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Soviet Religious Propaganda: Apparatus and Operations

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Summary:

The Soviets have had some success in manipulating various international religious organizations and in shaping certain religious themes to support Soviet foreign policy objectives. Using high-profile ecumenical gatherings and persistent personal interaction with Western and Third World religious leaders and organizations, Soviet churchmen have convinced a significant number of their counterparts: that "opinions" expressed by Soviet churchmen (official propaganda) are independently derived and freely held; that Soviet and Bloc religious figures enjoy a degree of societal prominence and influence comparable to that of their Western colleagues; and that the Soviet ^S government is working in earnest to secure and maintain a stable, peaceful world. Western and Third World religious leaders who remain unconvinced of the peaceful intentions of the Soviet state nonetheless often come to accept the superpowers and their allies as being morally equivalent, thereby obscuring the fundamental differences between democratic and Communist/totalitarian societies.

The projection of Soviet policy positions and propaganda into Western and Third World religious debates is likely to continue--and probably intensify--in the Gorbachev era. Nonetheless, there appears to be a realization among Soviet propagandists that "traditional" active measures and propaganda activities have become ineffectual among the more sophisticated

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target audiences of Western Europe and North America. Although traditional Soviet religious fronts such as the Christian Peace Conference are losing credibility and influence in the West, new methods and venues of access are taking their place. The revamping of the CPSU CC International Department under former Ambassador to the US Anatoliy Dobrynin suggests that propaganda activities aimed at religious audiences are likely to become more nuanced and audience-specific. The creation and support of so-called "fronts of fronts"--new, more flexible international organizations aimed at members of specific professions or at specific issues--is one such new propaganda initiative. [redacted]

1/2h

*Most of these
now would
directly w/
Movement and
NOT as "fronts
of fronts"*

In particular, Soviet propaganda organs appear to be preparing a sophisticated media blitz in 1988 to commemorate the Millenium of ~~Christianity~~ in Russia. While any genuine resurgence of religious commitment within Soviet society is routinely checked, the outward appearance of state tolerance will be greatly enhanced by the full co-operation of the official Soviet church hierarchy. [redacted]

✓

Moscow has been largely unsuccessful, however, in exploiting Soviet Central Asian Muslims to curry favour in the Islamic Third World. With the exception of the radical, Soviet-allied Islamic nations, "official" Soviet Muslim clerics are generally rebuffed for their subservience to an "athetist regime." Moreover, the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan cost Moscow what little influence it had garnered in Islamic religious circles. [redacted]

*This is
changing
w/ their
Islamic
conference*

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

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

*Then
do publish
the issue +
support it
indirectly +
quell*

Although Russian Orthodox Church missions outside the Soviet Union were once used extensively as stations for intelligence-gathering activities, this practice appears to have been generally curtailed. The payoff has always been of marginal significance, and the risk of compromising the Church's ostensible independence seems to have outweighed any potential benefit. The extent to which Russian Orthodox and other religious bodies are used as

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of them
now*

example

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intelligence covers remains unclear. While [redacted]
intelligence officers have been given long-term Church cover under KGB
Directorate S, other [redacted] sources maintain that this practice generally
has been discontinued. [redacted]

The Soviet Religious Propaganda Apparatus

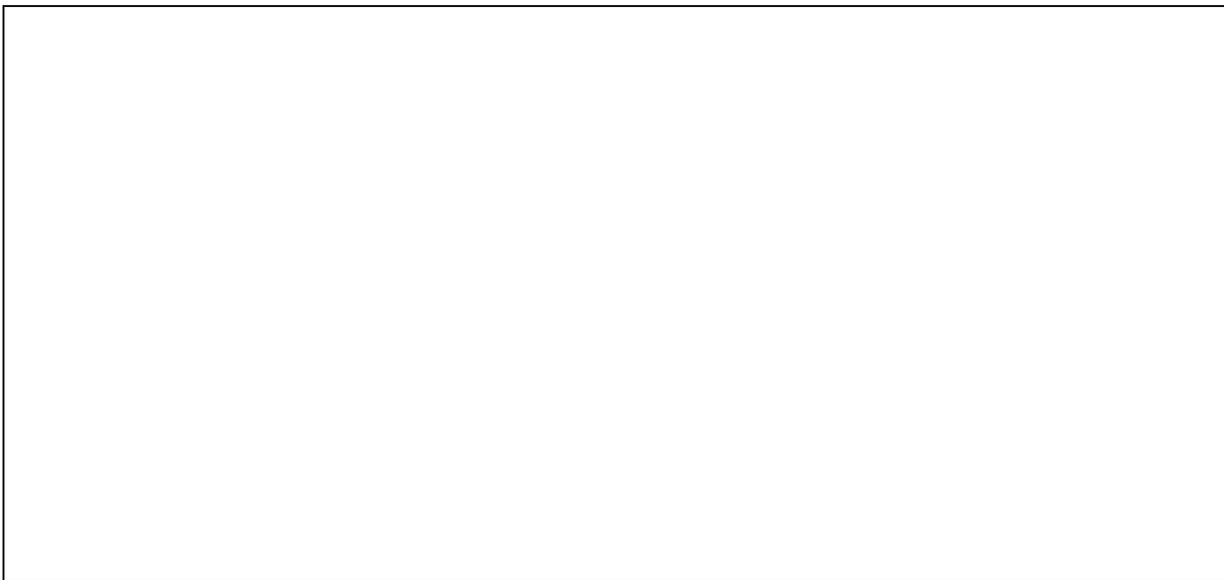
General guidelines and specific directives regarding Soviet foreign policy positions and corresponding propaganda activities are approved within the International Department (ID) of the CPSU Central Committee. Within the ID is a section responsible for general oversight of "mass organizations" and their international activities. The Council for Religious Affairs (CRA), a subordinate body of the Council of Ministers, is responsible for maintaining overall control of church-state relations in the USSR. Policy guidance regarding religious propaganda appears to flow from the ID to the CRA, and thence to the particular religious organizations and persons to be tasked.

[redacted]

Although the means by which propaganda is disseminated from the CPSU Central Committee to individual religious leaders is unclear, some channels have been identified. Domestically, the regional heads of the local Committees on Religious Affairs (CRAs) control the actions and statements of clergymen through networks of informants which infiltrate the various religious communities. For foreign dissemination, appropriate propaganda formulations

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appear to be communicated to Soviet churchmen primarily by the CC International Department. Input and oversight of this process can involve several other foreign policy components, however, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, various institutes of the Academy of Sciences, and the KGB's Service A (Active Measures)--which, according to Stanislav Levchenko, works closely with the International Department. [redacted]



The Council for Religious Affairs

As part of former General Secretary Andropov's campaign to clean out aging Brezhnevites, CRA Chairman Kuroyedov was retired in November 1984. The new chairman, Kharchev, is said to be a "strong ideologue." Shortly after his appointment as CRA Chairman, a regularly scheduled synodal meeting of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy was delayed to ensure that Kharchev was on hand.

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Various sources, including the Soviet press, suggest that current General Secretary Gorbachev intends to continue reinvigorating both the International Department and the CRA. [redacted]

[redacted]

It may prove to be of some significance that Kharchev is a career Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) diplomat rather than a Party propagandist. The role of religious figures in the foreign dissemination of Soviet policy positions and propaganda may increase under Kharchev's guidance. For example, Cardinal Sin, Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in the Philippines, has been invited to visit Moscow in July 1987 by the Russian Orthodox Church. As the Cardinal was a significant player in the ouster of the Marcos regime, this may be a sign of Moscow's desire to improve relations with Manila. The

[redacted]

intimated that the Cardinal may also be visiting in the capacity of informal representative of Pope John Paul II.

[redacted]

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The Twentieth Century Potemkin Village

Part of the Soviet domestic church-state arrangement provides that church leaders play the role of unofficial goodwill representatives for the Soviet state in hosting their Western and Third World counterparts on visits to the USSR. While the dissemination of specific propaganda themes might be the purpose in hosting a particular visit of a foreign delegation, the overriding policy goal of such hospitality is to convey the appearance of religious freedom for all believers in Soviet society. The larger policy goal is for the foreign religious envoys to bring home with them favourable impressions of official Soviet tolerance and respect for "believers' rights."

Over time, however, such church conferences in the Soviet Union--hosted most often by the Russian Orthodox Church--have come to be seen by many Western religious leaders as predetermined media events Soviet churchmen are nonetheless quite successful at attracting visiting delegations for a variety of reasons: many well-intentioned clergymen believe that they can convince Soviet political and religious leaders of their sincere desire for mutual understanding and accommodation; others recognize that they are being manipulated by Soviet propaganda organs, but feel that maintaining ties with co-religionists in the Soviet bloc is more important; also, ^{for some,} the opportunity for a free or substantially subsidized trip to the Soviet Union, with

Good point

that their visit will spark a religious revival in the Soviet Union;

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*name on!
+ give the
factual basis
for the state
ment!*

prospects for international media exposure, frequently is the determining factor.

✓

In February 1987, for example, Moscow sponsored several simultaneous peace conferences, targeting members of various professions including religious representatives for participation. All expenses, including travel to and from the conference, were paid for by the Soviet government. Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Yuvenaliy, Imam Pashazade (Pashayev) of the Muslim Religious Council for the (Soviet) Transcaucasus, and the Soviet Buddhist representative Lama Erdyneyev co-chaired the religious component of the peace conference.

