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The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Shaping the Political Culture of Russia

Besides other changes that have taken place in the Russian Federation in our times, the process of constitution of an ideology, which is accompanied by different competing value-systems, is one of the crucial tendencies. This process also occurs in the area of the development and construction of religious institutions and religious consciousness. Historically, the Russian Orthodox Church has had a dominant position among the other religious institutions in the country. Unfortunately, it has not and does not serve the role of promoting a democratic change, but is rather an "echo" of the authoritarian and totalitarian past of the Russian history. In my paper I will analyze different factors that contribute to these characteristics of the Orthodox Church, and their influence on the political culture of Russia.

In spite of the fact that, officially, a course towards democratization has been adopted in Russia since Perestroika, there are some tendencies, rooted deeply in the consciousness of the Russian people, which are contradictory to the idea of democracy. The Russian Orthodox Church is one of the oldest institutions in Russian society. In my paper I will argue that the Russian Orthodox Church is the body, which simultaneously reflects and shapes the reactionary, extremely conservative "interpretation of reality" of Russia. Paradoxically enough, even though the Church was persecuted during the communist regime, some members of the priesthood, who have become politically active today, associate themselves with the communist ideas. To some extent, the Church is an "echo" of the totalitarian past of the country.

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Thus, some of the questions I would like to answer in the paper are: Which factors of the Russian culture work for and against the formation of legitimacy of the Church in the society? Can we say that the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church serves as the "root paradigm", or as the ideology that can potentially "win" against the competing ones (for example, liberalism)? Is the claim of the Russian Orthodox Church to become the "civil religion" (Bellah), the symbol of national unity, a realizable one? Will the Church be able to fill in the spiritual void existing in Russia; Will it be able to become the moral symbol of authority of the nation?

In my opinion, there are several aspects that have contributed to the formation of the Church as it is today: 1) the essence of the doctrine itself (extremely traditionalist); 2) the history of the relationship between state and Church in the Russian history. There has always been a symbiosis between Church and state in Russia, and over the time this has resulted in mutual protection. Russian Church does not have a history of independent development, of struggle for human rights, for liberty or freedom, as it is the case with the Roman Catholic Church in Poland; 3) the situation of great instability and change in Russia ("unsettled lives", using the term of Swidler), which led to a greather need for spiritual security, support, and determination among people. The economic instability and the standards of living are also important factors that have contributed to the formation of a certain type of religiosity. Inglehart's ideas concerning the values of traditional and postmodern societies are very useful here.

My paper will be organized according to these aspects: 1) Firstly, using the works of Swidler, Aronoff, Inglehart, Berdiaev, and others I will discuss the basis and the forms of religious ideology in the political culture of Russia; 2) Secondly, I will touch upon the political activity of the Church and its ideological premises. 3) Thirdly, I will take a look at the history of the development of the relationship between Church and state; 4) In the end I will deal with the legal aspect of religion, because, as we can see by comparing two Russian Federal laws adopted after the transformation period, in the laws towards religions we can find a discriminatory basis, other than Russian Orthodox. This, undoubtedly, is a step back on the road (imposed by Gorbachev) for democratic changes in the field of law making and politics.

In this paper I will use mainly the assumptions of the semiological approach proposed by Kubik (forthcoming). This approach focuses on the dynamic interplay of attitudes, discourses, and institutional settings where power is actualized. (Kubik forthcoming, p.13). Consequently, it allows the researcher to combine different dimensions, such as the psycho-social one (which focuses mainly on attitudes), the semiotic dimension (focusing on the study of symbols); and the socio-political or the dimension of power (which concentrates primarily on the study of institutions and power). It is also necessary to point out the dynamic character of the cultural representations and the evolving character of their meanings in contrast to the understanding of culture as a static phenomenon. Religion is potentially one of the

most powerful system of symbols, able to reshape the political culture, and this is why, I think, it is best to approach it from the four angles mentioned above.

1. The social, cultural, and ideological premises for the formation of the ideology of the Church. Some characteristics of the Church today

The period of social transformations that started in the 80s and 90s in the countries from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has completely shaken the foundations of the settled lives in every aspect – economically, ecologically, politically, etc. In the field of culture, the established rules and customs began to be questioned. The old ideological schemas, propagated by the communist regime ceased to have an influence on people, and, consequently, a new political discourse had to be found by political entrepreneurs to explain the reality. A great spiritual need and a search for meaning is characteristic for such periods. Aspirations for a new and brighter future have been expressed in the democratic reformation and the dethroning of the cult of the totalitarian regime introduced by Gorbachev during Perestroika. Unfortunately, the shadows of the past, and the ideological form that political culture takes today *are not new* in the history of Russia. They were selected from the existing "tool kit", the repertoire of possibilities (Swidler) that Russian culture had, and that is why there are different types of "democracy" in the former Soviet countries. The historical past is differently molded with the choices of the present.

