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Soviet Exploitation of Religious Leaders and Organizations for Propaganda and Intelligence Purposes

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A Research Paper

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Soviet Exploitation of Religious Leaders and Organizations for Propaganda and Intelligence Purposes

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by [Redacted]

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Office of Soviet Analysis, with contributions from

[Redacted] Office of Leadership Analysis [Redacted]

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[Redacted] It was coordinated with the

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Directorate of Operations and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. [Redacted]

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Regional Policy Division, SOVA,

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**Soviet Exploitation of
Religious Leaders and
Organizations for Propaganda
and Intelligence Purposes**

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Summary

*Information available
as of 1 January 1988
was used in this report.*

The Soviets have had considerable success in manipulating international religious organizations and shaping certain religious themes to support Soviet foreign policy objectives. Using high-profile ecumenical gatherings and persistent personal interaction with Western and Third World religious leaders and organizations, Soviet churchmen have convinced a significant number of their counterparts that "opinions" they express (official propaganda) are independently derived and freely held, that Soviet and Bloc religious figures enjoy a degree of societal prominence and influence comparable to that of their Western colleagues, and that the Soviet Government is working in earnest to secure and maintain a stable, peaceful world.

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Moscow has been largely unsuccessful, however, in exploiting Soviet Central Asian Muslims to curry favor in the Islamic Third World. Except in the radical, Soviet-allied Islamic nations, "official" Soviet Muslim clerics are generally rebuffed for their subservience to an "atheist regime." Moreover, the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan has cost Moscow much of the influence it had garnered in Islamic religious circles.

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Under Gorbachev, Soviet propagandists appear to have been persuaded that traditional active measures and propaganda activities have become ineffectual among the more sophisticated target audiences of Western Europe and North America. As traditional Soviet religious fronts such as the Christian Peace Conference have lost credibility and influence in the West, new methods and venues of access have taken their place. The revamping of the CPSU Central Committee's International Department under former Ambassador to the United States Anatoliy Dobrynin suggests that propaganda activities aimed at religious audiences are likely to become more nuanced and audience-specific. The creation and support of so-called fronts of fronts—new, more flexible international organizations aimed at members of specific professions or at specific issues—is one such propaganda initiative.

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In particular, Soviet propaganda organs are preparing a sophisticated media blitz in 1988 to commemorate the Millenium of Christianity in Russia (Kievan Rus'). While the regime's repression of domestic religious activity continues unabated, the outward appearance of state tolerance will be enhanced by the full cooperation of the official Soviet church hierarchy during the Millenium celebration.

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[redacted] the Millenium also will be used as a forum to attack the US Strategic Defense Initiative and to endorse Soviet disarmament proposals in an effort to create the impression that Christian bodies in both the East and the West are united in their opposition to US foreign policy. [redacted]

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The Soviet Government continues to regard Zionism as an effective US tool for generating anti-Soviet sentiment in the West and subversive activism within the indigenous Jewish population. [redacted]

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[redacted] Soviet propagandists use a small number of "patriotic" Jews to counter the negative publicity surrounding the plight of Soviet Jews. Such persons often host visiting Western officials who hope to learn more about the emigre problem. [redacted]

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Despite a gradually increasing level of communications, the long-term standoff in Kremlin-Vatican relations has changed little under the papacy of John Paul II. Likewise, the Russian Orthodox Church has maintained correct, if not always cordial, relations with Roman Catholicism. John Paul II's interest in overcoming denominational barriers presents an opportunity for warmer East-West ecumenical ties, but Moscow's wariness of Vatican support for Christian dissent within the Soviet Union makes significant improvement unlikely. It is equally unlikely that John Paul II will be allowed to travel to the Soviet Union for the Millenium celebration. [redacted]

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To the best of our knowledge, Soviet propagandists have not as yet made many attempts to exploit directly the Marxist-influenced rhetoric of liberation theology. Among Moscow's client states, however, Cuba appears to have begun exploring the movement as a potential venue for social destabilization in Latin America. Soviet fronts such as the Christian Peace Conference have also provided sympathetic forums for the rhetoric of liberation theology. [redacted]

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Russian Orthodox Church missions outside the Soviet Union were once used extensively as stations for intelligence-gathering activities, but this practice now appears to have been restricted mainly to closed areas, such as Jerusalem. The payoff has always been of marginal significance, and the risk of compromising the church's ostensible independence seems to have outweighed potential benefits. The extent to which Russian Orthodox and other religious bodies are used as intelligence covers remains unclear.

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Exploitation of Religious Leaders and Organizations for Propaganda and Intelligence Purposes [Redacted]

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Strategy in the USSR

Part of the domestic church-state arrangement provides that church leaders play the role of unofficial goodwill representatives for the Soviet state in hosting their Western and Third World counterparts on visits to the USSR. State officials hope to disseminate specific propaganda themes as well as to convey the appearance of religious freedom for all believers in Soviet society. The larger policy goal is for the foreign religious envoys to bring home with them favorable impressions of official tolerance and respect for "believers' rights." [Redacted]

activity to include, for example, allowing the clergy to visit believers in hospitals and prisons. Moreover, religious associations appear to have been given the status of juridical persons in the eyes of the Soviet state. Theoretically, the Moscow Patriarchate and other religious organizations acquire standing to bring claims against organs of the government or the Communist Party before the Soviet judicial system. Although domestic pressures may be an important factor in the liberalization of legislation on religious activity, many Soviet believers remain skeptical. For example, a foreign Orthodox clergyman resident in Moscow comments that these new statutes are merely more window dressing; he doubts that they will have any perceptible effect on the actual life of the church in Soviet society. [Redacted]

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Over time, however, religious conferences in the Soviet Union—hosted most often by the Russian Orthodox Church—have come to be seen by many Western religious leaders as predetermined media events. Soviet churchmen are nonetheless quite successful at attracting visiting delegations for a variety of reasons: many well-intentioned clergymen believe that they can convince Soviet political and religious leaders of their sincere desire for mutual understanding and accommodation; others recognize that they are being manipulated by Soviet propaganda organs, but feel that maintaining ties to coreligionists in the Soviet Bloc is more important; also, the opportunity for a free or substantially subsidized trip to the Soviet Union, with prospects for international media exposure, is a major factor. In 1987, for example, Moscow sponsored a peace conference for members of various professions, including religious representatives, and paid for all expenses, including travel to and from the event. The Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Yuvenaliy, Imam Pashazade (Pashayev) of the Muslim Religious Council for the (Soviet) Transcaucasus, and a Soviet Buddhist representative cochaired the religious component of the peace conference. [Redacted]

To burnish its image of religious tolerance, Moscow has accorded church officials greater prominence and more favorable publicity for foreign audiences. For example, two articles featuring the Russian Orthodox Church appeared in 1986 in *Soviet Life*, the government's glossy equivalent of *Life* magazine, for foreign distribution. Both articles give the impression that Russian Orthodox clergymen—and, by implication, all religious leaders—are widely accepted as respected members of Soviet society. [Redacted]

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Soviet propaganda organs have prepared a sophisticated, media-oriented celebration to commemorate the Millenium of Christianity in Russia (Kievan Rus'). Anticipating a sharp increase in church-related tourism to the Soviet Union, Soviet propagandists reportedly plan to highlight recently refurbished ecclesiastical "showcases" to convey an atmosphere of religious tolerance—even of deference—to visiting clerics. [Redacted]

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Moscow has already incorporated promises of liberalized domestic religious regulations into its international propaganda. These liberalizations of the Soviet law on religion, published in the January 1986 issue of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, may significantly extend the scope of legally sanctioned religious

[Redacted]

The Central Apparatus

General guidelines and specific directives regarding Soviet foreign policy positions and corresponding propaganda activities usually are issued from the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee. An element in the International Department is responsible for general oversight of "mass organizations," such as peace groups and religious bodies, and their international activities. The Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), a subordinate body of the Council of Ministers, is responsible for maintaining overall control of church-state relations in the USSR. In 1984 former General Secretary Andropov replaced aging Chairman Kuroyedov with Konstantin Kharchev, who last served in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomatic post rather than in a Party slot—the traditional career path of CRA chairmen. [redacted]

Policy guidance regarding foreign religious propaganda appears to flow from the International Department to the CRA, and then to the particular religious organizations and persons to be tasked. Domestically, the regional heads of the local committees on religious affairs are charged with controlling the actions

and statements of clergymen through networks of informants that infiltrate religious communities. Propaganda formulations for foreign dissemination appear to be communicated to Soviet churchmen primarily by the International Department. Input and oversight of this process can involve several other foreign policy components, however, such as the KGB's Service A (Active Measures), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and various institutes of the Academy of Sciences. For example, [redacted] in 1983 Professor Podlesnyi of the Soviet Academy of Sciences Institute of the United States and Canada (IUSAC) accompanied the Soviet church delegation to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver and also was a "principal expert speaker" at a meeting of the Christian Peace Conference in Moscow. [redacted] described Podlesnyi as a "quite senior official" at IUSAC, who reports directly to Arbatov on issues related to the Christian Peace Conference and the Russian Orthodox Church. [redacted]

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Because Soviet Government and party control mechanisms within the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious bodies are so pervasive and ingrained, they are not easily perceived by many Western observers, who tend to project their own experiences onto other societies. This tendency often works to the advantage of the Soviet propaganda organs. Western visitors to the Soviet Union for the most part observe open, functioning churches and may assume that beneath this ostensible evidence of religious freedom lies a church-state dynamic similar to that in their own societies. The reality of government control over church policy rarely emerges. [redacted]

The Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Beginning with the creation of the Christian Peace Conference—a Soviet front—in 1958 and the granting of permission for the Russian Orthodox Church to join the World Council of Churches in 1961, Soviet religious leaders have become increasingly outspoken in their advocacy of foreign policy objectives. Indeed,

vigorous support of Soviet policies appears to have become a part of the larger "understanding" that defines church-state relations in the USSR. [redacted]

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The entire administrative structure of the Russian Orthodox Church is monitored—and often infiltrated—by state security organs. Thus, the Soviet leadership is undoubtedly confident that only "reliable" clerics will reach positions of authority and high public profile. Church leaders and administrators have developed a keen sense of where the parameters of permissible activity lie. Regardless of the personal sentiments of an individual cleric, he generally can be counted on to exercise prudent self-censorship when dealing with foreigners. [redacted]