BOX

Russian Orthodoxy: Still the State Church

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

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of an international proletariat in favour of appealing to the nationalist sentiments of the Russian people, he allowed the Church to be revived, but in a tamer, "Leninized" reincarnation. [redacted] [Photo of Russian Orthodox bishops laying wreath at Kremlin Wall]

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

[redacted]

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The Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)

Beginning with the creation of the Soviet front Christian Peace Conference in 1958 and the granting of permission for the Russian Orthodox Church to join the World Council of Churches in 1961, Soviet religious leaders have become increasingly outspoken in their advocacy of Soviet foreign policy objectives. Indeed, vigorous support of Soviet policies has become a part of the larger "understanding" which defines church-state relations in the USSR. [redacted]

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Because the entire administrative structure of the Russian Orthodox Church is monitored--and often infiltrated--by state security organs, the Soviet leadership can be assured that only "reliable" clerics will reach positions of authority and high public profile. Voices of dissent are treated first as insubordination within the Church hierarchy; only when the Church is unable to control a maverick clergyman, ^{would be} is he turned over to state authorities as a criminal dissident. Church leaders and administrators have thus developed a keen sense of where the parameters of permissible activity lie. Regardless of the personal sentiments of an individual cleric, he generally can be counted upon to exercise prudent self-censorship when dealing with foreigners. [redacted]

*under
there is
any
of
turned
over to
the state
authorities*

In contrast to the often anti-Soviet propensities found among the clergy of other religious groups, the Russian Orthodox hierarchy's loyalty and reliability is often rewarded by the Soviet government with special perks and favourable publicity. In Kommunist (April 1980), Vladimir Kuroyedov, then Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs of the USSR Council of Ministers, writes:

It must be said that the vast majority of the representatives of the priesthood in our country correctly understand the laws on religious cults and observe them; they display political loyalty to the policies of the Soviet state. However, there is no family without its black sheep, as the saying goes. We still have religious extremists, both within and close to the church. [redacted]

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The overall relationship between the Soviet leadership and the Russian Orthodox hierarchy, while always a coercive game of cat-and-mouse, has developed over time from one which was almost all stick and no carrot into one which--at least for senior clergymen--has come to include more and more carrot, and with only tacit reference to the stick. Kuroyedov concludes his article in Kommunist with an implicit tribute to the propaganda value of the Russian Orthodox Church:

The churches functioning in the USSR take an active part in the struggle to strengthen universal peace, to avert the threat of another world war, to halt the arms race, to establish just relations between peoples. This noble activity meets with the approval of citizens and all the public, and is much appreciated by the Soviet Government. [redacted]

The Russian Orthodox Church is integrated financially as well as structurally into the Soviet foreign propaganda apparatus. Regular, sizeable contributions of funds from the Church's still ample coffers to the official Soviet Peace Fund is a longstanding aspect of the "gentlemen's agreement" between church and state in the USSR. This fund is controlled by the Soviet Peace Committee, which co-ordinates the activities of all Soviet front organizations. [redacted]

In at least one instance, the Russian Orthodox Church has benefited from the Soviet state's heavy-handed control of religion. In 1946, the secessionist

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Ukrainian Catholic Church was forcibly reunited with Russian Orthodoxy. The Soviet government, long distrustful of Ukrainian ties to Rome, actively supported this merger. As 1986 was the fortieth anniversary of the L'vov Assembly--at which the reunion was effected--TASS issued a lengthy, laudatory statement, giving rare coverage to a religious event. [redacted]

Conversely, the Soviet government also can finesse a controversial policy decision by couching it in terms of respecting the separate church-state spheres of influence. [redacted]



The Soviet government may be increasing the foreign policy role of the Church, especially in situations where state-to-state or party-to-party relations have proven ineffectual. For example, [redacted]

[redacted] the Soviets have shown their interest in improving relations with Lebanese Christians. In December, ^{1986?} the Moscow Patriarchate invited the Maronite Lebanese Patriarch to visit the Soviet Union. Soviet diplomats are reported to have conveyed through the Russian Orthodox Church a commitment to

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using Soviet influence with Druze leader Walid Jumblatt to facilitate the return of Lebanese Christians to their traditional residences in the Shuf Mountains. [redacted]

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

Although the Patriarch and other Church leaders have been used as mouthpieces for Soviet propaganda formulations in the past, the recent exposure granted religious figures in the Soviet internal media is unprecedented. Also, the Patriarch's call for an active response by Soviet believers to events taking place in the United States served to add credibility to the genuineness of the Church's endorsement of Soviet foreign policy positions. Such state-approved "religious activism" has the additional effect of buttressing

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the new leadership's claims of greater societal freedom and openness. Propaganda experts such as CC International Department head Dobrynin no doubt realize that the appearance of vigorous participation by religious leaders in Soviet policy "debates" attracts favourable attention in the Western media.

[redacted]

Because Soviet government control mechanisms within the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious bodies are so pervasive and ingrained, they are not easily perceived by Western observers. The natural penchant for projecting one's own experiences onto another society thus works to the advantage of the Soviet propaganda organs. Western visitors to the Soviet Union observe open, functioning churches and assume that beneath this ostensible evidence of religious freedom lies a church-state dynamic similar to that in their own societies. The reality of government control over Church policy rarely emerges. [redacted]

*Yes,
well
written!*

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The Millenium of Christianity in Russia (988-1988)

Soviet propaganda organs are gearing up for a major international media blitz based on the upcoming Millenium of the establishment of Christianity in Russia in 1988. Moscow is planning to manipulate the year-long celebration to increase its influence in religious circles beyond the Soviet bloc. Specifically, Soviet propagandists will attempt to enlist religious leaders in promoting Soviet peace policies. Sources indicate that the official celebration of the Millenium will be used as a forum to attack SDI and to endorse Soviet disarmament proposals, such as the moratorium on nuclear weapons testing. A major goal of this campaign is to create the impression that Christian bodies in both the East and West are united in their opposition to SDI and in support of Soviet disarmament initiatives. [redacted]

*Bill:
still
true
as stated*

*Not true
now. As
of Mar. 89, they
have tested.*

Although Soviet propagandists are planning a foreign media blitz, several sources indicate that the government intends to restrict severely the occasion's domestic impact. Various ecclesiastical "showcases" in the major Soviet cities have been designated recently as foci of Millenium activity. These "showcases" have been remodeled--and sometimes completely reconstructed--recently for the purpose of hosting visiting clerics as part of the Millenium celebration. In particular, the Soviet state is restoring

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the ancient Danilov (St. Daniel) Monastery in south-central Moscow for use as the Church's downtown administrative headquarters. Until now, the Patriarchal offices and residence have been located in the less accessible outlying village of Zagorsk. [redacted]

In addition to providing the Church with an urban setting for its administrative offices, the Soviet government is constructing a hotel for visiting clerics on the Danilov Monastery grounds. This will enhance the overall "Potemkin Village" aura of the Millenium celebration: Western and Third World clergymen ^{are expected to} will experience a complete immersion in Russian Orthodoxy ^{with little or no exposure to the} free of any encroachment by the surrounding atheist Soviet society. [redacted]

[Photo of Danilov Monastery undergoing repairs, from Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate]

Anticipating a sharp increase in Church-related tourism to the Soviet Union, Soviet propagandists plan to highlight these recently refurbished ecclesiastical "showcases" throughout the Soviet Union to convey an atmosphere of religious tolerance--even of deference--to visiting clerics.

Various sources confirm that the Soviet clergymen assigned to meet with foreign guests at these sites have been carefully chosen for their reputations as being "safe"--able to be counted upon to adhere to official Soviet propaganda formulations when dealing with foreigners. [redacted]

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

Another aspect of Moscow's campaign to show its religious tolerance is the recent liberalization of domestic regulations regarding the parameters of permissible clerical activity in Soviet society. These liberalizations in the Soviet law on religion, published in the January 1986 issue of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, significantly extend the scope of legally sanctioned religious activity to include, for example, allowing the clergy to visit believers in hospitals and prisons. Moreover, religious associations are given the status of juridical persons in the eyes of the Soviet state. Theoretically, the Moscow Patriarchate and other religious organizations acquire standing to bring claims against organs of the government or the Communist Party before the Soviet judicial system. A foreign Orthodox clergyman resident in Moscow ^Mcoments that these liberalizations are merely more window-dressing in anticipation of the Millenium celebration, and will have no perceptible effect on the actual life of the Church in Soviet society. [redacted]

In preparation for the Millennial year (1988), the Russian Orthodox Church has planned three conferences on various aspects of the Millennium and Russian Orthodoxy. The first conference took place in Kiev in June 1986, and dealt with historical aspects of Ancient Russia's (Rus') conversion to Christianity in AD 988. A second conference on religious dogma is planned for the summer of 1987 in Moscow. Finally, the actual celebration of the Millennium is scheduled to take place in the summer of 1988, primarily in Moscow. Foreign clergymen and other dignitaries are invited to attend each of these events, and pre-determined Soviet policy pronouncements on peace themes are scheduled for ratification by the assembled religious leaders. [redacted]