As Swidler wrote, in unsettled societies, ideologies have a stronger control over people's actions than in the "settled lives". If in a stable social order culture is taken for granted, and religion often plays the role of tradition, changing societies are much more sensitive to culture. Doctrine, symbol, and ritual shape action directly. Undoubtedly, the religious revival in Russia is of great importance not only for the spiritual life of the individual (I agree with the thesis of M. Eliade, C.G. Jung and others according to which "religious thinking" is an essential part of human consciousness that can take different forms), but also for the formation of a political and legal culture. The ideology of the Russian Orthodox Church has looked back upon the tradition of conservative nationalism, and its representatives have understood and cooperated with the ideas of the "new" communists. Using Swidler's terminology, fewer resources were needed to be spent for this already trodden path of history. "Culture in this sense is more like a style or set of skills and habits than a set of preferences and wants" (Swidler, p.275). To some extent, one can say that the development of the Church was frozen during the seventy years of repressions, and now the Church is being rebuilt, copying its own image from the pre-revolutionary times from the beginning of the twentieth century. This was the strongest tool to choose from in shaping the religious ideology of our times.

However, there are some researchers who affirm that the historical reality has very little or nothing in

common with the construction of an ideology (Petro forthcoming). Additionally, "there is no cultural or historical disposition toward any particular type of policy" (Ibid, p.52). What really matters, in Petro's opinion, is the preference of elites, who take the decisions on what kind of symbols to evoke in a given political situation. Pursuing certain political interests, elites (re)construct a certain myth from the history of a country. If the public accepts a given myth, it helps to achieve the legitimacy of the regime, and serves as a strong cohesive factor, forming (national) identity. This means that the role played by the Orthodox religion today in the political culture of Russia was and is determined by the purpose orientated actions of the political leaders.

Petro's position on the role of elites could be contradicted from the standpoints of some other scholars who say that elites are rather subconscious recipients than conscious manipulators of culture. These researchers consider that the explanations are to be found taking into consideration the uniqueness of the history and culture of every country (Petro pp.47-48).

From the comparative perspective of the macro-historical approach, one can speak of different types of societies only in terms of their economic and cultural development and, consequently, in terms of different systems of values and religious through which this are characterized. I fully agree with the distinction made by Inglehart between people's values in the traditional and modern societies. The sense of great insecurity, instability, and low economic standards of living determine people to look for absolute standards, security, a greather power, and a rigid set of (religious) uniting norms. The Russian Orthodox Church satisfies these needs perfectly. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that, according to Inglehart, people, especially in the former countries of the Soviet Union, did not start feeling happier, more satisfied with life after the beginning of the transformation period. As a result, one cannot speak about the legitimacy of the democratic regime, which was established in Russia (Inglehart 1999). This factor rather forms the basis for authoritarianism, and in the religious sphere – for a dominant traditional religion. It pushes people towards criticizing the existing regime, and thinking that the earlier (for example, communist) times were better. If we can speak of the emergence of new social and religious movements, which express the set of "post-materialist" values (tolerance, belonging, self-expression, participatory role in society) in the Western countries, in Russia the situation is different. I think that pluralism and acceptance of different religious forms is a matter of things to come in the case of Russia. Unfortunately, one can say that, to a certain degree, the legitimacy of monotheistic religion goes along well with the support for the strong authoritarian secular power in Russia today. These are two facets of the same type of political culture. Undoubtedly, Western countries have the longest tradition of monotheistic religion; but the modern post-industrial regimes of these countries are also characterized by the existence of new social movements, including new religions, some of which even non-Christian (Inglehart 1999, Balagushkin 1999).