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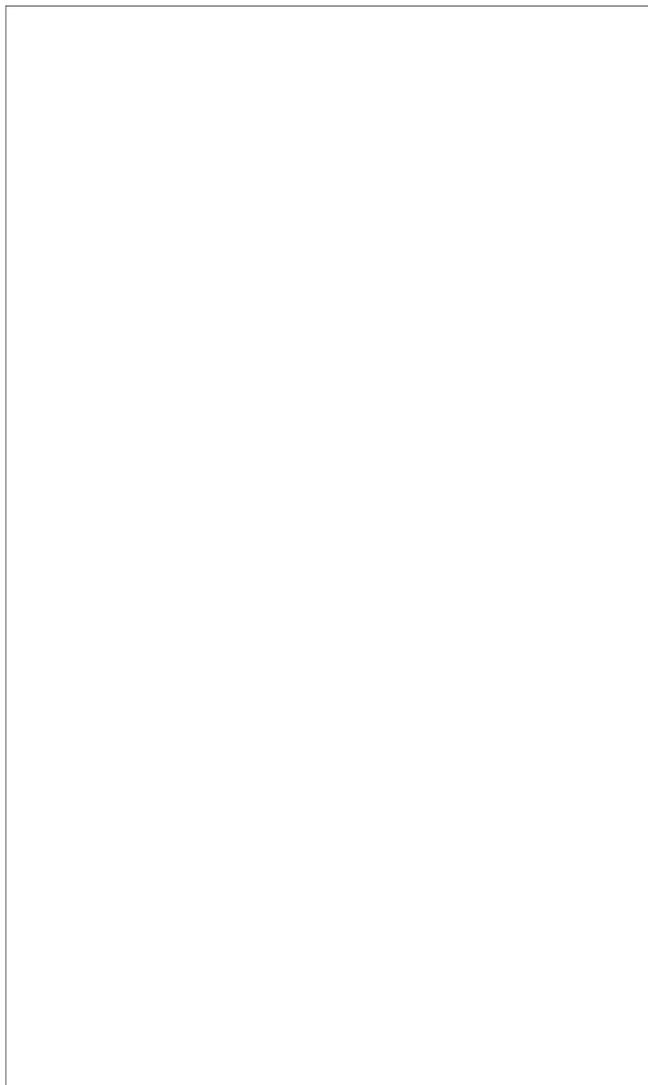
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The Russian Orthodox hierarchy's loyalty and reliability is often rewarded by the Soviet Government with special perquisites and favorable publicity. [redacted] the overall relationship between the Soviet leadership and Russian

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Patriarch Pimen, [redacted] has been accorded a place of unprecedented prominence in anti-SDI and nuclear weapons test moratorium campaigns. In June 1986, a lengthy "open letter" to President Reagan, attributed to the Patriarch, was given front-page coverage by *Izvestiya* and broadcast worldwide through the TASS wire service. Both the "open letter" and the Patriarchal Easter sermon for 1986 echoed official Soviet propaganda formulations regarding arms control issues. The Patriarch's comments also included a counterattack on the human rights front: he called for Soviet believers to initiate a letterwriting campaign in support of "persecuted" American churchmen participating in the sanctuary movement for refugees in El Salvador. [redacted]

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Orthodox hierarchy, while always a coercive game of cat and mouse, has developed from one that was almost all stick and no carrot into one that—at least for senior clergymen—has come to include more and more carrot, and with only tacit reference to the stick. Soviet officials have publicly acknowledged the international propaganda value of the Russian Orthodox Church in the struggle to strengthen universal peace and to halt the arms race. [redacted]

Although the Patriarch and other church leaders have been used as mouthpieces for propaganda formulations in the past, the recent exposure granted religious figures in the Soviet domestic media is unprecedented. Also, the Patriarch's call for an active response by Soviet believers to events taking place in the United States served to add credibility to the church's endorsement of Soviet foreign policy positions. Such state-approved "religious activism" has the additional effect of buttressing the new leadership's claims of greater societal freedom and openness. Propaganda experts such as International Department head Dobrynin have probably developed this strategy of creating the appearance of vigorous participation by religious leaders in Soviet policy "debates" to attract favorable attention in the Western media. [redacted]

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The Russian Orthodox Church continues to be integrated financially as well as structurally into the foreign propaganda apparatus, [redacted]

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[redacted] Regular, sizable contributions of funds from the church's still ample coffers to the official Soviet Peace Fund is a longstanding aspect of relations between church and state in the USSR. This fund is controlled by the Soviet Peace Committee, which coordinates the activities of all front organizations. [redacted]

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The Russian Orthodox Church has benefited occasionally from the Soviet state's heavyhanded control of religion. For example, the secessionist Ukrainian Catholic (Uniate) Church was forcibly reunited with Russian Orthodoxy. The Soviet Government, long distrustful of Ukrainian ties to Rome, actively supported this merger. In 1986, during the 40th anniversary of the L'vov Assembly—at which the reunion was effected—TASS issued a lengthy, laudatory statement, giving rare coverage to a religious event. [redacted]

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The Soviet Government also can use the Russian Orthodox Church to finesse a controversial policy decision by couching it in terms of respecting the separate church-state spheres of influence. In February 1985, the Vatican requested Soviet authorization to appoint an Apostolic Administrator to Minsk to preside over Belorussian and Ukrainian Catholics. [redacted]

Then Foreign Minister Gromyko responded by referring the Vatican to the Moscow Patriarchate, thus indirectly tabling the request. When the Vatican then approached the Russian Orthodox Patriarchate, the church's response incorporated longstanding Soviet foreign policy goals vis-a-vis Poland and the Vatican in the form of preconditions to favorable consideration. [redacted]

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The Soviet Government now appears to be increasing the foreign policy role of the church, especially in situations where state-to-state or party-to-party relations have proved ineffectual. For example, [redacted] the Soviets have [redacted]

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Russian Orthodoxy: Still the State Church

Despite unrelenting state repression, the Russian Orthodox Church (the Moscow Patriarchate) continues to maintain a sizable following in Soviet society. The spiritual and administrative head of this body is its presiding bishop, the Patriarch of Moscow. Upon the demise of the last pre-Revolutionary Patriarch, it appeared that Stalin was planning to have the office abolished, as Peter the Great had done two centuries earlier. The sudden end to the Soviet-Nazi Alliance, however, left Stalin in need of a means of rallying the people to the war effort. As part of his policy of abandoning the rhetoric of an international proletariat in favor of appealing to the nationalist sentiments of the Russian people, he allowed the church to be revived, but in a tamer, "Leninized" reincarnation.

The confined parameters of "permissible" domestic religious activity have changed very little under succeeding Soviet leaders. The extent to which religious groups are exploited for propaganda purposes, however, has steadily increased. This bifurcated religious policy has been described by Western observers as "no politics at home, nothing but politics abroad."

shown interest in improving relations with Lebanese Christians. In December 1986, the Moscow Patriarchate invited the Maronite Lebanese Patriarch to visit the Soviet Union. Soviet diplomats [redacted] have conveyed through the Russian Orthodox Church a commitment to using Soviet influence with Druze leader Walid Jumblatt to facilitate the return of Lebanese Christians to their traditional residences in the Shuf Mountains. [redacted]

The Millenium of Christianity in Russia (988-1988)
Soviet propaganda organs are gearing up for a major international media blitz based on the 1988 Millenium of the establishment of Christianity in Kievan Rus' (Ancient Russia and the Ukraine). We believe Moscow is planning to manipulate the yearlong celebration to increase its influence in religious circles



Figure 1. Russian Orthodox bishops laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier by the Kremlin wall in Moscow.

beyond the Soviet Bloc and to enlist religious leaders in promoting Soviet peace policies. [redacted] the official celebration of the Millenium will be used as a forum to attack SDI and to endorse Soviet disarmament proposals in an effort to create the impression that Christian bodies in the East and West are united in their opposition to US foreign policy. [redacted]

In addition to conducting a foreign media blitz, the government has designated various ecclesiastical "showcases"—cathedrals and other religious edifices—in the major cities as focuses of Millenium activity. These showcases recently have been remodeled—and sometimes completely reconstructed—for the purpose of hosting visiting clerics. For example, the Soviet state has restored the ancient Danilov (St. Daniel) Monastery in south-central Moscow for use as the church's downtown administrative headquarters, and has constructed a hotel for visiting clerics on the Danilov Monastery grounds. This planned isolation of the foreign visitors will enhance the overall "Potemkin village" aura of the Millenium celebration: Western and Third World clergymen will have little reason to leave the grounds to mingle in secular Soviet society. [redacted]

In preparation for the Millenial year, the Russian Orthodox Church has held two conferences and plans a third on various aspects of the Millenium of Russian Orthodoxy. The first conference took place in Kiev in

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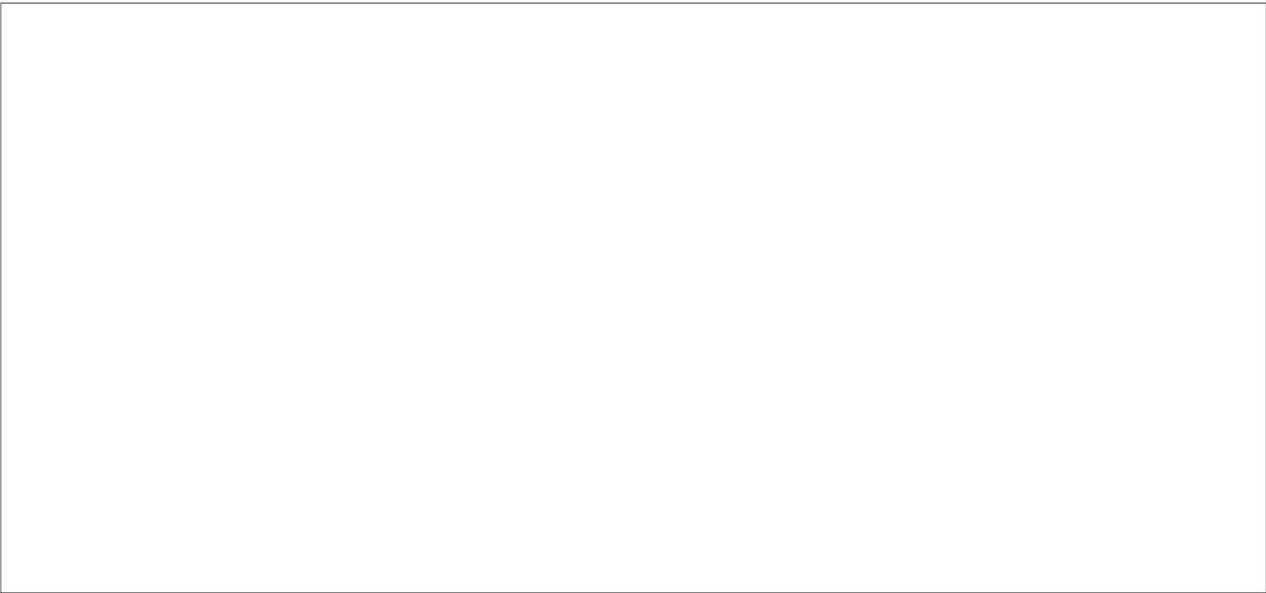
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June 1986 and dealt with historical aspects of the conversion of Kievan Rus' to Christianity in AD 988. A second conference on religious dogma was held in the summer of 1987 in Moscow. Finally, the actual celebration of the Millenium is scheduled to take place in the summer of 1988, primarily in Moscow. Foreign clergymen and other dignitaries are invited to attend each of these events, and predetermined Soviet policy pronouncements on peace themes are scheduled for ratification by the assembled religious leaders.