To spread its commemoration of the Millennium beyond Soviet borders, the Russian Orthodox Church is planning a "Goodwill Cruise" of Church clergy and lay leaders to visit other Orthodox patriarchates in the Mediterranean Sea. According to the source cited above, a ship with as many as 200 people will embark on a voyage possibly in May 1987; ports of call are to include: Constanza, Romania (Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate); Varna, Bulgaria (Bulgarian Orthodox Patriarchate); Athens (Greek Orthodox Archbishopric); Alexandria, Egypt (Patriarchate of Alexandria); Latakia, Syria (Patriarchate of Antioch); Larnaca, Cyprus (Archbishopric of Cyprus); and Istanbul (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople). Church Millennium planners are also looking into visiting Jerusalem (Patriarchate of Jerusalem) and a possible audience with Pope John Paul II in the Vatican City. The clerical source of this report suggested that a major objective of the cruise will be the dissemination of Soviet propaganda themes. [redacted]

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

All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists

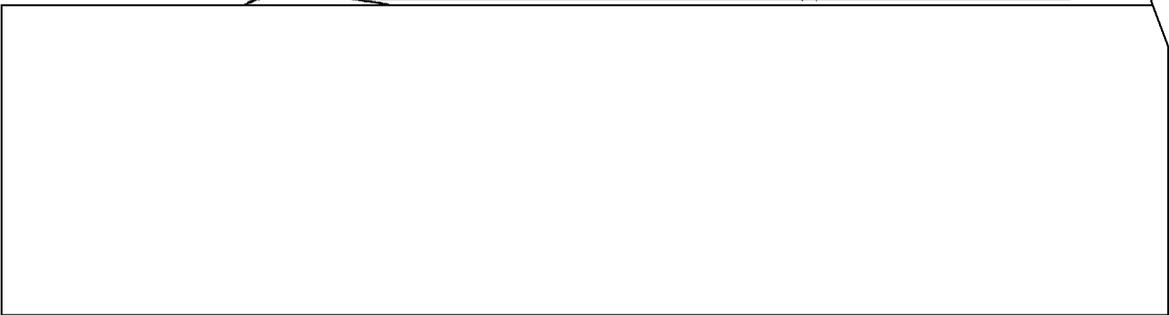
The All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) is the officially approved umbrella organization which co-ordinates and controls the activities of most Protestant churches within the Soviet Union. While very small in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church, AUCECB is called upon to perform similar functions. The organization is regularly represented at Soviet-approved ecumenical gatherings by its General Secretary, A.M. Bychkov, or the Council Chairman, V.E. Logvinenko. [redacted]

[Bio profiles and photos of Bychkov and Logvinenko]

Like the Russian Orthodox Church, AUCECB automatically adopts policy positions and propaganda lines dictated by the International Department and the Council for Religious Affairs. In April 1986, AUCECB held a plenary session in Moscow at which a resolution was adopted urging "Christians of the whole world" to treat with "particular censure" the development of SDI. [redacted]

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Because many Western ecumenical organizations--such as the World Council of Churches and its national affiliates--are predominantly Protestant, AUCECB's participation in "East-West exchanges" and "dialogues" is a useful method of bridging the denominational gap for the Russian Orthodox Church and, thereby, the Soviet government.



This "Protestant-to-Protestant" link is equally effective outside the Soviet Union. In early 1986, a delegation of the AUCECB paid a fraternal visit to the Baptist Church in Nicaragua on the occasion of the latter's 50th Convention Assembly. The rhetoric which ensued adhered to standard Soviet-Nicaraguan propaganda formulations.

Catholics in the Soviet Union

The Catholic presence in the USSR, in addition to being relatively small, is divided ethnographically into two groups: traditional ("Latin rite") Roman Catholics of the Baltic republics (primarily Lithuania) and the Byelorussian SSR; and the Ukrainian ("Byzantine rite" or "Uniate") Catholics. While neither religious community provides significant opportunities for propaganda

*Wrong!
The metropolitans are Catholics + Soviet CPC + other priests have them as constant mouth pieces for Sov. propa- ganda on peace anti-nuclear anti-SBI matter*

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exploitation, overall Soviet policy distinctions in its relations with these indigenous Catholic populations has important propaganda implications.

As a result of the 1946 absorption of the Ukrainian Catholic ("Uniate") Church into Russian Orthodoxy, neither the Soviet state nor the predominant Russian Orthodox Church recognizes the existence of Ukrainian Catholicism. Officially, there are no longer any Ukrainian Catholics in the USSR, and the protestations of Ukrainian emigre groups to the contrary are merely manifestations of anti-Soviet slander campaigns. The whole Ukrainian Catholic "question" or "issue" is thus a no-win situation from the vantage of Soviet religious propaganda. Beyond denying that the problem exists, Soviet ⁶ government and religious spokesmen will therefore not address the topic.

The traditional Roman ("Latin rite") Catholic populations of the Baltic republics and Byelorussia, however, are officially recognized and addressed by Soviet propaganda organs. According to Igor Troyanovsky in The Catholic Church in the USSR, (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1984) "... the rights of Roman Catholics are effectively guaranteed by Soviet law, and complete freedom of conscience and religion is ensured." Nonetheless, even the officially recognized Soviet Roman Catholic communities are comprised primarily of the more restive and nationalistic Lithuanian and Polish ethnic groups, and present few opportunities for effective religious propaganda exploitation.

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Soviet propaganda organs nonetheless try to put a good face on a relatively stagnant situation. Various Soviet publishing houses issue books--primarily in Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian--on the purportedly happy state of affairs of Catholicism in the USSR. A Leningrad film studio has even made a film on the subject: "Catholics in the USSR." The film deals only with "good" ("Latin rite") Roman Catholics, and highlights state-funded restorations of Catholic churches in the Baltic republics and Byelorussia. Julian Cardinal Vaivods, the elderly primate of Soviet Catholics, makes a rare appearance to pray: "... that the Lord should save us, our land and the whole world from a new war. Life is good in itself, and will be even better if we uphold peace." [redacted]

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The Anti-Zionist Committee

The Soviet government considers Jews to be primarily an ethnic group, such as the Ukrainian and Baltic minorities, rather than a religious community. Officially, the Soviets therefore do not view the challenge they pose as being similar in nature to, for instance, the growth of unofficial, activist Christian congregations. Thus the whole "Jewish question" is not a topic which is addressed herein. [redacted]

*This is
daddy up
the question
+ swallowing
Soviet propagan
that there there will
Jewish resistance
a Zionist
dissident, etc
question*

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

[redacted] the Soviets harbour an exaggerated notion of "Zionist influence" in the West, having largely swallowed their own propagan- [redacted]

[redacted] Zionism is an effective American propagan- [redacted] tool for generating anti-Soviet sentiment in the West and subversive activism within the indigenous Soviet Jewish population. [redacted]

In this regard, Soviet propagandists have counterattacked with rhetoric distinguishing "good," "patriotic" Soviet Jews from "reactionary Zionists"-- dissidents and refuseniks. There are, indeed, a small number of Soviet Jews who allow themselves to be used for such counterpropagan- [redacted] In the religious sphere, Adol'f Shayevich, Chief Rabbi of the Moscow Choral Synagogue, fulfills this role. [redacted]

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

The Anti-Zionist Committee stage-managed a tour of the Soviet Union by American Jewish "leaders", as reported in the Soviet publication New Times, 26 May 1986. Committee Chairman Dragunskiy led the group on a tour of many major Soviet cities, visiting, among other sites, the Babi Yar Memorial in Kiev. Of this visit, New Times reports: "'As a Jewish supporter of the peace movement,' [an American participant] observed, 'I want to end the shame of Israel behaving like the murderers in Babi Yar. As an American, I pledge all my energy to changing the policies of my government to one of peace.'" [redacted]

Moscow propagandists may have begun ratcheting up anti-Zionist rhetoric to the point of abandoning the "good Jew/bad Zionist" distinction, however. Zionism, published in June 1986 by Aleksandr Z. Romanenko in Leningrad, contains an explicit call for "struggle against the Jewish religion." The author calls for Soviet writers to "carry out uncompromising criticism of Judaism despite the efforts of the clergy of this aggressively anti-Communist

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religion to pursue their activities under the mask of loyalty [to the Soviet Union]." If Romanenko's views are indicative of a new, harsher propaganda trend, it suggests that Soviet policy-makers have abandoned any pretense of arriving at some accommodation with Soviet Jews who insist on maintaining their religious heritage, as well as with world Jewish opinion. Such a propaganda campaign might appear more rational in the context of what appears to be a new wave of increased Soviet permissiveness in granting Jewish refuseniks permission to emigrate. The implicit message in such co-ordinated changes in propaganda and emigration policy would be that Soviet Jews should either forsake open religious adherence in order to remain in the Soviet Union, or emigrate to Israel or the West.

"Official" Soviet Judaism apparently retains some usefulness in Moscow's estimation, however. In October 1986, Nobel Peace Prize Winner Elie Wiesel travelled to the Soviet Union as a guest of the state. During his stay, he met with Rabbi Shayevich and attended services at the Moscow Choral Synagogue.

