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Religion in Russian Society: State Policy, Regional Challenges, and Individual Rights

Conference Proceedings

Edited by F. Joseph Dresen



OCCASIONAL PAPER #298

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Washington, D.C.

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Co-sponsored by the Henry M. Jackson Foundation

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Nikolas Gvosdev, Editor, *The National Interest*; Senior Fellow, Institute for Strategic Studies, The Nixon Center; and Senior Fellow, Institute for Religion and Public Policy

Catherine Cosman, Senior Policy Analyst, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

Firuz Kazemzadeh, Professor Emeritus of History, Yale University; former Vice Chairman, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom; and Senior Adviser, Office of External Affairs, Baha'i Faith

Discussant: **Kate Brown**, Associate Professor of History, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

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David Abramson is an analyst on Central Asia in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Previously, he worked in the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, where he promoted religious freedom in the Middle East and contributed to U.S. outreach efforts toward the Muslim world, including the American Muslim community. Abramson received a doctorate in cultural anthropology from Indiana University, specializing in community and conflict in post-Soviet Uzbekistan. He spent four years as a research fellow at Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies before heading to Washington. Abramson has lectured and written on Islam and secularism in Uzbekistan, the politics of civil society assistance in Central Asia, and the role of religion in U.S. foreign policy.

Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer is a research professor at Georgetown University in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies (CERES). She is editor of the M. E. Sharpe journal *Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia* and of the books *Shamanic Worlds: Rituals and Lore of Siberia and Central Asia* (1997), *Culture Incarnate: Native Anthropology from Russia* (1995), and *Russian Traditional Culture* (1992). She is author of *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective* (Princeton University Press, 1999). Her fieldwork since 1986 has focused primarily on the Turkic-speaking Sakha [Yakut] of the Russian Federation, and in the 1990s she helped organize exchanges of Native American and Native Siberian leaders. She is editor of a forthcoming volume, *Religion and Politics in the Russian Federation* (M. E. Sharpe), and is at work on a research project, "Siberian Spirits of Diversity: New Religions from Ancient Roots? New Frontiers for World Religions?"

Alexander Bogomolov holds a Ph.D. in Arabic linguistics and speaks fluent Arabic and Persian. He has traveled and lived extensively in the Middle East. Since 1995 he has been vice

president of the Kyiv-based Association of Middle East Studies (AMES), of which he is also a founder. AMES is a nongovernmental think tank engaged in research and policy analysis focusing on the Middle East, Central Asia, the Caucasus, ethnic conflicts, minority issues, and Ukraine's domestic and foreign policies. Bogomolov is the author of *Islamic Identity in Ukraine* (2005), which was declared the national Book of the Year 2005 in humanities in Ukraine. He is a regular contributor to major Ukrainian media (TV, print, radio) on the Middle East and Muslim minority issues.

Kate Brown is an associate professor of history at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is the author of *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Harvard University Press, 2004), which won the American Historical Association's George Louis Beer Prize for the best book in international European history, the Heldt Prize from the Association of Women in Slavic Studies, and an honorable mention for the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies' Wayne C. Vucinich Prize for 2005. She holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of Washington and has received fellowships from the Social Science Research Council, the International Research and Exchanges Board, the Davis Center of Harvard University, the National Council for East European and Eurasian Research, and the Eurasia Foundation.

Catherine Cosman joined the staff of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in late 2003 as senior policy analyst for the region embracing the member states of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). She has also served on the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe as senior analyst on Soviet dissent (1976–89). At Human Rights Watch (1989–92), she wrote several studies on ethnic conflicts in Central Asia and on human rights. At the Free Trade Union Institute (1992–96), she worked with emerging trade unions in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. In Estonia, she was the senior expert

of the OSCE Mission (1996–98.) She managed the Central Asian and Caucasus grants program at the National Endowment for Democracy before joining the Communications Division at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in 1999, where she founded and edited the online periodicals *Media Matters* and *(Un)Civil Societies*. Besides a B.A. in history from Grinnell College, she holds an M.A. from Brown University in Slavic languages and literatures, which she also studied at the doctoral level at Brown. She has also studied at the Free University of Berlin and the All-Union Institute of Cinematography in Moscow.

Robert Crews is an assistant professor in the Department of History at Stanford University. He holds a B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, an M.A. from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. from Princeton University. A former research scholar at the Kennan Institute, he is the author of *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Harvard University Press, 2006).

Sascha Goluboff holds a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is an associate professor of cultural anthropology at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia. She did her dissertation research on Jewish religious revival and ethnic identity in Moscow in 1995 and 1996, and published this work as *Jewish Russians: Upheavals in a Moscow Synagogue* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). Tracking the rapid rise of a transnational congregation headed by a Western rabbi and consisting of Jews from Georgia and the mountains of Azerbaijan and Dagestan, along with Bukharan Jews from Central Asia, *Jewish Russians* evaluates the process that created this diverse gathering and offers an intimate sense of individual interactions in the context of the synagogue's congregation. Goluboff's new fieldwork project is located in the Mountain Jewish village of Krasnaia Sloboda, Azerbaijan. She is interested in the links among mourning rituals, Mountain Jewish women's daily experiences, and Jewish religious and ethnic identity in and beyond the Caucasus.

Nikolas Gvosdev is the editor of *The National Interest* and a senior fellow in strategic studies at the Nixon Center. He is a frequent commentator on U.S.–Russian relations, Russian and

Eurasian affairs, general aspects of U.S. foreign policy, and developments in the Middle East. He received his doctoral and master's degrees from Oxford University, where he studied on a Rhodes Scholarship, and has written or edited a number of books, including *Church-State Relations in the Byzantine and Russian Empires* (Mellen Press, 2001). He has held academic appointments at Baylor University and Georgetown University.

Nancy Hewett has been a foreign affairs officer and senior adviser on Eurasian affairs to the ambassador at large for international religious freedom in the Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL), U.S. Department of State, since June 1999. Her portfolio includes activities promoting religious freedom in the successor states of the former Soviet Union, with a primary focus on Russia and Central Asia. Hewett joined the State Department in June 1993, serving in DRL's Office of Democracy Programs from 1997 to 1999, and before that as special assistant in the Office of the Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to the Newly Independent States, in the Democracy Assistance Office. She holds a Ph.D. in applied linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. Prior to her arrival at the State Department, she spent 20 years in academic life working with the international community, teaching, doing research, and administering programs at a number of universities.

Firuz Kazemzadeh was born in 1924 in Moscow, where his father served for many years on the staff of the Iranian Embassy. He received his college education in the United States, obtaining a B.A. (magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa) and an M.A. from Stanford University in 1947 and a Ph.D. in Russian history from Harvard University in 1950. Having settled in the United States, Kazemzadeh began his academic career as a research fellow in Slavic studies at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He was subsequently a research fellow at the Russian Research Center and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard. In 1956 Kazemzadeh began teaching at Yale University, where he was appointed a professor of history in 1968. He has been professor emeritus since his retirement in 1992. He is the

author of *The Struggle for Transcaucasia, 1917–1921; Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914: A Study in Imperialism*, and of chapters in several collective works such as *The Cambridge History of Iran*, as well as numerous articles in various journals. Having been involved for many years in the defense of human rights, Kazemzadeh was appointed in May 1999 by President Bill Clinton to serve on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom for a term of two years. He served for one year as the Commission's vice chairman and was reappointed for another two-year term in 2001. He has testified before congressional committees on the state of religious freedom and the persecution of religious communities in many countries and on the ratification of treaties on genocide and on torture. For 35 years, Kazemzadeh was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States, serving at various times as its chair, vice chair, secretary, and secretary for external affairs. He has taught at Baha'i schools in Europe and North America, and lectured on Baha'i topics in Europe, the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand. Kazemzadeh was for more than 30 years a member of the editorial board of *World Order*, a Baha'i magazine.

Alexey Malashenko is a scholar in residence and co-chair of the Religion, Society, and Security Program at the Carnegie Moscow Center, and has been a professor at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2000. He previously worked at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and has taught at Colgate University in the United States. He is an expert on Muslim populations in the Russian Federation and Commonwealth of Independent States, and has authored, co-authored, or edited more than a dozen books on the subject. Malashenko holds advanced degrees in political science and history from Moscow State University.

Margaret Paxson joined the Kennan Institute in November 2002 as a senior associate. She holds a B.A. in anthropology from McGill University (1987) and an M.Sc. and a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Montreal (1991, 1999). Paxson's doctoral research was on the subject of social memory in rural Russia,

and was based on more than 17 months of fieldwork in a single village in the Russian North. In 2005 Paxson published *Solovyovo: The Story of Memory in a Russian Village* (Indiana University Press and Woodrow Wilson Press). In addition to social memory, Paxson's broader research interests include post-socialist transition, agrarian religion and traditional healing, and the philosophy of science. During 1999–2000 she worked with David Hoffman of *The Washington Post* conducting research for his book *The Oligarchs*. She has published academic articles in various venues and journalistic pieces in *The Washington Post Sunday Magazine* and *The Wilson Quarterly*. Paxson has received awards and fellowships from the Social Science Research Council, the International Research and Exchanges Board, the Kennan Institute, and other organizations. She has also worked as a consultant in organizational anthropology; a coordinator, designer, and presenter for Mayor William A. Johnson's Biracial Partnerships for Community Progress, a race relations initiative in Rochester, New York; and as an instructor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University, Montreal.

Blair A. Ruble is director of the Kennan Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington. He also serves as director of the Comparative Urban Studies Project at the Woodrow Wilson Center. He holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Toronto (1973, 1977), and an A.B. in political science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1971). He has edited more than a dozen volumes. His booklength works include a trilogy examining the fate of Russian provincial cities during the 20th century, *Leningrad: Shaping a Soviet City* (University of California Press, 1990); *Money Sings! The Changing Politics of Urban Space in Postsoviet Yaroslavl* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1995); and *Second Metropolis: Pragmatic Pluralism in Gilded Age Chicago, Silver Age Moscow, and Meiji Osaka* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). His latest book, *Creating Diversity Capital: Transnational Migrants in Montreal, Washington, and Kyiv*, was published by the Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press in 2005.

Neelima Shah is a program officer at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation in Seattle, Washington, where she leads the foundation's programs in land use planning. She holds a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Washington, and has been a German Marshall Fellow.

Elizabeth Sewell is associate director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University (BYU), where she writes and lectures on church-state and comparative law topics and has co-organized and participated in dozens of conferences and academic projects with other scholars and with government leaders from around the world. She has taken part in drafting commentaries and legal analyses of pending legislation and other developments affecting religious freedom, and has assisted in drafting an amicus brief on international religious freedom issues for submission to the U.S. Supreme Court. She has published numerous articles and chapters on church-state issues and has been an associate editor of *Facilitating Freedom of Religion and Belief* and two books on law and religion in post-communist Europe. She has also testified before Congress on religious freedom issues.

Before joining the International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Sewell was an associate in the Washington, D.C., office of Mayer, Brown & Platt. She also clerked for Judge J. Clifford Wallace on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Sewell graduated summa cum laude from the J. Reuben Clark Law School at BYU, where she was editor in chief

of the *BYU Law Review*. She has taught courses on comparative law, comparative constitutional law, international human rights, and European Union law at the J. Reuben Clark Law School.

H. Knox Thames has served since 2001 as counsel to the U.S. Helsinki Commission, an independent federal agency tasked with monitoring human rights within the 55 participating states that make up the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). For the Commission, Thames monitors religious freedom and issues concerning refugees and internally displaced persons in all 55 OSCE countries. He has served as a member of U.S. State Department delegations to numerous OSCE meetings, as well as traveled on behalf of the Commission throughout Europe and Central Asia. The State Department has also selected Thames to serve as one of the two U.S. appointees to the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Thames's previous professional experience includes associations with World Relief Refugee Services and AmeriCorps, and graduate legal research with the State Department's Office of the Legal Adviser for Human Rights and Refugees, the legal office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the U.S. Helsinki Commission. He has authored numerous articles and reports on a variety of human rights issues, both for the U.S. Helsinki Commission and in his private capacity. He is a member of the Maryland State Bar Association and the American Society of International Law.

Conference Organizers

The Henry M. Jackson Foundation

The Henry M. Jackson Foundation is guided by the principles, values, and interests of the late Senator Henry M. Jackson. His emphasis on the need for objective analysis, making informed policy choices, and taking a longer-term view is reflected in all of the Foundation's work. The Foundation seeks to promote dialogue between the academic and policy worlds, between the public and private sectors, and between citizens and their government.

Since its establishment in 1983, the Henry M. Jackson Foundation has committed more than \$17 million to nonprofit organizations and educational institutions in the United States and Russia. These grants provide essential support and seed funding for new initiatives that offer promising models for replication and address critical issues in four areas in which the late Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson played a key leadership role during his 43-year tenure in the United States Congress: international affairs education, environment and natural resources management, public service, and human rights.

Through the Foundation's grant making, and strategic partnerships and initiatives, the Foundation seeks to make a lasting impact in the region, in the nation, and in the world today. The Foundation continues to actively make grants in international affairs and human rights and to a very limited extent in its environment and natural resources management and public service programs. In addition, through the Foundation's strategic partnerships and initiatives strategy, the Foundation utilizes the expertise of its Board of Governors and staff to convene leaders to discuss timely public-policy issues, and partner with local and national organizations and with foundations to leverage its resources and carry forward the Jackson legacy.

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The Kennan Institute was founded as a division of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in December 1974 through the joint initiative of Ambassador George F. Kennan, then Wilson Center Director James Billington, and historian S. Frederick Starr. Named in honor of Ambassador Kennan's relative, George Kennan "the Elder," a 19th century explorer of Russia and Siberia, the Kennan Institute is committed to improving American expertise and knowledge about Russia and the former Soviet Union.

The Kennan Institute bridges the gap between the world of ideas and the world of public affairs by bringing scholars and government specialists together to discuss political, social, and economic issues affecting Russia and other successor states to the Soviet Union, seeking always to place these issues within their historical context.

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Established by an act of Congress in 1968, the Wilson Center is our nation's official living memorial to President Woodrow Wilson. As both a distinguished scholar—the only American president with a Ph.D.—and a national leader, Wilson felt strongly that the scholar and the policymaker were "engaged in a common enterprise."

The Wilson Center is a nonpartisan institute for advanced study and a neutral forum for open, serious, and informed dialogue. It brings preeminent thinkers to Washington for extended periods of time to interact with policymakers through a large number of programs and projects. The Center seeks to separate the important from the inconsequential and to take a historical and broad perspective on the issues.

Preface

In June 2006, the Kennan Institute organized a conference with the support of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation titled “Religion in Russian Society: State Policy, Regional Challenges, and Individual Rights.” The conference convened experts from Russia and Ukraine to present their firsthand expertise on the subject, as well as scholars, policymakers, and experts on religion in Russia. The resulting presentations and dialogue provided a rich mixture of expertise and experience to the conference participants. This occasional paper is an edited transcript of the proceedings.

As the title suggests, the conference addressed three main issues: the Russian government’s policies and practices with regard to religion; the challenges facing regional governments and institutions that have to function amid religiously diverse populations; and the space for individual religious rights in a state where one religion, Orthodoxy, is so importantly linked with Russian national identity.

The topic of religion and religious tolerance is rapidly emerging as an important means of understanding how Russia is developing as a society. In a post-1991 climate of new state formation, changing demographics, and mass migration, religion touches upon all spheres of social, political, and cultural life. In a region in flux, issues of religion and religious tolerance are also important for national and international security.

The interaction between religion and the state in Russian history is extraordinarily complex. Centuries of imperial expansion and rule over an increasingly multiethnic and multiconfessional population were followed by 70 years of harshly imposed state atheism in the Soviet Union. The end of Soviet rule brought unprecedented religious freedom to the Russian people. It also ushered in an influx of foreign religious influences that challenged Russian notions of identity and society.

The first panel, on Russian policy and practices on religion, raised a number of issues that must be considered if one is to understand the words and actions of the central government.

Current policy, as Robert Crews observed, closely reflects the tsarist-era practice of state tolerance in conjunction with co-optation of major religions by state authority. At the same time, since the passage of Russia’s 1997 law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations, those religions that are not identified as being within the Russian tradition are subject to harassment and unequal treatment. As a result, the Russian government is often accused of repressing religion. As the panelists noted, however, Russia shares the European tradition of state–church relations, in which a primary religion is frequently favored under law and custom.

Regardless of state preferences, the reality on the ground in many Russian regions is one of different ethnicities and faiths or branches of faiths living in proximity. The second panel of the conference addressed how these diverse groups function in practice. There is competition for members and for influence with and resources from the state, as illustrated by Sascha Goluboff’s case study on Jewish groups. A particularly valuable contrasting example presented by Alexander Bogomolov concerns Ukraine, which confronts the same issues of religious diversity, but does not extend official state preferences to any religion or religious group.

Finally, the panel on individual religious freedom framed an interesting discussion on the notion of freedom itself. Nikolas Gvosdev pointed out that Russians have unprecedented freedoms as individuals. It is when they press for rights as members within a group, especially a minority or foreign religious group, that they encounter resistance from the state. Firuz Kazemzadeh noted that religious freedom in Russia today is incomparably greater than in the Soviet era; yet, in comparison with the United States, it is severely limited.

This is but a brief overview of the conference proceedings. The assembled panelists and discussants engaged in a substantive discussion ranging from how religion is lived on a personal level, to whether state policy prevents or exacerbates religious extremism, to how reli-

gion shapes the identity of individuals and communities.

The Kennan Institute would like to thank Catherine Cosman of the U.S. Commission on

International Religious Freedom for her invaluable advice and input in organizing this conference. We also gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation.

—*F. Joseph Dresen*

Welcoming Remarks

Blair A. Ruble, Director, Kennan Institute

Neelima Shah, Program Officer, Henry M. Jackson Foundation

Blair A. Ruble: The topic of religion and religious tolerance is rapidly emerging as critical to how we understand what is taking place in Russia and how Russia is developing as a society. As the title of the conference suggests, we want to try to talk through the Russian government's policies and practices, the challenges facing regional governments and institutions—particularly in areas that have to function with religiously diverse populations—and the space for individual religious rights in Russia.

This program fits into a series of programs we have held at the Kennan Institute. Later this summer, we will hold a session about how we talk about the issues of religion, of Russia and religion, and of religion in societies in general. We feel that there is a paucity of language for the policy community, even for the academic community, for talking about religion. We are hoping this conversation will begin to move toward how to talk about religion as a living social ecosystem that interacts with other social ecosystems; to conceive of how one talks about religion as a verb rather than as a noun; and to talk about it as a living aspect of social life, including state policy. Our hope is to integrate the discussion of the nouns of policy with a discussion of the verbs of the practices of religious communities.

This conference is the result of conversations we have had over a long period of time with Lara Iglitzin at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation and with Cathy Cosman with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. They have been full of wonderful ideas and suggestions about how a meeting like this should be organized in order to be productive for everyone. It has been a pleasure to work

with both of them, and also with the person from the Jackson Foundation to whom I am about to turn over the floor, Neelima Shah.

Neelima Shah: I am delighted to be here to represent the Henry M. Jackson Foundation. I would like to add my welcome to Blair's, and to thank you all for participating today in what should be a very provocative, thoughtful, and informative discussion.

With this conference, the Jackson Foundation is very pleased to continue what has been an ongoing and, we think, fruitful partnership with the Kennan Institute. This kind of partnership allows the Jackson Foundation to have a bit more of a presence in Washington, D.C. We work nationally, and partnerships like this help us do our job better. In this case, it allows us to work with one of the premier institutes working to convene scholars and interested people in the community on key issues in Russian studies.

We believe that the subject matter of this two-day conference is of profound importance, and the Jackson Foundation is very pleased to be part of this timely discussion. Some of you may know that the Jackson Foundation has been working in Russia on human rights issues for about a dozen years and has spent over a million dollars on projects working on the ground to support nonprofit organizations in Russia, primarily concentrating on basic human rights, political and civil rights, and religious freedom and tolerance. We hope that today's agenda will help the Foundation to do its job better and improve its informed and thoughtful grant making in the area by learning from the experts assembled here.

Panel 1: Russian State Policies and Practices on Religion

Chair: David Abramson, Analyst for Russia and Eurasia, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State

Alexey Malashenko, Scholar in Residence and Program Co-Chair, Religion, Society, and Security Program, Carnegie Moscow Center

Robert Crews, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Stanford University, and former Research Scholar, Kennan Institute

Nancy Hewett, Senior Adviser on Eurasian Affairs, Office of International Religious Freedom, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State

Elizabeth Sewell, Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

Alexey Malashenko: I think it is true that with Russia, the more we try to understand the real role of religion in Russia the less we understand it. That is because of the changing situation inside Russia. It is also because of big distinctions between the relative positions of different religions. So to summarize at the onset of my presentation, my opinion is that religion in Russia, as ideology and institution, continues to play a very important role, and sometimes we don't understand it.

Today I want to concentrate my attention on two religions, Orthodoxy and Islam. Why? Because when people speak about Russia and the notion of religion, the general vision of Russia is that it is an Orthodox society and country with a very large Islamic presence. I don't want to say that we have to neglect other religions, but in my opinion, when we talk about religion in Russia we first have to deal with these two religions: Orthodoxy and Islam.

Very simply, this is true because approximately 80 percent of the Russian population, or more, is Orthodox. There are something like 20 million Muslims in Russia. The official figure is 14.5 million, but it depends on how we count Muslims in the Russian Federation. We have to talk about these two religions because of general history, because of their presence throughout Russian society, because of their influence on Russian politics and the state, and because these two religions have had some political meaning of late. Perhaps I

should add one more modern problem—the credibility of religion.

If I am not mistaken, the credibility or approval level of Orthodoxy is about 55 percent. It is much higher than the rating of the Russian government, though perhaps the rating received by Russian president Vladimir Putin is little bit higher than the ratings religion in general and Orthodoxy in particular receive.

I talk about religion, and of course you have to ask me what, specifically, I am talking about—clergymen, ideology, tradition, culture? I do not know, because when we try to understand the relationship between state and religion, when we want to understand the role of religion in society, we have to get a general vision, because sometimes we talk about religion as if about an ideological or spiritual elite. Sometimes we talk about religion as culture. Sometimes we may use the notion of a religious community. So I apologize, but in my presentation I have to use the word *religion* in a different context.

What about the Russian state today, and the administrations of presidents Putin and Yeltsin? They both needed religion. Primarily, of course, they needed two religions—Islam and Orthodoxy—because of these two faith's high level of credibility.

Second, Yeltsin and perhaps especially Putin badly needed a certain additional or supplementary legitimating factor. The state, and the official programs and policies of the state, are not very popular in Russian society. The state

needs the approval of religion, according to some religious idea. Putin, his team in general, and the secular elite needed a certain religious interpretation of their political and social life.

For instance, several weeks ago at a certain Russian Orthodox *sobor* (assembly), the participants presented a religious idea, an Orthodox idea, for Russian official policy, and it was approved with pleasure by the Kremlin. In the Kremlin, they understand very well that they need a certain endorsement from outside for their policies in the social and political fields.

The leadership of the Russian Muslim community did the same thing. It presented an Islamic social conception, but it was very close to the state's secular conception of the development of certain social problems.

This may be evidence that despite the popularity of Putin, he feels that he is weak. Russian tradition and Russian history generally show that when a ruler feels that he is weak, he turns to church and to religion. I want to repeat that today, in certain situations, Putin is sometimes ready to accept assistance even from official Russian Islam, and in my opinion that is very important.

The second question is: If Russians respect the spiritual leadership of both Orthodoxy and Islam, why do those religions need the state? This question does not need a long explanation. Cooperation and alliance with the state creates more favorable working conditions for the religious and spiritual elites. It gives them additional authority in the eyes of believers, because if they are closer to the president, then they are closer to power. And, of course, cooperation with the state gives the Patriarch, the bishops, the muftis, and the imams additional opportunities to realize their ambitions, including political ambitions and material ambitions. Good relations with the state give them the opportunity to save their property. As you know, the question of who owns what is a very important question in the relations between the Kremlin and the Orthodox and Muslim communities.

Of course, Islam and Orthodoxy are both very politicized. That is quite normal, in my opinion. We declare, and it is written in the Russian Constitution, that religion is separated from the state, but it is not true. The degree of political activity of religion is very high, whether in Orthodoxy or Islam. I could provide many examples.

There is, of course, a certain amount of cooperation between different political parties and religious groups. There is cooperation between Russian nationalist parties and even some left parties and religious groups—mostly Orthodox. I may say that there is a problem of some Russian nationalist parties wanting to nationalize certain religions. If you read Russian religious newspapers, if you look through the Internet, you may note that in nationalist ideology there is now practically no barrier between religion and nationalism. They talk now about Russian Orthodoxy, even while they forget about the presence of Orthodoxy in places such as Serbia and Bulgaria. This is a big difference between today's situation and the situation two or even one year ago. Russian Orthodoxy has become more and more a national and nationalist religion.

The idea that Russian nationalism, the "Russian way of development," and Russian Orthodoxy's views on human rights have priority over anything that comes from abroad is very prominent now. Russian nationalism, or perhaps, more accurately, Russian isolationism, is increasingly based on Orthodoxy. That is why in April 2006 there was so much talk about Orthodox human rights and Orthodox democratic values and so on.

In Islam, the main problem is that in these moves, the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox ideology are completely supported by official Islam. They think alike—that traditional values are the values of both Orthodoxy and Islam, and that these values have to be protected against all kinds of penetration from abroad.

A week ago, I assisted at a special seminar organized by the Central Spiritual Muslim Board of the Russian Federation. The main task of this seminar was how to create a barrier against penetration from abroad. The participants did not discuss the problem of radical Islam; they did not discuss the problem of Osama bin Laden. They only talked about the West, about American and European influence. So a coalition between Islam, Orthodoxy, the state, and nationalism is evident.

I do not want to talk a lot about relations between Islam and Orthodoxy. It is an exciting problem; if you ask, I can answer. But what about the future? The two main religions of the Russian Federation will play an important role

in a generation or so. I think this way because I do not believe that in several years the Russian Federation will reach a high level of political, social, and economic stability. I do not believe that Russia will be able to avoid political, social, and economic crises. In that situation, where there is an emergence of instability or crisis the role of religion will increase, in particular the role of Orthodoxy and Islam. The state, the central administration in the Kremlin, will once again need assistance from religion.

But at the same time, if I am indeed right and Russia must survive some crisis, we have to pay more attention to Islam. The recent history of Russia proves that while Orthodoxy constantly tends to support the central administration, there is a deep split within Islam. If something dangerous happens, I believe that once again we will have to deal with a very strong Islamic opposition—and not only in the North Caucasus region but everywhere, even in regions that are now considered very settled. Perhaps I am too pessimistic in my remarks, but I make these short observations based only on my point of view. Thank you very much.

Robert Crews: Thank you. In the tradition of appealing to multiple confessions at once, I will take the Manichean approach. Since Alexey has been somewhat pessimistic and gloomy—although he is probably right—I will try to counterbalance that by being overly optimistic.