Besides the cultural and socio-political factors that formed the basis for the legitimation of the Russian Orthodox Church, it is worth mentioning that there has been an ongoing debate about the "nature" of the Russian culture. Can Russia can be considered a part of Europe, Asia, or is it an independent "Eurasian" country? These discussions can be traced back to the Slavophiles and Westernizers which have become very important today due to the global geopolitical changes taking place all over the world, the shifting of the borders and the reshaping of the cultural identities of the people. The answers to such questions like: "who are we and where do we go?" are not provided by the cultural "tool kit" anymore. This questions are rather posed than answered. Russians do not perceive themselves as Soviet citizens; they need to identify themselves in different terms and being engaged in different relations with the rest of the world. Today the Church is claiming to become a symbol of a Russian nation. Some of its features, its ideology, is similar to that one of the neo-Slavophiles. The Church claims to play a unique messianic role for Russia, being extremely hostile to everything that comes from the West, including the ideas of liberalism and democracy, tolerance to other religions, cosmopolitism, Enlightenment, etc.

The fundamentalist wing of the Church perceives perestroika, started by Gorbachev, negatively, as the event that pushes the Russian nation away from God. The representatives of the Church, using terminology from the Middle Ages, defines Europe and America as being possessed by evil forces, as the countries that will inevitably burn in hell soon (Shenfield 2001).

There are some strong anti-Semitic tendencies that can be noticed in the activity of the Church. Books and pamphlets which describe the dangers of the satanic secret movement are being published. On 9th of March 2000, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church issued a declaration, in which the Ministry of Taxes and Duties was accused of using satanic symbols in some tax documents (Shenfield 2001, p. 63). Additionally, a revival of the medieval belief that Jews commit ritual murders, using Christian children has also been noted. Some believe that the Jews, who perceived it as a ritual slaughter, killed the tsar's family in 1918. Many members of the Church believe that there is the Judaeo-Masonic plot against Russia. Adherence to the tradition and the strong secular power (preferably in the face of a monarch) are the main points of Church's ideology today. I think that *one of the most characteristic* features of the Church is its resistance to change, to accept modernization in any form. Its rituals and attitudes toward world have remained unchanged for centuries. Some authors have shown that the ideas of neo-Slavophilism are closely connected with the communist ideology today. (Kubik "Cultural Legacies of State Socialism..."). It was noted also that the members of the Russian Orthodox Church associate themselves with communism and neo-Slavophilism (Balagushkin, Shenfield). Some of them even cooperate with fascist organizations such as Russian National Unity. On the other hand, communists themselves are very eager to be associated with Russian

Orthodoxy. For example, the leading figure of the Russian Communist Workers Party, Viktor Tyulkin, has been characterized as an "orthodox internationalist communist" (Shenfield 2001, p. 60). Undoubtedly, it is nevertheless an overstatement to put the political activity of the Church on the same level with fascist organizations or analyze it within the framework of fascism as, for example, S. Sheffield[1] and Steeves did (Steeves, 1994).

The image of the Russian Orthodox Church would be misleading if the liberal aspects of its ideology were to be let aside. Politically this liberal wing stands for Christian democracy and a separation of the Church and the state. There are some Christians believers who have preserved their faith during the religious repressions of the Soviet regime; at the same time they remained open and welcoming to democratic changes. The appreciation of one's nation can be combined with appreciation of other, different cultures. Likhachev, for example, noted that it is necessary to distinguish between patriotism and nationalism. The first means love for one's nation and for one's neibour, and its roots can be found in Orthodoxy and in the Russian national character. It is important to note that the liberal wing of the Orthodox believers identifies its forefathers with the ideologist-philosophers of the Silver Age. I think that these thinkers (such as Florensky, Berdiaev, Bulgakov, Frank and others) have contributed greatly to the spiritual heritage of Russians. Several generations have found inspiration and answers to the question about the meaning of life in their books. These writers considered Russian Orthodoxy to be the essence of the Russian soul, but at the same time they often criticized both some aspects of the regime and the weaknesses of the Russian character. For example, N. Berdyaev wrote that Orthodoxy was embedded in the spirit of the Russian soul. He noted that *religion and nationality were understood as a symbiosis* by the Russians. "Narod" (common people) always loved its tsar and saw nobility as the cause of its problems. The tsar was at the same time a secular and a spiritual authority. Berdyaev discussed the "feminine" nature of the Russian nation, its passivity, its *collectivistic* character, the lack of determination and discipline. Irrationality and contradictions are also qualities that were pointed out by him. Berdyaev thought that even Marxism and nihilism were easily accepted by the Russians in accordance with the Russian nature.[2] He also noted that Church's nationalism is a characteristically Russian phenomenon. In my opinion, many of these ideas are very relevant today (a century after Berdyaev's works have been published), when we talk about Church and its influence on the development of culture and politics in Russia. For example, if one can underline the importance of Protestantism in the formation of the ethics and the culture of the American society (started by Weber's works), this is not the case with the Russian religious tradition. The crucial features of religious, and later economic ethics of Western societies are lacking: individualism, rationality, and the idea of the division between the secular and the spiritual powers. This becomes clear if we take a look at the history of Russian Church.