Soviet policymakers may be divided among themselves as to the extent to which discussion and debate on Soviet Judaism should be permitted. In February 1987, a prominent American television talk show host travelled to the Soviet Union to conduct "random" interviews with representatives of various segments of Soviet society. He was originally promised access to both official Soviet Jewish spokesmen and the Jewish refusenik community. His intention was to

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stage a debate between representatives of each faction. After his arrival in the USSR, however, the Anti-Zionist Committee reneged and the on-camera debate fell through. [redacted]

Central Asian Muslims:

For foreign consumption, Soviet propagandists are most deferential to the cultural and religious practices of Central Asian Muslims. One Soviet propagandist, writing in English, describes life in the Central Asian republics in this manner:

"Most of them [older Soviet Muslims] grew up in Soviet times. These people believe in Allah and have performed their religious rites for five or six decades within the Soviet system. ... Under Soviet law Muslim communities have the right to build mosques or rent prayer houses, and they have every opportunity to make use of this right." [Muslims in the USSR, by Leon Emin (Moscow: Novosti Agency Press Publishing House, 1984)]

[redacted]

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

Our ideological opponents, by fighting against communism under the banner of Islam, are trying to describe the cultural and historical heritage of the peoples of the Soviet East as a religious heritage.... The conditions of socialism make it impossible for religion to have an influence on

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national forms. But ethnic-religious relations still remain in the cultural sector, in the customs of part of the population, in their way of life and habits as a legacy from the past.... The progress of socialist nations is constantly eliminating the religious influence from peoples' traditions and customs. [Zh. Mammadova, "Superficial 'Defenders' of 'Muslim Culture,'" in Kommunist, 5 February 1986.

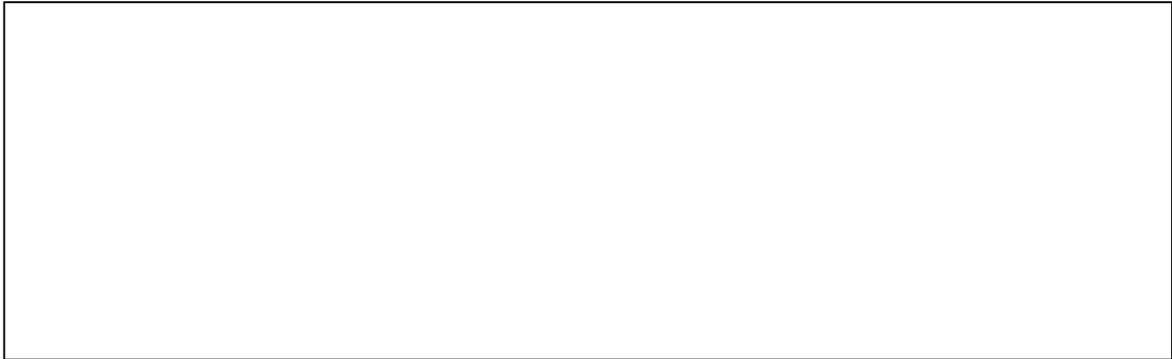
Religiously based customs and traditions are thus distinguished from genuine religious conviction. This is the official Party line not only for Muslims, but for all ethnicities and religious communities in the Soviet Union.

A recently published article in Sovetskaya Kul'tura (18 Dec 86), however, suggests that even such rhetorical deference to social customs rooted in Islamic religious culture may be declining. Attacking what he perceives as "Muslim exclusivity" within the "Soviet multi-nation state," Uzbek SSR Academy of Sciences Academician Yusupov argues against retaining such traditional Muslim practices as praying five times daily and fasting during Ramadan, the month of penitence. Even when such practices are justified by "modern science" as beneficial--bowing during prayer as physical exercise, and fasting as a means of weight loss--they are "reactionary" and should be abandoned. Yusupov advocates inter-ethnic marriage (between Muslims and non-Muslims) as one method of eradicating Islamic cultural practices.

Despite such harsh rhetoric, Moscow is not unaware of the cultural-religious sensitivities of its indigenous Muslims. Whenever possible, concessions to

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the religious needs of Soviet Central Asians are arranged so as to include some propaganda benefit via-a-vis the non-Soviet Muslim world. [redacted]



Like their Christian counterparts, Muslim religious leaders understand and adhere to the confines of the Soviet church-state "gentlemen's agreement." Soviet Islamic clerics invariably seek to project a "Potemkin village" image of Muslim believers co-existing with non-Muslim Soviets in a harmonious "multi-ethnic" nation-state. In an interview with the Arabic publication al-'Awdah in September 1986, Soviet Mufti Tal'gat Tadzhuddin [redacted]

[redacted] emphasized the vitality of Islam in Soviet Central Asia, the excellent condition of mosques, and the printing of the Koran in the various languages of Soviet Central Asia. Fulfilling his other role of unofficial goodwill ambassador for the Soviet government, Tadzhuddin recited the standard litany of Soviet "peace" proposals, Soviet observances to mark 1986 as the International Year of Peace, and the "struggle" of the Soviet state to establish and maintain "world peace." [redacted]

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Soviet Muslim religious leaders, in conjunction with the CRA, have hosted conferences on various Islamic themes in the Soviet Union. Speeches and concluding resolutions invariably adhere to official Soviet propaganda. The presence in the Soviet Union of as many as 50 million Muslims exerts a strong attraction for Arabic and other predominantly Islamic nations. Yet Soviet propaganda organs did not begin to exploit this advantage until 1962, when a Department of Foreign Relations with Muslims Abroad--under the central Council for Religious Affairs (CRA) of the USSR Council of Ministers--was established. In addition, parallel foreign relations departments were set up under each of the four Muslim administrative districts within the Soviet Union.

Until this time, contacts with foreign Muslims had been limited to pilgrimages (hajj) to Mecca, made by Soviet delegations in very limited numbers. In the 1960's, invitations were extended to Muslims in certain countries to visit their counterparts in the USSR, largely for the purpose of creating the impression that Soviet Muslims enjoyed religious freedom and other (particularly economic) advantages of Soviet society.

It thus became a primary task of the four Soviet Muslim spiritual directorates to support Moscow in fostering favourable impressions of the state of Islam in the Soviet Union among visiting foreign delegations. The idea of hosting "all-Muslim conferences" to help the Soviet government appear sympathetic to certain causes shared by the world Islamic community was first realized in 1970 in Tashkent.

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Following the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979-1980, however, the World Muslim League (WML) called upon all Islamic nations to boycott the 1980 Soviet-hosted conference, scheduled to take place in Tashkent. Soviet propagandists were stung when, after considerable preparatory fanfare, attendance at the 1980 conference fell far short of their goals. Moreover, many Muslim delegates who did attend publicly chastised their hosts over the Afghan situation, as well as for restrictions on the practice of Islam in the Soviet Union. The few, terse references to the conference in the Soviet press bear witness to what must have been an acrimonious meeting. Soviet propagandists considered the 1980 conference such a disaster that no further such gatherings were attempted in the next six years. [redacted]

Contacts with foreign Muslims, however, did not cease during this period. The four Soviet religious boards continued extending invitations to foreign delegations from individual countries to visit the USSR. Many visits involved repeat tours by long-term foreign friends of the official Soviet Muslim establishment, which led these delegations over the well-worn paths of historical Islamic sites in Soviet Central Asia.

Time nonetheless may be working to the advantage of Soviet diplomats and propagandists. At the most recent Soviet-hosted Islamic conference, which took place in early October 1986 in Baku, Azerbaijan, as many as 60 Islamic nations sent religious delegations, including both Iran and Iraq. World

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Muslim League (WML) Secretary General Dr. Abdullah Omar Naseef disputed this sanguine description of the Baku gathering, however. Speaking with officials of Embassy Cairo, Naseef claimed that he attended the conference only to protest the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. He claimed that many if not most of the non-Soviet delegates "endorsed" his presentation, and only the Palestine Liberation Organization representative took issue with his speech. While allowing that many Islamic nations were represented at the conference, he described the overall attendance as "spotty," especially from the Gulf states. [redacted]

The Soviets nonetheless achieved certain tangible results from the October 1986 conference in Baku. By delaying its announcement until just before the actual event, Soviet propagandists were able to ensure against the presence of the sort of contingent of Western news correspondents that attended the 1980 Tashkent conference and replayed its negative consequences. The result in Baku was the sort of successful media event that can be replayed to Soviet advantage throughout the Third World. [redacted]

Visits of Muslim notables to the Soviet Union are generally on the rise, however gradually or grudgingly. WML Secretary General Naseef has indicated to [redacted] that an "unofficial, low level" WML delegation might travel to the USSR on a "fact finding mission," but he offered no tentative dates or travel itinerary. Apart from the WML, the head of another Islamic organization broke precedent by travelling to the USSR in November 1986.

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Islamic Conference Organization (OIC) Secretary General Pirzada was received in Moscow by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and other high MFA officials. Significantly, Pirzada made a follow-on visit in February 1987, ostensibly to participate in a February peace conference in Moscow. The two visits seemed timed to fall on either side of an OIC Summit which took place in January 1987 in Kuwait. Pirzada communicated [redacted] his intention to use these invitations to the USSR as opportunities to confront the Soviets with the OIC's undiminished ire over the situation in Afghanistan. The OIC Secretary General felt that the opportunity to raise the issue of Afghanistan yet again was worth risking whatever propaganda benefit the Soviet government may have realized from his presence at a Soviet-sponsored peace assembly. Furthermore, he expressed the hope that his actions would encourage other Muslim leaders to step up their criticism of the continued Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. [redacted]

The profile of Soviet "official" Islam was also raised somewhat in April 1986 when a "Soviet religious" delegation headed by Mufti Babakhanov gained admission to the American Embassy in Moscow to protest the US air raid on Libya. [redacted]

[redacted]

One of the official actions of the Baku conference was to set up a preparatory committee to organize further international conferences to which the representatives of Arab and other Islamic nations will be invited. This

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committee is to be chaired by Allashukur Pashazade (Pashayev), Chairman of the Spiritual Directorate of Soviet Muslims of the Transcaucasus, whose administrative office is in Baku. This move not only institutionalizes the holding of these conferences, it also ensures that they will be under Soviet control. [redacted]