To spread its commemoration of the Millenium beyond Soviet borders, the Russian Orthodox Church is reported to be planning a "Goodwill Cruise" of church clergy and lay leaders to visit other Orthodox patriarchates in the Mediterranean Sea. [redacted]

[redacted] a ship with as many as 200 people will embark on the

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voyage. Ports of call may include Constanza, Romania (Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate); Varna, Bulgaria (Bulgarian Orthodox Patriarchate); Athens, Greece (Greek Orthodox Archbishopric); Alexandria, Egypt (Patriarchate of Alexandria); Latakia, Syria (Patriarchate of Antioch); Larnaca, Cyprus (Archbishopric of Cyprus); and Istanbul, Turkey (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople). Church Millennium planners are also looking into a visit to Jerusalem (Patriarchate of Jerusalem) and a possible audience with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican City. [redacted]

[redacted] a major objective of the cruise will be the dissemination of Soviet propaganda themes. [redacted]

In August 1987, Demetrios I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul), traveled to Moscow and visited various holy places. The visit was the first meeting of Greek and Russian Orthodox patriarchs in 400 years. Western observers noted that, in addition to agreeing to attend the Millennium festivities, Demetrios I may have discussed measures for increasing interchurch cooperation with his Russian hosts. [redacted]

The overall goal for Soviet propagandists is to attract as many prominent Western clergymen as possible to the Millennium celebrations to legitimize the official propaganda pronouncements that will accompany the religious aspects of the occasion. [redacted]

All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists

The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) is the officially approved umbrella organization that coordinates and controls the activities of many officially registered Protestant churches within the Soviet Union. Although small in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church, AUCECB is called on to perform similar functions. [redacted]

The organization is regularly represented at Soviet-approved ecumenical gatherings by its General Secretary, Aleksey Bychkov, or the Council Chairman, Vasilii Logvinenko. It reportedly adopts foreign policy positions and propaganda lines dictated by the

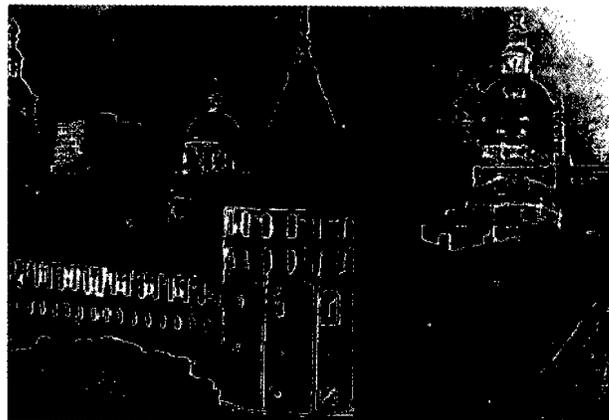


Figure 2. The Danilov Monastery undergoing repairs. [redacted]

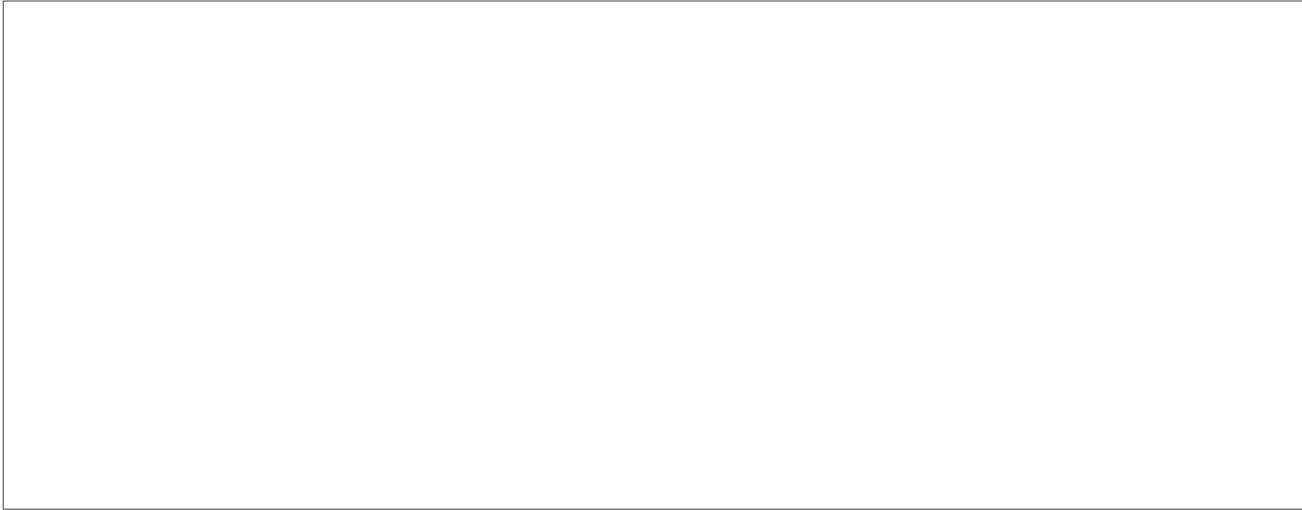
International Department and the Council for Religious Affairs. In April 1986, AUCECB held a plenary session in Moscow at which a resolution was adopted urging "Christians of the whole world" to treat with "particular censure" the US development of SDI. [redacted]

Because many Western ecumenical organizations—such as the World Council of Churches and its national affiliates—are predominantly Protestant, AUCECB's participation in "East-West exchanges" and "dialogues" is a useful method of bridging the denominational gap for the Russian Orthodox Church and, thereby, the Soviet Government. For example, Soviet officials have been quite successful in manipulating the visits of a prominent American preacher for propaganda purposes. They were insistent that his visits be well documented and broadcast back to the West. The American clergyman's participation in a May 1982 Moscow "Peace Conference" did in fact receive wide coverage in the Western media. [redacted]

This "Protestant-to-Protestant" link is equally effective in visits outside the Soviet Union. In early 1986, a delegation of the AUCECB paid a fraternal visit to

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the Baptist Church in Nicaragua on the occasion of the latter's 50th Convention Assembly. The rhetoric that ensued adhered to standard Soviet-Nicaraguan propaganda formulations.

community provides significant foreign propaganda opportunities, overall Soviet policy toward these indigenous Catholic populations has important propaganda implications.

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Catholics in the Soviet Union

The Catholic presence in the USSR, in addition to being relatively small, is divided ethnographically into two groups: traditional (Latin rite) Roman Catholics of the Baltic republics (primarily Lithuania) and the Belorussian SSR; and the Ukrainian (Byzantine rite or Uniate) Catholics. Although neither religious

As a result of the absorption of the Ukrainian Catholic Church into Russian Orthodoxy, neither the Soviet state nor the predominant Russian Orthodox Church recognizes the existence of Ukrainian Catholicism. Officially, there are no longer any Ukrainian Catholics in the USSR, and the protestations of Ukrainian

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emigre groups to the contrary are labeled as manifestations of anti-Soviet slander campaigns. The whole Ukrainian Catholic "question" or "issue" is thus a serious detriment from the vantage of Soviet religious propaganda. Beyond denying that the problem exists, Soviet Government and religious spokesmen will not address the topic. [redacted]

"Anti-Zionist" rhetoric, however, plays an important role in Soviet anti-Western and anti-Israeli propaganda. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

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The traditional Roman Catholic populations of the Baltic republics and Belorussia, however, are officially recognized and addressed by Soviet propaganda organs. According to Igor Troyanovsky in *The Catholic Church in the USSR* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1984), "the rights of Roman Catholics are effectively guaranteed by Soviet law, and complete freedom of conscience and religion is ensured." Even though the officially recognized Soviet Roman Catholic communities are comprised primarily of the more restive and nationalistic Lithuanian and Polish ethnic groups and present few opportunities for effective religious propaganda exploitation, Soviet propaganda organs nonetheless try to put a good face on a relatively stagnant situation. Various Soviet publishing houses issue books—primarily in Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian—on the purportedly happy state of affairs of Catholicism in the USSR. A Leningrad film studio has even made a film on the subject "Catholics in the USSR." The film deals only with "good" (Latin rite) Roman Catholics and highlights state-funded restorations of Catholic churches in the Baltic republics and Belorussia. Julian Cardinal Vaivods, the elderly primate of Soviet Catholics, makes a rare appearance to pray "that the Lord should save us, our land and the whole world from a new war. Life is good in itself, and will be even better if we uphold peace." [redacted]

Soviet propagandists have counterattacked with rhetoric distinguishing "good," "patriotic" Soviet Jews from "reactionary Zionists"—dissidents and refuseniks. There are, indeed, a small number of Soviet Jews who allow themselves to be used for such counterpropaganda. [redacted] 25X6