I have three points to make as an historian. Most basically, all of this has a history. We are all interested in human rights and contemporary politics, but I think that some attention to the past—and perhaps, more appropriately, the Russian revisiting of the past—since 1991 might shed some insight into all of this.

While Alexey was pessimistic in some respects with regard to Islam, I am inclined to see Russian politics dovetailing in key ways with European politics, specifically on the Continent. I have in mind principally what we see in Germany and France with respect to state attempts to manage and police Islam. I share with all of you the concern with events in the North Caucasus, which I think are exceptional with respect to the wider Muslim community in Russia. I share all of your criticisms of the Russian state, yet I have some anxiety about singling out Russia. I think it would be useful to put this in some global context. A case study of

Islam may allow us to sort out what is particular to Russia, and what is more broadly a global issue of human rights.

Since 1991 the Russian state, like the other former Soviet republics, has struggled with a new obligation to try to meet international human rights norms with respect to religious policies. I think we can applaud the effort. It has not always been so serious, and one reason why is because in its search for legitimacy, as Alexey noted, the Russian state has tried to appeal to what it calls distinctly Russian historical traditions. This is what anthropologists would call an invented tradition, but there is a deep history, beginning with Catherine the Great, of Russian toleration. This is not toleration in the American sense of *laissez-faire*. This tradition that Catherine introduced was really one that involved intensive state policing of a limited group of confessions earmarked for toleration. So in addition to Orthodoxy, we have Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam as the religions most clearly marked for toleration under Yeltsin and Putin.

But what is interesting about this in the Russian case, both in the 19th century and today in Russia, but also for Europe, is that the state's attempts to construct institutions have run into some fundamental sociological and theological impediments arising from the Muslim past. There is nothing like a Muslim church. As one historian at Columbia University has argued, Islam has known neither the burden nor the benefit of a church structure. So naturally, for states in various political contexts that have attempted to control Islam, including Europe and Russia today and Russia in the past, the state tries to create some kind of churchlike structure. As Alexey noted, one of the chief impulses is to create some kind of body of doctrinal positions that will assist the state in advancing its policies. Alexey already has given us some contemporary examples of this, in which the so-called official clerics supported by the Kremlin have very reliably offered authoritative confirmations of state policy, arguing that there is some kind of religious foundation for such positions. This was true in the 19th century, and this is true in other countries today as well.

But the flip side of this is that in constructing a church structure, the state also has the burden of trying to identify that which is

authentic about the tradition. What's traditional? How do we know what is traditional in Islam? The Russian state did not know in the 19th century, and it does not know today. In practice, this has brought the Russian state, past and present, into dialogue with Muslim authorities, and also, critically, with Russian scholars, historians, and Orientalists, as well as those trained in the disciplines of Islamic studies, Arabic philology, and so on. We have a long tradition of Russian scholars working within the bureaucracy in the Russian imperial period. In many of the cases that have been flagged by human rights activists as violations of Muslim human rights, it is these Orientalist scholars, especially in the provinces, who have re-emerged to interpret particular Muslim texts in order for the state to identify which claims are nontraditional, which texts are somehow going to incite hatred, which texts are illegitimate, and which texts are going to incite terrorism. This is clearly a reflection of another component of this institutionalizing policy, which is a strong anticlerical streak. In this regard, the 19th-century context is critical, because the state wants a church, it wants official Muslim clerics, and it wants to lend these clerics support insofar as policing is necessary to keep out rivals, in a kind of trade-off. Alexey noted that Muslim clerics receive something in exchange for offering confirmation of state views. So as part of this policing practice, there is, of course, a reward for clerics who go along. Yet there is also a deep sense of distrust. Not all of these local institutions backed by the state enjoy equal support, and so there is a wide variation by region in the local institutions that receive state support.

There is a doctrinal interest at stake here. Another concrete example is the access that some of these official Muslim institutions enjoy with respect to the army. The Mufti's Council in Moscow has a publication that is aimed at Muslim Russian soldiers, which offers so-called moral and so-called patriotic teachings in the spirit of the Putin ideology.

As I noted, there is a regional character. The North Caucasian cases are somewhat distinctive and problematic, and I suspect we will return to them over and over in the course of our discussions.

A second point about these hierarchies is that whenever the state has tried to attempt to cre-

ate a churchlike structure in Russia in the 19th century, or in Russia today, it has unleashed a hotly contested struggle for religious authority. Who speaks for Islam? Which Muslim clerics should garner state support? And here, I am interested in hearing the later presentations, especially with respect to the Jewish communities. Throughout the 19th century in Russia, the Muslims and the Jews, ironically, shared all these wonderful dilemmas about religious authority: which rabbis would enjoy state support, which kind of Judaism would be tolerated under the tsars? In the little bits I know of the Jewish cases, we have seen rabbis competing for state patronage. And in the Muslim case, there is a very strong suspicion among journalists, among human rights activists, and among Muslims themselves that denunciations of Muslims by Muslims are at the heart of a number of cases—particularly where clerics have been charged with Wahhabism, which is an elastic term we can return to later, or offenses ranging from pornography to pedophilia, drug possession, and possession of weapons. All these charges often can be traced beyond the prosecutor's office to the rival mosque, whether in St. Petersburg or in the provinces.

This is nothing new to Putin's Russia. This has a long tradition within the history of Muslim societies, particularly in Russia and other places where the state is trying to identify a single Islamic authority to which the state can speak.

Again I will highlight the role of non-Muslims, that is, of scholars, people in the universities and in academic institutions in Russia, who have also been called on to identify which behaviors are terrorist and which texts are going to induce terrorism, all in a kind of Orientalist tradition that is familiar to people who study colonialism in the 19th century. So first there is an impulse to create institutions; second, there is a real dilemma about religious authority and the unleashing of contests among Muslims.

The third critical factor in Russia is the geopolitical or even international one. In the past, as in the case of Russia's treatment of Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Buddhists, the Kremlin has had anxiety about the transnational nature of all these communities. For example, there is the pope in Rome. In the 19th century, of course, it was the sultan in Istanbul, who appeared to be the potential center of Muslim authority, who would compete for the alle-

giance of Russia's Muslims. Today it is more diffuse in the absence of a single Islamic center. Despite bin Laden's claims to embody that center, there really isn't one.

Alexey has already noted that there is a strong concern with sealing off Russia's borders. This is of course a project of the FSB [Federal Security Service], but it is also, as Alexey rightly noted, dear to the hearts of Muslim authorities who enjoy the Kremlin's patronage. Yet this linkage between Russia's Muslims and Muslims abroad is somewhat more complicated than I am making it, because the desire on the part of Muslims in the state is not simply to seal off the border. It is also to have good relations. This is why the attempt to marginalize alternative centers of authority for Russia's Muslims is an impetus behind sealing off the borders. Russia's concern with maintaining good relations with its Muslim neighbors is also a major break with Russian policies toward Islam. That is, it operates as a kind of moderating influence.

Here also we see continuity with the 19th century. Russia has wanted influence in Afghanistan. It has wanted influence in Iran, as is clear today from the nuclear issue. Russia would like to have better relations with Turkey. There is fear of the spread of Islamic radicalism from the south, but there is also a strong interest in exporting influence and maintaining good relations, especially at a moment when U.S. relations with the Muslim world are very poor. I think the case of Iran is the most compelling example, which we can discuss further.

Russia's concern with its image in the Muslim world has led it to become an observer to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It is not yet a full-fledged member, to my knowledge, [Editor's note: the Russian Federation is an observer state to the Organization of the Islamic Conference] but it participates in these discussions and clearly has sent out feelers again, especially in this geopolitical context.

The last reason why the international context of geopolitics and the international discourse of human rights and politics are so important is that the Putin regime has used the war on terror to identify a wide range of Muslim actors as extremists and, most recently, as terrorists. This geopolitical context is also one in which Russia can appear to justify its actions in the Caucasus and elsewhere, claim-

ing that it is engaged in a war of attrition against terrorists. But I think it is useful to recall in Washington that this is very much akin to what we have seen in Europe and, indeed, in the United States, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

I see Russian politics toward religion actually moving Russia closer to Europe. Now, this is not a cause for celebration. Obviously, I have a dim view of European policies toward Islam and its Muslim communities. Of course, there are differences. Russia's Muslims are indigenous. Islam is the oldest religion in Russia, in fact, with conversions occurring before the arrival of the Orthodox Christian missionaries.

As I have stated, the Russian state has approached Islam by trying to construct institutions, by cutting off transnational ties, and by manipulating religious authority to validate state policies. It has also used these institutions to try to conduct surveillance of the activities of mosque communities and personnel.

I will conclude by suggesting that the Russian pattern fits a broader European pattern—one that really goes back to the early 19th century, when structurally the mold of Russian state building and Russian state politics was laid with Russia looking to Europe, looking to Napoleon, looking to France, and looking to France's attempt to accommodate but also discipline Protestants and Jews. For me, this is very much a European story, yet I share with you the anxiety about the state of human rights and religious freedom in Russia today.

Thank you.

Nancy Hewett: I will turn from our last speaker's historical approach to a focus on the events of the last year. My office reports to Congress on religious freedom every year, as required by the International Religious Freedom Act. We produce reports on religious freedom, which are available on the State Department website [www.state.gov]. We follow events not only to advocate on behalf of religious freedom in our foreign policy but to get a picture of what actually is happening, in order to inform our foreign policy. We noted in our last religious freedom report on Russia, which came out in November 2005, that conditions deteriorated for some minority faiths while remaining largely the same for others. I certainly agree that the vast majority of Russians practice their faith freely if they are Russian

Orthodox or if they are Muslims affiliated with the congregations that have official clerics.

But religious freedom in Russia remains incompletely realized as long as there are minority religious groups who are harassed and have difficulties. Usually, these are the groups that have strong ties to foreigners, as our previous speakers have suggested. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses have difficulties. Even though they have been in Russia since pre-revolutionary times, they quite often are considered to be tools of the West. They have had a great deal of difficulty, especially after being banned last year in Moscow. Although they have not been banned in other cities, they now have increasing difficulty finding venues for their large meetings, which are an important part of their worship practice.

Most recently in Moscow, on April 12, their most sacred liturgical event of the year, their Commemorative Dinner for the Death of the Lord, was interrupted by Special Forces. They put 200 people out in the street, would not let them finish the service, took about 14 of the leaders down to the police station, and when their lawyer arrived, they beat the lawyer. This does seem like quite an excessive response. In reporting this, the Jehovah's Witnesses did say to us that we should be sure to acknowledge that they did, however, have meetings in many other districts in Moscow that were uninterrupted. So it was just in the one place where they experienced this difficulty. Their national headquarters in St. Petersburg is currently under pressure because the thought is, I believe, that if the authorities can find an excuse to shut down the national headquarters for any kind of infraction—taxes, violations of fire codes—they will have an excuse then to shut the church down nationally. Right now the Jehovah's Witnesses have a national registration as a religious organization, and that is what allows them to continue to worship, even though they have been banned in Moscow.

The Scientologists have not been able to even register as a religion, and they have difficulty even setting up centers as social organizations.

We find that the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia, headed by Metropolitan Valentine of Suzdal, is having many difficulties, despite the recent attempt to unify that Orthodox alternative under the Patriarch of

Moscow. Not all members wish to unite under Moscow, and those who do not are continuing to have severe difficulties. Metropolitan Valentine was attacked in his home. He is diabetic. The bandages were removed from his feet, and his feet were beaten. He was knocked unconscious. He lost the use of a foot, and part of his foot had to be amputated. He was in the hospital for six months. Many of the clergy under his jurisdiction reported being threatened when they went public with the fact that the Church of St. Olga, which adheres to this particular Orthodox alternative, was turned over to the mainstream Russian Orthodox Church by the courts.

There have been other congregations of other alternative Russian Orthodox believers that have reported difficulties. We know that some Roman Catholic congregations and some Baptists have had difficulties. You can read about these things in the Religious Freedom Report and in the Religious Freedom Section of the Human Rights Report. There are some congregations of evangelical nondenominational Protestants that we might expect to have difficulties with their tithes and sometimes their funding coming from the West. Of course, the Muslim congregations that have been mentioned that have some connections outside of Russia have difficulties as well.

Although it is primarily with local authorities that minority religious groups tend to have the greatest difficulties, we sometimes see trouble from the Federal Security Service, the OMON special forces unit, and the Procuracy. These agencies or institutions, in which the role of the federal government is intertwined with that of local representatives of those agencies, are apparently acting on behalf of their parent agencies or acquiescing in the mistreatment and abuse of minority religious groups.

I mentioned the harassment of Jehovah's Witnesses, the raids on worship services, denial of worship space, the blacklisting of groups as dangerous sects or cults, the closures of places of worship. We have seen some groups denied registration or have their registration revoked. This has been the case for some of the mosques in the Caucasus. We have seen slander against minority religions, including portrayals of Muslims as terrorists. We also have seen some television programs portray the evangelical Protestants and Jehovah's Witnesses as danger-

ous sects and cults, thereby increasing pressure on these groups over the past year.

One interesting thing that has happened, which I think is supported by some of the things we heard this morning from earlier speakers, is that we have seen a near cessation of attacks on Pentecostal churches. We do hear from time to time of attacks, but they have almost come to a complete standstill. Some people have thought that it might have been prompted by the attention the U.S. Congress put on the issue last year. Congress had a hearing on April 14 in which it highlighted the arson attacks on Pentecostal and Baptist churches, and there have been some congressional resolutions in support of minority religious groups in Russia.

But many think and argue that this is really the result of the participation of the Pentecostal bishop Sergei Ryakhovsky in the Public Chamber—that his courting by, and some people would say co-opting by, the Russian government has led to the cessation of all of the attacks. Earlier, he was under pressure to join the Public Chamber and become more politically active, and we saw an increase in these attacks and activities against the Pentecostal churches. This is something about which some observers have wondered.

We have seen pressure on some Muslim groups, which the authorities partly justify as being antiterrorist activity. We have seen that in Europe as well, of course. We heard of regional officials closing mosques in Nalchik in October, which some observers thought contributed to the violence there. We have seen how a mosque in Astrakhan, one that was supported by the mayor of a previous administration, suddenly found its congregation passing into disfavor with the current mayor. Now the mosque, which had been nearing completion, is to be torn down because of violations of certain building inspection codes. Some experts note that there are rumors, and it could be an urban legend, that President Putin was on a visit and did not like the sight of the mosque on the road from the airport into the center of town, which was why this action against the mosque was initiated. There were those who tried to have some kind of a compromise by erecting a Russian Orthodox Church in the vicinity, but I gather that that alternative was turned down. The last I heard is that the mosque will be destroyed. The

visual effect on the population of seeing a mosque being torn down is at odds with what one would expect enlightened authorities to desire to promote Muslim engagement and moderation in that area.

We get reports from human rights advocates who try to provide us with evidence that security officers have increased their harassment of Muslim clerics, arbitrarily arresting, planting evidence on, and reportedly even torturing some of the observant Muslims in the North Caucasus. There are Muslim believers who claim that they are not involved in extremist activity, but who have been targeted for harassment and ill treatment because they are observant.

I mentioned the mosque closings. There have also been denials of registration for many mosques. For example, the Stavropol regional authorities have denied 39 of 47 applications, which is a rather high level of denial.

There has been the restrictive and intrusive legislation that is just coming into force on non-commercial organizations that has some provisions which, if applied to religious organizations, could possibly be used to intimidate or close them. They certainly are intrusive or restrictive. I am not a lawyer, but we have asked lawyers at the State Department to look at the legislation. Until the G-8 meeting is over and all of the implementing regulations have been worked out, we are not going to know how this law is going to be implemented, but there is a potential for abuse there. The law on nongovernmental organizations [NGO law] amends four different Russian laws. The law on closed administrative territorial formations does not seem to apply to religious groups. The law on public associations does not apply specifically to religious groups, but in fact says that all but religious organizations are affected by it. The law on nonprofit organizations has the potential to do the most mischief. The bulk of the law does not apply, but it does amend Article 32 with respect to new reporting requirements, and provides authority for the Ministry of Justice, which is the registering entity, to request certain documents from religious groups. Authorities are even permitted under the law to send representatives to participate in events and to conduct an annual review of any organization's activities, including activities of religious organizations, to see if they are in conformity with the stated goals under their statutes.

There are a couple of provisions that we are uncertain about, but one such rule will require the provision of certain kinds of organizational data about the organization within three days of its effectuation. The implementation of that rule is still being worked out, but it might include providing the names of the founding members, if they are still attached to the organization. It might be that the people who will represent the government agencies involved will be listed as the contacts for the organization with the government. It is not quite clear to us how that is going to work.

Then there is the civil code, which is the fourth law that the NGO law amends, and those effects are still not clear to us. I think we will know much more after the G-8 meeting is over and the Russian government then turns its attention to nongovernmental organizations. But I think it does suffice to say that this NGO law does not amend the federal Law on the Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations of 1997, and the latter is still the primary law that regulates the formation, registration, and dissolution of religious organizations.

While I have focused on the negative from the past year, which is a necessity since we are tasked with monitoring what is going on, I don't wish to give the wrong impression of what is happening in Russia. Certainly it is the case that the vast majority of Russians have what they would say is religious freedom, if they are Russian Orthodox or if they are Muslims. There are also many Pentecostals who worship freely and have no problems, and there are many other Protestant groups that are able to worship and have no problems. We hear about the problems because it is our job to report on them.

Elizabeth Sewell: What I would like to do is to try to pull this information together a little bit, to tie together some of the current developments in the policies and practices of the Russian state with some of the historical analysis and some other features of Russian culture and history that we have heard about. Some of the current practices are part of the legacy of the cultural and political attributes of the Soviet and tsarist eras.

Specifically, I will look at issues like the lack of rule of law, tendencies to have a strong ruler—and then for subordinates to anticipate the desires or presumed wishes of their superiors—and

Russians' ambivalent relationships with foreigners. I will also look at some of the state policies and practices that are new and have come about as a result of the ideological vacuum at the fall of the Soviet era. We have heard about some of the attempts to bring in and institutionalize the dominant religions. This is an interesting situation, because unlike in the tsarist era, individual religions must now compete in a more pluralistic, globalized society with other conceptions that focus more on protection of individual rights or on the separation of church and state.

But first, a look back at the legacy of Soviet and tsarist policies and practices. One thing that I am not sure has been brought out is the idea of the lack of rule of law. I think it is difficult to overestimate the impact this is having on religious groups and others. Nancy Hewett mentioned a number of practical problems that religious groups face. Part of the problem is that they have no recourse. They are not able to turn to courts and expect neutral, evenhanded treatment of their cases. There is still a sense of telephone justice, where the courts rule based on outside influences instead of the law. There is arbitrariness from the police or the FSB, particularly with regard to Muslim groups as well as other minorities. There are questions of selective prosecution or nonprosecution based on outside influence. The Sakharov Center put on an exhibition a few years ago that the Russian Orthodox Church became very upset at and saw as defamatory. The leaders of the center were prosecuted successfully for inciting religious hatred. But on the other hand, there are numerous accounts of groups and individuals who deface synagogues or Protestant churches, or who have firebombed different Protestant churches or other institutions, who are not being prosecuted for their actions.

There are problems, particularly in the regions, with refusals to implement federal law, or with attempts to get around the federal requirements or counteract them with additional local requirements. There are refusals based on technicalities, as Nancy mentioned. Local authorities will use lack of compliance with a fire code to deny registration or other building permits. A lot of these problems stem from an overall lack of rule of law, under which all groups should be treated evenhandedly, whether they are minorities or majorities.

Certainly there are some positive developments in this area. Some courts have been will-

ing to uphold the rights of unpopular groups, particularly the federal Constitutional Court, which has had a liberal interpretation of the 1997 law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations. This court upheld the right of the Salvation Army to be registered, although that case has since bogged down in local bureaucracy issues. Federal officials have generally applied the 1997 law liberally, so there is progress here. But particularly at the local level, there is still a significant problem that stems from the Soviet era and a lack of strength of rule of law.

Another tradition that stems from the past and is influencing the present is the tradition of having a strong leader, and then for subordinates to try to anticipate his wishes. It is interesting to note that in contrast to Yeltsin, Putin has been much more demonstrative about his close ties with the Orthodox Church. Alexey Malashenko touched on this. He mentioned how perhaps it is weakness in the leadership that leads it to turn to religious organizations for additional support and validation. In any case, Putin has made a point of visiting the Patriarch regularly, and making these visits visible in the media. Understanding this, what is interesting to see is how this plays out on the lower levels. At lower levels, it has been interesting to notice how officials have made a point of being much more openly Orthodox as well. They have built Orthodox chapels in the Ministry of Justice and in the courts. Government officials regularly consult with local Orthodox leaders even on questions of whether to register other religious organizations.

Nancy Hewett mentioned the rumor about Astrakhan, how Putin reportedly made a comment to the effect that there should not be a mosque in a certain place. Whether or not the rumor is true, I think what is telling is that the rumor exists and is accepted as a credible reason for the destruction of the mosque.

I think Malashenko also mentioned how official Islam followed very closely and endorsed certain state policies to bolster its legitimacy. That is also at least partially explained by this practice of anticipating the desires of those in power and attempting to garner favor by doing what you expect those in power would prefer.

Another historical, cultural, and political aspect that continues to have an impact on state

policies on religion is what I would call an ambivalent Russian approach to foreigners. On the one hand, there are some, going back to Peter the Great, who seek out the West, seek new ideas, seek interaction, and want to have those connections. You see that in religion with the acceptance of international norms, such as when Russia submitted itself to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. There is also the sentiment that Russia plays a unique role and can contribute something unique to the world because of its religious beliefs, and this is clear from the global religious summit it is attempting to hold before the G-8 meetings in St. Petersburg next month.

But together with that, there is a very strong element of what we have heard from all three of the panelists—that there is a fear of foreigners or foreign influence. Likewise, there is a fear of any religion that is associated with foreigners, even though, in the case of some Protestants or the Jehovah's Witnesses, they may have been in Russia more than 100 or 150 years and really should be seen as indigenous groups by now.

This also plays out in terms of “spy mania,” as it has been called. This is a perception that if you cannot see your enemies they must be hidden, and so Russians see enemies in foreigners or people who are associated with foreign organizations. You see this in the media, even in the mainstream media. There have been reports of Catholics or Seventh-day Adventists committing ritual murders or being spies.

Nancy Hewett also mentioned the NGO law that came into effect earlier this year. Some of the provisions come down particularly hard on foreign organizations and foreign sources of funding. It is not clear how they will play out, but these provisions seem to allow the state to ban financial transfers from abroad to local NGOs. I have heard that this is already having an impact on the ability of religious organizations to cooperate with foreign partners to engage in charitable activities.

You also see this fear of foreigners playing out in legislation against proselytizing. Three regions already have restrictive laws, and the Duma Committee on Religious Affairs is reportedly working on legislation that would regulate proselytizing as well. Distrust of outsiders goes far back. Jewish groups have long been seen as dangerous outsiders. In January

2005 there was a request by prominent Russian nationalists to ban all Jewish religious organizations, which fortunately the state dismissed out of hand.

Then there is the current competition for ideological power, and the institutionalization of some of the dominant religions. There is an ideological vacuum now, although the state has formally adopted a democratic constitution and a secular system. The constitution has a provision requiring equality of religious organizations. But both Alexey Malashenko and Robert Crews mentioned attempts by either the state or religious organizations, or by both, to forge a closer relationship between church and state. Sometimes this is seen as just the Orthodox Church; sometimes it is described as the “traditional” faiths—meaning Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism.

The Orthodox Church’s position is understandable, looking at its history and its theories. They have traditions of close church-state cooperation and ideas of canonical territory—ideas that correspond with closer association, but do not necessarily fit as neatly with the new constitutional order of nondiscrimination.

But this attempt at ideological dominance or mutual co-optation by the Orthodox Church or this quartet of so-called traditional faiths is a repeated feature of Russian state policy and practice. They were mentioned in the preamble to the 1997 law, but officially according to the 1997 law there are no special benefits for these groups. There have been regular attempts in the Duma to introduce legislation that would grant them such status, but they have always been defeated. It is not happening at the overt level, but what is happening at an informal level is a series of formal and informal agreements whereby the fields of education, chaplaincy, military, law enforcement, customs, prisons, FSB, and the army are becoming in many cases exclusive to the Orthodox Church. You may be aware of the “Foundations of Orthodox Culture” class that the Orthodox Church has been trying to have introduced as mandatory. My understanding is that the course work focuses predominantly on Orthodox theology. There is an attempt to introduce it in the educational curriculum of secondary schools. The federal government at this point is backing off, but the church has been successful in some regions.

The assumption seems to be that the country would be divided up along ethnic lines, and that the Russian state would cooperate with Islam in predominantly Muslim areas. What I think this reveals is a very interesting mind-set that underlies the practices that we heard about, particularly from Alexey Malashenko and Robert Crews. You see what we might call an ethnoconfessional mind-set, in which religion is something that is divided up along ethnic lines. This was prominent in Europe particularly after World War I, when nations entered into treaties designed to protect ethnic minorities and their religious practices. But in Europe and in the United States since World War II, there has been a growing consensus that the need is to focus on individual rights, rather than minorities as ethnic groups per se, and that one should have the right to move in and out of those groups.

I appreciate the comment by Robert Crews that Europeans more often work with religious groups as groups. They have more cooperative church-state systems, and that often forces more decentralized groups like Muslims to create an artificial hierarchy so that they can cooperate more easily with the state. It is interesting, however, that in Europe, Muslims are now a bit of the exception to this practice. In France, there is pressure to avoid discrimination and to respect the autonomy of religious organizations. In fact, some of that pressure comes from the organizations that feel that too close a cooperation with the state can violate their autonomy. That is certainly a point that I think Robert Crews made very well about the lack of internal autonomy that comes when a religion becomes co-opted by the state or becomes too close.

If you are talking to Russian government officials, some of the most thoughtful ones will talk about that and say, “We are just a more European system than we are an American one. Do not try to judge us by your American standards. We really line up much more closely with Europe.” I think a point worth making is that European systems do have a cooperative approach that is different from that of the United States, but they also have a very strong base of individual protections, individual rights, and a system of rule of law. All of these protections help prevent abuses that could happen in a cooperative system, where cooperation with the state means that minority-group

rights can be trampled and such groups then become marginalized, which is what we see happen in many cases in Russia.

There is a problem that the laws themselves are vague enough that they leave room for discrimination, particularly in their implementation. The NGO law, for example, allows for registration to be denied or groups to be dissolved for threatening the national unity, cultural heritage, or national interests of the Russian Federation. That is sufficiently broad for most minority religions to fall into, particularly with the mind-set that foreigners or groups allied with foreigners are a threat to national security.

The extremism law passed in 2002 also has similar vague provisions that have already been abused in terms of “propaganda of exclusivity,” such as groups saying that they believe that they have the sole truth and that they are better than other religions. In the case of Islam, materials making that claim have been found to be extremist, but that is clearly selective. Most religions would have something along those lines.