Pashazade himself is an unusual figure: He acceded to his present position at the age of 29 (causing a sensation in the Soviet Islamic community in light of traditional Muslim deference to seniority). He is a skilled representative of "official" Soviet Islam who knows Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Russian, and English. He is a member of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee presidium, and a corresponding member of the Jordanian Royal Academy. He studied under Ayatollah Khomeini at Qom and is a representative of the Soviet minority (approximately 10%) Shi'ite community. His appointment to the post of chairman of one of the four Muslim spiritual directorates is illustrative of Moscow's recent efforts to rejuvenate and revitalize its apparatus for conducting relations with foreign Muslims. [redacted]

Equally significant is Pashazade's status as chief representative of the Soviet Shi'a community and, in this connexion, the choice of the predominantly Shi'ite city of Baku as the site for the 1986 all-Muslim conference. Moscow may have decided to shift its focus in foreign Muslim relations toward the heretofore neglected Shi'ite branch of Islam. Shi'as generally comprise a disgruntled minority in many Islamic nations, one which

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Moscow may see as ripe for exploitation, especially to counterbalance the largely conservative Sunni establishment. In the second place, Shi'as constitute the majority in Iran, long regarded by the Soviets as the primary strategic objective among countries of the "Northern Tier" states bordering the USSR. Pashazade has been involved in broadcasting radio propaganda to Iran. In March 1985, for example, he said "We are proud of the fact that our country is the only place in the world where Sunnis and Shi'ites can conduct prayer services in the same mosques at the same time." As a propaganda line, this is neither new nor likely to sit well with the current Shi'ite regime in Tehran. Moscow has not found those presently in power in Iran easy to deal with, but it knows that Khomeini's days are numbered. The Soviets are likely to intensify their efforts to court his successors, and the establishment of good relations with a broad spectrum of Muslim clerics throughout the Islamic world is an important first step. [redacted]

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Taking the Show on the Road

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

Participation in international ecumenical activities also provides an opportunity for Soviet officials to interact with the religious elites of Western and Third World nations. For example, [redacted] Sergei Gordeyev, a member of the permanent staff of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of International Relations, often accompanies high-level Soviet religious delegations abroad. As an interpreter he is far from competent, but he has often been observed giving curt instructions to other Soviets—including to his ostensible superiors. He routinely engages non-Soviets, especially from the West, in conversations on matters of foreign

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policy, arms control, national security, and related subjects, and seems to be well informed in these matters. He can be extremely friendly and outgoing, demonstrating a special interest in making contacts with Western churchmen and other officials. Gordeyev participated in the Soviet-controlled October 1986 World Peace Congress in Copenhagen as a member of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation. [redacted]

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The Christian Peace Conference

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

Meetings of the Christian Peace Conference are dominated by the headquarters staff, as is the case with all Soviet front groups. Decisions and resolutions are generally prepared in advance of meetings, and the international membership serves largely as a rubber stamp, supposedly

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enhancing the credibility of the Soviet propaganda contained therein.

Indeed, [redacted] at the March 1986 meeting of the CPC Working Committee in Sofia, the West German CPC Vice President said that the CPC must not lose sight of its principal role, which he described as the formulation and elaboration of Christian rationales for Soviet policies. [redacted]

[redacted] the CPC adheres more rigidly to official Soviet positions than most, if not all, other international front organizations. [redacted]

The Moscow Patriarchate provides most members of the CPC Working Committee with prepaid airline tickets for travel to and from such meetings, thereby greatly reducing the CPC's operating costs. [Ibid.] [redacted]

[redacted] Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev is treated with "great deference" by other CPC officials, and that he controls the flow of funds from the Russian Orthodox Church--by far the largest contributor--to the CPC. [redacted]

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Another aspect of front activities is that any expression of dissent from official Soviet propaganda is never reflected in organizational minutes or resolutions. [redacted] at the June 1984 meeting of the International Commission of the CPC, a typically one-sided, anti-Western

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communique was approved. Afterwards, [redacted] clergyman took the floor to disassociate himself and his church from the communique and the entire content of the meeting just concluded. His remarks were ignored and were not recorded in either the minutes of the Commission meeting, or in any subsequent CPC document. [redacted]

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

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The CPC invariably reflects current propaganda themes as promulgated by such Soviet propaganda organs as the CPSU CC International Department and the World Peace Council. Soon after the Soviet propaganda apparatus launched its anti-SDI campaign, the CPC, meeting in December 1984, focused its attention on "The Movement Toward the Militarization of Outer Space Glamorized by the 'Star Wars' Mentality." [as per the draft MS of the State Dept. AMWG Report to Congress in compliance with the Gingrich Amendment] The theme chosen for the 1985 "All-Christian Peace Assembly" was "God's call to choose life--the hour is late: Christians in resistance to the powers of death--[and] on the path to peace and justice for All." [redacted]

[Photo of 1985 CPC Session with caption provided by Journal of Moscow Patriarchate]

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

No doubt sentient of the CPC's diminished effectiveness among its traditional Western constituency, Soviet propaganda policy-makers have shifted the

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front's focus away from traditional East-West peace activism, and toward a posture of asserting the solidarity of Soviet bloc Christians with co-religionists in the Third World. [redacted]

[redacted]

CPC leaders have begun to echo the rhetoric of Latin American liberation theologians, emphasizing a common commitment to struggle against Western "imperialism." [See "Liberation Theology," infra.] Also, the CPC declared 15 February 1987 as a "Special Prayer Sunday dedicated to the bleeding and suffering people of Latin America and the Caribbean." The letter announcing the CPC's intended observance of the occasion recalls the "martyrdoms" of many Christian missionaries in various right-wing, anti-Soviet Latin American countries. Instances of religious persecution by Marxist regimes in the region, however, were not addressed. [redacted]