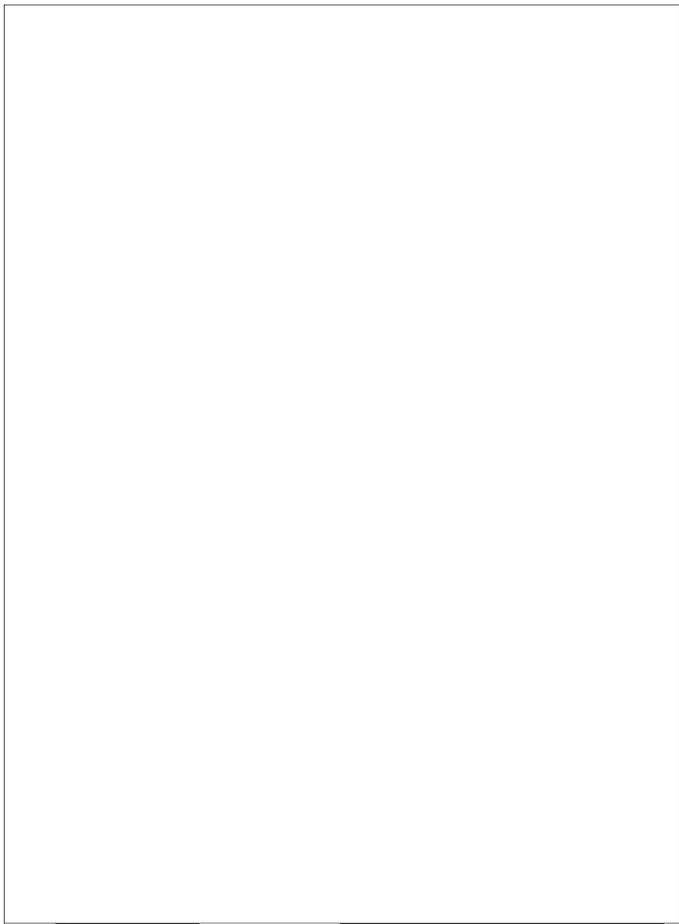
The Anti-Zionist Committee of Soviet Society was created in April 1983 to counter the negative publicity surrounding the plight of Soviet Jews. It is headed by retired Col. Gen. David Dragunskiy, who is an ethnic Jew. In its opening "appeal," the Committee accused the United States of "using international Zionism as a key weapon in its attempts to change the existing military balance through an intensified arms race and to conduct psychological warfare." [redacted] 25X1

The Anti-Zionist Committee

The Soviet Government considers its Jewish population to be primarily an ethnic group, such as the Ukrainian and Baltic minorities, rather than a religious community. Officially, the Soviets do not view the challenge they pose as being similar in nature to, for instance, the growth of unofficial, activist Christian congregations. [redacted]

The Anti-Zionist Committee stage-managed a tour of the Soviet Union by American Jewish "leaders," as reported in the Soviet publication *New Times*, in May 1986. Committee Chairman Dragunskiy led the group on a tour of many major Soviet cities, visiting, among other sites, the Babi Yar Memorial in Kiev. Of this visit, *New Times* reports: "'As a Jewish supporter of the peace movement', (an American participant) observed, 'I want to end the shame of Israel behaving like the murderers in Babi Yar. As an American, I pledge all my energy to changing the policies of my government to one of peace.'" [redacted] 25X1

At the same time Moscow propagandists have increased domestic anti-Zionist rhetoric. *Zionism*, published in June 1986 by Aleksandr Z. Romanenko in [redacted] 25X1



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February 1987, a prominent American television talk show host traveled to the Soviet Union to conduct "random" interviews with representatives of various segments of society. He was originally promised access to both official Soviet Jewish spokesmen and the Jewish refusenik community. His intention was to stage a debate between representatives of each faction. After his arrival in the USSR, however, the Anti-Zionist Committee reneged and the on-camera debate fell through. [redacted]

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Central Asian Muslims

In publications intended for foreign consumption, Soviet officials claim to be most deferential to the cultural and religious practices of Central Asian Muslims. One Soviet propagandist, writing in English, gives an "official" description of life in the Central Asian republics in this manner:

These people (older Soviet Muslims) believe in Allah and have performed their religious rites for five or six decades within the Soviet system. Muslim communities have the right to build mosques or rent prayer houses, and they have every opportunity to make use of this right.

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An article for domestic consumption, appearing in the less accessible Azeri language, however, is far less indulgent toward the vestiges of Muslim religion and culture in Soviet Central Asia:

Our ideological opponents, by fighting against Communism under the banner of Islam, are trying to describe the cultural and historical heritage of the peoples of the Soviet East as a religious heritage. . . . The progress of socialist nations is constantly eliminating the religious influence from peoples' traditions and customs.

Leningrad, contains an explicit call for "struggle against the Jewish religion." The author calls for Soviet writers to "carry out uncompromising criticism of Judaism despite the efforts of the clergy of this aggressively anti-Communist religion to pursue their activities under the mask of loyalty (to the Soviet Union)." "Official" Soviet Judaism apparently retains some usefulness in Moscow's estimation, however. In October 1986, an American Nobel Peace Prize winner of Jewish descent traveled to the Soviet Union as a guest of the state. During his stay he met with Rabbi Shayevich and attended services at the Moscow Choral Synagogue. [redacted]

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The regime thus attempts to separate national (ethnic) customs and traditions from religious beliefs and to deny any link between them. This is an important propaganda theme not only for Muslims but also for all ethnicities and religious communities in the Soviet Union. [redacted]

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Soviet policymakers appear to be divided among themselves as to the extent to which discussion and debate on Soviet Judaism should be permitted. In

A recently published article in *Sovetskaya kul'tura*, however, suggests that even rhetorical deference to social customs rooted in Islamic religious culture may be declining. Attacking what he perceives as "Muslim exclusivity" within the "Soviet multinational state," Uzbek SSR Academy of Sciences academician Yusupov argues against retaining traditional Muslim practices such as praying five times daily and fasting during Ramadan, the month of penitence. He writes that even when such practices are justified by "modern science" as beneficial—bowing during prayer as physical exercise, and fasting as a means of weight loss—they are "reactionary" and should be abandoned. Yusupov advocates interethnic marriage (between Muslims and non-Muslims) as one method of eradicating Islamic cultural practices. [redacted]

Despite such harsh rhetoric, Moscow is not unaware of the cultural-religious sensitivities of its indigenous Muslims. Whenever possible, concessions to the religious needs of Soviet Central Asians are arranged to include some propaganda benefit vis-a-vis the non-Soviet Muslim world. In the early 1980s, for instance, the Soviets signed an agreement permitting the World Muslim League (WML)—a conservative, Saudi-supported Islamic organization headquartered in Mecca—to publish the Koran in the Uzbek language, using Cyrillic characters, and providing for the establishment of an Islamic University in Soviet Central Asia. [redacted]

Like their Christian counterparts, Muslim religious leaders understand and adhere to the confines of the Soviet church-state relationship. Soviet Islamic clerics invariably seek to project a "Potemkin village" image of Muslim believers coexisting with non-Muslim Soviets in a harmonious "multiethnic" nation-state. In an interview with the Arabic publication *al 'Awdah* in September 1986, Soviet Mufti Tal'gat Tadzhuiddin emphasized the vitality of Islam in Soviet Central Asia, the excellent condition of mosques, and the printing of the Koran in the various languages of Soviet Central Asia. Fulfilling his other role of unofficial goodwill ambassador for the Soviet Government, Tadzhuiddin recited the standard litany of Soviet "peace" proposals, observances to mark 1986 as the International Year of Peace, and the "struggle" of the state to establish and maintain "world peace." [redacted]

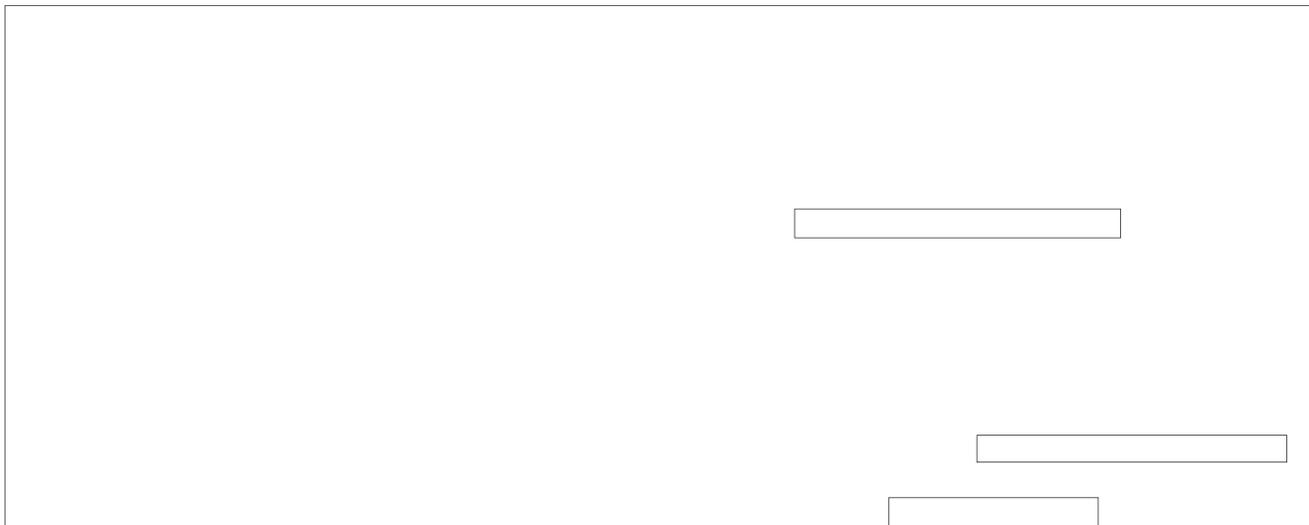
Soviet Muslim religious leaders, in conjunction with the Council for Religious Affairs, have hosted conferences on various Islamic themes in the Soviet Union. Speeches and concluding resolutions invariably adhere to official Soviet propaganda. The presence in the Soviet Union of as many as 50 million Muslims is a strong attraction for Arabic and other predominantly Islamic nations. Yet Soviet propaganda organs did not begin to exploit this advantage until 1962, when a Department of Foreign Relations With Muslims Abroad—under the central Council for Religious Affairs of the USSR Council of Ministers—was established. Parallel foreign relations departments were set up under each of the four Muslim administrative districts within the Soviet Union. Until this time, contacts with foreign Muslims had been limited to pilgrimages (hajj) to Mecca, made by Soviet delegations in extremely limited numbers. In the 1960s, invitations were extended to Muslims in certain countries to visit their counterparts in the USSR, largely for the purpose of creating the impression that Soviet Muslims enjoyed religious freedom and other (particularly economic) advantages of Soviet society. [redacted] 25X1

It thus became a primary task of the four Soviet Muslim spiritual directorates to support Moscow in fostering favorable impressions of the state of Islam in the Soviet Union among visiting foreign delegations. The idea of hosting "all-Muslim conferences" to help the Soviet Government appear sympathetic to certain causes shared by the world Islamic community was first realized in 1970 in Tashkent. Following the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979-80, however, the WML called on all Islamic nations to boycott the 1980 Soviet-hosted conference, scheduled to take place in Tashkent. Soviet propagandists were stung when, after considerable preparatory fanfare, attendance at the 1980 conference fell far short of their goals. Moreover, many Muslim delegates who did attend publicly chastised their hosts over the Afghan situation, as well as for restrictions on the practice of Islam in the Soviet Union. The few, terse references to the conference in the Soviet press bear witness to what must have been an acrimonious [redacted] 25X1

