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Religion, Cultural Memory, and the Rhetoric of National Identity in Russia

Religia, pamięć kulturowa, a retoryka tożsamości Narodowej w Rosji

Streszczenie

Poczynając od zwycięstwa nad Napoleonem w 1812 roku, religia stała się centralnym elementem Rosyjskiej tożsamości narodowej. W okresie komunistycznym, totalitarne państwo opierało się na szczątkowych uczuciach religijnych w celu mobilizowania społeczeństwa w czasie wojny, a dysydenci widzieli w religii źródło moralnej odwagi / oporu wobec ucisku politycznego. Wzrost pluralizmu politycznego i rozszerzenie przestrzeni wolności religijnej w latach *pierestrojki* stworzyły warunki do powrotu zapomnianego bądź świadomie tłumionego dziedzictwa kulturowego. Jako jedne z głównych ofiar reżimu sowieckiego, *religia* w ogóle a szczególnie *prawosławie* pojawiły się jako gotowe wzorce autorytetu kulturowego i odrodzenia duchowego. Opierając się na pojęciach Kennetha Burke'a, autorka sugeruje, iż odniesienia do religii w wielu odmianach sposobów mówienia o tożsamości narodowej, które pojawiły się w rezultacie *pierestrojki*, oferowały swojego rodzaju "ekwipunek do życia" (Burke, *Philosophy of Literary Form*), jak i "struktury akceptacji" bądź też "odrzućenia" (Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*) w atmosferze duchowej pustki i kryzysu zbiorowej tożsamości spowodowanych upadkiem wiary w legitymizujące władzę mity marksizmu-leninizmu.

"The influx of new people into the Church, the passion for ancient Russian culture and also enthusiasm for philosophy and literature of the Russian renaissance of the 20th century indicate that today's necessary reunification with the stolen past has already begun. But along with its great riches, the past also conceals quite a few temptations within itself" (Gorski 387).

These words, written by a Soviet dissident intellectual in 1972, acquired new relevance in the years before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev policy of "perestroika" (restructuring) and "glasnost" (openness), begun as reforms within the upper echelons of the Communist Party in the mid-eighties, helped to erode the officially fostered piety for the Communist party's version of Soviet history. Increased political pluralism and

expansion of religious freedom in the years of perestroika created opportunities for appropriation of the nation's forgotten or suppressed cultural heritage. As one of the main victims of the Soviet regime, religion in general and Orthodox religion in particular appeared as a ready source of cultural authority and spiritual transcendence. Appeals to religion in discourses of perestroika, however, indicate the emergence of a variety of narratives of national self-definition, each offering a kind of "equipment for living" (Burke *Philosophy of Literary Form*) in an atmosphere of spiritual vacuum and collective identity crisis brought upon by a collapse of faith in the legitimizing myth of Marxism-Leninism.

In this essay, I argue that Gorski's warning was indeed prophetic in that the "temptations of the past," especially the appeal of nationalistic interpretation of Russian religious and cultural heritage, became irresistible. However, I would also like to suggest that such appeal turned out to be more rhetorically compelling as a unification device because it emphasized what Burke would call a frame of acceptance while those who advocated a more critical attitude toward the past neglected the importance of symbolism in the construction of national identity.

My argument builds upon Kenneth Burke's theory of identification as it relates to his concepts of equipment for living and frames of acceptance and rejection. To this end, I first set up Burke's definitions of these terms and interpret their applicability to the case study. I then trace the symbolic importance of religion in discourses of national self-definition in modern Russia before and after the revolution. Finally, I turn to the years of perestroika to explore the use of appeals to religion by liberal activists, apologists for Stalin, and Russian nationalists to illustrate the ways in which religious moral authority and religious idiom were appropriated across the political spectrum to formulate different attitudes to Russian and Soviet past and present.

Identification, Equipment for Living, and Frames of Acceptance and Rejection

One of Burke's most widely recognized contributions to rhetorical theory is the notion of identification. Developed in the tumultuous political climate of the nineteen thirties and forties, Burke's theory helps to explain how individuals and social groups establish, for better or for worse, a sense of communal belonging and purpose. No two people are alike, and whatever sameness is asserted of them (or by them) is already a symbolic construct. As a discursive process that creates a feeling of "consubstantiality" for otherwise separate individuals, "identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is **division**."

Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for a rhetorician to proclaim their unity. If men were wholly and truly of one substance, absolute communication would be of man's very essence" (*Rhetoric* 22). Burke's definition of rhetoric through metaphor—"rhetoric is concerned with the state of Babel after the Fall"—vividly underscores the condition of division and strife out of which rhetorically crafted unity might arise (*Rhetoric* 23). It is therefore particularly suitable for analyzing public rhetoric in societies in transition.

Because proclamations of unity are rhetorical, they can be more or less persuasive. Burke spent most of his career trying to understand why certain appeals to unity succeed and others fail. His address to the American Writers Congress on the subject of "revolutionary symbolism" in America, for example, criticized Leftist intellectuals for overlooking the power of the word "people" as a unification device. On the other hand, in his analysis of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* Burke shows how the sinister yet highly effective Nazi rhetoric was based on the "bastardization of fundamentally religious patterns of thought" (*Philosophy* 219).

To Burke, all genres of discourse—from overtly rhetorical political speeches and pamphlets to seemingly apolitical poems—aspire to evoke in their audiences a set of shared attitudes: "Critical and imaginative works are answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose. They are not merely answers, they are strategic answers, stylized answers" (*Philosophy* 1). Central to his argument is the assumption that there is no neutral vocabulary for assessing our historical reality, that human beings must rely on a "weighted" vocabulary to make sense of their world and to persuade others to adopt this interpretation.

Consequently, the relative persuasiveness of a discourse depends not so much on how accurately it describes a given historical situation, as on how aptly it "equips" its audience "for living" (*Philosophy of Literary Form*). Burke points to proverbs as the simplest, most ubiquitous example of symbolic equipment for living: "Proverbs are *strategies* for dealing with *situations*. In so far as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them. Another name for strategies might be *attitudes*" (*Philosophy* 296-297). Extrapolating from this example, Burke suggests that not only can "such analysis of proverbs encompass the whole field of literature," but also that "the kind of observation from this perspective should apply beyond literature to life in general" (*Philosophy* 296).

Therefore, a poem, a film, a philosophical essay or a political speech equally qualify as specimens of attitudinal discourse. Burke elaborates in *Attitudes toward History*:

In the face of anguish, injustice, disease, and death one adopts policies. One constructs his notion of the universe or history, and shapes attitudes in keeping. Be he poet or scientist, one defines the 'human situation' as amply as his imagination permits; then, with this ample definition in mind, he singles out certain functions or relationships as either friendly or unfriendly. If they are deemed friendly, he prepares himself to welcome them; if they are deemed unfriendly, he weighs objective resistance against his own sources, to decide how far he can effectively go in combating them. (3-4).

These attitudes toward history, according to Burke, are typically framed by strategies of acceptance or rejection. Acceptance is "the more or less organized system of meanings by which a thinking man gauges the historical situation and adopts a role with relation to it" (*Attitudes* 5). "Acceptance" does not mean "passiveness": since strategies whose mode is acceptance "name both friendly and unfriendly forces, they fix attitudes that prepare for the combat. They draw the lines of battle—and they appear 'passive' only to one whose frame would persuade him to draw the line of battle differently" (*Attitudes* 20). Burke illustrates this shift in emphasis by contrasting Thomas Aquinas and Karl Marx with regard to "the existence of social classes":

The difference between Marx and Aquinas is in the attitude (incipient program of action) taken towards the existence of classes. Since Aquinas, following Augustine, looked upon classes (with attendant phenomena of government, property, and slavery) as punishment for the fall of man, his frame was designed to accept the inevitability of classes, and to build a frame of action accordingly. Marx, on the other hand, accepted the need for eliminating classes, hence he drew the line of battle differently. (*Attitudes* 20-21).

Rejection differs from acceptance by its emphasis on a "shift in allegiance to symbols of authority" (*Attitudes* 21). Thus, the authors of the Communist manifesto were "stressing the *no* more strongly than the *yes*," and therefore their "project for redemption" was clothed in "negativistic terms, as a *specter that haunts*; and in parting they address themselves to the *anger of slaves* (*Attitudes* 22). Emphasis on rejection often puts a rhetor at a disadvantage as far as the completeness of his persuasive project is concerned: "Frames stressing the ingredient of *rejection* tend to lack the well-rounded quality of a *complete* here-and-now philosophy." It is not surprising, then, that Marx compensated his rejection of here-and-now

order by laying "the foundations for a vast public enterprise out of which a new frame of acceptance could be constructed" (*Attitudes* 29).