Orthodoxy and Islam are not monolithic. There are those within them who are committed to minority rights and those who realize that they are in a changed society, that it is too late in the day to return to the era of the tsars. But it is certainly a difficult road for minority religions.

I would like to end with some questions that I think were brought up by the different presentations, and then I will turn it back to our moderator for question-and-answer. But some of the questions are:

1. Where are Russian state policies headed?
2. If we see continued instability in the state and the economy, would that, as Alexey Malashenko suggested, move the government closer to dominant churches, and closer to Orthodoxy?
3. Would the state’s closeness with Islam cause a split within Islam?
4. If the state were closer to Orthodoxy or Islam, how could it avoid discrimination against minority groups or impingement on the autonomy of dominant religious

groups—that is, the ability to choose their own leaders, to choose their own members, and to believe what they choose?

How do we talk about religion and the state in Russia?

Do we think along ethnoconfessional lines?

Do we think about institutions?

Do we think about spiritual/cultural issues?

Do we talk about individual rights?

5. What kind of models do we use for our thinking? Do we use European models, do we use American models, or do we try to look back to historical Russian models? Are there problems with those? If so, where can we turn to try to seek a better understanding of Russian state policies and practices on religion?

David Abramson: Before we open the floor for discussion, I want to supplement Elizabeth Sewell’s questions with a bundle of related questions on how we conceptualize religion in Russia. Thus, some other questions that we can also consider would be:

1. In what ways do Russian state policies foster competition over religious authenticity, both within religious communities and in terms of what constitutes legitimate religion in terms of a hierarchy?
2. To the extent that there is a fostering of competition, does this inherently create obstacles to the realization of religious freedom or even religious tolerance?
3. Finally, is this competition changing in 21st-century Russia, and if so, how? And what impact will this have on freedoms and also on the potential for future conflict and instability expressed in religious terms?

I think these are questions that all of the panelists have raised, and I wanted to call attention to them.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Malashenko: I want to add one more problem, very briefly—the problem of generations. We have been talking about religions in terms of today. I think that we have to mention the problem in Orthodoxy of the generation born between 1965 and 1975. It is a new phenomenon. They are becoming more and more active. They are becoming more and more open to the world, but at the same time this generation, in my opinion, is much more nationalist yet much cleverer than its predecessor.

As for Islam, it is also the problem of generations that we missed—I mean the generation of Muslims and clergymen between 22 and 28 years old. They are also very clever, very ambitious, but this is also a generation of Muslim radicals. I remember that three years ago when I spoke to Muslim spiritual leaders who were between 35 and 50, they denied any radical influence, saying, “Well, they will come from the Middle East and we will educate them.” They came, and now I am not sure. I am relating a general opinion that had existed in the Muslim clergy. Now there is a new generation, and it can change the face of Islam. I think it is a very important point. Today we are encountering other people, and we often do not understand them.

Crews: Those are all wonderful questions. I am not sure where to start. I am prompted by Alexey to respond to his comments about the international conflict within Islam. Unlike Alexey, I think that if we are going to look for alarmist trends in the future, the state’s attempts to arbitrate these disputes is actually more likely to be a source of friction than a younger generation of people who were trained in a new way.

In my more limited discussion with Muslim clerics in Russia, I have been struck by their frustration with what they would describe as a kind of poverty of theology among Russian Muslims. What is so interesting about these institutions, and why I have drawn attention to them, is that fortunately, I think, they are meant to be recipients of state support. They are meant to provide alternatives to contacts abroad. But I think the conflicts dividing them are the kind of fissures that are rarely, if ever, theological in nature. They are serious. They

are religious insofar as they are about religious authority, which of course is central to all this. But when one presses the issue and tries to discover which aspect of Muslim tradition is being contested here, the ground gets much more slippery. I do not mean to suggest that there are purely material interests at stake, but I think oftentimes it comes down to a critical question of the control of mosques.

Yet this has had a wider impact on some issues, as others have noted. It can have an impact on freedom of religious expression. To draw on just one case, in St. Petersburg there has been a dispute over who can say prayers at funerals. The state—that is, the local administration—has essentially assigned a monopoly to one mosque and denied an alternative mosque the right to open, and thus the right to conduct funeral prayers. Here we see a very tangible impact on the lives of a mostly Tatar Muslim community in St. Petersburg that was left unable to choose its own spiritual leader to say prayers at a fellow member’s death.

Beyond this, though, it is very hard to sort out where the theological differences lie. Perhaps I am naively optimistic, but I tend to ignore most comments that you see in the press about the supposed radicalism of so-called Wahhabis and other so-called extremists in the Russian Federation. I would be delighted to see the evidence of this—to hear the sermons, to see the texts, or to see the concrete connections between a certain kind of political activity and a given mosque community.

Now a group that we have not yet discussed, Hizb ut-Tahrir, is one about which I think we all have different opinions. I think the state repression of Hizb ut-Tahrir is more likely to result in some kind of outright social unrest than ignoring a group that is, to be sure, anti-Semitic and disgusting in a wide number of areas. I am not pro-Hizb ut-Tahrir, but outlawing it as the Germans have done in the tradition of outlawing other kinds of neo-Nazi or neofascist groups is a step that in fact enjoys the support of many Muslims, but is still something that merits our attention.

To add some other questions—Which groups are we going to advocate for? Which groups are going to enjoy the protection of international human rights?—I think this problem is our own. David raised an important question about what are real faiths. Can we

scrutinize what is being constituted as real, and what is being condemned as totalitarian and fake? Where do we draw our own lines? Does that extend to a group like Hizb ut-Tahrir, which has been outlawed throughout the former Soviet Union and in a handful of European countries, although it is more or less based in London?

Hewett: The question about what is a dangerous totalitarian sect or cult underlies many of the intolerant acts that we see reported, because there is the widely held view that many of these groups are dangerous, and the Russian Orthodox Church has clerics who frequently say that publicly. There are clerics who do not, and who are clearly more modern—perhaps they are in that younger age group that was mentioned earlier—but many of them do. I have been at a conference in Moscow where the microphones were turned off when the Jehovah's Witnesses' representative got up to speak. The microphones just went dead. We got them back on, and some of the Russian Orthodox clerics in the room took out newspapers and put them up in front of their faces and made a big show of not paying attention. There were those who did not, but you can clearly see the tensions in society there, and I am sure the tensions exist within the religious groups themselves as well.

A very good question is, What will the established religious groups do? In the case of the Scientologists and Jehovah's Witnesses, authorities acting in support of the established religious groups have called in outside experts in court cases to try to persuade the court that certain groups are not viable religious groups. In most cases, the outside experts whom the authorities have lined up have failed to make the case that these smaller groups are totalitarian sects and cults.

If I may throw out yet one other question: If minority religious groups fail to play ball under the current system—that is, if they refuse to bribe the tax inspector and the fire inspector, and to pay bribes for expedited registration and the various hoops that religious groups must jump through—does that set them up for more problems than they might otherwise have? I hear from members of these organizations that they are asked for bribes quite frequently and are told that they will not have any problem if they

pay bribes that are often in the thousands of dollars. Many groups are too poor to do that, or they refuse on principle to pay, and then they have trouble. It is another question to throw out there: To what extent do they leave themselves open to repression because they refuse to play ball with the system, and what is the implication of that for Russian society in trying to establish the rule of law?

Sewell: I think the comment about the generations raised an interesting point, and that is the issue of what is going to happen in the future. One thing that is happening is increased familiarity with the unknown over time. I was thinking of the chair of the Religious Studies Department at the Russian Academy of State Service, which is in the official presidential administration. When she came to office, she swore that she would never get on a podium with a Protestant, but within a year she had. Part of it is a matter of familiarity, of starting to come to understand some of the other groups, and that is something that you will see more of in the next generations than we have in the past. But I think one of the problems that I have seen, particularly with the current generation, is increased passivity, less involvement in politics, tuning out, and growing disillusionment. People seem more interested in their own economic and personal lives, and it is interesting to think about what kind of impact that is going to have. I think we will see some changes for the better. David Abramson raised the issue of competition creating obstacles to religious freedom. One way of looking at competition is that it may be at least part of the solution: allowing free competition among groups in the marketplace of ideas and keeping the state from being so protectionist that it interferes in the free trade of ideas. We can think of that as a metaphor, without pushing it too far. The Russian state may not develop along American lines, but where will it end up in comparison to the Europeans or other parts of the world?

Alexander Bogomolov: I would address some of the issues that were brought to the table by Dr. Sewell in her presentation. It is useful to think about how we could address the conceptual framework with which we look at religion. To my mind, one thing we should focus on is what

are the pragmatic issues behind our conversation, i.e., what do we actually want? This is a matter of values. It seems that for many if not most of us here at this table, the concept of religious freedom is the guiding principle. I will address this notion in more detail in my presentation, but I believe that the concept of religious freedom is a value concept that can only be produced and sustained in a democratic, secular society. It is not really a religious concept as such. It is a concept that is located outside religion proper. We see that many religious groups, specifically the dominant religious groups, most characteristically the Russian Orthodox Church, are the greatest fighters against religious freedom. Similarly, in the Middle Eastern context, Iranian clergy fight against any notion of religious freedom except for the official religion in Iran, and the same is happening elsewhere in the Muslim world.

From the practical point of view, the only situation in which religious groups start fighting for religious freedom is in a diverse society where we find many faiths, and where there is a sustainable religious minority as such. You will find in many contexts that minorities, regardless of their specific religious rules, fight for a sustainable religious diversity, for religious freedom as such. We see, for instance, that Muslims who have majority status do not fight for religious freedoms, but in contexts such as India they do fight for such rights because they are minorities among the Hindus and the Christians.

I am not an expert on Russia, but in the post-Soviet context we have a different problem. I once wrote that we experienced one of the most consistently secular societies for about 70 years, but this is not true. I have changed my opinion about that. We never had secularists, we had atheists. I now realize that this is a different story.

I believe that the problem with religious freedom in Russia is that Russia is not a secular society. I am not talking about religiosity here, but about the role of religion in a more general social context and the way the state, society, and the elites deal with religion. They largely see religion as a useful source of mobilization for different purposes. That is how Putin's administration is running the game in Russia—by deploying Russian Orthodoxy. They use it as a reference point for ideological construction, utilizing religious themes as a source for their own purposes. The situation

will improve in Russia in all probability when they stop this practice. I do not expect them to stop it soon, however.

The situation in Ukraine provides a good comparative background as another post-Soviet case. We do not have politicians who consistently advocate for religious freedoms and for secularism. There is no other clear understanding, even in the current administration, about the value of secularism, a society in which secularism means freedom for different religious groups. But the situation that we have now is one in which we do not have one dominant group. We do not even have one dominant Orthodox Church in Ukraine. That in itself is very conducive to democratic management of diversity.

I suppose the greatest challenge and the greatest nightmare for the current Russian administration is to see what happens if Russia grows increasingly Muslim. They see religious diversity as a challenge to their political identity—not so much to the cultural or religious identity as to the political identity of their state. This is perceived as a real threat. This is the particular framework in which the value of religious freedom should be viewed.

Abramson: The idea that Russia was not a secular society in the Soviet period, and continues not to be a secular society today, makes me wonder. I will again throw the idea of social and cultural change out on the table, because we always want to see what kinds of changes there have been since the Soviet period without exaggerating them. The question is that if religion is seen primarily as a source of mobilization, it means you have Orthodox clergy or Muslims getting together to talk about what “human rights” means in terms of Orthodoxy or what “democracy” or “human rights” means within Islam. This kind of debate is not taking place in Russia alone.

Does that mean that they are trying to use those terms by incorporating them into that concept of mobilization? Or, because they are actually taking on these terms, does that indicate that there is some change going on in their thinking? Why are they taking on these terms?

Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer: I have a very specific question for Alexey Malashenko that also unties the issue of corruption that Nancy Hewett just raised, as well as the issue of

generations. I understand that this is more of a ground-level question. We need to know how much of this sort of thing is going on. I understand that in Tatarstan there have been instances of different mosques passing to different kinds of groups. The implication is that this is happening not only as younger generations take hold, but also as some imams “buy out” certain mosques as a means of moving in the direction of greater radicalization. By way of reference, this comes from some survey research and interview material from Edward Pinantan that he has recently compiled on Tatarstan. It is an alarming trend if it proves to be real. Have you had any information on this?

Malashenko: That is a good question. In 2001, even as late as 2002, I discussed the problem laid out in your question with people from Tatarstan, including clergymen and people around the president of Tatarstan, Mintimer Shaimiev. Everybody told me that this problem is exaggerated by many, including by Russian newspapers in Moscow. Since 2004, or even by the end of 2003, I was shocked to hear the same people, the same scholars, and the same officials begin to talk about the appearance of several hundred new imams and young men who had graduated from Middle East institutes. They came back, and they asked for places to serve as imams in mosques. Of course, in 2004 mosques were closed to them. They then began to organize circles around themselves, even within existing mosques. This problem of so-called penetration of radical ideas was recognized in 2004 and 2005 by the spiritual board of Muslims of Tatarstan, and in particular within the Muslim University of Russia, situated in Tatarstan, in Kazan.

What do we have now? In Tatarstan and in Bashkortostan as well, we have a network of these imams who have established connections between themselves and have penetrated several mosques, including four or five mosques in Kazan. Sometimes officials recognize that this or that mosque is under the control of radicals; sometimes they do not. But clergymen of the older generations of the perestroika and Yeltsin eras are afraid of these developments, and they do not know what to do about them.

The same dynamic exists in practically each oblast of Russia where there are those who came back from Middle East. Among the

Muslim spiritual leadership, some were very astonished and some recognize that they made a mistake. I do believe that it is not a problem of radicalism, it is not a problem of Wahhabism—it is a problem of competition and who will stay. Those who came from the Middle East are much more educated, they know Arabic, and so on. They bring with them some new ideas. This is a problem. So if you go to Tatarstan, if you go to Russia, you may get completely different information. It depends on with whom you talk.

Question: The use of religion as part of the mobilization of state identity is nothing new, particularly when empires collapse. The Soviet Union was an empire. Think back to Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. There was the Protestant Reformation, the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, and the emergence of new states based on religion and religious identity, which was also accompanied by religious wars that solidified those identities. Consider what happened with Yugoslavia when it broke up, and continues to break up now. Kosovo split from Serbia. Clearly, religion is part of these developments.

My concern is that this is simply the beginning of a process. What has been going on in Crimea in the last few years? Is religion going to be absent from tension in this region, particularly if religion is being used increasingly as an idea for mobilizing a state identity? The point I am making is that this is not unknown in European history.

Malashenko: I think this is a big problem for Kazakhstan, and not just for the short term but well into the future. In the region practically nobody discusses your question, but sometimes it seems that scholars are very fearful. They are afraid about such an evolution, because if we look at the global map, Kazakhstan is now perhaps considered as a certain exception and is safe.

One theory on how Kazakhstan has kept its integrity is that Kazakhs are bad Muslims, and the members of the Russian Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan are no better. I do not know whether the situation improves under such conditions.

Question: I have a question for Nancy Hewett about the concept of totalitarian sects.

I wonder how specific this phenomenon is to Russia, because as far as I have been able to determine, the theoretical justification for terming certain groups as totalitarian sects came to Russia from people who simply took these concepts from the United States and applied them in Russia. I was wondering if you had any comments.

Hewett: I am glad you raised that issue. Unfortunately, we saw the re-emergence of the concept of totalitarian sects and cults in Europe, especially in France and in Germany, not so many years ago. Russian policymakers seem to have been influenced by the Europeans from this perspective. Lest you think our office only takes on post-Soviet states, we also speak to the Europeans and have in fact engaged with Germany and France on their religious freedom policies and on this very issue in particular.

But once an organization is on the totalitarian sect list in Russia, then the rest of the post-Soviet states seem to follow suit in their policies. In fact, it appears that security services share lists of not only which groups to watch out for, but also which individuals. Thus, individuals who lose the ability to get into one of the post-Soviet states because of proselytizing or related activities will often then have difficulties getting into any of the others. The impetus does seem to have come from the West—that is, the existence of this kind of list of totalitarian sects in the West presented Russia with the opportunity to adopt the same practice. It certainly suited its purpose as well.

Question: Robert Crews talked about international influences and how those complications come into play, particularly in terms of the Middle East and the West. But it might be interesting to consider also the concept of the Eastern influence, particularly India's historical relationship with Russia. Sometimes members of the Russian Orthodox Church may overplay their hand, which in turn gets covered by an international press that is moderate on religious freedom.

For example, the Hare Krishna Caucus has been officially registered in Russia since 1988, and our largest community was in Moscow. A large temple had been functioning for many years there, but because of some road construction and city development, the land was taken

by the government. The government offered us another nice piece of land in trade, which was approved by the mayor's office. Then, as the development plans went ahead, the project drew the attention of the Orthodox Church and other people who were not comfortable with the project. There were large protest marches complaining that this was undermining the ethnicity of the state, and that drew a lot of attention. Then the mayor's office withdrew the permission, which had been progressing through the administrative processes at the time. We received an explanation that there were some questions about certain sentences that were not dotted properly and other similar reasons.

What was interesting was that the conflict then began to draw a lot of interest in India and also in the United Kingdom, where there is a large Hindu population. As a result, there was pressure coming from British members of Parliament and other international observers. When the mayor of Delhi was in Russia recently promoting cooperation between the two governments, she put the issue on the table, and within the last month the Russian government has said that it is going to go ahead and allow the new temple.

Part of what drew a lot of attention in India was that Archbishop Nikon made some very inflammatory comments in his efforts to draw attention to the whole situation. These remarks irritated a lot of people in India and drew a lot more international attention from the larger Hindu communities abroad.

So it might be of interest to see how the India card comes into play, because of the historical Russian-Indian relationship and, in this case, one archbishop who warned of "the evil demon that personified the power of hell opposing God coming from India." When you say such things, people get riled. That may, in turn, lead to some kind of moderation. Officials within the church have had to come out to say that the archbishop's comments are not church policy, and that he speaks for himself. That excessiveness led to a little bit of moderation in the church's stance. Such factors may come into play in the future.

Crews: That is a wonderful suggestion, and it also brings to mind another issue that has not been mentioned as much, and that is the centralization of religion as an object of mobiliza-

tion. Perhaps others can comment on this at greater length. I do not follow all the public-opinion survey work, and that kind of data is alien to me. In what little data I have seen about Islamic phobia in Russian society, some of the numbers that I have seen from Moscow, at least, are quite high.

Another issue that might be worth thinking about in this case with respect to this Indian connection from abroad is Russian society. We have focused on the Kremlin, and obviously these panels are devoted to state policy. But I think that, as in Europe, certain communities have exerted very strong social pressure on the state to limit the exercise of freedom of conscience. Certainly among Muslims, what is so interesting is that these institutions have successfully drawn Muslim laypeople into the litigation of these disputes. So even beyond the level of the clerics and the capital cities, we have laypeople who are engaged in this. I should note that it is at their initiative. They are not simply passive objects of state mobilization.

I think that, in looking ahead, one critical factor to consider would be not just the generational question among Muslims, but also among Russians. Alexey alluded to nationalism, but I was struck when I had a brief interview with an assistant to the Mufti in Moscow when he drew my attention to his fear of pogroms aimed against Muslims in Moscow. It seems far-fetched, but if you are there for awhile, you see acts of violence against Africans or people presumed to be from the Caucasus. One could imagine a context for such fears in Moscow, especially now that there are close to a million Azeris in Moscow who work in niches of the economy where they are thought by local Muscovites to be complicit in a negative side of capitalism. In the markets, the locals see Azeris who are dark skinned, who are Muslim, and who are engaged in capitalism. There is a confluence of ethnic and racial stereotypes.

I think it is significant that the state has looked back to a Russian past when there were multiple confessions that were deemed tolerable. It may not have been as diverse as most of us would want in its structure, and it was limiting, but at least there is that generic constitutional foundation upon which, presumably, future generations can build. But where that will stand vis-à-vis public opinion is perhaps worth more scrutiny, because there is also pop-

ular anti-Semitism, popular Islamic phobia, and so on. These are real phenomena. Racism is something that has not received the scholarly attention it deserves in Russia, but it is extremely serious. I think it will have some impact on the options that are open to the Kremlin in the future. So again, it is just a way of saying that we could talk about state mobilization as an element of religious policy, but I think that there is a Russian society to consider. Russia is a state that is attempting to shore up its legitimacy. It wants to be popular at some level, and policing is not available in the same way that it was under the Soviet regime.

Question: What happened to the militant atheists? Are there groups that oppose all religion and want to return to the happy days of my own childhood in Moscow?

Bogomolov: I do not know about Russia, but in our own particular case, which is also a post-Soviet case, atheism was a profession rather than a belief. It had been so in the Soviet Union since at least the middle of the last century.

Comment: It was a game.

Bogomolov: It was also a profession. You could formally be licensed to be an atheist and go and deliver propaganda lectures and be paid for it. In our case, all those former professional atheists are now involved in religious studies. They produce a very interesting and very confusing discourse.

Malashenko: I want to add that I assisted at a forum organized by Muslims, with some participation from the Orthodox Church, and the problem they discussed was the struggle against Islamic radicalism, Western influence, paganism, and atheism. When I asked them about atheism, some Muslims explained to me that there is inequality between paganism and atheism. When I put the same question to people from the Orthodox Church, they said, "Maybe we should agree and maybe not." But anyway, it is not fashionable to say that you are an atheist. I think that in a short time it will come back. It does not mean that once again we will become an atheistic society, but some element of it must exist.

Sewell: I will add one comment on the question of the atheists. They certainly do show up in the religious studies programs. We also see some as policymakers, and there the emphasis is often on separationism. They do not describe themselves as antireligious necessarily, but will say they are promoting church-state separation. At times, religious policy seems to move from one extreme to the next—from hostile, antireligious separationism that is pushed by the atheist contingency to closer cooperation pushed by those, such as nationalists, who feel closer ties to Orthodoxy. There is a lack of the kind of middle ground that we have here in the United States of people who want some separation but are themselves sympathetic to religious groups. There is less of a sense in Russia that religious groups can benefit from separation than there is here. But you certainly still have an atheist bloc out there.

Question: Going back to the discussion of Slavic radicalism in Russia, I wonder whether there is a consensus among the panelists about what actually constitutes Islamic radicalism in Russia, and whether the conception of Islamic radicalism in Russia is different elsewhere. Also, is there a spiritual debate within Russia on these ideas? Is conflict the result of competition, as Alexey suggests, or is there a real basis in theology for the conflict?

Malashenko: So many questions. Indeed, it is very interesting, but I feel that I am not able to answer all your questions because of a lack of time. There is a debate inside Islam; it exists. Despite all the words about the struggle against Wahhabism, fundamentalism, and the rest, there is a very strong discussion. It is underway, first of all, in mosques and in institutions in the North Caucasus. It has spread in Tatarstan and even in Bashkortostan. We have some Russian-language publications that can be read by Muslims, and let me say that this is first a clandestine or semiclandestine form of discussion.

While Wahhabism and fundamentalism and so on were not officially prohibited a year ago, they were persecuted. If I accuse somebody of being a Wahhabi or fundamentalist, he may encounter some problems. Yet in January or December of 2005, Dmitri Kozak, President Putin's representative in the Southern Federal District, asked why we criticize Wahhabism and suggested that we should talk about it and not just criticize it.

These words were repeated practically verbatim by Putin, and Russian clergymen were shocked. They had gotten accustomed to criticizing and persecuting Wahhabism. By the way, there is a coincidence between this presidential sentence and the visit of Hamas to Moscow. We can talk about a very ambiguous situation. Islamic radicalism is badly criticized, but at the same time there are some positive trends, and not only in Palestine. Maybe it is possible to talk to these people and have a dialogue.

I understand that all these are typical speculations, but it helps to correct a general position toward Islam in the North Caucasus. Among the Russian political elite, including Putin himself, they recognize that there are some ways to talk to them and not to kill them.

When you asked about radicalism, Islamism, and so on—it is not a very integrated group like a political party. This is a confederation of different approaches. There are those who are more moderate and less moderate, more radical and less radical. There are those whose target is the local administration and perhaps Putin. But at the same time, there are people who are able to negotiate, whether with the president of Dagestan or the president of Russia. This is a very important thing.

Since approximately 2002 or 2003, a new trend has emerged. In the North Caucasus there are those who will not identify themselves with Chechen separatists, nor with those who will speak about social justice or Soviet territory, nor with those who want to get rid of Putin. There are some who identify themselves with global jihad. It is not a joke. Indeed, they believe that they have a special mission. In the 1990s some in the Russian secret services, and some official Russian propaganda, said a lot about the existence of such a trend, but at that time it never really existed. Now it has emerged, and nobody knows what to do about it beyond saying they are gangsters and bandits. But they are real mujahideen who claim to occupy a special Caucasian position in the world jihad. I do not know how many there are, nobody knows. Maybe something around a thousand, but they are all across the North Caucasus, and nobody knows how many people support them.

Abramson: Would any of the other panelists like to address that question?

Hewett: I would imagine that where global jihad exists, and the notion of overturning the state as part of that, is where the dividing line will come eventually in regard to what Russia will tolerate and what Russian government officials will tolerate. They probably will allow discussion about more fundamental understandings of Islam that we often associate with Wahhabism in the traditional sense—that I think you see starting to emerge with this reference to Putin’s note of caution about criticizing Islam. There is a desire in the Muslim community in Russia to have a moral compass and to have an ideology to guide one’s actions in the present and to anchor one’s life. I think they will be tolerated up until the point that they advocate against the people in power.

Crews: I will add one line. Radicalism is a subjective and often polemical category. If we take the detainees of Guantánamo, to my knowledge there never have been any Chechens there. But there are a handful of Russian subjects in Guantánamo who are from various parts of the Russian Federation. But these guys are the product of civil war. They are all Muslim, and the whole Russian-Chechen

confrontation is one that is subject to debate, of course. How central is Islam to this? One could also focus on two competing nationalisms, with foreign-policy adventures thrown into the mix. But more broadly, it is only natural to expect that Muslims in the Russian Federation who have access to the Internet, who have access to travel, and who have access to education abroad are going to be more integrated into a kind of global Muslim community. How the state accommodates that development, or fails to accommodate it, will help determine whether or not these people will choose radical alternatives. I think that is to be expected. I also think radicalism as a term is a code word that 95 percent of the time is used to characterize people who are adopting norms that come from abroad. It does not mean that they are adopting terrorist norms or are joining Al Qaeda. It may mean that they are choosing to grow a beard, or that they are choosing to adopt an alternative form of dress, or that they trained in a Jordanian madrassa. But if we begin to label all those people radicals and terrorists, put them in camps, or hold their faith in contempt, then I think the Russian state, like other states, will really implant a problem.