Many writings of the philosophers of the Silver Age are deeply democratic by nature; they value human dignity and the uniqueness of the human being. The writers of the Silver Age saw themselves as philosophers, independent from the Church. Unfortunately, this line of thinking did not develop into the mainstream of the Russian religious thought due to the fact that the Bolsheviks destroyed the Church's activity, including the most positive beginnings. Some consider this fact as one of the main reasons why today's Church is reactionary, conservative, and hostile to the idea of the freedom of (religious) thought. The murder of A. Mien, who, in my opinion, was one of the most outstanding religious liberal thinkers of our days, is the best illustration of this fact. Even though one cannot say that ideologically all the members of the Church are affiliated to fundamentalist extremism, the majority of the clergymen could be characterized as conservative and politically loyal to the government today. (Shenfield 2001).

I will focus on this matter in the next part of my paper.

2. The Relationship between Church and State in the Russian History

Historically, the Church has always been associated with the secular power. The Church has no tradition of independent functioning, but only a history of loyalty and glorification of the rulers. On the one hand, one can say that during the times of troubles, wars, and foreign invasions throughout twelve centuries it served as a strong moral authority, giving spiritual strength to the nation in order to fight the enemies. On the other hand, its constant dependency and support of the authorities brought about strong reactionary and anti-liberal tendencies in this institution. There were times in Russian history when its status was inferior to that of the state (during Ivan the Terrible, for example), and times when the Patriarch was basically ruling the country (Patriarch Nikon, in 1662, claimed that the Church is superior to the secular power). There was also a tragic period in Church's history when it was almost completely destroyed (during communist regime), and only once revived by Stalin to use it as a source for motivating people in the struggle with fascist Germany.

Nevertheless, one cannot find in the history of the Church the idea of the separation of powers (as it could be found in Protestantism and Catholicism, often bringing deep Church reforms, which influenced society as a whole). There was no Enlightenment or modernization of the Russian Orthodox Church. Rather, one of its main characteristic features is the dogmatic adherence to *Tradition*. The forms in which tradition is understood by the members of the Church are: the Bible, the Seven Ecumenical Councils, the Later Councils, the Fathers, the Liturgy, the Canon Law, and the Icons. Nothing has changed in the Church of today, and the spirit of antiquity is consciously preserved in its liturgy, which is still being held in the ancient Russian language with a very impersonal character, in the ancient form of baptizing,

etc. The Church is extremely loyal to the past, often including the past of the secular powers.

The already-mentioned claim is sustained by the fact that some of the Russian rullers were canonized (Prince Vladimir, Tsar Ivan I, etc.). If the main mythologemas of the Poles, for example, are connected with the names of Saint Stanislaw and Saint Wojciech, who were associated with the resistance to the royal power, in Russia, in contrast, the abbot of Volokolamsk Monastery, a person devoted to absolutism, was canonized. He was characterized by religious formalism and ritualism, glorification of the power of the prince, and desire to defend the Church's wealth. The conflict between Church and state, connected with his name, was symbolical. In the 15th century a monk, Nil Sorskii, and his followers ("nestiazhateli") have started to defend the idea that the Church and the monasteries (which owned one third of the land at that time) should have no property. At first they gained the support of the prince, but in the end status quo of the Church and the state was preserved, and Joseph, the abbot of Volokolamsk Monastery, was canonized.

The relationship between Church and state at he beginning of the 21st century follows its typical path in Russia. If in the case of Poland, Catholicism served as the main catalyst of democratic change from the communist regime, in Russia the Church withdrew itself back to conservative nationalism. The visit of John Paul II in 1979 transformed Poland. It influenced public discourse, individual attitudes, and the rules of interaction of people. It evoked great psychological response, which served as one of the factors in forming the legitimacy of the new political regime (Kubik 1994). In Russia, during the period of Perestroika. lots of actions were taken by Gorbachev in order to find a basis for a democratic regime. The freedom of speech and religious practices, stipulated in the law were only one of the many reforms of that time. Thousands of churches of different denominations (Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, Armenian Apostolic, etc.), as well as seminaries were opened, and the publishing activity of the churches expanded, during the Gorbachev's time. These are all former demands, expressed by religious activists, satisfied at that time. Additionally, it was the time when new religious movements appeared, some of them coming from abroad, and some being formed from the roots of different Russian national traditions and beliefs. Most important, this has led to the change of status of religion. If previously, due to repressions, it was stigmatizing to speak about faith, after Perestroika officials found it increasingly useful to show their belonging to the church. The attitudes of people changed as well.