Religious discourse in general is perhaps the most complete frame of acceptance available in so far as it provides believers with an explanation of their place within history as part of the divine macrocosm and within their social milieu as a domain of politics. In Christianity, accepting the existence of inequality and strife as part of the sinful nature of human beings motivates one to seek transcendence through one's relationship to the divine. Thus the saying of Christ, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" is a program of action whereby one is exhorted to follow a spiritual path of moral amelioration and to find refuge in the kingdom of God.

Invocations of religious attitudes do not occur in a vacuum, however, and every historical and cultural context burdens them with political significations. It is enough to mention, for example, the concept of the "manifest destiny" to demonstrate how religious idiom is pressed into the service of a nationalist agenda. In Russia, the rhetoric of Orthodox Christianity was similarly aligned with a discourse of Russia's unique mission in the world. From a rhetorical standpoint, then, it is important to trace the historical fusion of religion and discourses of national identity.

Religion and national identity in Russia before and after the Revolution

To understand the role of religion in appeals to Russian nationhood, one must go back to the rule of Peter the Great (1682-1725), the first monarch who attempted to make Russia into a European nation by introducing vast changes in virtually all spheres of life, including religious practices. While his predecessors, including Ivan the Terrible, were still beholden to the Orthodox Church for their political legitimacy, Peter abolished the institution of the Patriarchate and replaced it with the Holy Synod, a state administration under the authority of the tsar. Coupled with the secularization of education and a turn to European customs among the nobility, the reforms within the Church effectively widened the gap between the elites (landed gentry and state servants) and the rest of the population, the majority of which were peasant serfs.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Russian monarchs continued Peter's European-oriented policies, and their educated subjects, most of whom were either instructed by foreign tutors or studied abroad, were alienated from their native traditions. In the absence of a civil society based on the rule of law, the Orthodox religion alone remained the common cultural

denominator that could unite the subjects of a Russian tsar into a nation. Consequently, the construction of national identity in the nineteenth century often became a matter of rhetorically bridging the chasm between the "people," politically dispossessed yet presumably patriotic carriers of cultural traditions, and the free educated "public."

A central event that catalyzed arguments over Russian national identity in the nineteenth century was the victory of the Russian army over Napoleon in 1812. On Christmas day of that year, tsar Alexander the First issued a decree ordering the construction of a church-monument to commemorate the event and to offer thanks for divine intercession. The monarch's gesture was symbolically weighted: the church was to be built in Moscow, Russia's capital before Peter the Great, and the language of the decree mentioned the "Russian folk" (*narod Rossijskij*) as the chief instrument of the divine providence.

Despite the patriotic fervor incited by the common victory among the different social classes, Alexander's gesture toward the "folk" did not translate into a policy of emancipation, and the serfs were not freed for another half century. But the impact of the event on the educated classes was nothing short of transformative. For decades after, intellectual and political debates in the country revolved around the question of Russian identity and destiny. In these debates, religion was particularly relevant to the efforts to define the "substance" of the Russian nation.

In the nineteenth century, arguments about Russian identity and destiny crystallized into two opposing camps, known as the "Westernizers" and the "Slavophiles". Westernizers saw Russia lagging behind Europe because of its backward culture and the servile passivity of its people in the face of autocratic rule. One of the major Westernizers was Petr Chaadaev, an educated nobleman who for his radical views was pronounced insane by tsar Nicholas I. Chaadaev's *Philosophical Letters* epitomize the frame of rejection by stressing the abject lack of anything culturally redeeming about Russia: "Isolated by a strange destiny from the universal progress of humanity, we have derived nothing from those ideas which have transmitted continuity to the human species ... If we wished to evolve an attitude resembling that of other civilized peoples, we would, as it were, have to repeat for ourselves the entire process of the education of the human race"(164).

Although he did offer a solution—to "civilize the race" by bringing it into the family of European nations united by Catholic religion—Chaadaev's frame of acceptance did not appeal to native resources of identity. One had to have already embraced Western cultural norms and customs in order to assent to this image of unity.