Panel 2: The Regional Challenge: Managing Religious Diversity

Chair: Margaret Paxson, Senior Associate, Kennan Institute

Sascha Goluboff, Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Washington and Lee University, and author, *Jewish Russians: Upheavals in a Moscow Synagogue*

Alexander Bogomolov, Vice President, Association of Middle East Studies, Ukraine

Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, Research Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Georgetown University

Margaret Paxson: I thought the discussion this morning was fascinating and a great start to our day. From the perspective of an anthropologist, I saw that we started up in the realm of the states and in the realm of policies and state actors, and that of course is crucial to the issues that we are trying to get at in our conference. But right now, we are going to move down to the level of communities, and I think that is also quite important. We will look at the problem of religion and what religion is, and what it does, and how it is also a verb, as opposed to a noun. It is really important to get into the lived practices of peoples and communities.

I can say a couple of words of introduction about my own research and how religion surprised me. My own fieldwork as an anthropologist was done in a small village in rural Russia, and I had no intention whatsoever to study religion *per se* while I was there. When I got there, I learned that there were no churches nearby, and only one person in the whole village would ever go to church. But at the same time, there was a great deal of religion and religious practice. And when I say that, I mean that in the moments of people's direst fears and their most transcendent hopes, they turn somewhere. They turn to God or saints or wherever. I take that as a certain form of religious practice.

If you take this religion as more or less living and without institutions and you think about that and how it works, you get to one of the problems that we are trying to examine: What is religion as it is practiced by communi-

ties on the ground, and how is diversity within that context dealt with? Is diversity more difficult on the ground than it is up at the level of the state? Or is it perhaps a little bit easier? There were some hints of that this morning. As we go on, we can think about the special problem of living together in diverse communities, at the level of the community.

Sascha Goluboff: I am a cultural anthropologist. Information for this paper comes from my ethnographic research. I did work in Moscow during 1995–96 and in 2000. In addition, I have talked to people on the phone and corresponded by e-mail about what is going on over there, which I will utilize in this presentation. I also have updates from newspaper reports and the like.

I will begin by mentioning what we usually hear about Jews in Russia, such as incidents of popular and legislated anti-Semitism. There is also what people are calling the renaissance of Jewish life. In January 2005, a group of deputies from the State Duma retracted a demand, sent earlier to the Prosecutor General's Office, to ban all Jewish organizations in Russia. The original demand stated that anti-Semitic acts in Russia are the product of anti-Christian behavior on the part of Jews, or committed by Jews themselves as grounds to take punitive measures against patriots.

Another press story relates to some of the other incidents we have been discussing about the control of religious texts. It concerns a translation of the *Shulkhan Arukh*, which is

basically about Jewish ways of life, and how it was investigated as to whether it incites national and religious hatred. In February 2006, proposed amendments to Russia's law on freedom of conscience would have enabled authorities to close down religious associations more easily by allowing the Federal Registration Service [FRS] to carry out inspections at the slightest suspicion of extremism and go to court to get associations banned. This right would apply to conducting religious study checks as well.

Whereas Russian Orthodox and Protestant communities are unworried about such proposals, it is said that Muslim, Jewish, and Krishna organizations are concerned that the Federal Registration Service could become an instrument for suppression of freedom of belief.

We also hear about grassroots anti-Semitism, such as graffiti on synagogues and violent attacks against Jews. The Moscow bureau of Human Rights Watch said that Moscow is the most dangerous city for Jews in Russia, with 27 anti-Semitic attacks in the period 2004–05.

There is also a reported rise in racial violence and expressions of racial extremism, and increasing use of racist and xenophobic discourse in politics, according to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance. Its report also said that visible minorities, like the Jews, are the main targets of racially motivated attacks. I think this was also mentioned by the earlier speakers.

Finally, Russia's new Public Chamber was also mentioned. This is a consultative body created by Putin to serve as a bridge between the state and civil society, and the chamber concluded that xenophobia and fascism are genuine problems and serious threats.

The most recent attack of this sort happened this past January, when a 20-year-old man assaulted worshippers at a synagogue with a hunting knife. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison and mandatory psychiatric treatment. He was not found guilty of racial hatred. Instead, he was found guilty of murder on racist grounds and wounding nine men, but basically the other charges against him were dropped.

You can look at examples of legislated anti-Semitism and grassroots anti-Semitism. But on the other hand, you have what many are calling a visible renaissance of Jewish life in Russia. An estimated 57,000 Jews have come back to

Moscow. An inside source told me that supposedly the Israeli Embassy has registered anywhere from 80,000 to 100,000 Israelis living in Moscow. Some people estimate that the number of Jewish communities in Russia has grown from 87 to 200.

Sources are contradictory, but we could say that according to figures from 2003, there are perhaps 400,000 to 700,000 Jews in Russia. These are the kinds of reports that we are hearing in the media as well. In fact, some say that the upsurge of anti-Semitism is a backlash against the increase in Jewish communities. Others have said the Russian government is actually genuinely committed to repairing the wrongs of the past, and they reference Putin's recent speech at Auschwitz, where he noted that there are "acts of anti-Semitism and intolerance in Russia, and we should feel ashamed of what is going on in the present." People are thus speculating on the ties between rising anti-Semitism and the visible face of Jews in Russia.

My hypothesis is that the media's focus on the complex relationship between rising anti-Semitism and the upsurge in visible Jewish activities, while important, disguises the extremely diverse nature of Jewish identity and community in Russia. The presence of grassroots and possibly legislative anti-Semitism really and truly negatively impacts the possibilities of the rights of Jewish individuals and organizations to achieve their full potential, but the future of the Jewish religion in Russia hinges more on the outcome of a less reported phenomenon.

There is a struggle among Jewish communities in Moscow for power and resources, and it takes place on two levels. The first level is the occasionally reported conflicts among Jewish spiritual leaders, who represent competing Jewish factions, over who has authority to direct religious practice and policy in Russia. This relates back to Robert Crews's point about authenticity. The second conflict, which is almost unreported in the media, concerns negotiation among different Jewish ethnic groups within these Jewish factions for influence and material goods. This of course relates to Alexey Malashenko's point about the fight over what belongs to whom, and it plays a big role here.

Let me talk about conflicts among Jewish spiritual leaders. There are two different Jewish federations, each with prospective leaders.

KEROOR is the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia. FEOR is the Hasidic Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia. As it so happens, President Putin is aligned with FEOR and not KEROOR.

There are other groups, but these are the two powerhouses. Let me just briefly talk about them. KEROOR is headed by the chief rabbi of Russia, Adolf Shayeivich. Pinchas Goldschmidt is the chief rabbi of Moscow. They are Orthodox Jews, and their offices are located at the Moscow Choral Synagogue. KEROOR also includes Reformed Jews. Zinovi Kogan, a Reform Jewish leader, is chair of KEROOR.

FEOR is Lubavitcher Hasidic, and is headed by Rabbi Berl Lazar, who also holds the title of chief rabbi of Russia. Thus, there are two rival chief rabbis of Russia. Shayeivich was elected by Russian Jewish leaders and then Berl Lazar was elected by his own group.

Lubavitcher Hasidim have institutions all throughout Russia, and their two synagogues in Moscow are Bolshaya Bronnaya and Marina Roscha.

Let me briefly explain the differences between the Orthodox and Hasidim. The Hasidim started as a mystical and popular movement in southern Poland and Ukraine in the 18th century. The Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the movement, provided a new way of being religious that moved away from the Orthodox notion that one must study the Jewish texts, the Torah and Talmud, to become religious and knowledgeable and thereby gain access to God. Instead, the Baal Shem Tov practiced mystical healing, and he believed in serving God through joy and song. The Hasids thus became opposed to the Orthodox, who continued to stress Talmudic learning as the core of Jewish practice. As time went on, the Hasidim saw themselves as even more pious than the Orthodox. They kept higher kosher laws and were in general more “orthodox” than the Orthodox.

The last Rebbe of the Lubavitcher Hasids, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, ran an underground support network for Hasids during the Soviet Union, and its base was Marina Roscha Synagogue. Thus, the Hasids were present throughout the Soviet period, but were

more underground. Rabbi Berl Lazar came to the Soviet Union in 1990 with the blessing of the Rebbe to oversee the reconstruction of Hasidic synagogues and revive Jewish life.

The conflict between the Orthodox and the Lubavitcher Hasidim came to a head in 2000, when FEOR elected Berl Lazar to be the chief rabbi of Russia. At that time, the Putin administration recognized both chief rabbis, but then the competition intensified over who would gain Putin’s ear and thus more influence in government policy over Jewish religious organizations and their material holdings. It soon became clear that Berl Lazar had gained the favor of Putin. This shows how Putin and the Russian government do not want to deal with Jewish religious diversity. Putin frequently visited FEOR’s main synagogue. He lit a menorah with Berl Lazar. In March 2001, Berl Lazar replaced Shayeivich on the President’s Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations, and in September 2005 Lazar was the only Jewish religious leader among the 42 people directly appointed by Putin to serve in the Public Chamber.

The end result is that the Hasidic community centered at Marina Roscha is now the main community, and it has gained a lot of funding. Russian Jews from all over the former Soviet Union come to Marina Roscha to go to yeshiva, obtain job opportunities, and find suitable marriage partners in Israel or the United States. The consequence here is that Jewish leaders conceptualize diversity among religious Jews as a negative, because unity in a mission will gain favor with the government, and those who are out of favor do not have the ties and means necessary for success. We have a conflict between FEOR and KEROOR for control over the Jewish community and Putin’s attention.

What we have, then, is a competition for souls, so to speak. Both groups are vying for the attention of the same growing Jewish population. There is also a struggle to make Jews religious. Some of you are probably familiar with the notion that being Jewish in the Soviet Union was associated with ethnic identity, a sort of secular identity with a historical tradition. This is a competition to make those Jews become religious and follow religious laws.

I want to focus briefly on this other aspect; that is, the negotiation among different Jewish

ethnic groups within FEOR and KEROOR for power and resources. I focus on the Moscow Choral Synagogue, where I did my fieldwork. On the outside, it looks like a typical stronghold for the Orthodox group. There were four different Jewish groups during my time at the synagogue: the Russian Jews, the Bukharan Jews, the Georgian Jews, and the Mountain Jews from the Caucasus. All of them came to Moscow looking for better lives, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, and each one of them attempted to gain their own space within the Choral Synagogue—to have their own rabbis and to gain resources from local and international sponsors. There was lots of discourse over who was more moral in terms of access to money and the ability of each group to compete in this new post-Soviet business culture. They really defined themselves in terms of gaining access to synagogue space, which was also manifested in their ability to gain sponsors within the Jewish community.

In conclusion, this quick rundown shows that post-Soviet religious Jewish identity is contextual, so one cannot simply be “Jewish” in Russia today. Being Jewish means a choice between associating oneself with the Hasidim or with the Orthodox. Also, it means choosing what ethnic adjective you put in front of “Jew.” Are you a Russian Jew, Georgian Jew, Bukharan Jew, or Mountain Jew? All of these different ethnic Jewish groups have international ties, and they also have their own websites and are very interested in maintaining those international links.

The Moscow Choral Synagogue has recently received some money to have a cupola restored to its synagogue, but the Marina Roscha Synagogue is definitely more illustrious. In addition to the richly appointed main prayer room, it has a gym as well as a basketball court. One of its main sponsors is the Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, so you can imagine that it has a lot of money.

Now there is also the question of the Sephardic Synagogue. I have heard contradictory reports about this small synagogue. Some say it is for the Mountain Jews; others say it is for the Bukharan Jews. There is conflict between them, because they do not want to align themselves with the Hasidim or the Orthodox—they each want to have their own

synagogue. Yet there are still debates as to which one is in charge, and they all have their own sponsors.

The competition among the Hasidim and the Orthodox Jews for followers, and the media attention that these conflicts attract, belie the more complex reality of Jewish religious diversity in Russia. It is diversity not only of denomination, but also of ethnicity in terms of ties to homeland, in terms of culture, and in terms of language. These distinctions hold sway even if, say, Mountain Jews ally themselves with Orthodox Jews or the Hasidim. A Russian state policy that continues to favor one Jewish denomination over the other, or exerts pressure on Jewish groups to align themselves with one group over the other for expediency, will in the end work to exacerbate the differences between denominations and ethnic groups. As each group works to win over the Kremlin and establish physical evidence of its strength, such as synagogues, it will put more resources into that struggle rather than into meeting the needs of its individual congregants.

I also think that this competition to gain and to display those resources could infringe upon the rights of Jews in terms of their ability to worship. Since the Kremlin does not really recognize alternative versions of Judaism, those left without funding or ties to the government are not successful in exercising their rights or meeting their needs through different ways of worshipping.

Alexander Bogomolov: I am going to talk about Islam. My experience is of course with Islam in Ukraine, not Russia. While there is an increasing amount of difference between these two cultures and countries, I still believe that this experience and the outcome of this study can be used for comparative purposes as part of what could be referred to as the post-Soviet context. There certainly are things that both countries inherited from the past, and these traditions and memories, including within the government, are still relevant.

I was interested in the previous presentation and noted a few things that are valid in terms of comparison, whether for Islam or other religions in the post-Soviet context. It strikes me that the notion of unity as a value is pretty much present, no matter which confessional denomination we

may talk about. These points are true about Orthodoxy and are certainly true about Muslims. Ukrainian Muslims talk about unity a lot, but they do not have it, and I predict that they will not have it anytime soon.

We are talking about religious freedom, and, as was mentioned in the program for the conference, about managing diversity. I would like to start by emphasizing the importance of these notions, and I believe that in the post-Soviet context the challenge is how to shift from administering the faith to managing faith and diversity. This is the challenge we all face in the post-Soviet context, and which so far governments have largely fallen short of meeting, both in Ukraine and in Russia. This is basically the topic of the conference.

But to understand why, I believe that a more careful study of the basic notions of the conceptual operators we use for understanding religion in the post-Soviet situation is needed. A much used, and probably overused, notion for describing the situation of religion in the former Soviet Union is that of revival, *vozhrozhdenie* in Russian or *vidrodzhennia* in Ukrainian. This concept is usually translated into English as “renaissance,” and sometimes as “resurgence” or “revival.” It projects the idea of something being dead for a certain period of time and then somehow resurrected. This is how it has been conceived. A kind of revivalist discourse has emerged in the Russian language, which is also the language of most Ukrainian Muslims. Most Ukrainian Muslims do not speak Ukrainian, and in their public discourse they largely tend to use Russian as well as ethnic languages such as the Crimean Tatar language. Other ethnic languages are less in use.

In this discourse, which has a lot of similarities both in Ukraine and in Russia, a large space is dedicated to this notion of revival, and I believe this notion is sometimes taken by external observers at face value. In reality, people are not returning somewhere, and the idea of using the past as a reference in constructing their future somehow escapes a large part of even academic discussion. This concept is especially missing from government-produced discourses and the discourses produced by those former atheists who are now involved in religious studies. These individuals are now perhaps the most powerful experts, at least in

terms of public recognition and acknowledgment from the government as experts on religion. They have dominated the secular discourse about religion thus far.

I have had a chance to study and to contemplate the situation regarding religiosity in the Ukrainian context of the province of Donbas, which is a mining province in eastern Ukraine. The local Muslim population there dates to the late 1920s or 1930s. They are former economic migrants who settled down in a compact fashion so that they stayed together, sharing a cluster of streets or a neighborhood, and they continue to live in this fashion.

I spoke to former and current mullahs and to several generations overall, and came to certain conclusions. Some results have been published in English, as has been noted by our colleague Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, in a publication of the Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World titled *Islamic Knowledge in the Ukraine*. My contention or theory is that despite the Soviet government’s ideology of atheism and the mechanisms and institutions that worked against religion in the former Soviet Union, the social frameworks for the support of Islamic knowledge were always there. This is evident in the local context of Donbas, and I believe it is so in many other areas as well, despite the absence of organized religion. The transfer of knowledge was going on, and the fashion in which it was done led me to the conclusion that what I believe to be a normal human demand for religiosity was satisfied in a rather nice fashion, despite the fact that religion itself was suppressed.

The practical social outcome of the policies against religion, in this particular context at least, was that religion was largely excluded from the public domain. It was driven inside the household, but it still was a very popular phenomenon. It was always a group phenomenon. The communal character of Islam makes this religion stand out among others, to an extent, and in that particular context this aspect was maintained and even increased.

What I am trying to arrive at is that this seeming boom of religious identities on the part of the newly formed faith groups after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in both Ukraine and Russia, is something else in its inner nature. It is not a sudden increase of demand

for religiosity as such. The driving force behind this phenomenon is substantially different. It comes from the fact that the collapse of the institution of the Soviet state—and with it the entire social fabric in the local sense, the original sense, the personal sense, and finally in the national sense—led to people having a sense of vacuum in their lives. This is not a vacuum of ideologies, as it has been publicly perceived and much written about, but instead a vacuum of identities. Religions provide a very fertile reference base for building and constructing identities. This is what actually brought about the boom of identities, and even more so when other ways of expressing oneself and sustaining group identities are suppressed. This dynamic is thus more pronounced in a context where we find a harsher and more authoritarian regime, and such is the case in Russia as opposed to Ukraine. Not only after the Orange Revolution but even before, Ukraine had a softer regime in this area.

The driving force for increased diversity is not only religious diversity but also youth subcultures. My colleagues working in Belarus, for instance, have seen a boom of youth subcultures unlike in Ukraine. We have much less diversity of youth subcultures. These identities, the religion as such, help sustain groups against the domination of bigger groups and certainly against suppression by the state. Religion, as opposed to ethnicity and ethnic nationalism as a more consistent ideological framework for sustaining ethnic identity, provides comparatively easier ground, or material, for identity construction. It offers a text, which could be discussed, disputed, and reinterpreted by different competing subgroups inside a larger group. This enables people to create different versions of the same identity. For instance, there are different ways of being Muslim or Christian based on varying interpretations of those faiths, resulting in varying forms of social organization and identity construction. There might be a dispute as to whether your Islam or my Islam is better, for instance. I believe that the same thing is going on with the Jewish community in Russia, as was described in the previous presentation.

So religion is a basic reference, which is more flexible in a way, paradoxically. I would address something that has already been put on

the table in the previous session, and that is whether Islam lacks a “church.” I think this is a simplification. Islam has produced and continues to produce new hierarchies, as any human organization always does. The fact is that Islamic hierarchies, in Sunni Islam in particular, are less formalized than many Christian denominations, and do not so easily lend themselves to co-optation by the government. But the attempts nevertheless are always there, and it is so not only in the case of Russia, but also in Muslim countries such as Egypt and elsewhere, that we see that the government sees the creation of controllable imams or mullahs as its paramount task. It is not something borrowed from Europe or Napoleon—it is there in the heartlands of Islam.

The problem again is diversity. What the governments and the elites are faced with in both Russia and Ukraine is an increased and unexpected amount of social diversity in many different shapes. Religion is only one side of that. The challenge the democracies and non-democracies in the post-Soviet space face is not only religion itself, but how to deal with and manage this diversity. Religion in particular, for whatever reason, is perceived as a greater diversifying factor than ethnicity. The Soviet Union somehow managed and learned how to live with hundreds of ethnicities, but failed to learn how to learn with multiple religious identities. Those identities were driven down into little pockets and never posed a challenge. It would be true to say that religion poses a greater threat to the management of post-Soviet administrative systems. It challenges, in a more profound way, their capacity to administer and control things.

One supporting fact from my studies in Crimea to sustain this notion—and some religious people would perhaps not like me to say this—is that religious symbols tend to be used more extensively in situations of confrontation as opposed to situations of peace and friendship. Ethnic symbols, such as ethnic dances and folklore music, are accepted in very different ways. They are not perceived by anybody as a threat in the public space, whereas the public presentation of a different religion is. Crimean Tatars who want to be more visible and have their voices better heard at their demonstrations are increasingly using religious symbols.

The situation in Crimea has another point of relevance to the case of Russia and also to this section of the conference on regional challenges. The nature of this challenge is that we have two major faiths in Crimea. One is Orthodoxy, which is actually a Russia-based, Moscow-administered church, and there already has been a lot said about the way Russian authorities cooperate with the Orthodox Church and use it in the context of promoting Russian nationalism. That point is important for Ukraine, because the nature of the challenge in the region is not just Islam and Russian Orthodoxy but also Russian nationalism within Ukraine.

Religious symbols, such as churches and crosses, are used as a language of dominance by the Russian majority against Muslims, who constitute 12 percent of the Crimean population. Crimean Tatars use their religious symbols in a similar fashion to fight back, and this symbolic war has been going on since the mass repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea.

A characteristic example that I can mention is the biggest mosque in Crimea. It hosts a worshipping crowd of up to 400 people. The Russian Orthodox Church went on to build a church that is at least five times bigger than the mosque. It does not mean that the religiosity or the number of Orthodox worshippers is greater, but the intention was to construct the larger church right in the middle of the town and select a provocative name, Alexander Nevsky, as the patron of this church. In the history of Russian colonization of Poland and other places, the usual practice was to build a church to St. Alexander Nevsky, the warrior saint who fought the Western crusaders—the Teutonic Knights. A prominent case in point was the Warsaw Alexander Nevsky Cathedral that was demolished in the mid-1920s by the Polish authorities less than 15 years after its construction, for it had been viewed by Catholic Poles as a symbol of Russian dominance.

In Crimea, the projected Alexander Nevsky Cathedral was included as part of a single memorial place with graves and a tank monument dedicated to World War II, after a prolonged dispute with the war veterans. It is a very sensitive issue, particularly in Crimea, because many retired army pensioners reside there. Muslims immediately reacted when the

idea was brought to the table by the local government, and said that they also needed something patriotic. They questioned why they were excluded from the approval for the construction of such a large church as well as the government-sponsored memorial. But the Muslims' reaction was to begin planning the construction of a larger mosque. They are seeking approval for construction, and have raised money for it, but they face enormous bureaucratic difficulties in securing a site for it.

The most conspicuous and notorious case in point is the idea of the Crimean Orthodox metropolitan Lazar to mark the 2,000th anniversary of Christianity in the year 2000 by placing large stone crucifixes all across Crimea, particularly in places densely populated by Crimean Tatars. This has provoked a wave of protests from the Tatars. I have been to sites of these protests and spoken with the participants, including the most moderate protestors, who attempted to mediate the dispute. The issue was also brought to the highest government level, where it is still pending. The so-called Cossacks continue to make such provocations specifically to show off in front of Muslims. The Muslims react in turn, and this symbolic war is the result.

This is evidence for my initial contention, that the claim of certain of our so-called religion experts that politics are epiphenomenal to religiosity or religious freedom is not true—it is the other way around. Religiosity is largely an epiphenomenon of an increased demand for group identity, and identity politics is probably the framework for certain other things. The government should try to understand that. But so far, the government's efforts are very much scattered in Ukraine, at least.

On the level of legislation in Ukraine, religion is primarily treated as an issue of human rights and freedom. The government takes that approach in its legislation on religion as well as in some other spheres, like migration. I was surprised to find it is sometimes more progressive than much Western European legislation, but it does not necessarily work.

At the same time, Islam is framed as a foreign faith in the Ukrainian culture and by many in the government as well. It is not an official policy, but the perception is there that Islam is a nonlocal or imported thing, and

therefore can be easily excluded and avoided. When government does try to interfere in religion and mediate between religious groups, it does so between branches of Orthodoxy. We have plenty of branches of Orthodoxy, and the driving force behind government efforts is the idea of perhaps uniting everybody behind shared values and making Ukraine into a monolith. I do not think it will work.

The only reason we have become an acknowledged democracy is because we have always had diversity over the past 15 years, and we will continue to have this diversity. This is our destiny. Many people in the government hate this, but in fact it will continue. We have diversity on the level of different branches of Orthodoxy, we have diversity on the level of religion overall, and even in economics we do not have one dominating force—we have many competing ones. Therefore, Ukraine has to develop a democratic framework for dealing with religious issues, and I believe that understanding diversity as a value would be a good starting point.

Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer: These presentations provide such rich offerings that I feel as if I have more than enough to talk about just by discussing what has been said today. But my role here is also going to be to expand a bit on other aspects of religious communities, in addition to making some comments specifically about what we have just heard.

I want to warm up with some images relevant to the debates about President Putin's role. I will first talk about Russia, but I am also going to make a real effort to make some exciting comparisons given Alexander Bogomolov's wonderful talk on Ukraine.

On a recent trip to China, President Putin posed in the center of a Buddhist group. While the photo is admittedly not set in Russia itself, salient symbolism is very much there—Putin right in the middle of a kung fu group with Buddhists. He is the center of attention within a community, and he presents an image of a public figure in a religious midst. He has no problem with this, or with traditional religion as a value. He's sending a message about officially sponsored religions. There is another photo of Putin dancing at a Muslim Tatar festival, Sabantui, in Tatarstan several years ago. In

this case, Putin is sending a message of support for “folk Islam,” a moderate, tolerant Islam that has a lot of pre-Islamic aspects to it.

As a cultural anthropologist, I look at the importance of religious traditions and ethnicity, and their politicized correlations over time. I feel very challenged that Alexander Bogomolov has proposed a competing, juxtaposing view to explain which is more important, religion or ethnicity, in terms of the way in which symbols are used and competed for. I am not sure we can actually say whether either type of identity, particularly religion, is more incendiary. However, when there is a mix of both of these interesting identity dynamics, there can be extra potential for extremism. It is going to be very important to start thinking about ethnic diversity and religious diversity and their nexus in more subtle ways. These are just very general opening remarks.

Two more images are salient to showing a range of politicized religion in Russia. A famous Tatar cartoon dating from the turn of the 20th century depicts moderate Islam and advocates education for women. And most delightful is an early-1990s photograph of a Russian Orthodox priest exorcizing evil spirits from the church in the courtyard of the KGB complex in Moscow. I should mention that I am in the process of editing a book on religion and politics in Russia, and so this conference comes at a great time for me to think about some general trends concerning religious communities. I do not want to reduce things to lowest common denominators, however. I will also briefly bring in not only the missing Buddhist community, but also mention some of the missing shamanists, since I do my own fieldwork out in the Far East in the Sakha Republic [Yakutia].

My first trend concerns increasing pluralism. It is not enough just to say that there is diversity in Russia and to talk about “managed pluralism” concerning the four “privileged” religions. It is also important to understand how diversity can sometimes be misrepresented, and how people can be accused of being extremist when they are not. Given this process, what we can do is learn how to focus on the practitioners themselves and what they are saying about their own conditions and their own debates? I think Sascha Goluboff's and Alexander Bogomolov's

essays, discussions, and books all point to these kinds of sensitivities. One message is: do not radicalize people until they radicalize themselves. Relevant here is [French philosopher] Bruno Latour's idea of "iconoclasm." Certainly, we just saw how this can play out in Ukraine—iconoclasm symbolism as opposed to some sort of larger clash of civilizations predicted by Samuel Huntington. Latour highlights debates inside religious communities as well as between religious communities.

Communities also relate to each other variously over different issues. I think one of the more interesting trends that we have seen this past spring is Muslim and Orthodox leaders getting together over issues of morality to protest gay parades and gay politics. We have a lot of shifting political diversities and voices here. It is more diverse than perhaps a cliché about a few cleavages within a given religious community might convey.