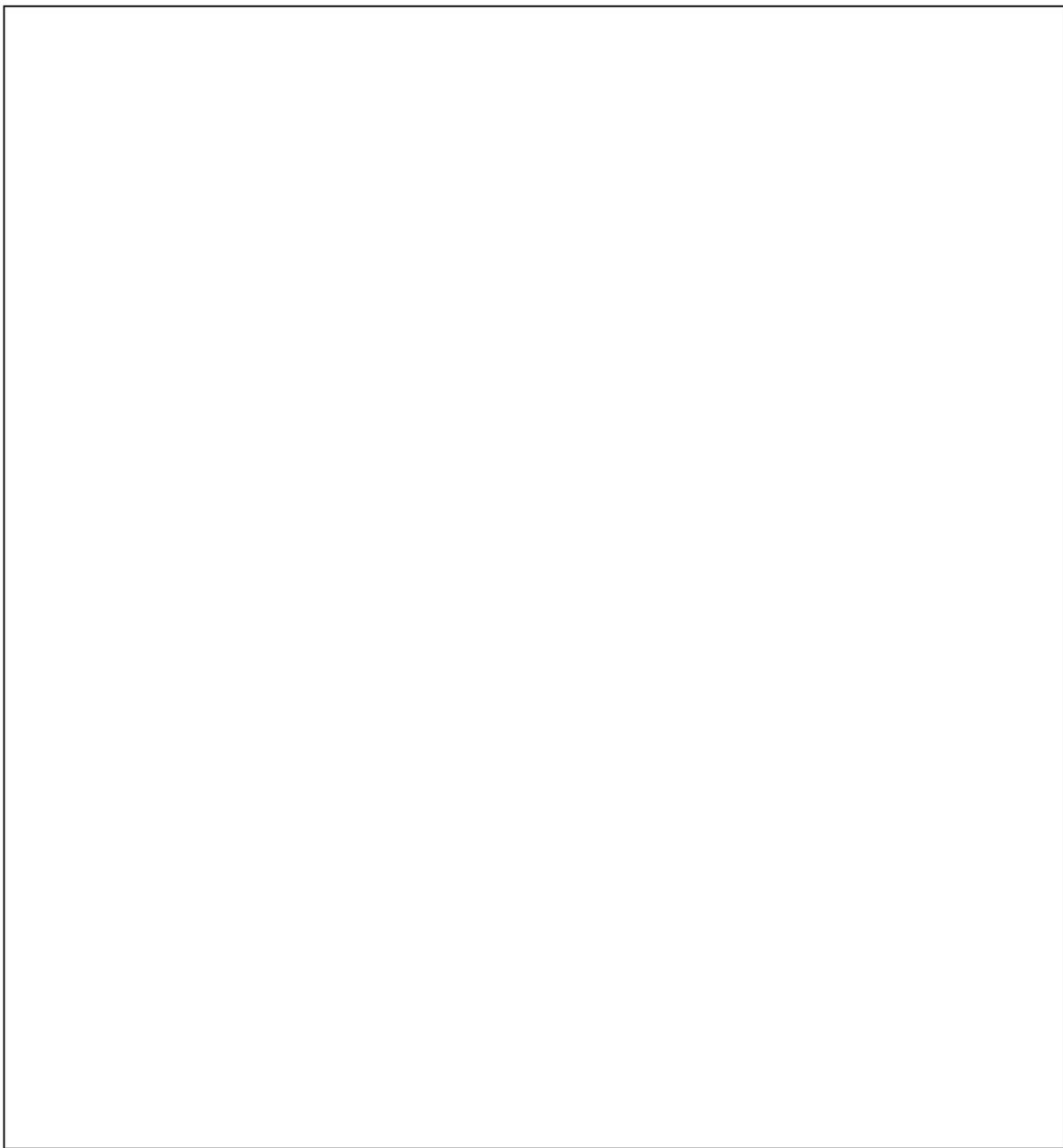
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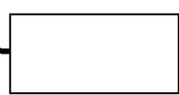
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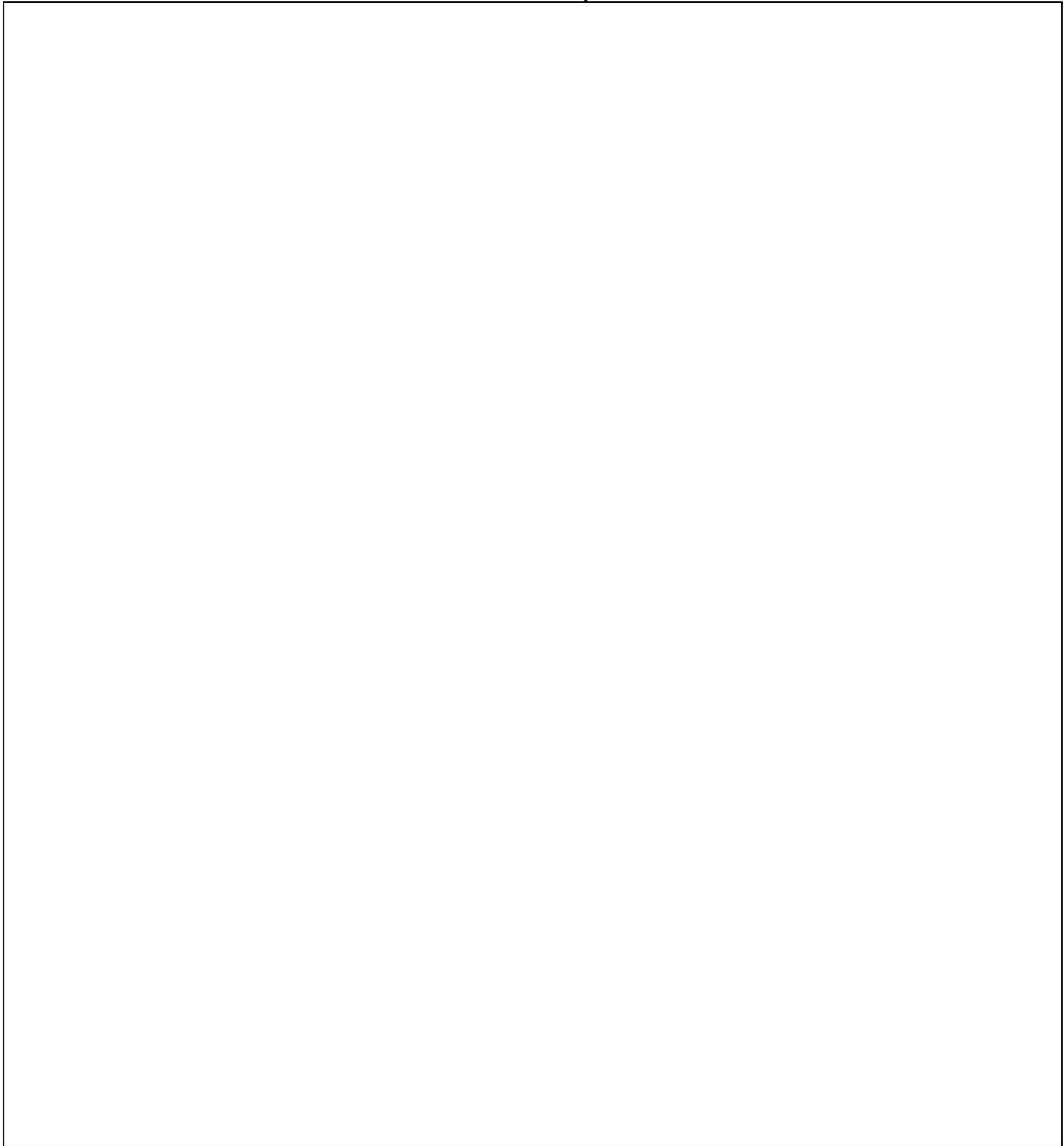


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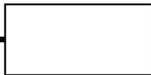
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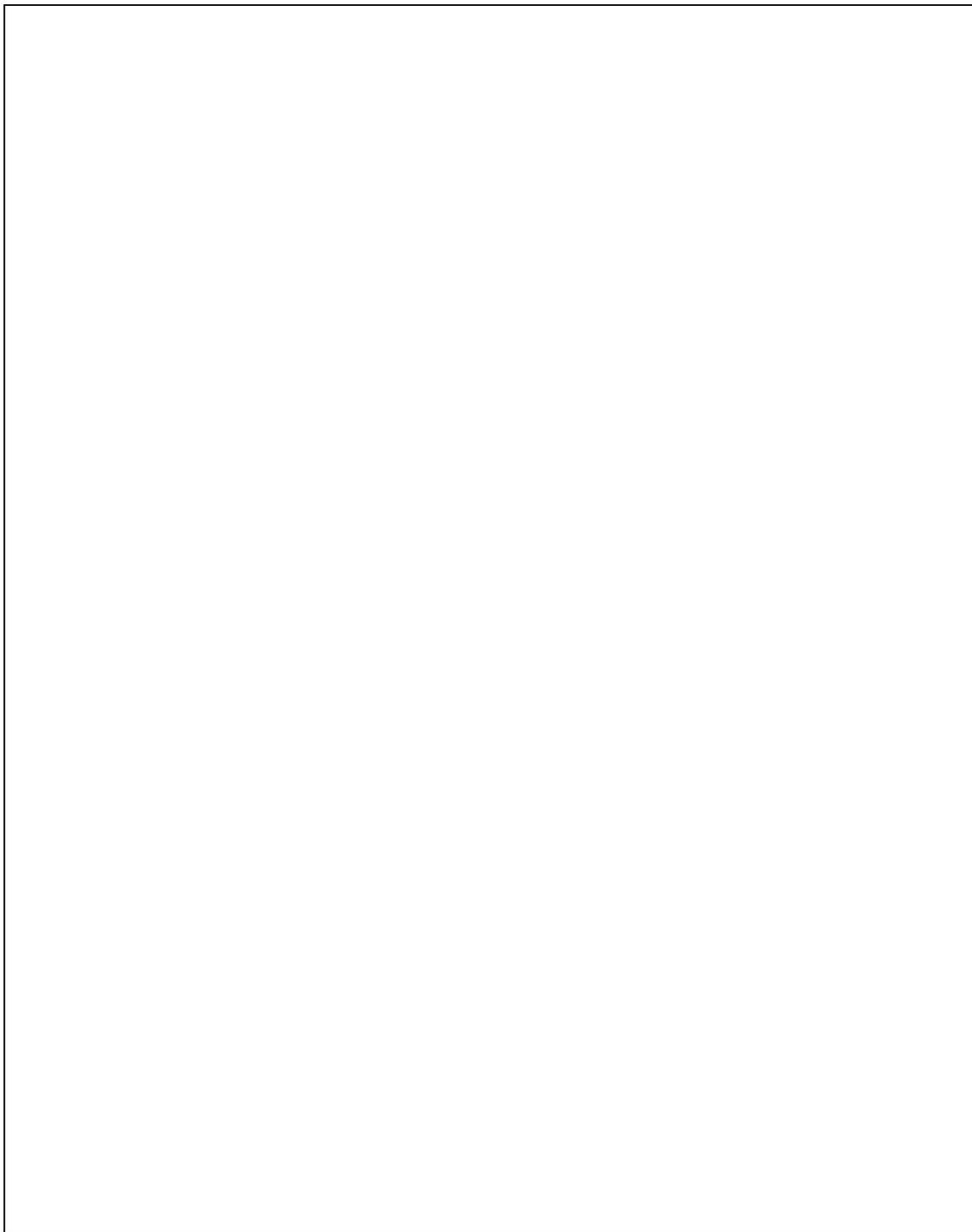
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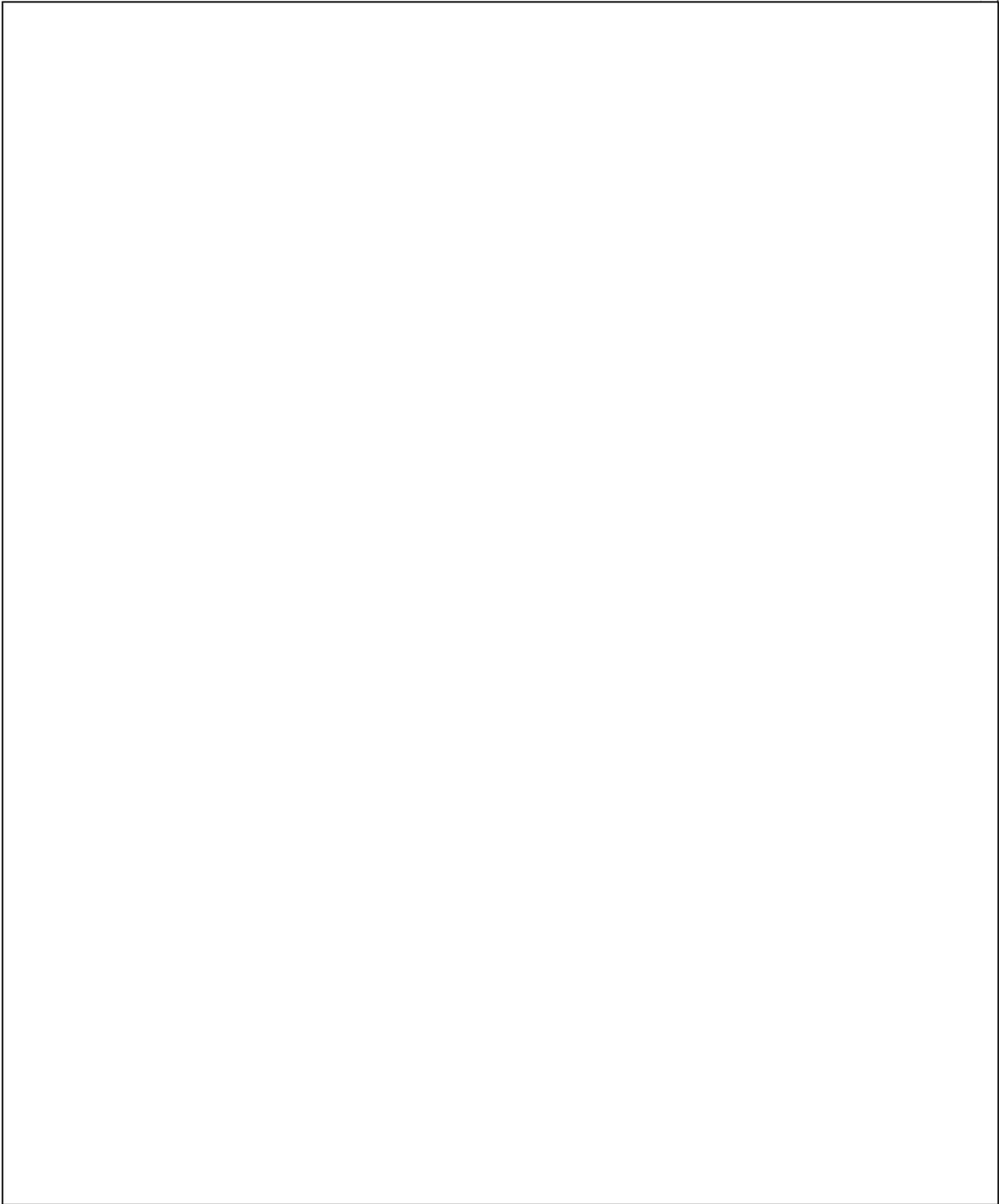