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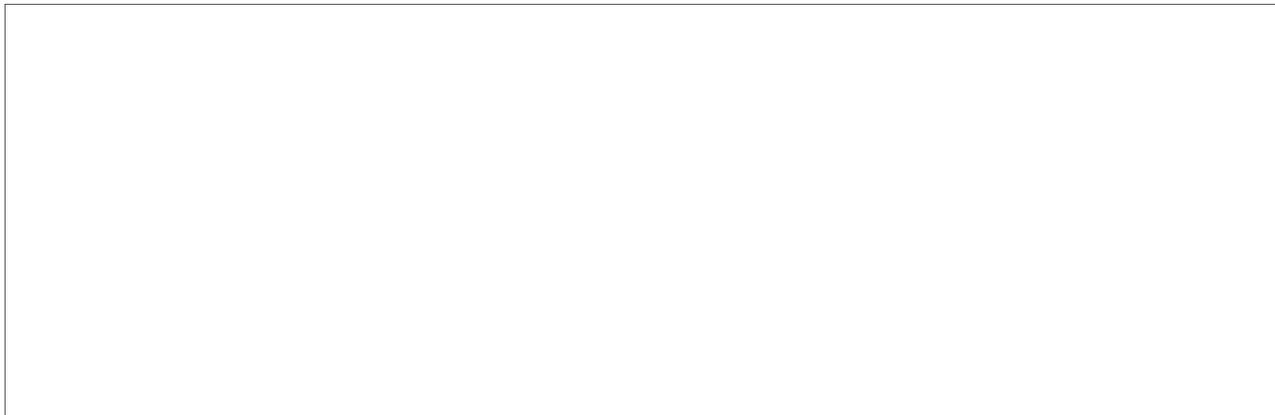
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Leaders of the Central Asian Muslims

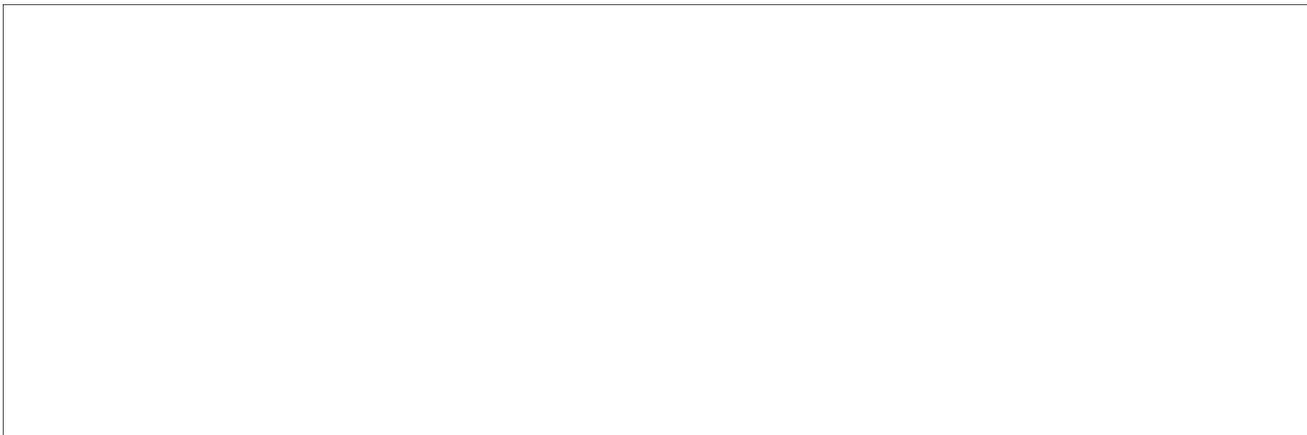


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meeting. Soviet propagandists considered the 1980 conference such a disaster that no similar gatherings were attempted in the next six years. [redacted]

Contacts with foreign Muslims, however, did not cease during this period. The four Soviet religious boards continued extending invitations to foreign delegations from individual countries to visit the USSR. Many visits involved repeat tours by long-term foreign friends of the official Soviet Muslim establishment, who were led over the well-worn paths of historical Islamic sites in Soviet Central Asia. At the most recent Soviet-hosted Islamic conference, which took place in early October 1986 in Baku, Azerbaijan, as many as 60 nations sent delegations, including both Iran and Iraq. But WML Secretary General Dr. Abdullah Omar Naseef, speaking with officials of the US Embassy in Cairo, claimed that he attended the conference only to protest the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. He claimed that many, if not most, of the non-Soviet delegates "endorsed" his presentation, and only the Palestine Liberation Organization representative took issue with his speech. Although allowing that many Islamic nations were represented at the conference, he described the overall attendance as "spotty," especially from the Gulf states. [redacted]

The Soviets, nonetheless, achieved certain tangible results from the Baku conference. By delaying its announcement until just before the actual event, Soviet propagandists were able to ensure against the presence of the sort of contingent of Western news correspondents who attended the 1980 Tashkent conference and replayed its negative consequences. As a result, the conference became a successful media event that was replayed to Soviet advantage throughout the Third World. [redacted]

One of the official actions of the Baku conference was to set up a preparatory committee to organize further international conferences to which the representatives of Arab and other Islamic nations will be invited. This committee is to be chaired by Allashukur Pashazade (Pashayev), Chairman of the Spiritual Directorate of Soviet Muslims of the Transcaucasus, whose administrative office is in Baku. This move not only institutionalizes the holding of these conferences but also ensures that they will be under Soviet control. [redacted]

Pashazade himself is an unusual figure. He acceded to his present position at the age of 29 (apparently causing a sensation in the Soviet Islamic community in light of traditional Muslim deference to seniority). His appointment to the post of chairman of one of the four Muslim spiritual directorates is illustrative of Moscow's recent efforts to rejuvenate and revitalize its apparatus for conducting relations with foreign Muslims. He is a skilled representative of "official" Soviet Islam, a former student of Ayatollah Khomeini at Qom, and chief representative of the Soviet minority (approximately 10 percent) Shi'ite community. [redacted]

In this connection, and in choosing the predominantly Shi'ite city of Baku as the site for the 1986 all-Muslim conference, Moscow may have decided to shift its focus in foreign Muslim relations toward the heretofore neglected Shi'ite branch of Islam. Shi'as generally comprise a disgruntled minority in many Islamic nations, one that Moscow may see as ripe for exploitation, especially to counterbalance the largely conservative Sunni establishment. Moreover, Shi'as constitute the majority in Iran, long regarded by the Soviets as the primary strategic objective among countries of the northern-tier states bordering the USSR. Pashazade has been involved in broadcasting radio propaganda to Iran. [redacted]

Visits of Muslim notables to the Soviet Union are generally on the rise. WML Secretary General Naseef has indicated to the US Consul in Jeddah that an "unofficial, low level" WML delegation might travel to the USSR on a "factfinding mission," but he offered no tentative dates or travel itinerary. Apart from the WML, the head of another Islamic organization broke precedent by traveling to the USSR in November 1986. Islamic Conference Organization (OIC) Secretary General Pirzada was received in Moscow by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and other high MFA officials. Pirzada made a follow-on visit in February 1987, ostensibly to participate in a February peace conference in Moscow. The two visits seemed timed to fall on either side of an OIC Summit, which took place in January 1987 in Kuwait. Pirzada, a

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Pakistani, communicated to Consul Jeddah his intention to use these invitations to the USSR as opportunities to confront the Soviets with the OIC's undiminished ire over the situation in Afghanistan. The OIC Secretary General felt that the opportunity to raise the issue of Afghanistan yet again was worth risking whatever propaganda benefit the Soviet Government may have realized from his presence at a Soviet-sponsored peace assembly. Furthermore, he expressed the hope that his actions would encourage other Muslim leaders to step up their criticism of the continued Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. [redacted]

Strategy Abroad

Soviet foreign policy goals and propaganda themes are also advanced on a worldwide basis through the foreign travels of Soviet religious figures. Such appearances range from one-time attendances at ecumenical gatherings to longstanding associations with international religious organizations. Rather than generally aiming to convey the goodwill of Soviet coreligionists, the goals of Soviet participants in international religious forums are quite specific and fine tuned to advance Soviet foreign policy. Indeed, the behavior of Soviet participants at international religious gatherings can be hardnosed and even obstreperous in pursuit of their policy goals. [redacted]

Participation in international ecumenical activities provides an opportunity for Soviet officials to interact with the religious elites of Western and Third World nations. For example, [redacted] Sergey Gordeyev, a member of the permanent staff of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of International Relations, often accompanies high-level Soviet religious delegations abroad. As an interpreter he is far from competent, and he has often been observed giving curt instructions to ostensible superiors. He routinely engages non-Soviets, especially from the West, in conversations on matters of foreign policy, arms control, national security, and related subjects, and seems to be well informed in these matters. He can be extremely friendly and outgoing, demonstrating a special interest in making contacts with Western churchmen and other officials. Gordeyev participated

in the Soviet-controlled October 1986 World Peace Congress in Copenhagen as a member of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation. [redacted]

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The Christian Peace Conference

The Christian Peace Conference (CPC) is a textbook Soviet front organization, formed on the initiative of the CPSU propaganda apparatus for the express purpose of insinuating Soviet foreign policy positions and propaganda into Western religious circles. In the West, its heyday has for the most part long passed, but it still operates as a gathering place for the already converted. The less sophisticated audiences of the Third World nonetheless remain fertile ground for the CPC and its subsidiary organizations. Founded in 1958, the CPC holds All-Christian Peace Assemblies every five to seven years. These assemblies are always held in Prague, where the CPC is headquartered. [redacted]

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Meetings of the CPC are dominated by the headquarters staff, as is the case with all Soviet front groups. Decisions and resolutions are generally prepared in advance of meetings, and the international membership serves largely as a rubberstamp. [redacted]

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The Moscow Patriarchate provides most members of the CPC Working Committee with prepaid airline tickets for travel to and from meetings, thereby greatly reducing the CPC's operating costs. [redacted] [redacted] Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev is treated with "great deference" by other CPC officials, and that he controls the flow of funds from the Russian Orthodox Church—by far the largest contributor—to the CPC. [redacted]

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Under Moscow's Control

At the March 1986 Working Committee meeting, the British participants proposed that a congratulatory telegram be sent to Cardinal Sin, leader of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, commending him on the constructive role the church played in effecting a peaceful change of government in that country. [redacted] Bishop Karoly Toth, president of the CPC and a Hungarian, expressed enthusiasm for the idea, as did others in attendance. The Soviet delegation disagreed, however, claiming that such a gesture would be "premature." In subsequent private conversations, the Soviet churchmen explained their grounds for disapproval: the new regime in the Philippines is viewed by the Soviet Government as having been installed by the United States chiefly to ensure the security and permanence of American military bases in that country. The Aquino administration is viewed as a creature of Washington and therefore hostile to Soviet interests, more so than the Marcos regime because of President Aquino's apparently broad political support base and popularity. The idea of a telegram to Cardinal Sin was subsequently dropped. [redacted]