The Westernizers on the whole failed to articulate a compelling vision of a people based on native cultural traditions, including religion. As Vera Tolz comments, Westernizers “preached ‘universal values’ represented by ‘Western civilization’ and expected that with time, as autocracy and serfdom disappeared and the peasantry was educated, Russia would enter the European political mainstream. The peculiarities of the Russian historical and cultural tradition, for instance the impact of Orthodoxy, were of no particular interest to them. In the future most Russian liberals would remain cosmopolitans in the Enlightenment mode” (65-66).

Where the Westernizers saw lack, the Slavophiles saw infinite though not yet realized strength. For them, in order to redeem Russia, the educated classes had to identify with “the people”—politically downtrodden yet genuinely patriotic bearers of authentic cultural traditions. Nineteenth-century Slavophiles (among them poet Fyodor Tiutchev and philosopher Alexis Khomyakov and Ivan Kireevsky) considered Russia a distinct civilization based on the Orthodox faith, Slavic ethnicity, and the communal institutions of a predominantly peasant population. Russia was more than a country—it was a spiritual force that transcended historical particulars (Billington 12-13; Riasanovsky *Russia and the West*).

Many of the Slavophiles espoused a messianic belief in Russia as a “God chosen people.” Writer Konstantin Aksakov, for example, thus describes God’s gifts to Russia in reward for its purity and humility:

And God exalted humble Rus’! Forced into desperate struggle by belligerent neighbors and newcomers, it defeated all of them, one after another. Territory on earth befell it. Its possessions are in three parts of the world and one seventh of the earth belongs solely to it... And proud Europe, which always despised Rus’, despising and not understanding its spiritual power, saw the terrifying material power, one which it understood. And consumed by hate, and in secret terror, it looks upon this frightening body which is full of life, but whose soul it cannot understand” (qtd in Gorskii 365).

Notwithstanding all the differences and nuances of thought among the individual Slavophiles, they were united in one point: that Christianity is the primary characteristic of the Russian people. They believed that Russian man was *first* a Christian and son of the Orthodox Church and *then* a citizen and son of the Russian state. Ironically, despite their opposition to

autocracy, the exalted vision of a Russian people united in Orthodox faith was assimilated into the tsarist ideological formula "Orthodoxy—Autocracy—Nationality" (Riasanovsky *Nicholas I and Official Nationality*).

The Slavophile frame of acceptance proved useful not only to the Romanov dynasty. Its messianic aspects, in particular, attracted the most unlikely rhetors—the Bolsheviks. Although the Bolsheviks denounced religion as "the opium of the masses" and persecuted priests, they appropriated the nationalistic thrust of the Slavophile discourse, while shifting the accent from the peasants to the proletariat.

Stalin famously exploited the patriotic appeal of the Orthodox religious tradition during World War II, when he relaxed the state's proscription against church going and worship in order to rally the population to fight the Holy War against the "dark fascist power," to quote a famous song from those years.

While the totalitarian state relied on the residual religious sentiment of the people to mobilize the country in the war effort, dissident writers and artists saw religion as a source of moral courage in the face of ideological oppression. Banned from the public sphere and writing "for the drawer," they often appealed to the divine authority as the ultimate arbiter of history and their place within it. Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem* compared the author's plight to that of Christ at the time of the crucifixion: "The heavens were on fire, and he/Said, 'Why have You forsaken me, oh Father?'" In *Doctor Zhivago*, Boris Pasternak calls on the symbolism of the Last Judgment to assert the righteous path of the artist as distinct from the official path toward communism charted by the country's leaders.

In the late sixties and early seventies, when discussions of religion and its place in Russian identity began to appear in underground publications of Samizdat, the argument between nationalist and ecumenical interpretations of Christianity once again acquired prominence. Gorski's warning about temptations of the past, quoted at the beginning of this essay, was a response to the wave of neo-Slavophilism that swept over both Samizdat publications and some of the mainstream journals such as *Molodaja Gvardija*. To him, the messianic consciousness displayed by the neo-Slavophile interpretation of Russian national identity was not much better than the discredited utopianism of Marxism-Leninism: "The inclination to sanctify State rule, the desire to assign absolute categories to natural-historic formations, is testimony to the position of consciousness at the level of religious naturalism and external interpretation of Christianity. The confusion of two kingdoms—the kingdom of the Spirit and the kingdom of Caesar—is a tempting utopia, no less terrifying in its consequences than the communist idea of 'heaven on earth' (368). To rid itself of despotism,

Gorski argued, Russia needs to "reject the idea of national greatness. For this reason, it is not 'national renaissance' but the struggle for Freedom and spiritual values which must become the central creative idea of our future" (386).