My second big trend in the way religious politics play out, certainly in Russia and Ukraine, has to do with folk syncretic traditions and the linkage of religion to ethnonational backgrounds. There has been a lot of manipulation on this score, including by official demographers, by authorities, and by "religious entrepreneurs." As scholars, we have trouble defining the demographics of national and religious congruency, especially since we did not get accurate responses in the last [2002] census, when no question was asked on religion. We also have some unexpected new data. We have Russians converting to Islam, as well as the more obvious issues concerning how you count Muslims—whether you count 14 million or 20 million. Do we count every member of an ethnic group associated with Islam as Muslim? A further issue becomes how to look at diversity within religious communities, especially because of the delicate phenomenon of "folk Islam"—mixes of pre-Islamic traditions. Here I might surprise people by saying that there is also diversity and debate within shamanic traditions. These concern issues of shamanic revival, small intellectual groups fighting among themselves over how best to portray and maybe reinvent religion in the name of national identity.

One of the things that I talk about a lot, including when I go into the field in the Sakha

Republic, is that each generation tends to remake its own traditions. This sometimes shocks people who think of traditions as stable, timeless. People with renewed interest in religion are processing a lot of very diverse kinds of knowledge, and so they are picking and choosing from tradition what kinds of idioms and symbols will become important and when they will be triggered. In sum, ethnicity itself does not equal religion, and religion does not equal ethnicity—in neither Russia nor Ukraine, two places where there has been considerable diversity.

My third major trend has to do with polarization and extremist minorities within religions. Here I need to be less upbeat. The relevant dynamic is that similar kinds of fundamentalisms seem to be arising in various religious communities. I think something is developing in Russia that may potentially motivate anthropologists to attempt to create typologies of fundamentalisms, or to think about the triggers for fundamentalisms. What creates polarization, and what influences young people to turn into radical Muslims? Obviously, arresting young people for radicalism before they have become radical can tend to polarize them, for example in the North Caucasus.

Another thing to consider when looking at Russian Orthodox discourses and the radicalization of Russian nationalists has to do with their legitimate—and I am using a value word here—complaints against the "McDonaldization" of the spirit, as some Russian Orthodox officials have said. So, yes, there is a tendency towards an "us and them" discourse in religion. I am not sure that it is by definition sharper just because it concerns religion, but we certainly do see this playing out in some contexts.

One way to get an early warning sense of the potential for fundamentalism is to study the geography of religion or the geography of religious competition. This pertains to the religious symbol competitions that we have heard about, over the ways in which mosques and churches are contended for in every city in Russia. In Yakutsk, where I have done a lot of my urban fieldwork, there is a new shamanic temple. This type of construction had not occurred before in shamanic traditions, but the intelligentsia decided that they needed a "House of Purification" [Archie Diets] as a

way to compete with missionaries and the Russian Orthodox Church. One of the things that happened in the process of shamanic renewal and revitalization—and yes, it is revitalization because of the Soviet repression—is that the planned temple was supposed to be right next to a new Russian Orthodox church. The archbishop of the region complained, and the temple was placed down the street a block away. But then there was further complaint from the Russian Orthodox community because—and this I got directly from an interview with the archbishop—the steeple that was planned for the temple was higher than that of the Russian Orthodox Church. They built it anyway, and the political dynamics within that temple and surrounding it are considerable.

Let me go on to other examples of competition and fighting with symbols. We have from Sascha Goluboff some absolutely fascinating examples of conflict within the Jewish community, with two major competing community centers. And while we are talking about symbols in Moscow, we also have the famous symbol of Christ the Savior, the Russian Orthodox cathedral rebuilt on the site of a swimming pool, funded through volunteer donations and also huge individual and corporate “donations” made at the behest of Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. Here, the political dynamic is about sacred/secular tensions, as well as assertions of Orthodoxy.

Some symbols and competitions are not so acrimonious. I do not want to give the impression that they are all at the same level. I think they get to a level of real seriousness when registrations for communities to build temples get taken away and when religious communities fight over registration. That is when polarization and real radicalization start setting in.

This brings me to another trend. The political context within a recentralizing Russia [Rossiia] is a pull away from federalism. There is a retraction of spoken and unspoken promises concerning republic control over education and cultural values. This builds on and feeds into a regeneration of Russian xenophobia, whether it is manifested against Tatars, against Muslims in general, against people from the East, or against shamanists. Some derive a sense of privilege in identification with the mainstream Russian Orthodox

Church. I am not only talking about the ramifications of the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations. I am talking about how people feel in these actual Russian-dominated communities.

I want to refer again to Alexander Bogomolov’s work. He mentioned briefly how issues of Soviet antireligious repression, or the way that religious and political diversity was handled, had always been a little softer in Ukraine. I pricked up my ears, because one of my favorite theorists of ethnonationalism is an historian of China named Prasenjit Duara, who has a theory of hardening and softening boundaries. He talks about the zigzags in histories of hardening and softening boundaries, and how it is much more difficult to return to “soft” boundaries after they have been hardened with ethnonational animosity. His work combines issues of ethnonationalism and religion, but focuses on the ethnonational identities.

Let me get to a final point about the trends and then make a few more comments on the specific presentations. One of the things that I think we need to think more about is the structural ramifications of political zigzagging and mixed signals from authorities and their resonance inside communities. After the exuberance of the freedoms under the Russian Federation 1993 constitution, it is particularly hard to cope with the uneven and unfair implementation of the 1997 Law on Religious Organizations. I would make the argument that President Putin has created some real structural, long-term implications for the way he has been trying to handle and manage pluralism. I want to give some credit to my colleague and former Georgetown student Nick Gvosdev. A lot of people have picked up his phrase “managed pluralism” in the discussion on religion.

But think for a minute about what it means as President Putin gives signals about picking particular leaders over others. Sascha Goluboff was beginning to get to this. By the end of her talk, she was saying that it is really quite a counterproductive process when people are so involved in the competition for recognition from powerful elites and for themselves to become sole official authorities. Here we have particular leading religious leaders, like Rabbi Berl Lazar, playing out their own internal competitions. These internal competitions—

fissures, if you will—were already there. But I suspect that they are unfolding more sharply in the current context. In Judaism, it is not simply an easy or familiar Sephardic and Ashkenazi cultural/religious split, but rather it becomes the much more acrimonious politicized splitting that Sascha described. There is the split between the groups associated with KEROOR [Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia] and FEOR [Hasidic Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia, supported by Putin]. There are further splits among the Mountain Jews, Georgian Jews, Russian Jews, and European Jews with a more secular orientation. Then there are the issues of who is more moral, who is more powerful, and who has a greater claim to authority.

I think Sascha's work brings us beyond the work of a colleague from Russia, Simen Koslov, whose summary of 20th-century Jewish life, published in the journal I edit, *Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia*, suggested that while there are lots of splinter groups, Jewish life has recently been based on striving for social connections and cultural memory, rather than actual religious belief. I would like to hear how Sascha would respond to that as a question.

In Islam, we know of huge debates. I did not stress the Tatar case, although I would have, had we had a regional contribution from Tatarstan. But I want to emphasize that some of the polarization and structural fissures have been particularly tragic in the very places we have been looking at and touting for their religious diversity, such as Crimea or the Volga regions. These are places famous for their interethnic mixings, for their tolerance of multiple religions, for their multicultural identities, and for their pride in diversity. Polarization becomes especially tragic in these kinds of contexts.

In the Tatar case, a relevant reform tradition at the turn of the 20th century was known as Jadidism, glossed as “the new way.” It came from the Crimean Tatar intellectual Ismail Bey Gasprali [Gasprinski], allowing us to celebrate a liberal Crimean Tatar tradition that attempted to bridge Eastern and Western philosophies. Gasprali symbolically destroyed many stereotypes. For instance, his daughter edited a satirical journal called *Ha Ha Ha*. I

cannot resist describing briefly the cartoon mentioned earlier, which comes from this journal and portrays images of women flying out of a birdcage, symbolizing their education. Gasprali's statement about women's education was, “Whoever loves his own people and wishes it a great future must concern himself with the enlightenment and education of women, restore freedom and independence to them, and give wide scope to the development of their minds and capabilities.” This has become part of Muslim tradition in Russia. “Neo-Jadids” in Tatarstan have taken up Gasprali's cause, such as Raphael Khakimov. He is one of the advisers to President Shaimiev of Tatarstan, but unfortunately he is not as popular as some of us would like him to be. There is a kind of cacophony and competition over the soul of what Muslim identity will be like, particularly in Tatarstan. So we have one version from Khakimov called “Euro-Islam,” which has been hijacked partly because officials have started using it, including President Putin. (Putin likes to call it “Russian Islam.”) We also have Salafis, Wahhabis, and Hizb ut-Tahrir. I advise all of you to make up your own minds about the Hizb ut-Tahrir version of radical Islam by viewing its website. It is pretty scary. And then we have the more culturally grounded, mystical traditions of Sufism, with various kinds of ethnic identities to it.

I will not go into the comparable kinds of splits and fissures in Buddhism, but I could. There are fascinating ways that the Buddhist communities also have been splintering, luckily not to the point of real radicalization.

Let me end by setting out several challenging questions. I think from Alexander Bogomolov we have the challenge of trying to understand why religion does tend to lend itself to these symbolic wars. We need to think about the political and social contexts of religiosity, and the way it is used so that religion becomes, forgive me, the heart and soul of identity politics.

And from Sascha Goluboff's work, I think we not only find an enormous amount of rich and specific material about Jewish identity growing and transcending the ethnic-group identities and fissures, but going further, we also begin to see how debates turn on issues of

authenticity. Who is more moral, who is a radical, and why? How do specific communities interact with and cater to state policy? These themes are important in this changing, moving target issue that we are discussing today.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Paxson: There is a question that has been in the air today as I have listened, and I am sure it will be in the air tomorrow. I think that for those of us who work on religion, it has been in the air for a long time, but it strikes me as something worth bringing up as we go further, and that is the question of what religion is.

What is religion actually? What kind of object, if it is an object? What kind of verb, if it is a verb? And where is it located? I think there are implications to that. Is it located in states? Is it located in institutions? Is it in ethnic groups or local communities or cultural communities or in the privacy of people's hearts? Now, I am sure that the truth of it is that it is everywhere. But it seems to me that thinking about this theoretically has implications for how we think about diversity and what it is and what it does, and what we have to do to help foster unity in diversity. I want to let that question hang there as we go forward, because lots of points have come up that have made me think that it matters where we think religion is primarily located.

For now, I want to add one question I want all of you to consider, and then we should go to Marjorie's questions, and then open it up to the floor. Returning to my initial comments, I said we started up here at the level of the state and here we are at the level of the community. My question, then, is what does looking closely and deeply at communities do to inform the broader debate of the state? What do people who think about states need to know from all of you who look at communities up close? What are some of the most important points?

Bogomolov: In reference to communities, I have a project for which we hope to secure the funds that will bridge the gap between the communities and the government. The government in the Crimean case is very much involved in these symbolic wars, because most of the officials obviously belong to the majori-

ty population, which is Russian. Whether or not the officials are atheists, they favor the Orthodox denomination, or any Christian denomination, including the Armenian Orthodox Church, over Muslims. This is quite clear. They tend to put aside the political overtones that are now brought to the table here. These issues are actually very important, and they receive a great deal of attention in Crimea, particularly in the context of symbolic wars. This is now the most obvious and the most important manifestation of the tension between Russians and Muslims in Crimea. We can talk about tension, we can talk about exclusion, and we always are asked "why" and to produce evidence. And while this evidence is very obvious and clear, the government tends to miss or pretend not to see it. We want to bring the issues to the table to sort out the actual complaints of Muslims and to see to what extent they are relevant.

For me, the challenge is to sort out and to address in some way, not completely, the first question you asked—What is religion?—and to define the actual religious demands. Or, let's say, the material goodies the government can come up with, assets and so forth, to help people sustain or address their actual religious demand as such. Which demands are psychological, which are social, which are more or less purely religious? But when we look at mosque attendance, it is very difficult to make these distinctions. When we look at the parameter we use in our research and that many people use—mosque attendance as a measure of religiosity—I am not sure, at least in some circumstances, whether these groups, particularly the younger groups in Crimea, come there to pray or to assert themselves as a group. This is the point. The dividing line is very unclear between these things. But it is really important to apply cultural anthropology as perhaps the best theoretical framework to help the community sort out the actual issues, and particularly to sort out the political as opposed to the religious. It can help show the government where the dividing line roughly goes, and also introduce a very important but missing notion in the post-Soviet context: the notion of the public domain or public sphere as a complex thing.

The post-communist government tends to see the public sphere in a scattered or fractured

fashion. I can show you pieces of discourse from the newspaper on the new religious legislation in Ukraine, on the political sphere, on the social sphere. They tend to divide these issues, but they are indivisible. It is very important for the government to understand its role as a mediator, and not as a dominant force or administrative force. It is not there to tell the religious communities what to do, but the role is more or less like those guys at intersections who direct traffic and help people take turns—and not much else.

Goluboff: I think Alexander is on target with that. I would talk a bit about specifics. Looking at the Jewish religion, people used to talk in the Soviet period about being *verniushchii* (a believer) versus *religioznyi* (religious). Being a believer indicated your own personal faith that you could hide from the authorities, and being religious was something that you would demonstrate. The Orthodox Jewish and Hasidic religions are about acting—faith and action are seen as one. When you talk about what is religion in the Jewish context, you really cannot separate politics from religion, because acting Jewish is also a political statement.

In thinking about what communities can tell us about the state, it seems that we can really look at specifics from the Jewish case. It is not so much the state as a monolith, but it is how each different group tries to align itself with oligarchs or particular figures within the state. A lot of people now, as they have in the past, say as sort of a joke that being Jewish is a profession. But in talking to people on the ground, they say that a lot of young Russian Jews are Russian-speaking Jews from Belarus or from Ukraine who are coming to the Hasidic centers because they can make a living there. In a way, religion has become a way in which people can prosper in difficult times. There is a lot of crossover among politics, economics, and religious belief that perhaps people know is happening, but maybe the government is not really thinking theoretically about it.

One concept of flourishing civil society implies a bigger, broader idea of the interrelationship of the state and all other levels of society. For certain purposes, I like to divide civil society so as to focus on informal groups from below. If you start with that kind of frame-

work, then it is a more encompassing and multilayered dynamic, but it is also trickier than to start dividing the problem of what is political and what is religious. I find it a little bit ironic, but it suddenly occurred to me that we have all—and I do not accuse anyone in the room if I am not accusing myself—been aware of at least the idea that Islam's reputation is that it is a more political religion by definition, or that there is a kind of built-in politicization. It is a tricky thing to say, because actually Islam itself is quite politicized. But I suspect that all religions are quite politicized. There may be different degrees and different ways—this hard and soft boundary issue—but I am a little nervous about claiming that one kind of religion is by definition more political than another.

Then we get into the issue of what a religious community or a specific religion needs, not only according to the definitions, as Maggie Paxson is challenging us to think about them, but also as Alexander Bogomolov described. He asks how much reconstruction does a specific religion need, and I am not sure that the issue is what religions need as much as what people say they want. This negotiation may be exactly what you were trying to get at, and the point is, of course, that we are way beyond the idea that there is a post-Soviet vacuum that is being filled by nationalism or by religion. Instead, it is a mix of these, and the different kinds of competitions between nationalism and religion, which seem to be triggering a lot of ferment, including within the younger generation, which Alexey Malashenko brought up this morning and about which we need to think a lot. But what we can think about in a more positive way is how this community knowledge is being built. How is solidarity building being used as a resource in a more positive sense? If there are going to be these kinds of negotiating sessions in Crimea, then that is all the better.

Question: I have three questions for Mr. Bogomolov. First, what are the lines of division within the Muslim community in Ukraine, and would you describe them as ethnic or doctrinal? Second, in your estimate, what is the size of the Muslim community of Ukraine? My third question has to do with the organizational structure of the clerical establishment. Is

it similar in Ukraine to the spiritual administrations in Russia, or is it different? And in this context, is there an emergence of so-called parallel Muslim congregations that spontaneously form and perceive themselves as not necessarily opposed to, but as alternatives to, government-sanctioned establishments?

Bogomolov: Thank you for the questions. All these questions were addressed in our recent book. The simplest one is, How many Muslims are there? We used the census, the most recent census on the year 2001 in Ukraine, and we included all ethnic groups that are traditionally Muslim in our calculations, because the national census did not have a question on religion. This figure also included migrants, of course, because the national census did not require respondents to produce a passport.

Figures on Arabs in Ukraine previously reported to me were blown out of proportion. There is a much smaller number of Muslims in Ukraine—about 439,000. For all the disputes and rivalries that Muslims have among them, they agree on one common thing—which is the claim that there are two million Muslims in Ukraine.

Consider also the level of religiosity, which we base on calculations of mosque attendance and also some other external factors we were able to verify. The real number is much less, of course. Of the above 439,000, perhaps 10 to 15 percent are really interested in religion; the rest—not so much. The number of frequent visitors to mosques is probably somewhere around 20,000 to 40,000 people. But if asked, most Muslims, particularly in the Crimean context, would definitely state their identity as Muslim, even if they had never been to a mosque. This goes to my initial and basic thesis of identity as the key to understanding the problem.

Regarding organizational setup, there are different points. We have several types of Muslim organizations in Ukraine. The most important of them is the religious community, registered or unregistered. Sometimes they do not need to register. But the registration procedures in Ukraine are easy, and any 10 people can register as a religious community at any time. It is very easy. It is also a challenge, because sometimes you have two groups in the same location that will claim a mosque. It has

not happened very often in Ukraine so far, but I predict it could happen more often in the future. It has happened at least three or four times in Crimea already. The younger groups of people who affiliate themselves with Hizb ut-Tahrir claim ownership, and they also claim their rights to the local mosques through their influence with the local imam.

The community is a most important institution. The other important institution is the mosque as such, and the symbolic value it represents for the local community. The next-higher organizational body is usually something that would be officially referred to as a Muslim directorate, but it is different from the case of Russia. The directorate has interesting roots as an institution in imperial Russia, and has continued in different forms in the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. It is quite a story.

This history has convinced lay Muslims that in order for everything to be alright with Islam in their neighborhood or community, they should have some kind of directorate. They got used to that notion. And that is how we came to reproduce it in Ukraine. We have reproduced three such official institutions. One of those institutions, the genuine one reproduced by local Muslim initiative, is often referred to by Muslims as Muftiyat in Crimea, also called the Spiritual Directorate of Muslims in Crimea in the official government documents. A second one, organized by Tatars in Donbas, distinguishes itself from the other centers, but was actually organized with the same idea in mind—to have their own mufti. They have now secured one Al-Azhar University [Cairo] graduate for that particular post.

The third institution is not very genuine. It is actually an enterprise run by a Lebanese individual who is connected to the global Habashi network that is primarily based in Lebanon but also has an office here in the United States and in some other countries.

So those are the Muslim directorates, but they are not co-opted by the government, as is the case in Russia. This guy from Lebanon is very smart, actually. He had established himself with the local Ukrainian government prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, and afterward participated in a failed attempt by the Ukrainian authorities to mimic Russia's approach to controlling Muslim affairs. The

institution of the Muslim Directorate in Russia is pretty much based on the idea of Islam as a *traditional faith* on par with—or perhaps in the capacity of a junior brother of—Orthodoxy. In Ukraine it does not work because we do not have the same tradition. At least, nobody perceives Islam as something indigenous except for the Muslims themselves, particularly the Crimean Tatars, who see Crimea as their indigenous land. Generally, officials in the Ukrainian context perceive Islam as a foreign faith, and therefore it makes no sense for them to have these co-opted Islamic institutions, and so Russian policy for dealing with Muslims does not work there.

We have new types of organizations. We have Islamic centers and networks of centers. The most successful project of this sort is a Muslim Brotherhood-sponsored project, ar-Raid, which presents itself as an association of different entities. It is one of the favorite tactics of the Muslim Brotherhood to have a federated type of organization. They have registered legally all across the nation as separate entities. One or more offices might be closed, but it would take a great effort to close all of them. But it is one and the same network. I mention closure because there was a case in which one of the offices, located in Zaporizhzhya in the east, was actually knocked down by the local authorities. It was not a national initiative; it was a local initiative to close this office.

Finally, we also have what we call a religious opposition—a very few tiny local Salafi groups in Crimea and an up to 150-member-strong Hizb ut-Tahrir group with no more than 500 sympathizers. There are very few genuine Wahhabis, by which I don't mean terrorists, of course, but individuals coming from Saudi Arabia professing the specific Saudi version of the rigorous Hanbali Islam. They had offices in Crimea from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. Strangely enough, it is alleged that the most outspoken Russian nationalist and Communist, Leonid Hrach, then speaker of the Crimean local parliament, was the one who helped them open an office in Crimea—the first Wahhabi stronghold in Ukraine, so to say. It has since been closed by security forces.

That is more or less the organizational setup of the Ukrainian Muslim community.

Question: I am writing about relations between the church and KGB in Russia, and I want to address my question to Sascha Goluboff. In your opinion, why does Putin support Berel Lazar and not Adolf Shayevich?

Goluboff: I do not know exactly why. I think it goes back to earlier, when Putin seemed to be indecisive and a Russian oligarch named Vladimir Gusinsky supported [chief rabbi Adolf] Shayevich. I think that perhaps persuaded Putin. Then the oligarch Boris Berezovsky supported Lazar while Berezovsky was still in favor with Putin. I think there was a Gusinsky-Putin rivalry at that time, which perhaps influenced his view.

Also, the Hasidim seem to be much better at gaining resources and connections than Shayevich. Shayevich is a Russian Jew, and I think Lazar is originally from Italy and consequently has connections internationally. I think there is also the allure of foreign connections that perhaps Putin also likes, but that is speculation.

Question: I have visited both synagogues, and it was so obvious that one of them was out of favor and the other was favored. Shayevich's synagogue was shabby. The entrance door could not be opened and closed easily. Everything was sort of dank and unpleasant, and the people whom I met there seemed to be frightened, which surprised me. There was a sense of apprehension and insecurity, whereas in Berl Lazar's synagogue there was a gym. People were running around. There was a sense of ownership of the place, and that made a good impression on me.

Goluboff: That is true. People I talked to recently said that Berl Lazar and his group want to create a Jewish campus in Moscow, and apparently plan to expand to land nearby as well as build more Jewish facilities, all with the blessing of the government.

Catherine Cosman: In fact, Mayor Luzhkov has granted them a big plot of land for a museum of tolerance.

Paxson: One thought that Bob Crews raised this morning was that most conflicts are not

theological in nature. Can you all comment on whether you think most conflicts within these communities are or are not theological in nature?

Bogomolov: Religion in our particular case, the post-Soviet situation, presents itself as a reference point and also as a symbolic system. To me, theology in that regard is a language by which people express themselves and by which they express their differences. I took note of the fact that the disputes of this nature going on in Crimea in our particular case—and I see that increasingly elsewhere in post-Soviet cases—are expressed more readily in stone than in language. This is probably because the real sources of knowledge are waiting to be studied by the newly reconverted religious scholars and imams. It is easier to express yourself through the size of your mosque than through the text, because the latter requires more effort and more learning.

Goluboff: I also took note of that idea, and also that conflict arises over modern rather than theological issues. That definitely had resonance for me, and I think that Alexander's point is well taken. I think that if you asked the leaders of the two Jewish groups, they would say it was theological—the difference between the Hasidic outlook and the non-Hasidic Orthodox outlook. But having done some fieldwork among Hasidim and new converts, I can say that they really do not explain why you should do things, they just say you should do things a certain way because it is the right way. So I think that people, including new converts, have a very simplistic view about that. It plays out not only in terms of buildings, but also in terms of Jewish paraphernalia that one needs in order to pray correctly. For example, recently, Torah scrolls that had been confiscated by the Soviet government were returned to the favored Jewish group, and so there are also disputes as to who gets the right kind of religious paraphernalia that one needs besides just the buildings.

Balzer: I am not sure we can completely generalize about the nature of conflict. In other words, while there may often be material issues at stake and political and ego issues, I do not think we should completely throw out the baby

with the bathwater and talk only about the idiom of religion as if it were just a foil. There is also some genuine debate about issues of beliefs and their sources, and it gets back to the question of authenticity. In religious debates in the Sakha Republic, one academic ethnographer is basically accusing another more fundamentalist shamanist of picking and choosing from all sorts of different grab bags of ethnographic sources from the Turkic world in order to construct and supposedly reconstruct a whole cosmology and worldview of the Turkic nine heavens, and multiple gods. And the person who is being accused in this particular case says, “No, wait, I really do get my inspiration from a spiritual mystical authority. I am not getting it from just putting together all sorts of different archival sources.”

I think that to deny that there is some passion concerning theology would also be a mistake. In other words, we have to look at all of these levels together. And maybe the question kind of reflects our own worldviews.

Crews: I was speaking directly about the other communities of the Russian Federation, and I think that what I said was that the conflicts that have surfaced since the 1990s among Muslims, to my mind, have been principally less about doctrinal issues. I appreciated the last point about all this being in flux. Bogomolov mentioned people being reconverted, and this whole notion of what form the theology will take. There is a great deal of uncertainty about all of that. But I think the doctrinal issues are not advanced forcefully. In fact, I think the theological journals do not advance them forcefully. What are advanced forcefully, I think, are claims about religious authority and who can speak on these issues. It is not simply a question of materialism. I think we would all agree that I am not posing an either/or question.

Malashenko: I would add that we have to analyze the situation in the Middle East, and not just in Central Asia, or the Caucasus, or in Russia, of course.

Comment: We know that it is much deeper than that. I am a Russian from the same area, just on the Caspian. I think it is a bit more than a resurgence of religiosity among the modern.

You never had that among the educated people in Iran. Khomeini happened, and everything changed right in front of our eyes. It happened under a very serious regime with schools. They were living in this society, and all of a sudden these ideas started coming.

Bogomolov: So far as I understand, the question is why all of a sudden in the Middle East there is an upsurge of religiosity. This issue has been addressed by others. The thesis I proposed is that religiosity does not provide a complete explanation, and in many ways religiosity is epiphenomenal to other social demands, such as the demand for group identity.

In the Middle East, the period between the 1960s and the end of the century witnessed the collapse of national projects built on the idea of nationalism, and also projects based on the ideology of Marxism. Both failed very dramatically.

And now comes the traditional reference-based model to the fore. People utilized Islam for the sake of building a new national project, and it differs in its scope and its geography in many ways. It does not necessarily coincide with the nation-states, because the idea of nation-states is pretty much a contested one in the Middle East. That is what is happening, and religiosity follows it.

In our particular case, I see the younger people in Crimea abusing the tenants of Islam. They go to the mosque, and they abuse the elderly people for the sake of promoting their case as a new religious group. It clearly shows that their motivation is not pure religiosity as such.

Question: I have a general question. We have talked about the different competitions within Judaism and within Islam. What has sort of gone unnoticed is the competition within Orthodoxy itself—the rise of what I would call an almost radical Orthodox fundamentalism, which is a grassroots movement. I would argue that here you actually do have a theological justification for this, because the argument there is not about power, it is about very theological issues about who is in authority and how to face this new globalizing world. The answers the fundamentalists are arriving at are extremely different from the official positions and are actually strangely resonant with what is occurring in fundamentalist communities in

other religions. I was wondering if you had any comments about that.