Expressions of dissent from official Soviet propaganda are never reflected in CPC organizational minutes or resolutions. [redacted] at the June 1984 meeting of the International Commission of the CPC, a typically one-sided, anti-Western communique was approved. Afterward, an American clergyman took the floor to disassociate himself and his church from the communique and the entire content of the meeting. His remarks were ignored and were not recorded in either the minutes of the Commission meeting or in any subsequent CPC document. [redacted]

The CPC invariably reflects current propaganda themes as promulgated by such Soviet propaganda organs as the International Department and the World Peace Council. Soon after the Soviet propaganda apparatus launched its anti-SDI campaign, the

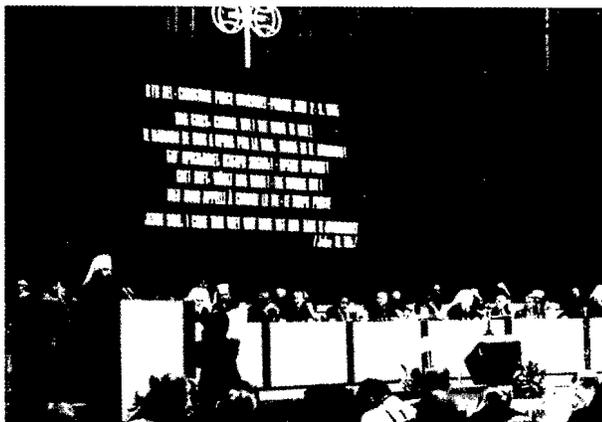


Figure 3. Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Belorussia, Head of the Department of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, reading out the message from His Holiness Patriarch Pimen to the participants at the 1985 CDC Session. [redacted]

CPC, meeting in December 1984, focused its attention on "The Movement Toward the Militarization of Outer Space Glamorized by the Star Wars' Mentality." The theme chosen for the 1985 All-Christian Peace Assembly was "God's call to choose life—the hour is late: Christians in resistance to the powers of death—(and) on the path to peace and justice for All." [redacted]

In 1986 the CPC, like other Soviet fronts, organized all its activities around the general theme of the UN International Year of Peace, largely a Soviet-sponsored and -controlled observance. The various regional CPC affiliates (The African Christian Peace Conference, The Latin American Christian Peace Conference, and The Asian Christian Peace Conference) scheduled assemblies, for which the CPC provided financial support. The Moscow Patriarchate supplied prepaid tickets for travel to and from many of these events via Aeroflot, the Soviet civil airline. [redacted]

Aware of the CPC's diminished effectiveness among its traditional Western constituency, Soviet propaganda policymakers have shifted the front's focus away from traditional East-West peace activism and toward

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a posture of asserting the solidarity of Soviet Bloc Christians with coreligionists in the Third World. [redacted]

[redacted]

CPC leaders have begun to echo the rhetoric of Latin American liberation theologians, emphasizing a common commitment to struggle against Western "imperialism" (see "Liberation Theology," p. 20). In addition, the CPC declared 15 February 1987 as a "Special Prayer Sunday" dedicated to the "bleeding and suffering people" of Latin America and the Caribbean. The letter announcing the CPC's intended observance of the occasion recalls the "martyrdoms" of many Christian missionaries in various anti-Soviet Latin American countries, but fails to address religious persecution by Marxist regimes in the region.

[redacted]

[redacted]

the CPC continues to receive ample funding from such sources as the Russian Orthodox Church and [redacted] propaganda policymakers in the International Department remain satisfied with the front, notwithstanding its apparent decline in effectiveness. [redacted] the absence of significant changes in the CPC's top leadership in almost 10 years as further evidence of Moscow's continuing approval of the organization's activities.

[redacted]

The World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an ecumenical organization of more than 300 Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches whose denominational constituencies comprise more than 400 million Christians worldwide. Headquartered in Geneva, the WCC has an executive committee that takes stands on political and other international issues. During the 1960s and 1970s, the WCC's focus shifted away from traditional ecumenical dialogue toward such "Third World issues" as "Western colonialism" and the "economic disparity between nations of the First and Third Worlds." The WCC leadership increasingly

took up policy positions consonant with Soviet "anti-imperialist" (anti-Western) rhetoric. The organization's present General Secretary, Emilio Castro, typifies these trends. A prominent advocate of liberation theology, Castro was exiled from Uruguay for his links to several leftist organizations, including the terrorist Tupamaros. [redacted]

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The WCC's constituency—especially in the Third World—often overlaps with those of Soviet fronts. Demographically, many Third World countries have small, disproportionately influential cultural and religious elites who seek to enhance their nations' international standing through participation in as many international organizations as possible. They see no contradiction in maintaining relations with both a "legitimate" ecumenical organization such as the WCC and a Soviet front such as the Christian Peace Conference. Soviet churchmen have been increasingly successful in co-opting this well-meaning organization for their specific propaganda purposes. Soviet propagandists are most eager to co-opt the WCC precisely because it is not an alter ego front organization. Pro-Soviet policy pronouncements are considered more effective when issued by the WCC than by a readily recognized front such as the CPC because of the WCC's ostensible neutrality. [redacted]

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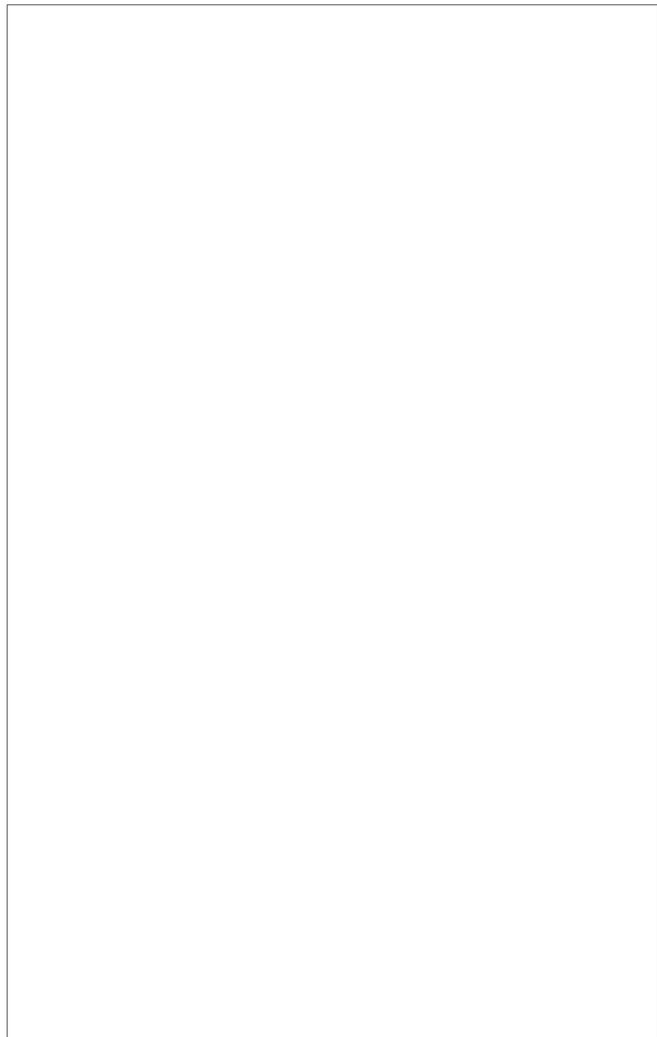
The WCC also has been notably willing to coordinate its activities with Soviet front organizations. [redacted]

[redacted] the WCC is a major source of funds for the Indonesian-based Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), a Soviet front. Moreover, the WCC and ACFOD jointly direct the activities of two otherwise unaffiliated umbrella organizations, the Asia Regional Fellowship and the Asia Partnership for Human Development. Also, the WCC and the CPC sent a joint delegation to the Philippines in May 1986 to pressure the Aquino government to remove American military bases. [redacted]

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The Christian Peace Conference is often successful at manipulating WCC rhetoric and actions (see "Christian Peace Conference," p. 14). In preparation for the 1983 WCC General Assembly in Vancouver, Canada,

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on messages from persecuted East European Christians at the same gathering. [redacted]

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[redacted] The current WCC/IA director, Ninan Koshy, came to the Commission from the CPC. [redacted]

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WCC representatives also have shown themselves particularly willing to cooperate with the Soviet front World Peace Council (WPC). The WPC hosted a nongovernmental organization symposium on "World Peace and the Liberation of South Africa and Namibia" at the WCC headquarters in Geneva in June 1986. [redacted]

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In addition, the WCC supports nonallied radical leftist and some violent elements in the Third World. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), dedicated to fomenting a guerrilla uprising among the rural peasants and Mapuche Indians of southern Chile. Because at the time the MIR publicly identified itself as part of the Christian Left Party, however, it obtained a grant of \$20,000 from the WCC for agrarian development projects. These funds were used instead for the MIR's political agitation and paramilitary preparations. [redacted]

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a conference of "Christian women" was held in Kiev in April 1983. The group was instructed on how to coordinate their activities in Vancouver with the CPC and the Russian Orthodox Church delegation. The result was the defeat of a pending resolution demanding an immediate Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Russian Orthodox and CPC representatives argued successfully that, if the General Assembly voted to condemn the Soviet invasion, the East European women and Soviet clergymen would not be permitted to attend future WCC meetings. For similar reasons, the WCC declined to take note of or act

The WCC also openly funds such organizations as South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia and the South African African National Congress (ANC). [redacted]

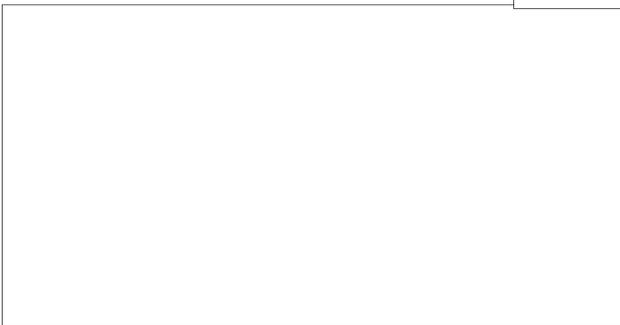
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Berlin Conference of European Catholics