Confronting the Soviet Past: Religion and National Identity in Discourses of Perestroika

Religious symbolism played a major role in public discourses of the late 1980s. A number of perestroika-era artists turned to religion to address the trauma of the Soviet past. In fact, Tengiz Abuladze's film *Repentance*, shown to packed movie theaters around the country in 1987, heralded Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* (openness) (Horton and Brashinsky). This allegorical story about the trauma of the Stalinist era and the need to remember its sins was a symbolic beginning of a widespread probing of Soviet history and as such deserves a closer look. The film opens with a scene showing a middle-aged woman making elaborate cakes in the shape of churches. The woman is Ketevan (Keti) Barateli, daughter of a painter sent to a gulag by a Stalinist mayor Varlam, depicted in the film as an agglomerate of Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Stalin's Secret Police chief Beria. In the film, Keti is the agent of memory, bringing to light the crimes committed by Varlam decades before. Keti is on trial for disinterring Varlam's recently buried body, and her testimony drives the film's narrative. The revelation of Varlam's crimes sets in motion a tragic chain of events: Varlam's impressionable and idealistic grandson Tornike takes his own life and his son Abel, the current mayor of the city, ends up digging up his father's body one last time and throwing it off a cliff. The end of the film circles back to the scene with Keti making cakes when she hears a tap on the window. At the window is an elderly woman who thirty years earlier implored Varlam to preserve a 6th century church in danger of crumbling due to scientific experiments performed there. She asks Keti: "Is this the road that leads to the church?" Keti answers, "This is Varlam Street and it will not take you to the church." "What good is a road that doesn't lead to a church?" the old woman responds and walks into the distance, her back to the camera.

Unlike many journalistic and artistic accounts that addressed Stalinism during perestroika, *Repentance* approaches the trauma of Stalinist repression and the amnesia of the Brezhnev era through a religious parable of victimage and redemption. The circular structure of the narrative highlights Keti's character as an embodiment of spirituality and historical vigilance and portrays Varlam's breach of the divine and human law as a sin that continues to

haunt the lives of his descendants. Abel's eventual repudiation of his father comes too late to save his son, who plays the role of a sacrificial vessel.

Although *Repentance* uses religious reference to transcend the particulars of history, its rhetorical impact depends on the audience's tacit understanding of various historical allusions. For example, the elderly lady's complaint about the use of a medieval church for scientific experiments reflects the Soviet regime's widespread destruction of churches in the 20s and 30s. In another allegorical scene, Abel has a dream of confessing to a hidden priest who is eating a large fish. Abel admits that he is a hypocrite: "I preach atheism and I wear a cross." At this point the priest reveals himself to Abel and hands him the bones of the fish. The priest is Varlam. Not only does this scene allude to the overall hypocrisy of the Brezhnev era when party officials did not even believe the ideology they preached, but it also implicitly condemns the corruption of the Orthodox priesthood under the Soviet regime.

Repentance offered the Soviet audience "equipment for living" in that it provided familiar tropes to deal with the current socio-political situation. The film's message of repentance and historical awareness resonated with a broad national support for public recognition of Stalin's crimes. Yet its blend of exhortation and consolation was not adopted as a rhetorical strategy by democratic activists who led the effort to excavate the country's shameful past. The so-called Memorial society, formed in 1987 with the help of famous artists and intellectuals, including poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko, singer Bulat Okudzhava, and mathematician Andrei Sakharov, made its mission to research and bring to light the names and biographies of all victims of the Stalin regime as well as to build a permanent memorial to honor them. In "The Memorial Manifesto," Yevtushenko argued against honoring only "celebrity victims": "The national conscience and the national talent is not a privilege limited to celebrities. Our duty is to honor the memory of the murdered innocent grain harvesters, laborers, engineers, doctors, teachers, people of all professions, all nationalities and faiths, each of whom is a particle of the murdered national conscience, the national talent" (16).