However, the religious situation changed again when Boris Yeltsin was alleged President. Slowly, mainly due to Church's activity, the religious situation in Russia has shifted towards intolerance for all other religions. Undoubtedly, this has had a certain effect on the formation of a political and legal culture. The democratic orientation that started with Gorbachev has failed to produce the long-term effect that was expected. This was also reflected on the Federal and local laws on reli-

gions (at the end of the 80's the Orthodox clergy were being elected as deputies in the Russian parliament).

On 1st October 1990, a law concerning religion ("On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organizations" for the USSR) was adopted by Gorbachev. At the end of October, another law concerning the "Freedom of Worship" in Russian Federation was signed (Witte 2000). Both of them prohibited religious discrimination. The foundations of religious liberty, freedom or religious expression were stipulated in these documents. Additionally, they stated the separation of state and religion. These two institutions were expected not to interfere with each other in any way. The Russian Constitution from 1993 confirmed these provisions. However, since then the Russian Orthodox Church has started an active campaign against all other religious practices, because, first of all, they were bringing about the context for a contest for souls, so to speak. Western Churches also represented the ideology of individualism and liberty, which is inherently alien to this Church. Finally, the Russian Orthodox Church claimed that the foreign religious denominations posed a threat to society by breaking up families, using brainwashing techniques, etc. It should be mentioned that the Church accused *all* other religious denominations of this, without making any distinctions. The idea, being supported by Patriarch Aleksii II, was to ban all of them. The Church has published numerous proclamations against the activities of the other religious denominations; the Moscow Patriarchate requested restraint for several times, and even a one-generation moratorium on foreign mission activities in Russia. In 1993 the Moscow Patriarchate joined various nationalist groups in order to make a pressure on the Russian Parliament to amend the Federal Law from 1990 (Witte 2000). As a result, in 1997 a new Federal Law was adopted by President Yeltsin, after long discussions and protests (Western representatives, including the Presidents Clinton and Carter altogether with 160 senators and representatives in the U.S. Congress, several Western European heads of state and Council of Europe, Pope John Paul II). The new law discriminates against all religious denominations other than the Russian Orthodox Church. They are all subject to several restrictions (the right to juridical personality, to hold a collective property, to access to the state's material benefits to religion, and many other were revoked). The Orthodox Church is protected by the state and granted all kinds of support according to the new law. More than one third of Russia's eighty-nine provincial governments also adopted laws limiting the rights of foreign religious organizations (Witte 2000, p.10). One can come to a conclusion that these changes, made in the Federal and local laws of Russia, are a step back on the road to constructing the civil society, protecting the human rights, and guaranteeing legal equality for all religious denominations. But, certainly, the Church does not have the potential to be the spiritual force that stimulates people for civil activity towards democratic reformation.

But it still has the potential for becoming the "civil religion" (Bellah) of Russia. There is no doubt that this institution has a highly moral authority, in comparison

with the situation before Perestroika. First of all, it is noticeable that people, holding power positions show their respect, interest, and participation in religious practices of the Russian Orthodox Church. The mass-media always pays attention to the visits and meetings of Putin with the Patriarch; images of Putin's attendance to church ceremonies are often present even on the first-covers of the magazines. Gorbachev and Eltsin have worked for themselves the same public-image. Hierarchs attend official state ceremonies, and Orthodox priests serve as chaplains in the armed forces and bless submarines, armaments, and boundary posts, etc. The departments of Orthodox theology are opened in state universities; Orthodox sermons are often covered on TV, etc. Thus, one can say that, at an official level, the centuries-long symbiotic relationships between Church and State are restored. At the level of public opinion, according to the statistical research, one can clearly see a growing interest in religion in Russia. In a poll conducted in early 2000 by the Russian Independent Public Opinion Research Center, 57 percent of the respondents said that they trusted the Russian Orthodox Church; 32 percent said that they mistrusted it. According to the survey, *the Church is trusted more than the central and local governments, the Duma, the police and the judiciary system, the media, and the banks*; only the Federal Security Service and the army had better ratings (Shenfield 2000, p.60). However, according to other surveys (ISSP-91; Vorontsova 1997, etc.) it cannot be said that a great majority of people go to church regularly (only about one percent of the population). Also, there is a growing interest in non-traditional religion in Russia now. There was noted lately a shift away from Orthodoxy in people's religious preferences, especially a shift away from the Church as institution, and an orientation toward "Christianity in general" and a vague "New Age spirituality" (Filatov and Furman 1992).