Headquartered in East Berlin, the Berlin Conference of European Catholics (BCEC) has the same functions with respect to Catholics as the Christian Peace Conference (CPC) has with Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox communions. Vatican policy does not permit representative organizations of the Roman Catholic Church to join ecumenical organizations. Catholic organizations, however, have sought and are often granted observer status in such bodies. It is Roman Catholic Church policy to discourage its clergy and laity from maintaining continuing relations with semi-official Soviet Bloc organizations such as the BCEC, but the Church Curia apparently does not wish to risk a public confrontation with a potentially vociferous segment of its West European constituency by disallowing participation in BCEC. [redacted]

ascendancy of Pope John Paul II initially brought on a confrontational period including two trips to Poland, but the Pope has apparently set his sights on a rapprochement with Moscow. For both political and theological reasons, the Vatican has set about making public and private overtures to both the Soviet Government and the Russian Orthodox Church. [redacted]

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Various other ecumenical organizations, including the World Council of Churches, consider themselves sister organizations of BCEC and work closely with it. BCEC works most closely with the CPC, however, and participates alongside the CPC in such international forums as UN nongovernmental organizations meetings and conferences. [redacted]

The attempt on the Pope's life in 1981 precipitated a heated East-West war of words. Soviet propaganda organs chose to treat allegations of Soviet Bloc complicity as a preposterous provocation calculated to sour East-West relations. Subsequently, the CPSU Central Committee ordered the Soviet media to increase criticism of the Vatican in response to what it perceived as increasing Catholic anti-Sovietism. [redacted]

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Pax Christi International

This is an organization of prominent, left-of-center Roman Catholic activists throughout the world (primarily Western Europe) who seek to enhance contacts with Christians of Eastern Europe (primarily the Russian Orthodox Church). Although headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium, Pax Christi International's rhetoric frequently reflects many Soviet propaganda themes largely because its Western constituency values the maintenance of East-West links over the content or result of such dialogue. Meetings, therefore, often result in diplomatically worded agreements to disagree. Pax Christi International was among the few Western religious groups to attend the Soviet-controlled World Peace Congress in Copenhagen. The October 1986 Congress has been widely exposed in the Western press as a Soviet propaganda forum. [redacted]

[redacted] Moscow authorities believed that the Catholic Church, and the Pope personally, were attacking Marxist-Leninist ideology more harshly. The Soviets reportedly also felt that the Vatican was attempting to foment religious activism within the USSR. [redacted]

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In general, the Moscow Patriarchate has been careful to maintain correct, if not always cordial, relations with the Vatican. The Russian Orthodox Church is always represented at continuing Orthodox-Catholic ecumenical dialogues and at Vatican functions whenever invited. Most recently, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev participated in the Vatican-sponsored World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, in October 1986. [redacted]

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Soviet-Vatican Relations

Beginning with the reception of Khrushchev's son-in-law Aleksey Adzhubei by Pope John XXIII in 1963, Vatican-Kremlin contacts have slowly broadened. The

John Paul II is seeking to negotiate a visit to the USSR to participate in commemorations of the establishment of Christianity in Lithuania and Russia. We believe the Pope is unlikely to succeed in this, however, because the Soviet Government remains apprehensive that the Vatican might foment internal religious dissent, especially in Lithuania and the Ukraine, where Catholicism has remained influential. Moreover, age-old denominational and nationalist antagonisms persist; both the predominantly Russian Soviet Government and the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy remain distrustful of Vatican overtures. [redacted]

Nonetheless, [redacted] John Paul II has not abandoned his efforts to broaden and stabilize Catholic Church relations with Moscow both politically and ecumenically. Most recently, we have seen a significant increase in Soviet contacts with representatives of the Catholic Church: Cardinal Sin of the Philippines and Mother Teresa were permitted to visit traditionally Catholic regions of the USSR, prompting widespread speculation that a breakthrough of some sort was imminent. Before Cardinal Sin's trip to Lithuania, the Council for Religious Affairs permitted the Catholic cathedral in Klaipeda to be restored, and the aging Cardinal Stepanavicius was officially recognized as Primate of Lithuanian Catholics. The Soviet Government, however, appears to be offering cosmetic gestures to garner favorable media coverage, rather than addressing substantive and longstanding Vatican conditions for better relations. The Soviet Government has not shown any willingness to reconsider permitting a papal visit to Lithuania. Similarly, Mother Teresa's stated purpose for visiting was to establish a chapter of her charitable order in Chernobyl' to minister to radiation victims, but this wish appears to have been denied. [redacted]

Liberation Theology

The present Soviet policy regarding the liberation theology movement appears to be one of tacit approval. Among the Soviet-allied nations, Cuba has taken the lead in exploring the potentials for propaganda exploitation and, ultimately, political use via the indigenous liberation theology movements in Latin America and elsewhere. If Cuba or any of its client states such as Nicaragua can show success at manipulating and co-opting this phenomenon, the Soviet

intelligence services and propaganda apparatus may decide to begin exploring such options more seriously. [redacted]

Soviet propaganda has endorsed aspects of liberation theology rhetoric. At the March 1986 meeting of the Working Committee of the Christian Peace Conference, CPC President Bishop Karoly Toth condemned the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Nicaragua for its opposition to the totalitarian consolidation of power by the Sandinista government. Soviet Doctor of Philosophical Sciences M. P. Mchedlov, addressing the interaction of religion and politics in the modern world, asserted that clergymen have played a "positive role" in countries engaged in "anticolonialist liberation struggles." Speaking before the Znaniye Society in Moscow in October 1986, Mchedlov spoke favorably about "the growth of leftist trends within religious groups, including armed resistance," especially in Latin America—a clear reference to the liberation theology movement. While condemning clergymen who "use bourgeois society's institutions to preserve and advance the church's interests and to combat communism," he praised individual clerics who have taken up arms alongside Communist rebels in Cuba and Nicaragua, and elsewhere in Latin America. The merits of liberation theology as a political ideology, however, do not yet seem to have been addressed directly by Soviet ideologues. [redacted]

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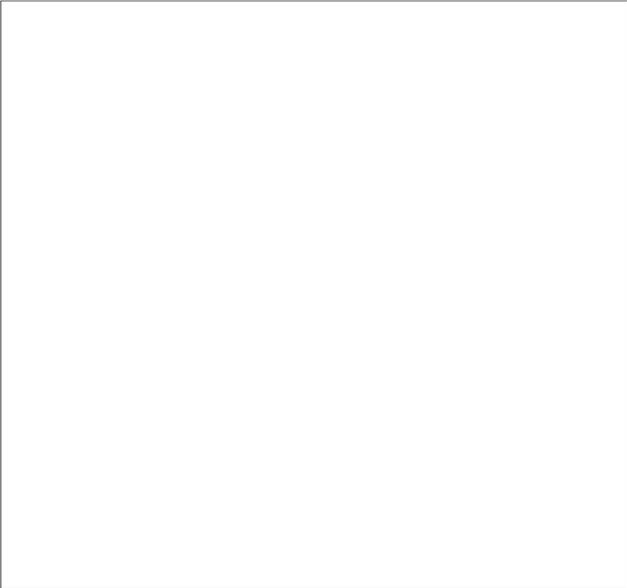
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At least one Soviet cleric has established relations with the indigenous Central American liberation theology movement. In May 1986, Father Izadors Upenieks, a Soviet Latvian Franciscan priest, traveled to Nicaragua as a member of the Soviet Peace Committee. During his stay, he concelebrated mass in a "Popular" (that is, Sandinista) Church, and endorsed liberation theology in his sermons and in a newspaper interview. [redacted]

[redacted]

The ABCP appears to have more members on the World Peace Council than any other member organization. In addition, both the ABCP's president and its secretary general sit on the WPC's Presidential Committee; no international organization holds more than two slots on this body, and only four other Soviet fronts have this maximum representation. Despite its recent setbacks, the WPC remains the most important Soviet-controlled front organization, and the steady increase of ABCP representation therein reflects the emphasis Soviet propagandists are placing on the ABCP and Buddhism in general. [redacted]

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The Asian Buddhist Council for Peace

The Asian Buddhist Council for Peace (ABCP) is the Soviet front responsible for maintaining and improving ties to Buddhists worldwide. It claims 15 affiliates in 12 countries. With the exception of China, which was intentionally excluded, Burma and South Korea are the only countries with significant Buddhist populations that maintain no relations with ABCP. Ostensibly, the organization is dominated by Mongolia: its headquarters is in Ulan Bator, and its leadership—the president, the secretary general, and deputy secretary general—is entirely Mongolian. Following the usual pattern for Soviet fronts, however, the Soviet membership—coreligionists from the central Siberian Buryat Autonomous SSR—reportedly sets the organization's policy. [redacted]

Soviet propagandists have been quite successful in tasking the ABCP with spreading anti-American rhetoric in Sri Lanka. Several prominent Buddhist monks there have sponsored events designed to increase popular support for the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace. The monks hold important positions in such pro-Soviet fronts as the Ceylon Peace Council (the national affiliate of the World Peace Council) and the Sri Lankan-Soviet Friendship League. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) decided in late 1986 to make use of left-leaning Buddhist clerics to promote Soviet peace movement propaganda. CPSL leader Pieter Keuneman reportedly announced this policy decision after returning from a visit to Moscow. Subsequently, six public meetings were sponsored by the CPSL on various peace-related subjects during the remaining months of 1986. At three of these sessions, members of the Buddhist clergy were among the main speakers. The Soviet Government pays for exchange visits between Soviet and Sri Lankan monks and sponsors university scholarships for monks to study in the USSR. The Sri Lankan chairman of the Sri Lankan-Soviet Bhikkus (Buddhist Monks) Association traveled to the USSR in 1983, and his Soviet counterpart visited Sri Lanka in 1986. [redacted]

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Like all other Soviet fronts, ABCP holds frequent international conferences controlled and funded by the International Department. The latest gathering, in Vientiane in February 1986, featured demonstrations and resolutions condemning the US Strategic Defense Initiative. Other official proclamations commended "the political courage of the USSR in extending a moratorium on nuclear weapons testing"; recalled and condemned "the sufferings of our brothers in Vietnam, Laos, and Kampuchea caused by chemical genocide"; and endorsed the Soviet-backed Asian-Pacific Zone of Peace (APZP) initiative. APZP, like other zone-of-peace initiatives, is part of the Soviet effort to remove American and allied military bases in a given region—in this instance, primarily the US naval bases and airbases in the Philippines. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, the World Council of Churches, and the World Peace Council were among the non-Buddhist attendees. [redacted]

Soviet propagandists seem to achieve more mixed results elsewhere in the Buddhist world, however. At the 15th Conference of the World Buddhist Federation, held in Kathmandu in 1986, a Soviet-sponsored resolution calling for world nuclear disarmament was passed only after language attacking the US SDI