Balzer: I am glad you brought this up, because I have a list of some of the fissures that I see going on in the Orthodox community. Clearly, the basic one is the kind of liberal Orthodox intellectual ideas that came from the late, murdered Father Alexander Men's theology, and now his successors. The people who are arguing that there is nothing inherently undemocratic about Orthodoxy, for instance, have very strong voices. But they are countered on the right, or whatever you want to call it, by people like Metropolitan Ioan and others. They are clearly not only insiders representing the nexus of nationalism with Orthodoxy, but also claim greater purity on other things. I suspect that Patriarch Alexei II sometimes feels himself somewhere in between, and is trying to juggle the various groups theologically, ideologically, and politically. But he is by reputation, and by some behavior, also more aligned with the conservatives among the Orthodox.

What I think is also very fascinating, and this comes out in some of the writing of Father Georgi Chistakov, and in the work of Victor Shnirelman, who warns about it, is the even messier mix of Russian Orthodoxy and Russian pagan nationalism with some Orthodox ideas and some of the anti-Semitic ideas of Oleg Platonov. I think that the whole Russian Orthodox spectrum is enormous, and therefore the range of what can be studied, and how people talk to each other about it and form groups and make claims, is extremely rich.

Question: This panel is dealing with religion at the community level, and I wanted to comment on how demographics play a role, especially with the rise of Muslims within the Russian Federation that is projected for 2015–18. At this time, the cohort of 18-year-olds who will be entering the draft will be at its smallest, and this same cohort will also have the highest percentage of Muslims. It spells interesting things for how Russians handle tolerance at the community level down the road.

Goluboff: I think that the ways in which Russians deal with racial diversity—and this

was brought up in the earlier panel—is a big issue for the other Jewish ethnic communities. It seems to me from my own research talking to people on the ground that it is important, for example, for Mountain Jews to talk about how they are Jews, and not Azeris, and to differentiate themselves—even though on the street they can be targeted for anti-Caucasus attacks.

On Alexander's point about religiosity's epiphenomenon for identity, it seems to me that, at least in the different Jewish groups, you cannot understand religiousness without understanding ethnicity. For Mountain Jews and Bukharan Jews, these sorts of small communities identify themselves, in terms of family networks and in terms of language, as different from their Muslim neighbors: that Jewishness has been part of their everyday lives, and now, because of international connections, they have to show that they are Jewish, too, and try to link up with international Jewish organizations. So, on the one hand, they acknowledge that they come from Muslim communities, but at the same time they show how different they are both to Jews and to non-Jews as well. It is a very complex picture.

Balzer: If I understood the intent behind your question, you are also worried about issues of perceived demographic threats from growing Muslim communities, their fertility rates being greater than Russian fertility rates. It is almost like a reprise of the old arguments about the Soviet Union and population projections. And yet demography is not destiny. Clearly this is a much politicized issue, and it is about perception. I suspect that a refined breakdown of different categories of different kinds of Muslims, showing they are not a monolithic threat, might be a good concept to project in the more popular literature and newspapers.

I understand where it is coming from. But the other thing that I think would be very interesting to deal with here is the issue of xenophobic attacks on so-called blacks. The problem is the racial perception of this issue, I suspect, and not so much a perceived Muslim threat, per se. In other words, this goes back to Alexander Bogomolov's issue of which is more dangerous—nationalist- or racist-based issues, or splits over religion. There is an awful lot of heat and animosity and misplaced projections

of the ethnonational or racial “other” that comes with this. Then that gets added into the idiom of the Muslim “other.” Again, it is when these notions are mixed together that they become particularly incendiary. But I have a feeling underneath that this is racism.

Cosman: Following on this question and point, what I cannot understand is Russian state policy on this issue. Putin's state of the nation address expressed a lot of concern about the demographic future of the Russian nation. Yet consider the ways in which Muslims are portrayed in the media, for example. Or, if human rights groups are correct, consider that there have been at least 200 fabricated cases against Muslims. Police arrest people because they are too devout and are therefore suspected of being extremists. Surely this is a very defeatist policy in the longer run, meaning 25 years down the road. It can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is more of a comment than a question.

The other comment I have is about Protestants. I know none of you are particularly talking about Protestants, but even though they are a relatively small group, they are growing very rapidly, from what I understand. There is the question of their international or American and Western connections, and sometimes Asian connections, and also the kinds of media slander to which they are subjected. They are even subject to psychiatric incarceration. There have been conferences where they have complained of being libeled in the press and subjected to psychiatric examination because they had been labeled extremists.

Balzer: Well, Cathy, on the first point I could not agree with you more. I think it is enormously self-defeating, and I suspect that many people in the room feel the same way. The comment is well taken.

On the Protestant communities, there is an interesting angle here that I do not want to overplay, especially because I said you cannot completely correlate religion and ethnicity. The Protestant communities that are more traditional within Russian Empire territory—the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria, the Finlanders, the Ingermanlanders—are the kinds of communities that can build on a reputation

of having existed since the 19th century within the territory of the Russian Empire. Catholics can also make this argument. These groups can all argue that their communities have long been in Russian territory, and are therefore traditional according to the rules for registration under the 1997 law on religious organizations. They have grounds for arguing with officials—of course, only if the officials want to act.

The problem becomes the local authorities who perceive the Protestant communities as being outsiders and who worry about outside missionaries. We all know, and I am not trying to avoid the issue, that much of the acrimony comes from a perception that missionaries are competing for believers who might otherwise have been Russian Orthodox. Here, I think the argument could easily be that the Russian Orthodox Church should not feel so threatened and that these missionaries are not necessarily targeting the same people. A lot of evidence from the Christian soup kitchens, and from the work that people such as anthropologist David Lewis have been doing in multiethnic communities throughout Russia, is that people who were of mixed ethnic background or are very impoverished are the ones who tend to be attracted. We do have a materialistic angle on this as far as the soup kitchens and the aid and the charity go. But perhaps we can make some rational arguments in the popular press to try to downplay the threat that these missionaries appear to represent in some people's minds. That may be too rational, though, because these attacks on Protestant evangelicals have been pretty irrational. One such attack just occurred this past week in the Sakha Republic that is particularly shocking, because it was perpetrated by a policeman and a bank security guard on evangelical Christians who were giving out literature in public, which is not particularly illegal. This attack may be prosecuted. In other words, some incidents get played out in the courts in various directions.

I guess the bigger picture here is that there is such a huge diversity about the ways these kinds of cases are dealt with on the ground locally. The unevenness of the way these court cases play out is part of what I think is frightening the religious communities. They have very little way of judging exactly what will

happen with their cases, and this also goes for the registration process.

Cosman: I just wanted to add that some Protestant communities have the most difficult time in traditionally Buddhist republics, oddly enough.

Bogomolov: I will again use Ukraine as a post-Soviet context that is different from Russia. I am not an expert on Christian confessions as such, but I know something about Protestants in Ukraine. I need to emphasize here that I have nothing against religiosity. Science as such speaks a mundane language, and that is why I emphasize the materialistic side of religion—because I do not dare say anything about God. I do not think it is for the scholar to speak about God, as such. I can and do pray sometimes, as everybody does. For cultural anthropology, for the social sciences, and for the policymakers, it is very important to sort out exactly the material and the group interests.

Coming back to your question about the Protestants—we have a lot of Protestants in Ukraine. We have a large and growing community of Pentecostals in western Ukraine which is supposedly taking away from the social support of the Greek Catholic Church and also partly the Orthodox Church. And the Greek Catholics and Orthodox might well be unhappy about that development, but there is not such a harsh debate about this trend in Ukraine, and nobody is killing anybody over it. There is nothing like assaults. You never see or hear anything about that. There are disputes, and I have been party to some disputes.

By the way, in some areas in western Ukraine, particularly in Volyn Region, the Pentecostals have won an unexpectedly high reputation among the local Orthodox and Catholics. They praise them and they say, “If you need a good construction worker, let's find a Protestant.” That is what they say. These particular Pentecostals do not drink, are very diligent, and have won a great reputation in their neighborhoods. People do not really leave their own faith. They continue to go to Catholic churches, to Greek Catholic churches, and to Orthodox churches, but they will also praise Pentecostals at the same time. That is how it works.

I will say that the relations between religious minorities—and this may sound a little bit Marxist—reflect the temperature in the society to a large extent. And in our case, the temperature is much lower than in Russia and everything is OK. They have a much higher temperature in Crimea, and that is where we do have assaults.

Balzer: I was just reflecting on what Alexander Bogomolov has been suggesting all along. I am going to give a little fuel to your fire, since I had argued for being careful about just considering the material interest. There is a figure in the Muslim community, and I suspect Alexey Malashenko knows a lot more about this, who has emerged as Putin's choice to lead the Muslim community, and I am a little surprised we have not really talked about him today. This figure is Mufti Talgat Tadzhuiddin [Tadjutin]. He is somebody who represents the most amazing zigzags, if seen as a symbol. He is quite a character. There must be something on him so that the Putin administration can ensure his compliance. This is somebody who had declared jihad on the United States at one point, and who has really gone back and forth in terms of his self-presentation, from being a kind of official Muslim who toes the line to seeming quite radical. One wonders when we get such mixed messages from the same leaders exactly what is going on, and I think it may be a naked manipulation of politics. Alexey, do you have any insights into this?

Malashenko: We have to go back a little bit, to 2003. At that time, somebody from the Foreign Ministry gave Putin the idea that Russia should become a member of the Islamic Conference. This problem was actively discussed within the Putin team and they decided that it would be OK.

The next step was to present Russia as a mediator between the West and the Muslim world. The next step was more concrete—to present Russia as a mediator between Muslim radicals in Europe and the United States. They wanted to manipulate Islam. They have a very profound ideological background, and I think that maybe they will continue to work on this line.

Of course, this position of Putin's is very favored by Russian Muslim communities. They

absolutely support this idea. Why? For their part, they want to become a bridge between Russia and the Muslim world. More concretely, they want to play the role of mediator in Russian business affairs with some in the Muslim world. The majority of Russian businessmen understand that it is an impossible idea. I remember that the first attempt along these lines was made approximately 10 years ago. That was a complete failure. But anyway, they try to repeat it.

I want to add one funny thing. If you read some Russian political fiction, you will find that there is a widespread idea that the restoration of Russia will be achieved through an alliance with the Muslim world through the creation of a coalition between Russia and the countries of the Persian Gulf. In this scenario, total control of oil would be restored. This is point number one.

Point number two: Russian Orthodoxy is something too old to enable the revival of Russian society. That is why Russia badly needs an Islamic element. Maybe Russia needs a certain Islamization. But if it should happen in a confrontation between Russia and the West, some Russians as well as some Muslims would be winners. If you think that I enjoy the prospect, I do not.

But as I said before, these ideas come from fiction. But I know that people in Moscow read such books. The idea that we can help save Russia by embarking on the road to Islamization is becoming more and more popular. Everybody understands that it is impossible, it is stupidity. But when you read in a newspaper in Moscow that Russia is becoming a member of the Islamic Conference, when you read that Putin said that Russia—I forget the exact quote—is a protector of Islam or something like that, it is very interesting.

I do not know what we will finally get, but we are helping to bring about a very strange situation of Russia attempting to use Islam and the Muslim world. You can observe it when you consider the Hamas visits.

By the way, in one of these fictional books published in 2000, the author mentioned that Russia must distribute nuclear weapons among some Muslim countries, first of all Iran. The book was published, I emphasize, in 2000. That is interesting.

Panel 3: Individual Freedom of Faith in Russia

Chair: **H. Knox Thames**, Counsel, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission)

Nikolas Gvosdev, Editor, *The National Interest*; Senior Fellow, Institute for Strategic Studies, The Nixon Center; and Senior Fellow, Institute for Religion and Public Policy

Catherine Cosman, Senior Policy Analyst, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

Firuz Kazemzadeh, Professor Emeritus of History, Yale University; former Vice Chairman, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom; and Senior Adviser, Office of External Affairs, Baha'i Faith

Discussant: **Kate Brown**, Associate Professor of History, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Nikolas Gvosdev: I thought I would first offer a general comment on what many people have observed over the last several years not simply with regard to religious freedom but to a variety of civil and political liberties in Russia. There is a paradox of shrinking institutional space and greater state intrusion into organizational affairs combined with a growing middle class that includes more Russians than at any point in its history. Russians now have greater access to a middle-class lifestyle with all that entails, especially the ability to fund and support choices of personal autonomy. This is to say, an increasing number of people who have the freedom to travel can now afford to travel. It is not enough to have a right to do something—one must have the ability to fund it and to put it into practice. We all know the statistics on the geometric expansion of digital communications. More and more Russians today are wired into cyberspace and are able to access information and to communicate beyond the traditional methods that were more susceptible to state monitoring and state control.

As we have seen in the last few years, the state has moved to reassert its claims to regulate and manage civil society, including the religious sphere. This has not really led to a major reaction on the part of the emerging Russian middle class, in part because the contraction that is occurring has not quite hit home for them yet.

There is an expanding zone of personal autonomy that is moving upward and outward for most Russians, and at the same time there is this contraction in civil society that is occurring. Those two lines have not yet quite crossed for most people. This is one reason why you have this dichotomy where, on one side, Westerners are saying Russia is not free and that conditions are getting worse; Freedom House is saying Russia is not even partially free anymore. On the other side, you encounter Russians in the middle class who could not disagree more, and say that they have opportunities that their grandparents or parents never had. This dichotomy is even more pronounced when one looks at the second post-Soviet generation, the current 18-to-24-year old demographic, which, particularly in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the provincial cities, has greater access to opportunities and whose sense of personal autonomy is much greater. We see very clearly in the polling data that for the most part people may complain about corruption, they may complain about an unregulated bureaucracy, but most people do not sense that a greater state centralization is infringing upon their perception of personal autonomy.

The problem in the long run, of course, is that eventually these trend lines may intersect. Perhaps the state will stop its drive toward centralization and control, or even begin to roll

these efforts back in the next few years. But at the rate things are going, at some point in the near future there will be a sense that the state's power to regulate and control civil society will begin to infringe upon people's perceptions of personal autonomy. We are just not at that stage yet, and that is why I think it is important to understand that we can have this dichotomy in which a society is becoming more regulated while many individuals do not really have a great sense of panic about it.

How this plays out with regard to religious freedom is also interesting, because the extent to which the choice one makes for private autonomy is something that the state does not really regulate. I have used this story before, so if people have heard it, I apologize. A colleague of mine in Moscow who is very interested in Buddhism and Eastern spirituality is in a position now where he can travel to India, as a growing number of Russians do. He can access all the literature he wants on the Internet and he can travel to congresses and retreats. If someone were to say to him that he did not have a great deal of religious freedom, he would respond that, in terms of his personal life, he certainly did. The question is more complex when it begins to move beyond individuals exercising autonomy and using their own resources and time to follow their own personal religious and spiritual commitments. Individual religious behavior does not really interest the state. But when that behavior rises to the level of organization, where groups of people want to get together, own property, and build centers, that is when we begin to see the difficulties that can emerge. Then we can begin to see difficulties, either because of official policies or simply, as in so many other areas of post-Soviet life, because of the weakness of the rule of law and the existence of a bureaucracy that still does not feel accountable—certainly not to the people, and not always to higher authority. But to the extent that people perceive that their personal ability to make choices is intact, then the state becomes less of a pressing concern.

At the same time, in much of the polling data you see, people define freedom of religion as meaning freedom *from* religion. That is, as long as they are not being forced to do something, it is not of concern. This, of course, is a

markedly different understanding of religious freedom, and it comes from the pre-revolutionary period in Russian history and certainly the Soviet period, when there was state compulsion to participate and to confess to a particular faith or ideology. If you look at pre-revolutionary Russian history, a number of petitions, particularly at the time of the 1905 revolution, were from people requesting the right to leave the Orthodox Church and return to being Lutherans or return to being Muslims.

That is not something that really occurs in post-Soviet Russia. The common joke is that there is a great deal of concern, particularly in some of the Orthodox circles, that whether you go to church or not is not the critical issue; but if you choose not to go, it should be the Orthodox Church. But if you are not going to church, you are not under any compulsion. No one comes in and says you have to go to an Easter procession, or to fast, or anything of that sort. Again, for most people the sense of freedom of religion means that I am not compelled to do something. So far, there is less of a sense that freedom of religion means equal access to the public square or a free marketplace of ideas. Usually it is still interpreted by most people in terms of no restriction on one's ability to do something, and I think that this dichotomy is something to keep in mind. It is why one finds in opinion polls and surveys that questions about freedom of religion usually rank lower when people are asked what they see are the most fundamental rights that they should be guaranteed in society, and I think that contributes to some of the trends that we have seen.

What I wanted to do for the remainder of my own talk here is to move away, perhaps, from things that are quantifiable and engage in a certain degree of speculation about where some of these trends may lead, particularly with regard to what happens in Orthodox communities.

We all know from the polling data that a majority of citizens of the Russian Federation will identify themselves as being Orthodox. The statistics vary anywhere from 55 to 70 percent. We also know that the level of practice is much lower. While 55 to 70 percent of citizens of the Russian Federation may identify themselves as Orthodox, when you look at the data on how many people are actually practicing or

are involved in a church, then you are looking at anywhere from 1 to 7 percent of the population. So we have this interesting development in which people claim the identity, but do not necessarily involve themselves in the life and practice of the institutional church.

What also come into play are those same trends toward personal autonomy in so many other areas of Russian life. Orthodoxy itself is not immune to this. The extent to which Russians have new sources of information and opportunities to travel means that generally accepted ideas about what constitutes Orthodoxy are going to be changing. Take, for example, the growing number of Russians who visit other countries with Orthodox communities, including the United States, and then immediately begin to see that there are differences in Orthodox practice. There is a certain degree of cross-fertilization that goes back and forth, with people questioning, for example, why there cannot be a greater role for women in liturgical life, or why shouldn't there be a more democratic parish council system. Likewise, there is a greater variety of literature that floats around and can influence ideas.

So far, what has happened in Russia is that the Moscow Patriarchate has been relatively successful in holding together under its jurisdictional wing the majority of people who would define themselves as Orthodox. Of course there has been some dissent, but for the most part, unlike in a number of other Orthodox countries, there has not been a major split or schism. But I think the trend lines are such that at some point in the future a time will come, as has happened in Greece, Estonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, when the ability of the hierarchy to hold together a consensus jurisdiction may come under threat. Then a very interesting question will arise in Russia about Orthodoxy and the Russian national identity: To what extent does Orthodoxy have to be identified with the Moscow Patriarchate and therefore identified with a specific jurisdiction?

The Patriarchate has been able to fend off, with some success, the potential challenge that would have been posed by the Old Believers, who can make in some cases an equal or even greater claim to Russian national authenticity with its form of Orthodoxy than the Patriarchate can itself. Depending on how the

talks on reunifying the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad with the Patriarchate go, that may remove one potential area for division. [Editor's note: In May 2007, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad formally re-entered into full communion with the Moscow Patriarchate and has become an autonomous entity within the Russian Orthodox Church.]

But as we have seen, particularly in a country like Greece, where a parallel Orthodox Church has existed for decades, or as we now see in places like Ukraine and Estonia, where the splits that have occurred are not temporary but are likely to become permanent, Russia may have multiple versions of Orthodoxy with multiple jurisdictions. Certainly the United States is an excellent example. In a completely free marketplace of religious ideas, Orthodox communities in this country have been very free to break down, in some cases, along political lines, ethnic lines, and, even more importantly, reimagining lines.

One thing that we sometimes miss when we think about Orthodoxy is that we think about it in ethnic and national terms. There also has been, and increasingly so in the last few decades, a process of reimagining. These movements can be very small, in fact, but we have seen groups in this country that will claim an Orthodox identity, but also want to reinterpret Orthodox traditions and to be able to express them.

It is a trend that also has been happening in the Catholic Church in this country. An overwhelming majority of American Catholics remain affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. But where I am from, in south Florida, there are independent Catholic movements that want to be Catholic, but want to reinterpret Catholic teaching—whether it is in regard to divorce, to homosexuality, or to the role and ordination of women. Of course, in this country the Catholic Church does not have the power to go to the state and request or demand that it shut down these groups or prevent them from using the Catholic name. The same thing has happened with the different Orthodox communities in the United States.

Let me mention two interesting developments in Russia. They may be outliers, but they are interesting and have occurred in the last two years. The first, and it may have been done as a joke, was the performance of the first

gay marriage by an Orthodox cleric. This of course led to a major reaction—the priest was suspended, and supposedly the church where the act took place had to be resanctified. But it is interesting that an issue like gay marriage that has divided Western religious communities has popped up in Russia.

Another possible outlier, which I saw on a Russian website, was a report of a chapel that has a woman who is vested as an Orthodox priest and who says that she is putting together a community. Does it matter if these are one or two isolated events? What is interesting, I think, is that the ability to say that there is a single Orthodox identity may come under increasing threat, from the perspective of the Patriarchate. The extent to which the Patriarchate attempts to put forward a vision of Orthodox life that perhaps is not in sync with 21st-century Russia might accelerate these trends.

I have a wonderful book that I bought for my son put out by the Orthodox Church. It is a wonderful, colorful book; but the vision of life that it presents is of village life. It shows people in colorful folk costumes and villages and flowers and animals, and that is just not the Russia of the 21st century. Russia is an urbanized society that has moved beyond this sort of agrarian vision. I think that in the first decade or so after the collapse of the Soviet Union, not just in Russia but throughout Eastern Europe, there was a sense of longing to return to history and perceived cultural roots. So far, the church has been relatively successful in portraying itself as a link to a Russian past. But sooner or later, questions will arise about integrating modern life with the past.

In the 1990s there was a reaction against Western movements, like the Protestants, that came in to offer a different vision of Christian life. This reaction culminated in the 1997 Law on Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations, which held these other factions as somehow alien to the Russian experience.

What Russian society, the Patriarchate, and others are not quite ready to handle as well is what happens when these challenges begin to pop up in indigenous Orthodox forms. It is one thing to say that women priests are to be found only in “foreign churches” like the Anglican or Episcopalian, and that this practice is from the outside. What happens if it begins to generate

and bubble more from within, and people start saying, “We don’t want to be Anglicans, we don’t want to be Lutherans, we don’t want to be Presbyterians—we want to be Orthodox, and we are going to redefine these things in an Orthodox format.” It could have very interesting implications for how religious freedom develops.

One possible direction is that Russia could move much more toward the model of Greece, where until very recently the Greek state made it very clear that Orthodoxy was to be identified with the Church of Athens. If you were not affiliated with the Church of Athens, then you were not really Orthodox, or your Orthodoxy was suspect, and therefore you were not given a great deal of freedom to operate. Or Russia could move toward what is happened in Estonia and Ukraine, where the division of the Orthodox community into multiple jurisdictions makes it harder for the state to prefer a particular form of Orthodoxy. It has certainly been the case in Ukraine. People can talk about Ukraine being a majority-Orthodox country, but when you have three to four competing Orthodox jurisdictions, it is much more difficult for the state to prefer one over the other.

I do not have statistics to offer regarding these ideas, but I mention them as interesting trends. In the 1990s, the debate was about religious freedom in Russia—about indigenous versus nonindigenous, and new religious movements versus traditional faiths. It may be that in the coming decades the question will focus on the internal discussions within those traditional faiths and what, in turn, that does to the climate for religious freedom. Will it result in movement toward what used to be the Greek model, where the state has a great deal of influence and can interfere, or toward what developed in Ukraine and has benefited not only Orthodox groups in Ukraine but the climate of religious freedom in general? If the Orthodox branches are not united, it is harder to set up a system that does not favor religious freedom in general.

I see two trend lines. First, there is a dichotomy between increased centralization and rising personal autonomy that is happening in society as a whole. Second, there is ferment within Russia’s “traditional” religious communities. Certainly, I know less about what happens in the Jewish and Muslim communities, which are also

designated as traditional faiths for Russia. These trends could lead to some interesting changes in the decades ahead in how religious freedom is understood in post-Soviet Russia.

Catherine Cosman: I should say that the commission where I work [the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom] is planning to go to Russia at the end of next week, so part of what I am saying is framed by that upcoming event. The deterioration in conditions for religious freedom and other human rights appears to be a direct consequence of the increasingly authoritarian nature of the Russian government and the growing influence of chauvinistic groups in Russian society that seem to be tolerated by the government. In the commission's view, the country's progress toward the rule of law and protection of religious freedom and other human rights is now in peril. Despite setbacks in the past year, it can be said that the practice of religion in Russia today, particularly for the individual, is freer than during the Soviet period, when atheism was a strictly enforced state policy and much religious expression was at least partially repressed. Nevertheless, advances in religious freedom protections that emerged immediately after the fall of the USSR are now in danger of being reversed.

A January 2006 law regulating noncommercial organizations allows Russian government officials to attend meetings of registered religious communities and provides for increased controls on foreign donations, which will likely hamper the charitable and other activities of religious groups. Although the number of violent anti-Semitic incidents has not increased, there has been a noticeable rise in the number of anti-Semitic sentiments expressed in official government circles as well as in the media. In addition, there has been a significant increase in allegations of official discrimination against, as well as harassment, detention, and imprisonment of members of, the country's numerous Muslim communities.

In 1997, Russia passed a new Law on Religious Organizations. It requires registration at both the federal and local levels. The law creates difficulties for previously unregistered as well as newly registered groups. Religious groups that have taken their cases to

court to overturn denials of registration have often been successful. However, administrative authorities have sometimes proven unwilling to implement court decisions. Russian authorities have also denied registration to certain religious communities based on the allegedly insufficient time they have existed, despite a 2002 Russian Constitutional Court decision that an active religious organization registered before the 1997 law could not be deprived of legal status for failing to re-register.

According to the U.S. State Department, a January 2006 amendment to the law requires that all registered local religious organizations notify the Federal Registration Service [FRS] within the Justice Ministry within 36 hours of any change to its leadership or legal address. If a local organization fails twice to meet this requirement, the FRS may file suit with the court to have it dissolved. At the federal level, the vast majority of religious organizations have been registered under a liberal interpretation of the 1997 law by federal officials and the Russian Constitutional Court. There have been several noticeable exceptions. In March 2004, a Moscow court decision banned the Jehovah's Witnesses in that city, and that ban was upheld on appeal, marking the first time that a national religious organization in Russia had a local branch banned under the 1997 law, even though 135,000 Jehovah's Witnesses practiced their faith in registered communities in many other parts of Russia. The Salvation Army has not been re-registered, despite a Constitutional Court ruling that overturned the government's decision not to register the organization in Moscow. Local officials sometimes either refused outright to register groups or created obstacles to registration. In addition, there are not enough specific guidelines on the 1997 religion law and not enough knowledgeable local officials, which have contributed to this problem.