The Memorial's commitment to pluralism in honoring Stalin's victims, however, made it difficult to settle on a particular symbol of collective suffering and redemption. It was one thing to publish all the names, but it was an altogether different task to express the magnitude and complexity of the regime's crimes against its own citizens in a monumental form. This difficulty transpired during the open design competition for a national monument sponsored by the Memorial. The competition yielded many lay proposals. Some emphasized the motifs of World War II, when the Soviet Union was unified by the struggle against Nazi invaders. Others drew on Russian Orthodox iconography to express the idea of collective mourning and

common cultural heritage. Several proposals advocated the rebuilding of Moscow's Cathedral of Christ the Savior, which was destroyed under Stalin in the early 1930s. The Memorial's leadership, however, "wanted a form of commemoration that would challenge people's complacency." They "saw a monument as merely a complement to civic action—the real guarantee against a return to totalitarianism—and to research—the embodiment of a continuing search for truth" (Smith 198-99).

From this perspective, religious idiom, just like the old Soviet iconography of triumphant socialism, was considered inadequate as a symbol of communal identification. Radical democrats among the members of the Memorial saw religion not as a distinct anchor of a new democratic identity but as one among many other important democratic values, such as freedom of speech and assembly. Furthermore, they reasoned that Christian symbolism would be alienating to ethnic and religious minorities who were persecuted no less than Orthodox Christians and Russians. Finally, the rhetoric of victimhood showcased in many religiously flavored designs implied the lack of agency and only perpetuated the dichotomy of the powerless people versus the all-powerful state.

The Memorial Society has not yet built a monument to Stalin's victims, although in 1990 it marked a place for it in the Lubyanka Square, opposite the State Security headquarters. As a result of its reluctance to articulate a coherent narrative of national unity, however, the Memorial lost the opportunity to influence the ongoing discussion of national self-definition. Having won Gorbachev's support in official rehabilitation of political prisoners and removal of barriers to free speech, democratic activists moved on to other issues. In so doing, they effectively ceded the rhetorical field to proponents of nationalism both secular and religious.

Indeed, many who embraced Russian Orthodoxy and supported the rebuilding of churches destroyed under Communism were after a different vision of the country's identity. If the Memorial Society represents one side of the remembrance culture of the late Soviet period, another group named Pamyat' (which means "memory" in Russian) stands for an opposing tendency. Originating in the activist work of the All-Russian Society for the Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments, Pamyat' became a venue for an eclectic blend of nationalist pride, Stalinist revival, and vocal anti-semitism (see Korey; Kostyuk). Several of its members were well-known artists and intellectuals, such as "village writer" Valentin Rasputin, painter Ilya Glazunov, sculptor Klykov, and mathematician Igor Shafarevich. The more extreme among them, such as Shafarevich, were eager to blame all the ills of the Soviet era on the Jews, who supposedly destroyed the country's spiritual heritage and led to genetic impoverishment of the Russian people. In Pamyat's revision of Soviet

history, Stalin was a strong leader whose patriotic vision and policies were undermined by Jews and "cosmopolitan" intellectuals. One of Glazunov's paintings, titled "The Mysterium of the Twentieth Century," is a vivid if kitschy effort to exculpate Stalin by depicting him as the Father of Peoples and an architect of the Soviet victory in World War II (Platonov). In Pamyat' account, the Jews in Stalin's circle, particularly Moscow city planner Lazar Kaganovich and Palace of the Soviets architect Boris Iofan, were the ones responsible for the destruction of religious heritage, most vividly demonstrated by the barbarous detonation of the Church of Christ the Savior in 1931.

Although Pamyat's rhetoric of scapegoating is an extreme example of the appropriation of Russian orthodoxy, nostalgia for pre-revolutionary cultural values and longing for a strong state took center stage in public discussions of history and national identity in the late eighties and beyond. Frustrated by political fractiousness and economic instability, more and more people were beginning to lose confidence in democratic reforms and to consider them an unwelcome Western influence. By then, the Soviet Union had definitely lost the Cold War and the policy of glasnost' had revealed the desperate condition of the country's social infrastructure. Against this backdrop, narratives of Russia's past national greatness and cultural uniqueness were bound to provide "equipment for living" to all citizens who felt humiliated by the country's present condition.