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The Asian Buddhist Council for Peace

The Asian Buddhist Council for Peace (ABCP) is the Soviet front responsible for maintaining and improving ties with Buddhists worldwide. It claims fifteen affiliates in twelve countries. There are ABCP "National Centers" in Bangladesh, Kampuchea, North Korea, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam; plus affiliates in Sri Lanka, Japan, and India. Burma is the only country with a significant Buddhist population which maintains no relations with ABCP.

Ostensibly, the organization is dominated by Mongolia: its headquarters is in Ulan Bator, and its leadership--the president, the secretary general, and deputy secretary general--is entirely Mongolian. Following the usual pattern for Soviet fronts, however, the Soviet membership--co-religionists from the central Siberian Buryat Autonomous SSR--ultimately sets the organization's policy. ABCP nonetheless wields considerable influence in world Buddhism. The Tibetan exile Dalai Lama is affiliated with ABCP presumably because of its anti-Chinese bias. ABCP also maintains cordial relations with the non-aligned World Fellowship of Buddhists. [redacted]

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

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

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Soviet propagandists have been quite successful in tasking ABCP with spreading anti-American rhetoric in Sri Lanka. A major Soviet foreign policy goal in the Indian Ocean is the establishment of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace (IOZP), a euphemism for the removal of American military bases on Diego Garcia. In Sri Lanka, several prominent Buddhist monks have sponsored events designed to increase popular support for IOZP. The monks hold important positions in such pro-Soviet fronts as the Ceylon Peace Council (the national affiliate of the World Peace Council), the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), and the Sri Lankan-Soviet Friendship League; these organizations generally work to create an atmosphere of popular resentment in Sri Lanka toward the United States and its Western allies. In December 1980, The Sri Lankan Center of ABCP hosted Soviet Peace Committee Deputy Chairman Igor Grabachev, gaining wide local publicity for his anti-American rhetoric.

[redacted]

[redacted] the Communist Party of Sri Lanka (CPSL) decided to make use of left-leaning Buddhist clerics to promote Soviet peace movement propaganda in 1987. [redacted]

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Subsequently, six public meetings were sponsored by the CPSL on various peace-related subjects during the remaining months of 1986. At three of these sessions, members of the Buddhist clergy were among the main speakers.

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The Soviet government pays for exchange visits between Soviet and Sri Lankan monks, and sponsors university scholarships for monks to study in the USSR. The Sri Lankan chairman of the Sri Lankan-Soviet Bhikkus (Buddhist Monks) Association travelled to the USSR in 1983, and his Soviet counterpart visited Sri Lanka in December 1986. [redacted]

Soviet propagandists seem to have less success elsewhere in the Buddhist world, however. At the Fifteenth Conference of the World Buddhist Federation, held in Kathmandu November-December 1986, a Soviet-sponsored resolution calling for world nuclear disarmament was passed only after language attacking the US SDI program was removed. Moreover, a resolution expressing concern over the persecution of Buddhists in Vietnam was passed over the objections of the Soviet and bloc delegations. The standard Soviet-backed resolution calling for the creation of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace was nonetheless approved. [redacted]

The Soviets and World Islam: Losing Ground

The Soviets seek to exploit their indigenous Central Asian Muslims for propagandizing and intelligence-gathering purposes throughout the Islamic Third World in much the same manner as the Russian Orthodox Church is used in the West. Soviet foreign policy and propaganda organs have had to work assiduously, however--and with little success--to recover what little influence Moscow had in the Muslim world prior to the 1979-1980 invasion of Afghanistan. [redacted]

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Relying primarily on the resumed "all-Muslim" conferences hosted periodically in Soviet Central Asia, Soviet strategy appears to be to task "official" Soviet Muslim clerics with the dissemination of propaganda throughout the Islamic world. [See "Central Asian Muslims," supra.] Moscow has met with little success beyond Soviet borders, however, because of the Muslim world's preoccupation with Soviet actions in Afghanistan. Whenever possible, Soviet propagandists look to non-Soviet Muslim spokesmen to echo Moscow's policies in an effort to enhance the propaganda's credibility. For example, Maulawi Abdul Aziz Sadeq, head of the (DRA) Afghan Religious Council, asserted in an interview that the Soviet Union is not interfering in Afghan religious affairs. "One cannot find any trace of enmity toward Islam in the mere presence of a limited Soviet troop contingent in Afghanistan. This is not a help to atheists against Muslims." [redacted]

As indicated by the substance of Sadeq's statement, Moscow has largely been on the propaganda defensive throughout the 1980's. A magazine published by the Afghan resistance in Peshawar refers to Soviet Central Asian republics as "colonized Islamic lands." Muslim clergymen seen as working at the behest of the Soviet-sponsored Afghan regime are considered traitors to their religion and their countrymen. The magazine, al Jihad ("Holy War"), is edited by a Saudi national identified only by his nom de plume abu Ahmed. [redacted]

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The Soviet Union nonetheless has recently succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations with several of the smaller Gulf States. This is due at least in part to careful exploitation of Central Asian Muslims for propaganda benefit. Once diplomatic relations with an Arab or otherwise Islamic nation have been established, the Soviet Foreign Ministry is careful to ensure that several members of its diplomatic mission--beginning with, if at all possible, the ambassador--are Central Asian Muslims. Very few non-Slavs have been accepted into the privileged elite of the Soviet diplomatic corps, however; and the MFA occasionally has been embarrassed by instances of incompetence by Central Asian Muslim envoys. [redacted]

Soviet restrictions on would-be pilgrims to Mecca is an additional source of friction with Moslem religious leaders. Saudi Arabia remains a denied-access area to Soviet diplomatic and intelligence personnel, however, and Soviet Muslims chosen for the annual hajj (pilgrimage) are carefully selected and often tasked with intelligence-gathering and/or propagandizing on the USSR's behalf. [redacted] the Soviets have been pressing Riyadh to permit the placement of a Soviet "mission" in Mecca to "support" Central Asian Muslims making the hajj. This initiative has to some degree backfired, however; every time the issue is raised by the Soviet side, the Saudis take the opportunity to chastise the Soviet regime for permitting so few Central Asians to travel to Mecca. [redacted]

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World Muslim League head Naseef is reported to have taken the Soviet government to task on the same subject at the October 1986 "all-Muslim" conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. Naseef claimed that in 1986 only fifteen of fifty million Soviet Muslims were permitted to make the hajj. In a subsequent conversation with a Soviet MFA official, the Soviet defended his government's policy with the preposterous assertion that too many manpower hours would be lost were more Muslims permitted to make the annual trek! [redacted]

[redacted] there has been an increase in the number of Soviet Central Asian Muslims who embark on government-approved visits to Afghanistan and Pakistan, thereby making the hajj without the prior permission or approval of either the Soviet or Saudi governments. [redacted]

Moscow's invasion and continuing occupation of Afghanistan remain seemingly insurmountable obstacles to improved relations with non-allied Muslim states. For example, the Fifth Islamic Conference Organization (OIC) conference, held in Kuwait in January 1987, approved a resolution condemning Soviet policy toward Afghanistan; the statement contained harsher wording than previous