In the past year, there were reports that the previous Procurator General encouraged local prosecutors to challenge the registration of some religious groups deemed "nontraditional" to Russia. In addition, some Muslim clerics have reported that it has become more difficult to register new Muslim communities. For example, registration has been arbitrarily denied to 39 of Stavropol Region's 47 mosques.

A number of minority religious groups continue to report difficulty obtaining permission to build houses of worship, since local government officials often create barriers. These groups include Roman Catholics, Protestants, Old Believers, Molokans, and Muslims. They have also reported problems acquiring land for new buildings, as have other alternative Orthodox communities. Religious groups that are seen as nontraditional to Russia face particular difficulties. For example, in November 2005 Moscow authorities overturned their decision to provide a lot for the building of a Hare Krishna temple, and in 2006 the community lost its appeal. I should add that since then, a Moscow official has said that land will be found for the Hare Krishna temple, although it is not clear exactly whether it will be in or around Moscow.

In other cases, local authorities have been responsive to the needs of a religious community. For example, following protests by church members in June 2005, the Moscow Department for Building Policy reportedly ordered that land be found for the Emanuel Pentecostal Church to build a center.

For Muslims, the situation is mixed. In a majority of Muslim areas, the local government often funds the building of new mosques. In Tatarstan, the local government has funded the building of 1,000 new mosques and several dozen Islamic schools. In areas where the Muslim population is new or in the minority, however, the community may face difficulties in building or operating places of worship.

In October 2005 in the city of Nalchik, capital of Kabardino-Balkaria in the North Caucasus, the regional governor closed six of the seven mosques in that city and allowed the remaining mosque to be opened for only a few hours a week. In Astrakhan, the capital city of Astrakhan Region, local authorities have ordered the demolition of the local community mosque that the previous government had helped fund. This case is apparently going to the Russian Supreme Court. Paul Goble of RFE/RL reported today that apparently the parishioners of the mosque in Astrakhan are maintaining a round-the-clock watch on the mosque, forming a human chain. The May 1, 2006, deadline for demolition of the mosque has obviously come and gone, and they are planning not only to appeal to the Russian

Supreme Court, but also to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg about the decision to demolish the new mosque.

In addition, I think it is important to note that the head of the Union of Muftis, Ravil Gainuddin, said that he could not understand why Astrakhan authorities could move to destroy a mosque in light of President Vladimir Putin's recent positive statements about Islam. He also said that in the future Russia's Muslim leaders will not only continue their own protest against the destruction of the mosque in Astrakhan but will also ensure that Muslims in Russia and in other countries are informed about the situation of their co-believers in the Russian Federation. I think that indicates that they are planning to attract more publicity about problems the Muslim community faces in Russia.

The Russian Orthodox Church, which has played a special role in Russian history and culture, enjoys a favored status among many Russian government officials, and this situation sometimes results in restrictions on other religious communities. The Russian Orthodox Church receives the overwhelming majority of various types of state support, including subsidies for the construction of churches, although other religious communities sometimes benefit. The Russian Orthodox Church also has agreements with a number of government ministries on guidelines for public education, religious training for military personnel, and law enforcement.

Early in 2006, a bill was introduced to allow only clergy from the Russian Orthodox Church to serve as official military chaplains. Members of registered Protestant communities in distant areas claim that they do have some access to military personnel, but that varies from region to region. In general, however, the authorities prohibit Muslim services at military facilities.

Russian Orthodox officials sometimes use their influence with regional authorities to restrict the activities of other religious groups. There are frequent reports, particularly on the local level, that minority religious communities must first secure permission from the Russian Orthodox Church before being allowed to build, buy, or rent a house of worship, and that local authorities sometimes deny registration to minority groups at the behest of local Russian Orthodox Church officials. In July 2005, for

example, the Sverdlovsk regional railway authority, reportedly in response to pressure from Russian Orthodox Church officials, canceled a three-day congress of 5,000 Jehovah's Witnesses scheduled to be held in a railway-administered stadium. Because of the perceived links to the decade-long conflict in Chechnya and acts of terrorism worldwide, in 2005 Muslims throughout Russia increasingly became the targets of widespread discrimination, media attacks, and occasional acts of violence. In many of these incidents, there is growing concern among human rights organizations in Russia that religion has been a major factor.

In February 2003, the Russian Supreme Court reportedly met in secret and banned 15 Muslim groups because of their alleged ties to international terrorism. The evidence on which the court made this decision has never been made officially public, but police, prosecutors, and courts reportedly have used this decision to arrest and imprison individuals from among Russia's estimated 20 million Muslims. Persons suspected by local police of involvement in alleged Islamic extremism have reportedly been subjected to torture and ill treatment in pretrial detention, prisons, and labor camps. There are as many as 200 cases of imprisonment of Muslims on what are apparently fabricated criminal charges of possession of weapons and drugs.

Since the 2004 hostage taking in Beslan, police actions against Muslims in the North Caucasus have intensified. The Russian human rights group Memorial described most cases against Muslims in that region as "trumped up." Nine female Muslim students at Kabardino-Balkaria State University reportedly were detained in June 2005 and interrogated for wearing the hijab and engaging in group study of the Koran.

Mosque closings in Nalchik in October 2005 resulted in violence when 300 attackers targeted military garrisons and police stations, leaving 34 police and members of the armed forces dead. Following this incident, police harassment of Muslim clerics and torture of alleged militants reportedly increased. According to the State Department, the head of the Islamic Research Institute in Nalchik, who sought to promote dialogue between the authorities and Muslims, is reported to have

disappeared in November 2005 after interrogation by the Federal Security Service. The Russian government continues to refuse to make a serious effort to address reports of chronic human rights abuses in Chechnya that are reportedly carried out by the Russian military, Chechen government forces, and Chechen rebel fighters. Despite entreaties from the U.S. State Department, Russian authorities have not sought negotiations to find a political solution to the decade-long war in Chechnya.

Many in Russia's Jewish community state that despite some continued problems, conditions for the country's Jews generally have improved, partly because, unlike in the Soviet period, the state no longer acts as an official sponsor of anti-Semitism. In 2005 construction began on a Jewish community building complex on land donated by the city of Moscow, which will include a school, a hospital, and a new museum of Russian Jewry, the Holocaust, and religious tolerance.

Nevertheless, anti-Semitic acts, including public pronouncements as well as vandalism and physical attacks, continue, particularly in Russia's western regions. In January 2005, twenty members of the Russian State Duma called on the Procurator General to ban all Jewish organizations in Russia, alleging that Jewish texts teach incitement of religious and ethnic hatred. Although the letter was later officially withdrawn, none of the signers have expressed regret for the views it expressed. In April 2005, another letter expressing similarly virulent anti-Semitic views was signed by 5,000 people, including many well-known Russian public figures and Russian Orthodox Church officials. Both letters were publicly condemned by the Russian Foreign Ministry. However, a Moscow district prosecutor opened an investigation into the Jewish organization that published a translation of the letters, as well as into charges brought by Jewish and human rights organizations that the letters themselves, by promoting hatred of Jews, violated federal laws against ethnic incitement. These investigations were later closed with no charges being brought.

In September 2005, border guards at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport denied re-entry to the rabbi of the Moscow Choral Synagogue. A Swiss citizen, he has lived in

Moscow since 1989, and his family resides there. His visa status has since been resolved, after a delay of several months. Casual anti-Semitic statements reportedly are so numerous that law enforcement bodies pay no attention to them. While official investigations into anti-Semitic activity by individuals have increased, official efforts to combat chauvinist and anti-Semitic groups decreased in 2005. There was a significant exception in May 2005, when a Novgorod city court ruled that three distributors of an anti-Semitic bulletin constituted “an extremist community,” as defined under the criminal code. All three defendants received conditional sentences, but were banned from distributing mass media, and one was also banned from engaging in journalism.

Anti-Semitic attacks and vandalism often go unpunished except for high-profile incidents, such as an attack in January 2005 in Moscow on two rabbis who were U.S. citizens. The two attackers in that case were sentenced to four years and 18 months in prison, but the court failed to find that they were motivated by hatred. In March 2006, a Moscow court sentenced a 21-year-old defendant to 13 years in prison for the stabbing of eight men in a Moscow synagogue, but did not find him guilty of inciting racial hatred. The perpetrator had reportedly been reading anti-Semitic literature before committing the act. The number of reported incidents of vandalism of Jewish cultural and religious sites in 2005 was estimated to be on a similar level to that in the previous year.

There also continue to be official efforts to portray foreign sects, mostly evangelical Protestants, as alien to Russian culture and society. Officials do little to counter libelous media attacks or discrimination. Security services treat the leadership of some minority religious groups, particularly Muslims and adherents of newer religions, as security threats. Many officials in the legislative branch and in law enforcement speak of the need to protect the country’s “spiritual security” by discouraging the growth of sects and cults, usually understood to include Protestant and newer religious movements. Evangelical Protestants also continued to be subjected to societal violence in the past year—churches and prayer houses were vandalized in several regions. The Slavic Law Center reported that a Baptist church in Chelyabinsk Oblast was

firebombed in April 2005. The Jehovah’s Witnesses reported two incidents in March 2006 in which members were assaulted, one suffering a concussion.

There are continued reports of difficulties for foreign religious workers in entering Russia, either to work or to visit. Catholic authorities reported a decrease in visa problems for Catholic priests in 2005, though foreign Catholic priests in the Pacific Region remain unable to invite other foreigners to assist them. None of the seven foreign Catholic clergy barred by authorities from entering Russia in 2001 or 2002 have since been allowed to return to the country. The Russian authorities have also not resolved pending visa requests by the Dalai Lama to visit the Republic of Tuva, although the Tibetan Buddhist leader was finally allowed to visit the traditionally Buddhist region of Kalmykia in late 2004, though the conditions of his visit were extremely restrictive. In the past year, the Russian government also denied entry to high-ranking British and Danish Salvation Army officials who sought to attend a church congress, reportedly on the grounds that it was not in “the interests of state security.”

I want to close by noting that a lot of people have referred to the official status for religions in Russia, mainly Buddhism, Judaism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Islam. Since this reference is only in the preface to the 1997 law, therefore, in the opinion of Russian experts such as Aleksandr Verkhovsky, the letter of the law does not confer on these four faiths the formal legal status of traditional religions. What that means in practice, of course, is another question. But the former human rights ombudsman of Russia, Oleg Mironov, who is a constitutional lawyer, has also said that this reference in the preface to the 1997 law, aside from the issue of its legal status, also violates the Russian Constitution, which very clearly separates religion from the state.

Firuz Kazemzadeh: I find it very difficult to comment, not only on this morning’s talks but on everything that has transpired at this conference, because religion in Russia is so complicated. Almost anything one says about religion in Russia is true and false at the same time. It depends on your perspective. It depends on how you see things. In my own case, I am burdened

by the disease of historians who cannot talk about anything that happens today without thinking of the controversy between Iosif Volotsky and Nil Sorsky as one of the sources of the problems in the Orthodox Church and in the relationship between church and state today.

To this I must add that I am myself a kind of an historical relic. I am old enough that my memory stretches to the very end of the 1920s. I remember the closing down of the Babayev sweet shop on Pokrovka Street when the New Economic Policy came to an end. This is one of the earliest traumas of my childhood. This wonderful place where we used to buy sweets had suddenly disappeared.

I remember the 1930s and the Stalinist terror quite vividly. So when I look at the situation of religion today in Russia, I must compare it to what I saw or read about in the Soviet Union, and the contrast is tremendous. Compared to the 1930s and 1940s, Russia has almost absolute religious freedom. The change is incredible. The Cathedral of Christ the Savior has been rebuilt. To see that building rise again, to see other churches repaired, is amazing. Down by where I used to go to school there was a pretty little church, deteriorated over the years. It looked shabby; the windows were broken. The last time I was in Moscow I passed by, and the church was renewed. It was bright; the cupolas were gilded again. So from that perspective, how can we deny that there is religious freedom in Russia? But when you switch perspectives and look at the situation in Russia from London or from any point in the United States, religious freedom in Russia is indeed severely limited.

There is today the issue of control of religious organizations, but that is not a new issue. There was control under the tsars, there was control in the Soviet Union, and this brings me to the idea that I wish were expressed more in our conversations here about what could be termed “popular culture.” Now the law is one thing; the general practice of the law is something else. In Great Britain, the queen declares war. Can you imagine Queen Elizabeth starting a war? Every criminal in Britain is arrested on the orders of the queen, in theory, but whom can she arrest?

In other societies, as in the Soviet Union, a constitution may proclaim all kinds of free-

doms, yet nobody pays any attention to those freedoms. When we look at Russia, we have to make distinctions between what the law says and what the practices are—that is, practices of the state and practices of individuals. The church is subservient to the state. The state derives advantages from the support that the church gives it, but the church also receives advantages from the state. It is a reciprocal relationship which existed under the tsars even before Peter the Great, even before the abolition of the Patriarchate. It was expressed in Russian literature. I remember a story by Nikolai Leskov in which a priest trying to induce a young man to confess to him says, “You know the secrecy of the confessional is always preserved except in government cases.” Here is a priest admitting it, and this is written not by a Marxist but by a very Orthodox Russian writer.

On the subject of respect toward law and understanding of law, we can look at Russian literature. There is a story by Chekhov in which a poor peasant unscrews some bolts and nuts from the railroad because he is going to use them for fishing. When he is brought before a magistrate and the magistrate talks to him about the crime he has committed, the poor man simply cannot understand what relevance the law has in this situation. He was thinking about fishing, not about the law.

There is another story, in which the judge says to the defendant, “How shall I judge you, according to the law or according to my conscience?” The poor defendant says, “Please, according to your conscience.” He is afraid of the law. The law is something in the books—it is formidable, it is frightening. Conscience is something else. You can deal with it. You can deal with people.

Finally, there is the business of individuals undertaking to enforce certain norms, no matter what the law may say. Again, I go back to Chekhov and Sergeant Prishibeyev, a character who cannot tolerate certain behavior of the peasants in his little village and who decides to enforce his views on them. When he is brought to court, he cannot understand why he is being convicted for telling people what to do, because people need to be told what to do.

Now, that has a lot to do with religious freedom. Manifestations, frequently very open

ones, of anti-Semitism or anti-Islamic sentiments in themselves inhibit the activities of these communities. They feel intimidated and uncomfortable. They want to disappear from sight, and that inhibiting effect can be very damaging to religious communities.

Now, as I said before, generalizations about religion in Russia are extremely dangerous. But having made that warning, I will still indulge in some generalizations. I feel, for instance, that the dislike of foreigners persists, and coexists with admiration for foreigners. Even under the Soviets, items that were imported from abroad were considered good and domestic products were considered poor. True or false, that was a prevalent feeling. “Foreign” meant something was good, yet the foreigners themselves somehow were suspect.

Anti-Semitism is pervasive. The educated classes partake of it just as the uneducated classes do. Again, it is not universal. It would be unjust and unfair to say that all Russians dislike the Jews. It is a question of proportions, and the proportion of anti-Semitic Russians to non–anti-Semitic Russians is, I am afraid, quite high.

The Orthodox Church undoubtedly includes many people with very high spiritual aspirations who preach and practice kindness. But the church as an institution frequently takes positions that promote religious intolerance. When I was in Moscow with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in 2003, I picked up a book at an exhibit, a book published by the Patriarchate. In it there were lists of evil religions, including my own, that were equated with satanism and called totalitarian cults. It is the church that produced this.

These things exist, and the state itself, for various reasons, may promote some of such activities and sometimes restrain them. But I do not think the blame can be put entirely on the state. If there is anti-Semitism, if there is intolerance, it is part of society’s past. It is part of the inherited popular culture, and in this respect Russia is no different from other countries of the world, where all sorts of intolerance and restrictions on freedom of religion exist. And it is not always the fault of the state.

When we discuss the situation in Russia, it is not enough to look at what the government does—what proclamations have been made, what preambles have been written to laws,

what laws have been written. All of this is very important, I will not deny this. But it is only a part of the picture, perhaps not even the most important part of the picture. One would have to do—and we have heard this mentioned several times—fieldwork. One has to go among the people; one has to see how they really feel in respect to freedom of religion.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

H. Knox Thames: Thank you very much. Before I open up the panel to questions from the floor, I would like to pose one to get the conversation rolling. I always find it interesting when people, in talking about religious freedom in Russia, say that it is better than it was in the Soviet times. Well, I would hope so. That was such an extreme, brutal system that just about anything would be better than what was happening during the Soviet times. I would like to hear from the panel about where they see the trends going in respect for religious freedom generally in Russia. We have heard from Nick Gvosdev’s talk that while the government is trying to increase its reach, there are still individual freedoms at this point, and individuals feel free in their personal lives.

Cathy Cosman pointed out in her presentation that the various groups encounter different conditions for their enjoyment of religious freedoms. Communities from Christian backgrounds face registration problems. The Muslim community seems to have a much more oppressive experience with local and federal government agencies. And the Jewish community encounters anti-Semitism that seems to continually crop up, not from the government but from society.

Finally, Professor Kazemzadeh spoke about the distinctions between what laws are on the books and what is done in practice, and the problems at the societal level.

If I could hear from each of you—where do you see this going, looking forward 5 to 10 years? Will religious freedoms continue to grow, or do you fear that they will be constricted?

Gvosdev: I think, first, that it is important to situate what happens in Russia in a larger European context. Certainly, religious freedom

in Russia is better than it was in the Soviet period, and I think everyone can agree with that. That does not mean that what replaces it is always going to be seen as optimal, depending on your perspective. If you are asking that Russia be compared to the Soviet past or compared to the United States or Britain in how you evaluate religious freedom, you will clearly get very different answers.

There are larger questions in terms of where Russia's own orientation is headed. For example, is Russia more or less akin to Greece in religious freedom? We still have problems with Greece. Greece is a member of the European Union and NATO. Yet we do not look at Greece and say it is a paragon of religious freedom as we would like it.

If Russians were interested in emulating some aspects of the German or Austrian model for religious freedom, or the lack thereof, that would include state registration, under which the state has the power to recognize specific groups and to designate others as a security risk. If Russia were to emulate Germany, would that mean that we would be satisfied with its level of religious freedom? From an American perspective, we could say that it would be an improvement from the Soviet period, or perhaps even from the post-Soviet period.

I think that there is a question of where Russia is headed. It may head in a more positive direction. In some areas, it could just as well head into trends that we have discussed. Certainly, the commission has pointed out that although Continental Europe is comprised of democracies, it does not mean that we agree with all of their perspectives on how they deal with religious freedom issues. I think that will be part of this discussion for years to come. If Russia does end up following the traditional Greek model for how it regulates religion, it may be an improvement. But that does not mean that we in the United States would say that it was optimal that they now had the Greek model of regulation. That would equate with the effective establishment of a religion, along with discrimination not only against religions that were perceived to be minorities, but also discrimination against groups that sought to dissent from the main institutions.

I would submit that Russia to some extent needs to be considered as part of this overall European context. It is interesting to make the

comparison with Germany, and as one moves from Germany to Russia, one sees a number of the same trends. It is just that in Russia religion policy is not always applied according to the rule of law, and Russians simply are not as efficient as Germans in implementing things. To the extent that there is a continuum, situating post-Soviet Russia on a central European continuum for religious freedom will have meaning to the extent that Russia becomes more of a rule-of-law society where the bureaucracy is under the control of the state and the courts. That would be a positive, but that does not mean that we are going to sit back and say that if Russia in 2015 is like Germany in 1990, the religious freedom issue has disappeared.

I would argue that we also need to see Russia not only as its own entity, but also as part of the debate in Europe itself about religious freedom. Just as the Russians have lists of undesirable religions, the French do as well. And just because France is a democracy, it does not mean that we are not very critical of the French government for how, in our opinion, it seeks to overregulate religion and in some cases prevent what we would consider to be the free exercise of religion.

Cosman: It is a complicated question. Putin early on promoted the "dictatorship of the law," and some surmised early on where he was heading. Apparently, Russia now has twice as many bureaucrats as it did in the Soviet period, which is pretty remarkable. I think it is also very relevant in light of the Federal Registration Service, which is in charge of registration procedures not only for religious communities but also for NGOs, and which was planned as early as 2004. According to one source, when Putin signed the NGO law into law in January, he signed an addendum to the law empowering this Federal Registration Service, which is headed by a lawyer friend of his from St. Petersburg, Sergei Movchan, to hire 30,000 bureaucrats all over Russia. To me, this bodes much greater state control.

Professor Kazemzadeh's observations about the emphasis on the state, and perhaps not enough emphasis on societal attitudes and views, rings true. Xenophobia is a problem around the world, and more common in an era of globalization and migration. I think it is

important to keep in mind that Russia today has the world's second-largest number of migrants. Although the official figure is 2.5 million, informed estimates say that the actual number is closer to 10 million, and most of those people, with the exception of some Georgians, are Muslims. The largest single number, I guess, come from Azerbaijan. These Shia Muslims, among whom at least some of the Moscow-based Azerbaijanis are quite well off, add another complicating factor to the building and funding of new mosques.

However, xenophobic attitudes are increasingly directed against migrants, of whom only 10 percent have legal status and most of whom live under extremely difficult situations. To me, you cannot really separate freedom of religion from xenophobia. Maybe this is a particular attitude on my part, but if you are concerned with freedom of religion from the point of view of every religion, then that concern should extend to societal attitudes toward minorities. There tends to be an overlap between ethnic groups and their religious affiliations, and therefore, unfortunately, I see xenophobia on the increase, and the statistics support this. There has been some recognition by the Russian government that it is facing an increasingly serious problem in that regard. I hope that this will result in the government renewing and expanding such initiatives as the official tolerance program, which for some reason was ended a year early. But it is possible that the government will simply employ more crackdowns to prevent the more violent xenophobic acts.

It is a complicated picture. Certainly I agree with Nick Gvosdev that one does need to see Russia in a more European context, for the simple reason that Russia has more of a Napoleonic legal structure. It does not have the Anglo-Saxon legal structure. Therefore, Russia's legal prism is more from a Continental European perspective, certainly, than a British or American one.

Kazemzadeh: Here again contradictions abound. On the one hand, there is a growing xenophobia. On the other hand, as was pointed out a minute ago, more Russians travel, the middle class is growing, and new ideas are penetrating that expanding middle class. There is

perhaps simultaneously a growth of tolerance and intolerance, depending on the segment of the population with which you deal. I am not convinced that, on the matter of laws, government arrangements necessarily represent very much. I understand that in Finland, for instance, the social security system is administered by the Lutheran Church. Finland is certainly a free country, and nobody has ever complained about religious intolerance in Finland. Nobody discriminates against the other religious groups, including the Orthodox, who have been quite numerous in Finland since the tsarist era, the Jews, or even the Baha'is. When members of religious minorities retire, they get their paychecks, nobody discriminates against them, and yet Finland has established the primacy of the Lutheran Church.

I would be quite happy to see the Orthodox Church proclaimed the national church in Russia if tolerance were to prevail in popular attitudes, if children were taught tolerance in the Russian schools, and if there were a kind of Russian civil rights movement such as we have experienced in the last decades in the United States. I have lived in the United States now for 60 years, and the difference between attitudes toward the black population 60 years ago and now are striking. It is visible everywhere, and not just with Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. The change has been enormous in the daily life of society. Here you have the state cooperating with the public, but the impulse is coming not from the state, but from the people. So perhaps one may be optimistic that in Russia, with the expansion of its horizons and knowledge, popular movements will arise that will advocate a change in attitude. Again, that is also a part of Russian tradition. After all, Russia is the country that brought us Chekhov and Tolstoy. Dostoyevsky may have been a bigot, but Tolstoy was not. All of these elements are there. Who knows which will prevail in the short run, but I continue to be optimistic.

Paxson: I would like to return to some of the comments that Dr. Kazemzadeh made earlier, because I think it helps us orient ourselves toward some of the bigger questions that we have been trying to get at these past couple of days.

First of all, his comments marked the complexity of the situation with regard to religion in Russia, now and in the past, and that is very important to remember. And then there are the contradictions—that is, while tolerance exists, intolerance also exists. That is actually epistemologically and theoretically very interesting and important, because material exists to go in one direction, and material exists to go in another direction. They are both there. Things will go a certain way, but they could go either way, and they could go either way at any moment.

I want to return to popular culture and its importance and place with regard to this question. I agree that this is a very crucial aspect, one that we have not talked about enough in the past couple of days, although I think we discussed it a bit yesterday. As a researcher and as an anthropologist who has done fieldwork, I bear both the strengths and weaknesses of my field. An anthropologist sits in one place, usually for a really long time, and knows that one place really well to the exclusion of other places. So my remarks have to be understood with that in mind.

In the tiny little village where I lived in the Russian North, where religiosity was a mixed practice, there was a great deal of tolerance for other people, for other ways of being, for other ethnic identities, and for other religions. They housed Jews during World War II who had been evacuated from St. Petersburg. The woman I lived with was a war orphan. She lived among other war orphans from all over the world, and she spoke of them with warmth and sometimes even love. This was a people who had terrible things happen to them, and they could be mean to each other. There were Gypsies in the area, there were Jews in the area, and excluding some tiny remarks here and there, in my microscopic investigation of this group of people I saw the potential for tolerance in this small place. That is important. It is not Russia as a whole, it is not urban Russia, but it is there. And here I will turn the floor over to Kate Brown to make a comment about the material for tolerance and intolerance in the popular culture.

Kate Brown: In the places I have studied in Ukraine, in both the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century there were all

kinds of religions present. There were lots of Protestant sects, Mennonites and Evangelical Lutheran sects; there were Jews; there were Polish Catholics and Ukrainian Catholics; and there were also Orthodox, of course. What I found in my research were people who actually felt that they could move from religion to religion, especially starting in the 1880s and '90s. I think that villagers were especially active in seeking out other religions to draw inspiration, and they mostly did this because they were thinking about questions of social justice, economic equality, who gets the land, and who gets access to the law. They found that the terms were often weighted against those in the village, and that the landowners controlled property, economic transactions, access to courts, and knowledge of the law.

So the villagers would seek out Hasidic Jews. Orthodox believers often sought out Protestants, evangelicals, and Mennonites who talked about social justice and who talked about sources of inspiration that came directly to the individual without any mediation from religious hierarchies such as priests, ministers, and rabbis. They actually started to create syncretic religious movements that were based in the village. What you would find was a villager, often illiterate or barely literate, who gathered all this information and said, "I've got the word of God. It came directly into me, and this is what we ought to do."

They inspired each other to go do very bold things with the courts and the local landowner. Leaders in these communities would often be women, and I think they were inspired to do something that they would not normally do—defy gender norms and defy the norms of the power structure—because of religion.

What I found was a terrific and inspiring force in Ukraine in the 1880s and '90s, and once again in the 1930s during the resistance to collectivization. These religions inspired people to say, "God has told us we should go, and we should resist them taking our kulaks away." Again, women led these movements in village after village. They did this, I think, because they were drawing on ideas from other religions that were around them, and you saw this particularly in Ukraine. This is a place that was a great mixing ground for ethnicities and religion, and I think this was empowering.

