherd-flock. This style of relationship increases the relative importance of the priest, as a parishioner's sense of belonging is more directly focused on the priest (vertically) than on the flock (horizontally). The parish was not democratized as in the Baptist formulation, and like-mindedness was less essential. Baptists were members of a church, not children of a father. Ogorodnikov's Seminar was an attempt at democratized religiosity, but there was ultimately little to hold the group together beyond a common interest in intellectual-religious debate. Their community was weak, in Craig Calhoun's definition, as is common in most purely voluntary associations.[163]

One of the common threads among those persecuted was their pursuit of community – but not just in terms of a simple collection of people, but a pursuit of mutual authenticity and openness. The subjects studied here almost universally acknowledged the lack of these qualities around them and the need to hunt for it and create it. One can sense the growing urgency the authorities felt in the face of religious gatherings. To them, it was mobilization. Priests and religious gatherings were sites of voluntary enthusiasm, and if youth were more enthusiastic about religious gatherings than state-sponsored ones, it could prove potentially disastrous. Comments by participants in Dudko's question-and-answer sessions revealed that state ideologies and apologetic debates of atheism-vs.-religion had become tiresome. More exciting was the pursuit of something done in an "open" way, with authenticity, and the emergence of a voluntary, not predetermined, "us." Theoretically, there was religious "propaganda" at every church service, but authorities only considered it propaganda under certain circumstances, namely when the profile of the participants changed from old women to youth and intellectuals, and when the affective

[163] C. J Calhoun, "Community: Toward a Variable Conceptualization for Comparative Research," *Social History* 5, no. 1 (1980): 105–29. See introduction for more on Calhoun's concept for analyzing community strength.

nature of the gatherings changed from ritualistic to communally dynamic. In the era of "Mature Socialism," church and state leaders were trying to keep things the "old" way, but they were having to fight to keep new life and innovations from emerging.

Although Dmitrii Dudko and Aleksandr Men' did play particularly large roles in the Muscovite religious-intellectual community, and although authorities chose to focus only on leaders as problematic, the agency of their audiences and congregations should not be ignored. The desires of audiences made particular priests popular. The state feared the formation of new horizontal and vertical relationships for the potential power they represented, and they usually managed to weaken the communities simply by removing or isolating the leaders, not by satisfying the desires of the people with alternatives. It is also clear that state organs, although they ultimately proved strong enough to cripple nascent attempts at creating church-community life, had to be judicious when confronted with large crowds and popular events. They did not use mass violence, but wisely preferred church avenues as means of creating inner-church problems first, and if necessary, using "legal" measures to make formal accusations. They were bound to a semblance of legality and order to remain legitimate in the public's eyes.

One way authorities isolated leaders was by labeling them as "anti-Soviet." Authorities criticized Dudko, for example, for "delighting in any kinds of renegades [*otshchepentsi*] who are servile to the West," naming Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn as examples.[164] Thus, it was not just about words, but about allegiances, communities, belongings and identities. There was a Soviet "us" that one could belong to, or a "them," and state representatives wanted the monopoly in defining those groups.

Many have labeled the leaders of these formations "dissidents," although this word connotes a political agenda (Yakunin emerged as the only clear dissident of the group, as he sought specifically political associations and activity). They are better called "non-conformists," as their goals were often not political at all, but social and religious. The authorities politicized *them*. But, they overlap with more clearly identifiable dissidents like Solzhenitsyn or Sakharov in that these "non-conformist" religious

[164] GARF f. 6991, op. 6, d. 989, 9.

figures likewise championed moral causes, like the value of morality and conscience in society.[165] The communist project had begun as a moral one, of righting socio-economic and political wrongs, but it lost its moral focus. Universal values and morals remained part of the discourse, but cynicism toward them and the promised future took hold, as the public zeal shifted toward more individualistic quests for comforts. In this context, and Soviet ideologists struggled to maintain a moral imperative for rule.[166]

Those who became dissidents had grown up in a morally framed and idealistic Soviet worldview, and they based their calls to change or reform on these principles. But they often failed to find a receptive audience among party members for reform (prior to Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost'). Furthermore, as Pospielovsky notes, recent converts often lived with "an acute sensation of conflict between the teachings of Christ, on the one hand, and the policies of the Moscow Patriarchate and the behavior of its clergy, on the other." Such neophytes had not grown up living with this particular tension, and their desire for coherence either led toward attempts to reform, acceptance of duplicity, or disappointment in the Church when calls to reform went unheeded.[167]

Many others, when faced with the crumbling moral imperative that shaped the Soviet Utopia, did not fight for reform, but they simply looked for alternative utopias or social worlds to inhabit and pursue. These wanted to avoid discussions of universal values and politics altogether and found in the religious realm an escape from the realm of universals and politics to something beyond. Judith Kornblatt suggests something similar, arguing that those who came to faith in the 1980s, did so more "as a response to the emptiness and confinement of the Soviet society in which they were raised," as one of the possible "outlet[s] for escape" which also included Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism.[168]

Nicholas Ganson, in his article on Dudko, argues that priests like Dudko, Men', Yakunin, and Eshliman were fighting "Soviet social atomization," but not just on a local level, but even a national and

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[165] Philip Boobbyer, *Conscience, Dissent and Reform in Soviet Russia* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 222. Boobbyer writes that the post-Khrushchev era was marked by a "moral crisis," where the ideology had lost its power (Alexei Yurchak likewise argues that ideology had become vacuous, but he does not assert a moral crisis).
[166] Ibid., 223.
[167] Pospielovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, 379–380.
[168] Kornblatt, *Doubly Chosen*, 84–85.

international one as well.[169] This is a very apt assessment. Part of their appeal was their contribution to concepts of belonging that were local (the Parish), national (Russian Orthodox), and international (ecumenical-Christian). Individuals saw religion as an opportunity to belong on many levels, and intellectuals in particular were drawn to its universalism. Young intellectual Mikhail Ardov was baptized in 1964, and he considered it "as a kind of initiation into worldwide Christian culture, and not as a most important Church Sacrament."[170] Christianity became appealing as an alternative worldview and culture of belonging. Even while Orthodoxy awkwardly mingled with (Soviet) promotion of Russian nationality, this chapter shows that for Soviet authorities, Orthodoxy-as-identity was supposed to be limited to an icon of nationality; it was not supposed to be either ecumenically cosmopolitan or a primary locus of local community identity, belonging, or social mobilization.

Whether one can characterize such religious-associational life as "proof" that society was not atomized or that civil society existed is less certain. These formations are best seen as loose affiliations of people who likely held a great diversity of views, yet came together for specific purposes. What united them was their coincidence in time and space, but not much beyond that. The popularity of the gatherings was itself of concern to the state, more so than the specific words that were said; it was certainly the sub-text (enthusiasm) more than the text that mattered to the state. Without a cross-sectional analysis of the participants, it cannot be determined what they thought the "text" was, but it was likely to have varied. Even if it might be difficult to provide a single label to describe what constituted the core for those participating in dynamic religious communities, the bottom line was that they could in no way be construed as state-sponsored or in harmony with the dominant state discourses.

[169] Ganson, "Orthodox Dissidence as De-Atomization," 114.
[170] Mikhail Ardov, *Vse k Luchshemu-- : Vospominaniia, Proza [All for the Better--: Memories, Prose]* (Moscow: B.S.G. Press, 2006), 185.