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program was removed. Moreover, a resolution expressing concern over the persecution of Buddhists in Vietnam was passed over the objections of the Soviet and Bloc delegations, although the standard Soviet-backed resolution calling for the creation of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace was approved. [redacted]

The Tibetan exile Dalai Lama, the spiritual and temporal leader of Lamaism, is affiliated with ABCP. He maintains cordial relations with both the Soviet Government and its Buddhist front organization as a means of leveraging pressure against the Chinese Government. The Dalai Lama has visited the Soviet Union three times, most recently in 1986, to attend an ABCP event in Ulan Ude, the capital city of the Buryat SSR. During the Moscow portion of his visit he was received by Russian Orthodox Patriarch Pimen at the Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery, where the two religious leaders held a press conference highlighting joint Christian-Buddhist efforts to secure world peace. The Dalai Lama, however, seems to have taken pains to avoid the appearance of embracing wholeheartedly Soviet religious peace propaganda. He uses Soviet-sponsored religious events mainly as convenient forums to decry the continuing plight of Tibetan exiles. [redacted]

The Soviets and World Islam

Soviet foreign policy and propaganda organs have worked assiduously—and with little success—to recover what influence Moscow had with governments in the Muslim world before the 1979-80 invasion of Afghanistan. Relying primarily on the resumed “all-Muslim” conferences hosted periodically in Soviet Central Asia, Soviet strategy appears to be to task “official” Soviet Muslim clerics with the dissemination of propaganda throughout the Islamic world (see “Central Asian Muslims,” p. 10). Moscow has met with little success beyond Soviet borders, however, because of the Muslim world’s preoccupation with Soviet actions in Afghanistan. Whenever possible, Soviet propagandists look to non-Soviet Muslim spokesmen to echo Moscow’s policies in an effort to enhance the propaganda’s credibility. For example, Maulawi Abdul Aziz Sadeq, head of the Afghan Religious Council, asserted in an interview that the Soviet Union is not interfering in Afghan religious affairs. Such measures are indicative of how Moscow

has largely been on the propaganda defensive throughout the 1980s. Muslim clergymen seen as working at the behest of the Soviet-sponsored Afghan regime are considered traitors to their religion and their countrymen. [redacted]

Moscow has failed to win support at a number of international conferences. For example, the Fifth Islamic Conference Organization conference, held in Kuwait in January 1987, approved a resolution calling explicitly for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan; the statement was worded more harshly than previous resolutions on the same subject. The OIC statement represented yet another setback in the Soviet campaign to convince member nations of Moscow’s purportedly earnest efforts to restore an “Islamic and nonaligned Afghanistan.” In addition, Afghanistan was represented at the OIC gathering by a rebel *mujahedin* alliance delegation, and not by Soviet-backed government representatives. Finally, the OIC continues to deny admission to Moscow’s “official” Soviet Muslims, a sign of the Islamic world’s unabated disdain for the religious envoys of an “atheist regime.” [redacted]

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union has made progress in establishing diplomatic relations with Islamic Gulf states. Once diplomatic relations with an Arab or otherwise Islamic nation have been established, the Soviet Foreign Ministry is careful to ensure that several members of its diplomatic mission—beginning with, if at all possible, the ambassador—are ethnic Muslims. Few non-Slavs have been accepted into the privileged elite of the Soviet diplomatic corps, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs occasionally has been embarrassed by what it perceived as instances of incompetence by its Muslim envoys. [redacted]

Soviet restrictions on would-be pilgrims to Mecca have been an additional source of friction with Muslim religious leaders. Saudi Arabia remains a denied-access area to Soviet diplomatic and intelligence personnel. Soviet Muslims chosen for the annual hajj reportedly are carefully selected and often tasked with

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propagandizing and probably also intelligence-gathering on the USSR's behalf. Sources of the US Embassy in Moscow report that the Soviets have been pressing Riyadh to permit the placement of a Soviet "mission" in Mecca to "support" Central Asian Muslims making the hajj. This initiative has to some degree backfired, however; every time the issue is raised by the Soviet side, the Saudis take the opportunity to chastise the Soviet regime for permitting so few Central Asians to travel to Mecca. For instance, World Muslim League head Naseef is reported to have taken the Soviet Government to task at the October 1986 "all-Muslim" conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, noting that only 15 individuals out of an estimated 50 million Soviet Muslims were permitted to make the hajj in 1986. [redacted]

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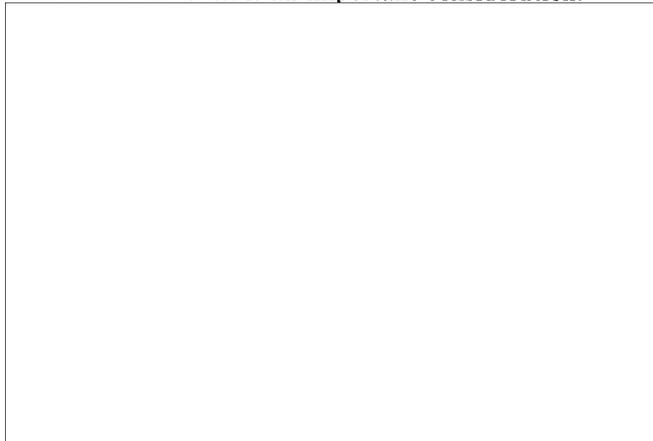
A Soviet Muslim source of the US Embassy in Moscow claims that there has been an increase in the number of Soviet Central Asian Muslims who travel to Afghanistan and Pakistan and then make the hajj without the prior permission or approval of either the Soviet or Saudi Governments. [redacted]

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Spies in Cassocks

The Soviet Government uses church facilities as intelligence-gathering stations mainly in closed-access areas such as Israel. The payoff has always been of marginal significance, however, and the risk of compromising the ostensible independence of the Russian Orthodox Church is an important consideration.



[redacted] church-based intel- 25X11
ligence gathering has been scaled back in recent years. This is probably the result of negative cost-benefit evaluations and concern that the potential harm to the ostensible independence of the Russian Orthodox Church is not merited; this is especially significant because exploitation of the church for propaganda dissemination appears to be steadily increasing. Were the church to be exposed as a cover mechanism for intelligence activities, the damage to

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overall Soviet foreign policy interests would be commensurately significant. Moreover, the number of countries that remain denied-access areas to Soviet nationals has diminished sharply in the 1970s and 1980s. Many nations unwilling to accord full diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Government nonetheless have opened their borders to such paradiplomatic Soviet officials as trade representatives and journalists, thereby reducing the KGB's need for church cover. [redacted]

Emigre and other lobby groups in the West have occasionally raised security as an issue in their efforts to leverage pressure against Soviet religious delegations. For example, the French Government has repeatedly denied the entry visa applications of Archbishop Kirill (Vladimir Mikhaylovich Gundyayev)—currently of Smolensk, formerly of the Leningrad suburb of Vyborg—for security reasons, and has indicated to the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs that it will refuse all further applications of the Archbishop on the same grounds. The French Government may have irrefutable evidence that Kirill has engaged in espionage, but it is possible that his visa denials are the result of domestic pressure exerted by the relatively sizable and influential Russian emigre community in France. The French branch of the Russian Orthodox Church predates the Russian Revolution and is not subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate. [redacted]

Implications and Outlook

Soviet foreign policy propagandists appear to be adopting more modest goals for religious active measures and adjusting to longer timetables. The content of Soviet religious propaganda for foreign consumption has become more subtle and audience-specific. Nonetheless, the general content of Soviet foreign policy positions and propaganda remains largely the same; only the methodology has changed from "hard sell" to "soft sell." [redacted]

The focus often appears to be less on disseminating propaganda than on developing long-term personal and professional relations with Western and Third World clergymen. In a recent lecture restricted to

party propagandists, Vadim Zagladin, First Deputy of the International Department, reportedly encouraged closer ties to non-Communist and religious peace activists. "Christians play an important role in Communist Parties in many countries," he is quoted as saying. "For example, in France and Italy. . . . The overall CPSU approach to religion should not create obstacles to cooperation with such groups." [redacted]

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There appears to be a realization among Soviet propagandists that traditional active measures and propaganda activities have become largely ineffectual among the more sophisticated target audiences of Western Europe and North America. [redacted]

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[redacted] The Christian Peace Conference, the religious component of this older generation of fronts, may be slated for cutbacks in funding and tasking. None of these fronts, including the CPC, are likely to be eliminated entirely, however, as they remain useful for propagandizing in the Third World.

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The International Department appears to be encouraging the development of a new generation of international organizations known generically as fronts of fronts. Fronts of fronts are smaller than traditional front organizations and lack the rigid control structures that typify older groups: a secretariat headed by a general secretary answerable to Moscow, an international presidium of vice presidents, and so forth. Many of these newer fronts focus on specific issues or seek to attract members of specific professions. For example, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War focuses its rhetoric on the medical dangers posed by the threat of thermonuclear warfare. New, issue-oriented religious fronts are also likely to develop. [redacted]

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In light of the perceived decline in effectiveness of traditional religious fronts, the Soviets are likely to place greater emphasis on bilateral religious relations. For instance, Soviet and American churches make reciprocal exchanges of delegations annually. This

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approach has the advantage of enabling religious propagandists to present Soviet society to visiting clerics in a favorable light as well as ensuring foreign forums for the dissemination of Soviet propaganda.

[redacted]

In the Third World, we anticipate that Soviet religious active measures and propaganda activity will become increasingly refined to reach specific audiences. For example, Soviet propaganda may begin to endorse and encourage the spread of liberation theology in Latin America. This would also reflect a perceived Soviet policy decision to widen its active measures and propaganda activity to include issues and movements not necessarily Marxist or otherwise pro-Soviet, but inimical to regimes perceived as anti-Soviet.

[redacted]

The role of religious figures in the foreign dissemination of Soviet policy positions and propaganda appears to be increasing under Council for Religious Affairs Chairman Kharchev. The recent visits of Cardinal Sin of the Philippines, Mother Teresa, and Ecumenical

Patriarch Demetrios I indicate Moscow's commitment to a higher religious profile, even though the Soviet leadership has—at least for the moment—decided to confine itself to cosmetic gestures.

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Finally, the celebration of the Millenium of Christianity in Russia in 1988 will serve as an important indicator of future trends in Soviet religious policies. The post-Brezhnev religious propaganda apparatus has been in place and is able to prepare carefully its treatment of the event. Although Pope John Paul II's participation remains unlikely, we can expect a foreign media blitz calculated to show both Moscow's deference to religious conviction and ostensible worldwide religious support for Soviet peace initiatives.

[redacted]

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