Thus a milder form of nationalist rhetoric, in some ways resembling pre-revolutionary discourses of the so-called Slavophiles, ascended to prominence in the public sphere. Perestroika-era nationalists invoked Russia as a long-suffering "motherland" and its people an innocent victim of Communists (in the past) and pro-Western reformers (in the present). Among the victims of the Communist regime were the Russian Orthodox Church, the Russian tsar Nicholas II and his family, the Russian earth, Russian peasants, and the sacred values of the Russian past (Ries 102-103). Present-day woes of the country were blamed on Western capitalists and their "cosmopolitan" supporters at home, although now they were condemned not for their hatred of socialism but for undermining native traditions and imposing alien political and ethical norms.

In keeping with the Slavophile narrative of Russian historical and spiritual mission, nationalists saw Orthodox religion as a natural ally. Yet unlike their nineteenth-century predecessors, perestroika-era nationalists valued Russia's imperial status and bemoaned the weakening of the state. Even if they derided the Soviet bureaucracy, they nonetheless endorsed its military. Nationalism thus brought together some curious bedfellows, as can be seen in the following report by American journalist David Remnick:

A few weeks ago, at the Red Army Theater in Moscow, priests and army officials took the stage and announced their unity. They spoke not of Lenin and Gorbachev, but rather Alexander Nevsky, Dimitri Donskoi, and other warrior-priests of Russian history and legend. With a row of war-won medals dangling from his cassock, a priest blessed the huge audience of young soldiers, saying "God is our general!" (qtd in Kull 84)

It would be wrong to assume, however, that the emergence of nationalism represents an anti-intellectual strand in the public culture of perestroika. Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, whose moral authority as a survivor of Stalin's camps and a dissident chronicler of "the Gulag archipelago" is beyond reproach, has lent legitimacy to this narrative of Russian cultural uniqueness. Solzhenitsyn's well-publicized pronouncements about the decadent West and its hollow materialistic values, coupled with his nostalgic invocation of a pan-Slavic community united around Orthodox faith, articulated a less authoritarian vision of a new Russian identity than the one promoted by hard-core nationalists. In his article "How to Revitalize Russia," published in the fall of 1990 in major national newspapers, he advocated national sovereignty of all non-Slavic republics lest the "concrete structure" of the collapsing Soviet regime crush all beneath the rubble. Still, even after his return to the motherland, Solzhenitsyn remained a marginal figure in the debates over Russian identity.

In general, as Russian sociologists observed, "the political correlate (in mass consciousness) of the movement away from atheism and toward Orthodoxy [was] a movement from communist totalitarianism toward 'reactionary-romantic' authoritarianism" (Filatov and Furman).

Conclusion

How did it happen, then, that appeals to religion, a ready source of cultural authority, failed to be used effectively by a pro-democracy movement and succeeded, by contrast, in rallying support for nationalistic causes? I suggest that the democrats' rhetorical failure stems from their reluctance to recognize the virtue of symbolic identification and their insistence on non-representational methods for promoting truth and reconciliation (such as creating archives and supporting research). Although the message of the film *Repentance* was very much in line with the purposes of the Memorial Society, the film's use of religious symbolism

seems to have been largely ignored. By placing a non-descript boulder in the Lubyanka square, all the Memorial achieved symbolically was to stake out a site of protest against the regime, without offering a more positive symbol of remembrance.

On the other hand, the nationalists' appeal to religion as a common cultural denominator allowed them to combine what Burke calls frames of "rejection" and "acceptance": while they identified Russia and its people as victims of various external forces (and thereby used rejection as a source of motivation), they also presented Russian Orthodox spirituality as a permanent source of positive transcendence. Such tactics also allowed a variety of nationalistic positions, whatever their "enemies" happened to be, to coalesce around the positive pole of communal identification.

In addition, appeals to common political identity in the perestroika era depended for their success on patterns of identification established in the nineteenth century and reinforced by public culture of the Stalin era. In this regard, Gorski's argument about the malevolent influence of "unconscious patriotism," manifested in appeals to national greatness, is particularly germane. To counteract the messianic frame of acceptance and to replace it with a new pattern, based on "an intelligent creative act of spiritual self-definition" (392), would require more than mere public condemnation of Stalinism and introduction of market reforms.

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