I wonder about what we find today. Xenophobia or intolerance toward religions outside Orthodoxy is in part a reaction to mass migrations and people moving in. But is it not also a part of a larger world movement? I would like to have the panel put this in perspective. If we could place this in a global context, it would seem to be a comparative project. What about anti-Muslim sentiment worldwide, or in the American national context? What about anti-Semitism? Take France as an example, where we see both anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim attitudes on the rise. What about increasing global migrations combined with xenophobia and retrenchment to less tolerant religions? We can see this in the rise of the Christian Right in the United States, which of course has policy implications. The handshake between government and less tolerant religious attitudes is not something that is unique to Russia. I would like to see some comments on that.

Gvosdev: First of all, about the raw material for tolerance, I think it is interesting that you see that it can go both ways among people who are religious as well as people who claim a certain identity but are not religious. That is, some of the most tolerant people are those who are religious and devout, and therefore recognize that in the followers of other faiths. You can also find people who are very religious but are very intolerant.

I think an interesting development in Russia is that some of the intolerance that is expressed is coming from people who are culturally Orthodox but are not really religious. That is, they do not go to church and they are not really interested in spirituality. For them, Orthodoxy is a marker and a way to distinguish *us* from *them*, especially from those who are ethnically Russian but profess another faith that is identified with another national community. This growing phenomenon of ethnic Russians becoming Muslims is an interesting one, and Paul Goble has been very interested in that dynamic.

There is also the idea that if you are going to be Christian, you should follow the form of Christianity that fits your own national identity. Oddly enough, I have run into Russians who do not understand that there are Orthodox Americans. Unless you somehow

have an ethnic connection back to Russia, they think you should be Protestant.

It is interesting when people who are not particularly religious use religious identity as a way of establishing some markers as to who belongs and who does not. I think that one aspect of tolerance and intolerance is the question about the halfway approach. I think that there is a middle ground, not only in Russia but elsewhere, where you can find a balance between tolerance of everything and intolerance, where people will say, "We will tolerate a certain degree of diversity, but not beyond these limits."

This comes back to why the preface to the 1997 Law on Religious Organizations, even if it is entirely legally valid, reflects the cultural thinking among at least some of the people. It says, "Yes, we have diversity in Russia, because we have our Kalmyk Buddhists, we have our Bashkir Muslims, we have our Jews, and we have our Russian Orthodox. This is our diversity, and anything beyond that we do not really accept." That is an issue for the United States as well, because our oft-trumpeted religious diversity usually has meant diversity among Christians, which is what we trumpet when we proclaim that we have 2,000 Christian denominations in the United States.

Having lived and taught in Texas, I can tell you that the Christian zone of tolerance usually means that they accept the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Free Church, and maybe the Catholics might be included. The Orthodox are "sort of on the edge," but can be accepted. Maybe Jews can be accepted. Now Texas is increasingly confronted with what happens with Muslim and Hindu immigration. The concern then is that people's acceptance of religious freedom, their tolerance, and their ability to process diversity begin to break down.

I think that is a real issue for Russia. Russians themselves are exposed to diversity as more Russians go abroad. There is more mixing as more Central Asians return or migrate to Russia, and as Chinese migrants arrive. People are trying to make sense of how much diversity they can tolerate and how they can hold their communities together.

One of the impacts of globalization has been the ability of people and ideas to move back and

forth. How did a lot of this antisectarian literature pop up in Russia in the 1990s? It is not indigenous—it comes from Germany and the United States. The irony is that some Protestant movements in the United States have put out literature against the Jehovah's Witnesses and similar groups, and now that literature has migrated to Russia. The Russians then took that literature and decided to add the Baptists and other Protestant groups. There has been this exchange of literature and ideas, which again puts Russia in a larger European context.

There is no longer an iron curtain between Russia and the rest of Europe, and as trends develop in other parts of Europe, they migrate to Russia and then from Russia back into Europe. I have not read this interesting novel that came out, *The Mosque of Notre Dame de Paris* [by Elena Chudinova], which apparently is a best seller. It is set in 2040, and Europe is part of the Caliphate. It depicts the struggle of a Russian, an Israeli, and a Serb to destroy Notre Dame, which has been turned into the Mosque of Paris. Those are themes that resonate in many parts of Europe, not simply in Russia. I think it is important to see these trends, particularly the concern about Islam and whether Hizb ut-Tahrir is a peaceful religious political movement or a terrorist group and so on. Something happens in Russia, something happens in London, something happens in Berlin—events now tend to cross-pollinate and to reinforce each other. I think it is important to see these not just as isolated trends in Russia, but as part and parcel of what is happening in the rest of the world.

Cosman: I agree with what Nick Gvosdev has just said, but would add just a few variations. One disturbing development is that one American in particular has contributed to the rise of increased intolerance in Russia, and that is David Duke. Apparently, he pays regular visits to Russia and to Eastern Europe and stirs the pot in various unpleasant ways.

I think Paul Goble has pointed out that the level of racist intolerance, or I should say xenophobia, is highest in the western parts of Russia. In other words, it is in the cities, where people are cheek by jowl with someone who looks very different, where you find the skin-heads, who are usually young, unemployed,

and uneducated. I think someone else pointed out here yesterday that the social structure for many young people in that age group has been eroded, and so they are increasingly at loose ends and open to all kinds of influences, both for bad and good. I think that some of the tolerance found in villages might be also because they are more isolated, and their memories and their identities are more whole. They are not as buffeted about by the vicissitudes of different kinds of influences and ideas, and are not as likely to encounter strangers. Villagers have known everybody else, along with their families, for decades at least.

Interestingly, it seems there is increased intolerance in prisons among people based on religious affiliation. Religiously based gangs are increasingly active and violent. And part of that may be because they spend a lot of time watching Russian TV—and Russian TV engages in a lot of ethnic and religious stereotyping. Russian Orthodox or non-Muslim prisoners view negative stereotypes of Muslims, and therefore they fear each other. It has resulted in less TV being available in prisons, and some Muslim prisoners have had to be removed from parts of the prison system where previously they could be housed with no particular problem.

There are also some interesting polling data that show that if someone is genuinely religious—as opposed to being religious as kind of a marker of ethnic or other sentiments—they tend to be more tolerant. And that is true for any religious group.

Kazemzadeh: Again, this is such an enormously complicated thing. For instance, in Southern California, in prisons and in schools there are fights between Hispanics and blacks. Both groups are minorities, both have a difficult life, and still they fight each other. But the religious element does not seem to enter into it. It is an ethnic fight. It is the difference in language and customs. Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles, who is of Irish descent and as white as they come, defends illegal aliens and is willing to violate America's laws to extend help to them. So there is no precise correlation. In some instances there is, in some there is not. But I have no doubt that awfulness has become globalized. Take, for instance, a country like Iran. It was never a

paragon of tolerance, but in the last few decades it has been so terrible that one simply does not recognize the country. It is happening in so many countries.

I am glad that somebody mentioned France, because religion in France was more or less a joke. Less than 10 percent of French people went to church. The French nationality was based on the mythology of the Revolution. It was as secular as it comes, and all of a sudden you have a strange paradox. You have the rise of both anti-Semitism and anti-Islamism. You would think that if people wanted to be anti-Muslim they would become pro-Israel, but that doesn't happen either.

I think that you could call it the tribalization of humanity. You have smaller and smaller units. People invent identities. They do not seem to be satisfied to be members of a nation or of a recognizable ethnic group; instead, they are looking for subgroups and for tiny little enclaves, and then those become the most important elements.

Cosman: Apropos of France, just before the riots last fall I met with some young French Muslim activists. They were very glad that the government had spoken out very strongly against anti-Semitism, but they regretted that the government had not done so against the many public anti-Muslim statements in France.

Thames: In comparing the experience here in the United States for religious freedom with that in Europe and Russia, I think part of it is our Anglo-Saxon legal tradition. But I have also wondered if it is just the combination of government policy and free movement, together with lots of open spaces. When you had Baptists here in Episcopalian Virginia, it did not work out so well. But they could leave and find an empty space where they could find religious freedom. The Latter-day Saints were in Illinois. It was not working so well, but they could and did move out to Utah and enjoy religious freedom.

In Western Europe you have freedom of movement, but not too many empty spaces where you are not rubbing up against each other. Russia has lots of empty spaces, but not so much freedom of movement. I can think of cases like in Krasnodar Krai with the Meskhetian

Turks, people who could not get their status regularized and so were not able to leave a horrible situation. As a consequence, the United States opened up a refugee resettlement program to bring them here. But I wonder if they could have left and had the proper documents and moved to another place in Russia where they had been welcomed, or that was just empty, would that problem have gone away?

Goluboff: I have a comment regarding this notion of material for tolerance and popular culture in Russia. It strikes me, as an ethnographer looking at small things in populations, that in my research looking at groups of Jews from Russia, the Caucasus, Georgia, and Central Asia, they found that they had to make differences among themselves. Being Jewish as an identifying factor just did not seem to be good enough. I found that the idea of ethnicity is much more fluid, and that those from the Russian-Jewish side can say that they feel Russian.

They had a notion of feeling Russian, of admiring churches, of admiring the icons, of feeling a link, whether or not the dominant culture allowed for that kind of fluidity. They felt that link, and would talk about how they felt more in common with Russians than with Jews from Azerbaijan, even though they were all Jewish. There was that cultural authenticity, that material for tolerance. But it is not recognized by the dominant society, and if it is recognized, it is not validated as important. So maybe we do have these smaller contextual movements of fluidity and ethnicity, but it does not seem to play out in the larger frame.

Comment: I would like to comment on some of the statements made. They are really interesting, but they touch on something very important about what is happening beyond Russia in terms of transnational movements. In many cases it is this reassertion of identity, of trying to locate oneself in a globalized world by focusing narrowly on what group one belongs to or what religion one belongs to. This leads in part to a phenomenon that has been tracked all over the world—the resurgence of religion in the public sphere and the need for public demonstrations of religiosity and one's belief. A part of it is in reaction to secularization. With the secularization of the 20th century, the understanding was that

religion was a private matter that did not belong in a public sphere, that a secular society meant the exclusion of religion, and that religion would wither away and die.

You see this reaction to secularization all over. You see Muslims in Nigeria or Indonesia wear head scarves, which they did not wear before. You see a desire for a more demonstrative orthodoxy in Russia, or wherever the case may be. It is an interesting pattern that is happening all over.

I think that some of the comments about Russia's return to Europe are useful. If you look more carefully at what is happening in Europe, there is increased pressure against discrimination—consider the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. Some things that are happening in Russia do not match up very well with that. Greece certainly does have a much more unified church-state system than the United States—one that most Americans would not feel very comfortable with. But I think it is interesting that even Europeans do not feel comfortable with it. The European Court of Human Rights has made very clear statements that a number of aspects of the Greek approach are not compatible with European laws. Russia is trying to sort out where it will end up and how it will deal with these issues. As Americans, our tendency may be to be dismissive and say that Russia is just moving into Europe. Having studied European systems, I think that it is not as simple as that. There are pressures against discrimination even in cooperative systems like Austria or Germany. There have been some successful court challenges to some of the most discriminatory features of those systems. That pressure is going to be felt in Russia as well.

Comment: I was intrigued by the conversation about complexity and the necessity to look at the local context. I wanted to follow up on that with an experience that I had visiting Saratov about two months ago. What I found fascinating there was this presence of contradictions. On the one hand, you had a Mormon community that attempted to build a temple and had actually gotten permission to do so from the governor. They were all set up to do it, and then a new Orthodox bishop comes along to visit the governor and says, "I don't like this,"

and the Mormon temple was shut down.

On the other hand, in Saratov you have about as many mosques as churches. You have the local population actually protesting against rebuilding a church on a site that now has a park and a stadium. The locals want their kids to have somewhere to run around, and they are asking why they would need another church when there are already three in their neighborhood.

A final fascinating element that I found in Saratov was a memorial to commemorate World War II, and there, surrounded by tanks and airplanes and all sorts of things, is this artificially constructed village built up over the last two or three years. It represents the houses donated by members of the local ethnic communities, and there are 20 or 25 different houses. There is a Ukrainian house, a Belarusian house, a Russian house, a Bashkiri house, an Uzbek house, a Tatar house, and so on. They are very proud of this reflection of their community. Today's comments really sparked this memory that I had of this visit, and it speaks to this issue of contradictory evidence about tolerance and intolerance in one place.

Balzer: I want to make a comment that draws on what Kate Brown and Maggie Paxson were talking about, having to do with some of these new syncretic religious movements. We have not talked much about a phenomenon that is growing worldwide, and that is the degree to which mixing and matching of religion is creating what Toby Lester called, in his *Atlantic Monthly* article "Oh, Gods!" the newest growth trend of the 21st century. One of the things that I was thinking about, as I thought of the historical backgrounds of syncretic movements and these revitalization movements, which I have studied comparatively for many years, is that a lot of them, unfortunately, are not so tolerant. It is very interesting that the cases that you are highlighting and that you found have created conditions in which the syncretism allows for room for tolerance. Sometimes these are revitalization movements that are very defensive in nature, but also are very us/them in the way that they frame an enemy. Often in Russia, it has been an anti-Russian thing on the part of non-Russians. It is unfortunate to say, but at the same time I really think we need to think about the ways in which these move-

ments have an enormous complexity and diversity and often get lost in the shuffle as we think about so many of the dominant religions and their dynamics with the state or with society.

The conditions right now in Russia socially and culturally are so chaotic that a lot of this new religious phenomenon is bubbling up from local levels. It is certainly happening in the Sakha Republic, where I do my fieldwork, but it is also happening in Tuva, Buryatia, and many other places as well. I would add that they cannot be lumped all together, but nor should they all be seen as automatically tolerant.

Comment: Russia does have the fluidity that we are discussing today. But in fact there is one organization that overwhelmingly determines religious policy in Russia. It is the Moscow Patriarchate. I am studying the Moscow Patriarchate's relations, as well as its corporate relations, with the KGB. Even here in America, I am making unbelievable discoveries not just about the Soviet era, but about today as well. My question is the following: How do you in America view the Moscow Patriarchate—as an independent organization, or as a part of the Russian government?

Gvosdev: It is probably best described as outside the state. It is not like in Greece, where there is a formal establishment, or even in Britain, where the Anglican Church has a formal establishment and the prime minister gets to pick bishops in the name of the queen.

But it is very clear that the legal question is not the whole picture. There is a very clear interrelationship of hierarchies in Russia between church and state, and between business and government. It is very revealing that the decisions of the 1917 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, which provide for bishops to be elected by the local dioceses in assemblies, have not been restored. You do not have the genuine restoration of what in 1917 was seen as the authentic Orthodox traditions, but rather a system of promotion and movement through the hierarchy that is still centrally controlled. There is a certain degree of influence back and forth.

I was at a conference at Columbia University on relations among the Russian state, the Russian church, and society. We heard the extent to which the church has been very much the junior

partner in this relationship over the last several years. Of course, how the next Patriarch is selected is going to be quite interesting.

Having said that, I come back to the point that I raised in my initial presentation, which is given that the number of people who are actually going to church on any given Sunday or in any given month is relatively small, the new movements and syncretism are likely to continue in spite of the Patriarchate.

Is the Patriarchate going to continue to be in a position of having a near-monopoly in Russia on the Orthodox identity or not? The answer depends on whether an increasing number of people become so dissatisfied with the Patriarchate or with its leadership that they decide that they want to separate and form something else. We are seeing this play out over the question of Russian Orthodox communities in Western Europe right now. As of today, one of the Russian Orthodox bishops in England has now been accepted into the Patriarchate of Constantinople. He is taking communities out of the Moscow Patriarchate, but not to become Greek, interestingly enough. It is this notion of churches in the Russian Orthodox tradition, but not affiliated with the Moscow Patriarchate. If these trends are happening in Western Europe, is there a delayed mechanism by which eventually this comes back to Russia? And then of course, what response will the state have? I do not know. I suspect that the state will probably lean more to the Greek model, under which the Orthodox Church in Greece is defined as the Church of Athens in communion with Constantinople, and if you are not a part of that, then you cannot be designated as being Orthodox.

What happened in Ukraine was that a sufficient number of people broke out of an existing church structure. It then became harder for the state to impose one Orthodox variant. I could see a situation in which 10 years from now there might be multiple Orthodox jurisdictions in Russia, as you already have in Estonia, Greece, Ukraine, and elsewhere, unless the state decides to use its power very heavy-handedly to enforce a particular Orthodox jurisdiction.

This comes back to another point, and I think maybe not just for Orthodoxy but for other religions in the Sakha Republic and elsewhere. What happens when local officials do not step back from this issue, and they actually have

an interest in the outcome? What happens if you have officials who say, “I prefer this variant of Orthodoxy” or “I really want to see this syncretic movement move forward.”

I think that is why there is a lot of stuff bubbling underneath the surface. We have to see what happens when the current Patriarch dies or retires—how the next Patriarch is chosen and whether or not that decision sits well. It happened in Bulgaria. It happened in the former Yugoslavia, where you now have three competing Orthodox jurisdictions.

The Russian government successfully maintained its influence over the church in the 1990s because most of the splinters were small enough that they could be contained. Father Gleb Yakunin going off to the independent Ukrainians could be contained. Father Georgi Kotchekov and his movement could be contained. The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad coming back to Russia could be contained. These developments were small enough to be contained. Whether that continues over the next 10 to 15 years is an open question, I think.

If the dominant religious movement itself splits into factions and fissures, then that creates a completely different environment for the legal regime for religious freedom. If people want to support Orthodoxy, then the next question is which Orthodoxy? Political figures like presidents Kuchma, Kravchuk, and Yushchenko in Ukraine were able to respond to demands to support “Orthodoxy” by replying, “Great, which Orthodoxy?” Their solution has been to visit all and favor none.

Could something like that happen in Russia? I do not know. Given that most Russians are not really religiously active, this could end up being a split of 2 percent versus 2 percent. I think the field is open.

Cosman: I would say that the Russian Orthodox Church is the first among equals, without doubt. I also think that the Moscow Patriarchate stands to lose a lot in Ukraine, since, I believe, half of its parishes are based in Ukraine.

Gvosdev: The Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine is a very strong proponent of religious freedom and of no state interference precisely for that reason. Its big fear was of a forced reuni-

fication of Orthodoxy in Ukraine under a Ukrainian patriarchate, which would then strip the Moscow Patriarchate of its parishes. For the same reason, the Moscow Patriarchate in Estonia is a big proponent of religious freedom.

Cosman: It is also interesting to note that the Patriarch was born in Estonia. I think the Russian government could be more conscientious about informing officials about relevant Russian laws and international legal commitments in the sphere of religion. It is necessary, and would be fairly simple to do. Many local officials in Russia really believe that the Russian Orthodox Church is the official church and should be granted veto power over other churches or permission to build houses of worship.

Kazemzadeh: In Russia, local officials are appointed by the state. Russian governors are not elected, as they are here in America. That is why local officials listen to the orders from Kremlin about which religion to support, and they are ordered to support the Moscow Patriarchate. Here in America, I am sure that not all the religious experts know that in Russia the church buildings belong to the state even now, not to the community. For example, if this or that Russian parish decides to move to another jurisdiction or even to join another religious group, that parish has to leave not only its property but the church building to the Moscow Patriarchate and go to the other jurisdiction.

Question: From what I understand, the Patriarchate in the last hundred years has been shrinking. It lost all these churches and parishes in the 1917 revolution, and now in Ukraine and Estonia it refuses to give up another thing and fights to remain dominant where it still has power. Has it become more of an entrenched body?

Kazemzadeh: The Moscow Patriarchate has never had a great problem, because it is a bureaucratic and not a spiritual organization. It was created by Stalin in 1953 in order to deceive the West that there was religious freedom in Russia. All the priests and students of the ecclesiastic academy who began to study in 1943 were drawn from the army and security

organizations. We just do not understand sometimes that today's Moscow Patriarchate is an organization that was created by Stalin and headed up by the KGB under Lavrenti Beria. So today's Patriarchate is not the same as the old Patriarchate. After the Declaration of 1927 [in which Metropolitan Sergy Stragorodsky declared the church's absolute loyalty to the Soviet state], a great part of the Russian clergy did not acknowledge it or just went underground, and this persists in Russia.

Cosman: According to a recent public-opinion poll, the Russian Orthodox Church has a higher credibility rating than any other institution in Russia.

Kazemzadeh: Yes. But let us remember events in Russia about 10 years ago. At that time you could see Stalin's portrait on top of cars passing by. Why so? They did not believe the Soviet government then, and they do not believe the Russian government now. They do not believe Putin. They need something spiritual. They do not have a lot of assurance about which religion to choose. They do not have enough information, because all the state channels are filled only with the Moscow Patriarchate.

Bogomolov: I am also not an expert on the authorities, but our recent experience in Ukraine, particularly during the Orange Revolution, has increased my interest in the Moscow Patriarchate. During this period, Moscow used the Moscow Patriarchate to support a government that we strongly disliked. That undermined the credibility of the Moscow Patriarchate, even among ethnic Russians in Ukraine. The vicissitudes of the Orange Revolution have brought me into close contact with some organizers of marches—i.e., supposedly sacred processions—in support of Viktor Yanukovich. The Christian marchers were holding crosses and portraits of Yanukovich. I found it interesting that the organizers came directly from Moscow, and some of them had nothing to do with religion at all. That brings me to the conclusion that it is not really important whether or not the Russian president can substitute Patriarch Alexei II for somebody else. This is largely a symbolic figure.

Thames: We are going to have to leave it there, as we are out of time. I would like to thank our panelists and conference participants for this stimulating discussion.

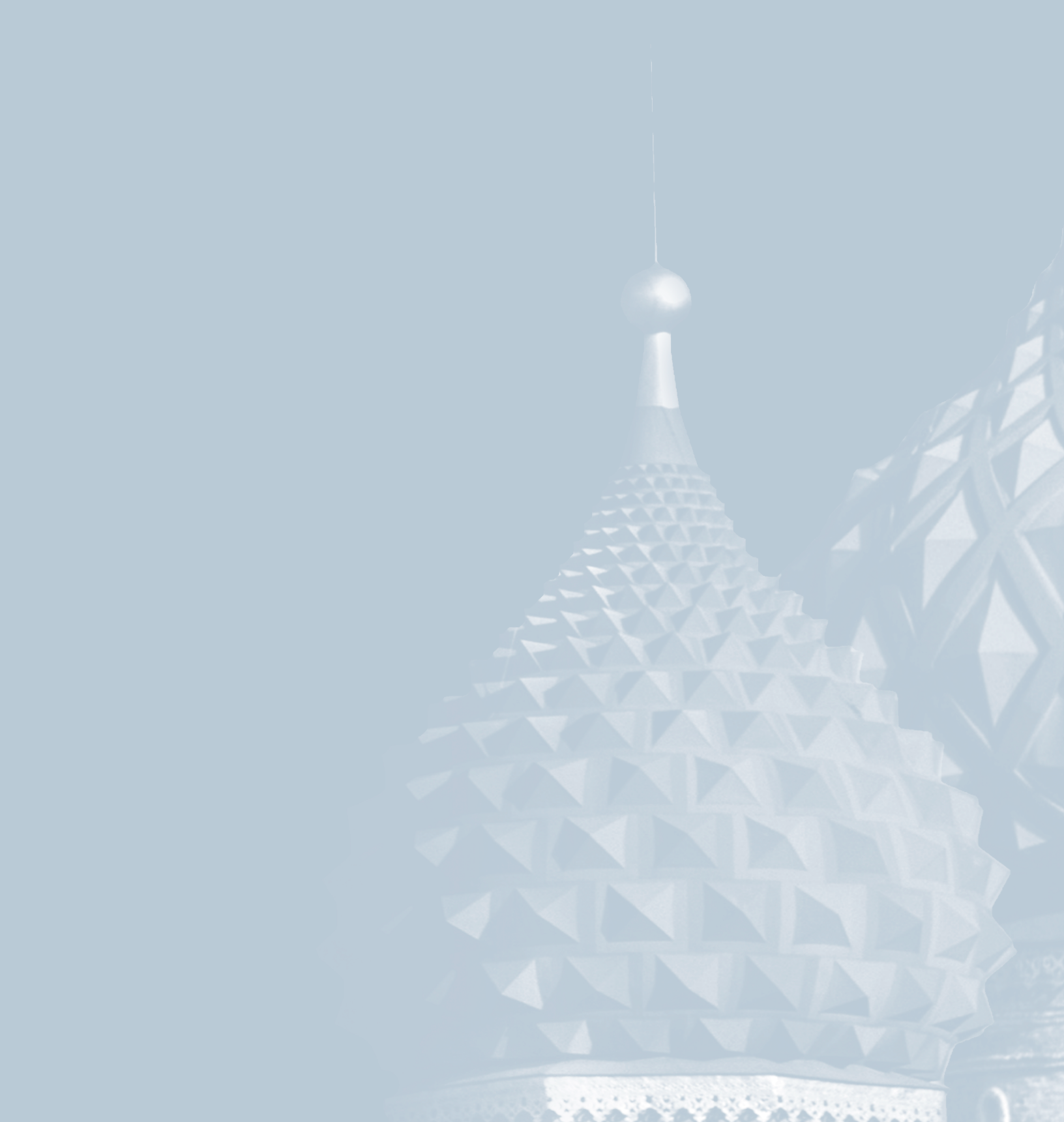
Final Observations

For generations, it was impossible for observers to evaluate the extent to which religious beliefs endured, shifted, or were reshaped in the climate of an antireligious Soviet state. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, it has become increasingly clear that religious beliefs and practices of many forms persisted even while churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious institutions were repressed and destroyed. Some of these religious practices were openly defiant, but others retained their relevance in people's lives more quietly: defining values, connecting communities, informing identities, and addressing some of the deepest hopes and fears of people living in volatile times.

In these years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, religious practice survives and, in many ways, thrives brilliantly. There is exploration into world religions that long dominated in the region: Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. But there is, of course, also active investigation into new variations and permutations of religious practice, including new sects with new social, economic, and political mores attached to them. As religious institutions develop in this changing ideological space, as these new institutions attach themselves to social and sometimes

political movements of various kinds, as individual adherents negotiate new relationships to religious practice—including new rites, new beliefs, and sometimes new moral codes—Russia faces a question: What kind of state will it be and what kind of state will it become? Spanning a rich, varied, complex territory, how can it harness its native diversity for the purpose of building a tolerant, just, and open country? How can it become an example to other nations in the ways it protects individuals and communities in their public expressions of religious practice, and in their private moments of spiritual longing?

Russia can choose many paths in this regard. In its diversity, it can become a country that is welcoming to religious difference and safeguards and protects the rights of individual peoples and communities for the sake of the inclusive whole. Like other great countries with complex pasts, it can also choose more troubled futures of official intolerance or unofficial fanaticism. There is no religion that fails to offer versions of a moral life, a civilized world. Russia is fortunate to have several of these traditions to engage. It is fortunate to be able to choose, today and in the years yet to unfold, the path of deep inclusion over deep and devastating alienation from within.



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