Most important, one could notice a considerable drawback of both theoretical and empirical research of the authors presented in this essay, mainly their *lack* of *attention* to age and occupational factors. My assumption is that *the same category* of people, circumscribed from the standpoint of these factors, are communists and active followers of the Russian Orthodox Church. Many of the former communists still adhere to this ideology, which combines nationalism and anti-liberalism, today. They also want to be associated with the (reactionary ultranationalist) part of Russian Orthodoxy. These are the kind of people who are not satisfied with their life due to their low standards of living (they have low salaries and unfulfilling jobs or are retired). They have lived most of their lives in the totalitarian regime, and were formed in the conditions of state control and indoctrination. According to one research undertaken by S. Kliger and Paul H. De Vries in the nineties, almost half of the population between 57 and 76 years old are still devoted communists. Such devotion is strong also among the uneducated. 45.8% of people with elementary school education are dedicated communists. Additionally, 53.1% of all the followers of communism are presently unemployed (Ramet 1993, p. 199-200). Unfortunately, I did not find the data on these factors for the

conservative fraction of Orthodox ideology, but my assumption is that extreme Orthodoxy appeals to such a category of people and finds response in it.

So, if one takes a look at the problem of the formation of legitimacy of Church today, it becomes clear that, even though the potential of this institution is considerably strong due to the already-discussed factors, it is nevertheless limited. Such a (extreme ultranationalist) form of religiosity does not appeal to other categories of people (educated, young, financially successful). They share views that are more similar to the values of the Western societies with post-materialistic ethics. Thus, my second main assumption is that *democratic changes will come not from the purely ideological traditional institutions (such as Russian Orthodox Church),* but from the flexible or globally integrated economic structures of society (for example, private business owners, employees of the international companies, etc.). Unfortunately, they do not represent a notable part of the Russian population today.

Conclusion

One can say that there are objective circumstances that predetermine the ideological form of the Russian Orthodox Church today. Due to the historical and socio-cultural reasons, as well as to the economic situation in Russia, the Church has strong authoritarian and nationalistic tendencies today. Using Swidler's terms, it could be said that the Church did not have the liberal ideology as a choice in its "tool kit". Church's activity is simultaneously a model "of" and "for" (Geertz) the political and legal culture in Russia, which is to a certain degree non- and anti-democratic in our times. However, it is important to note that one cannot generalize the conclusion at the level of society viewed as a whole. The already-mentioned aspects are only a part of the whole picture. There are other tendencies, which are worth mentioning. The new generation does not have the cultural experience of communism, and it has started to constitute different patterns of social and political behavior. It is much more open than the previous ones. Additionally, factors such as the globalization process and the economic growth in Russia should be mentioned. They form a different type of system of values.

Every theory assumes some agreed-upon limitations of its representation. However, there is a part of truth that is always reflected. What could be said with a greater sense of certainty in the case of functioning of the Church in Russia and its relation to culture and politics is that at a given moment the democratic tradition in this country was very weak. It is contradicted by a much larger part of totalitarian consciousness (better said, the unconscious part of the human psyche) – this fact can be observed in the activity of the Church.

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Notes:

1 Shenfield identifies similar features between these two ideologies: cooperation of the Church with some fascist organizations; rejection of Enlightenmen, democracy, and belief in Jewish conspiracy; public burning of the books that are considered anti-religious (including the ones, written by liberal Orthodox theologians). (Shenfield 2001, p. 69).

2 Berdyaev wrote that, for example, Russian Marxism has accepted a messianic, mythological form of Marxism rather than its scientific, evolutionary part. Nihilism , paradoxically as it might seem, has also grown on the soil of the Russian Orthodoxy: it is based on denial of the world as it is, seeing it as corrupt and sinful. (Berdyaev *Istoki I smisl russkogo kommunizma. Rysskaia religioznaia ideja I russkoje gosydarstvo. http://www.philosophy.ru/library/berd/comm.html).*