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resolutions on the same subject. The OIC statement represented yet another setback in the Soviet campaign to convince member nations of Moscow's purportedly earnest efforts to restore an "Islamic and non-aligned Afghanistan." In addition, Afghanistan was represented at the OIC gathering by a rebel mujahideen alliance delegation, and not by Soviet-backed DRA government representatives. Finally, the OIC continues to deny admission to Moscow's "official" Soviet Muslims, a sign of the Islamic world's unabated disdain for the religious envoys of an "atheist regime." [redacted]

Soviet-Vatican Relations

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Although there were attempts at establishing Vatican-Kremlin contacts prior to 1945, the zealous atheism of the new Soviet regime precluded the possibility of any meaningful dialogue. The decisive turning point came when Pope John XXIII received Khrushchev's son-in-law Aleksei Adzhubei in early 1963. His successor Paul VI continued to broaden relations with the USSR. In 1967, he granted an audience to the titular Soviet head of state Nikolai Podgorniy. [redacted]

The advent of Pope John Paul II--a churchman trained in the arcane art of standing up to a Communist regime--has presented new problems for Soviet propagandists. As a Pole, John Paul II knows how far he can push Moscow. Moreover, he brings to this test of wills considerable charisma and intellect. After an initial period of confrontational grandstanding--including two triumphant trips through his homeland--the Pope has apparently set his sites on a rapprochement with Moscow. For both political and theological reasons, the Vatican has set about making public overtures to both the Soviet government and the Russian Orthodox Church. The Moscow Patriarchate as yet has developed no apparent coherent response to this development. Any shift in policy toward the Vatican will have to be co-ordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the CPSU CC International Department, and the Council of Religious Affairs. [redacted]

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Writing in the CPSU Central Committee journal Kommunist (April, 1980), Vladimir Kuroyedov, then Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, reaffirmed the Soviet leadership's longstanding distrust of the Vatican:

There are instances when Soviet laws are broken by clerics of the Catholic Church, particularly in Lithuania. Certain representatives of Catholicism are engaged in subversive activities among believers ...

Extremist attempts of this kind, it must be said, are supported by the

Vatican. [redacted]

In October 1983, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the election of John XXIII to the papal throne, TASS commentator Anatoliy Krasikov described John XXIII's predecessor, Pius XII, as a pope "who maintained close relations first with Hitler and Mussolini and then with those who launched the cold war." Conversely, John XXIII "put an end to the pathological anti-communism of Pius XII." Having made this distinction between two previous popes, Krasikov described Pope John Paul II as having "refrained from giving preference to either of the two policies which were incarnated in the specific deeds of either Pius XII or John XXIII." [redacted]

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[redacted]

The attempt on the Pope's life in 1981 precipitated a heated East-West war of words. Soviet propaganda organs chose to treat allegations of Soviet/East Bloc complicity as a preposterous provocation calculated to sour East-West relations. In January 1983, one Soviet television commentator alleged that the charges were intended "to set Catholics against Communists." Such efforts were said to be doomed to failure, and Catholics and Communists would fight together against the "military threat to peace." [redacted]

Both before and after the attempted assassination of the Pope, however, Soviet-Vatican relations have fluctuated erratically between public recriminations and back-channel rapprochement. [redacted]

[redacted] it is rumoured that Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Yuvenaliy was at one point eased from the office of Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations because of an unauthorized meeting with Pope John Paul II. He was reinstated, however, in November 1984, suggesting the possibility that the Council for Religious Affairs subsequently approved of seeking closer ties with the Vatican. [redacted]

[redacted] Russian Orthodox Patriarch Pimen travelled to Warsaw in March 1984 ostensibly to meet with the Primate of the Polish Orthodox Church. During his visit, however, the Patriarch invited Polish

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Roman Catholic Cardinal Glemp to visit the Patriarchal residence in the outskirts of Moscow later in the year. [redacted] this exchange can be interpreted as a positive Russian Orthodox response to the Pope's wishes for greater co-operation between the two churches. [redacted]

[redacted]

In early 1985, however, the CPSU Central Committee ordered the Soviet media to increase criticism of the Vatican in response to what it perceived as increasing Catholic anti-Sovietism. [redacted]

[redacted]

In general, the Moscow Patriarchate has been careful to maintain correct if not always cordial relations with the Vatican. The Russian Orthodox Church is always represented at ongoing Orthodox-Catholic ecumenical dialogues, and at Vatican functions whenever invited. Most recently, Metropolitan Filaret of Kiev participated in the Vatican-sponsored World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, 27 October 1986. [redacted]

John Paul II is seeking Soviet permission to visit areas of the USSR in 1987-1988 to participate in commemorations of the establishment of

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Christianity in Lithuania and Russia. The Pope is unlikely to succeed in this, however. The Soviet government remains apprehensive that the Vatican might foment internal religious dissent, especially in Lithuania and the Ukraine, where Catholicism has remained influential. Moreover, age-old denominational and nationalist antagonisms persist; both the predominantly Russian Soviet government and the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy remain distrustful of Vatican overtures. Nonetheless, various sources report that John Paul II has not abandoned his efforts to broaden and stabilize Catholic Church relations with Moscow--both politically and ecumenically.

Berlin Conference of European Catholics

Headquartered in East Berlin, the Berlin Conference of European Catholics (BCEC) has the same functions with respect to Catholics as the Christian Peace Conference (CPC) has with Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox communions. (Vatican policy does not permit representative organizations of the Roman Catholic Church to join ecumenical organizations. Catholic organizations have sought and are often granted observer status in such bodies, however.) Various other ecumenical organizations, including the World Council of Churches, consider themselves as sister organizations of BCEC and work closely with it. BCEC works most closely with the CPC, however, and participates alongside the CPC in such international fora as UN non-governmental organizations (NGOs) meetings and conferences.

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Because Vatican-Kremlin relations have never been warm, it is Roman Catholic Church policy to discourage its clergy and laity from maintaining on-going relations with semi-official Soviet bloc organizations such as the BCEC. It seems the consensus of Vatican observers, however, that the Church Curia does not wish to risk a public confrontation with a potentially vociferous segment of its Western European constituency by disallowing participation in BCEC.

[redacted]

Pax Christi International, International Catholic Peace Movement (PCI)

This is an organization of prominent, left-of-center Roman Catholic activists from throughout the world (primarily Western Europe) who seek to enhance contacts with Christians of Eastern Europe (primarily the Russian Orthodox Church). It was founded in 1945, and is headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium. PCI's rhetoric frequently reflects many Soviet propaganda themes, largely because PCI's membership values the maintenance of East-West links over the content or result of such dialogue. Conversely, Soviet churchmen are not permitted the luxury of broad, open-ended dialogue with Western religious figures. This divergence of goals often results in agreements to disagree. PCI was among the few Western religious groups to attend the Soviet-controlled World Peace Congress in Copenhagen. The October 1986 Congress has been widely exposed in the Western press as a Soviet propaganda forum. [redacted]

Liberation Theology:

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The present Soviet policy regarding the liberation theology movement is at most one of tacit approval of any indirect propaganda benefits accruing. Among the Soviet-allied nations, Cuba has taken the lead in exploring the potentials for propaganda exploitation and, ultimately, social destabilization via the indigenous liberation theology movements in Latin America and elsewhere. If Cuba or any of its client states such as Nicaragua can show success at manipulating and co-opting this phenomenon, the Soviet intelligence community and propaganda apparatus may decide to begin exploring such options. [redacted]

Soviet propaganda has at least indirectly endorsed aspects of liberation theology rhetoric. At the March 1986 meeting of the Working Committee of the Christian Peace Conference, CPC President Bishop Karoly Toth condemned the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Nicaragua for its opposition to the ~~totalitarian~~ consolidation of power by the Sandinist government. He expressed dismay that "the official Roman Catholic church-leadership of that country reacts so nervously and negatively to the revolution, as they have shown, and are [elsewhere] demonstrating understanding and patience to some of the most oppressive regimes." Addressing "the question of the right relationship between a revolutionary theology and the Gospel of Jesus Christ," Toth asserted that:

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Those Christians ... who are involved in the revolutionary struggle and

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deeply committed to the cause of the Sandinist revolution, (b)(3) who means
can be understood and interpreted as [being] dependent on and identified
with the ideology of the Sandinists. These Christians in Nicaragua
have decided to go their own way, which leads between apolitical
spirituality and total political identification with the revolutionary
Party. [redacted]

Clearly the aim of such rhetoric is to impart to these "revolutionary"
Christians an artificial identity separate and distinct from that of the
secular Sandinist regime. It is likely that Soviet propagandists see this
movement as being potentially co-opted elsewhere by Soviet surrogates.
Addressing the interaction of religion and politics in the modern world,
Doctor of Philosophical Sciences M.P. Mchedlov asserted that clergymen have
played a "positive role" in countries engaged in "anti-colonialist liberation
struggles." Speaking before the Znaniye Society in Moscow in October 1986,
Mchedlov spoke favourably about "the growth of leftist trends within
religious groups, including armed resistance," especially in Latin America--a
clear reference to the liberation theology movement. While condemning
clergymen who "use bourgeois society's institutions to preserve and advance
the church's interests and to combat communism," he praised individual
clerics who have taken up arms alongside communist rebels in Cuba and
Nicaragua, and elsewhere in Latin America. The merits of liberation theology
as a political ideology, however, do not yet seem to have been addressed
directly by Soviet ideologues. [redacted]

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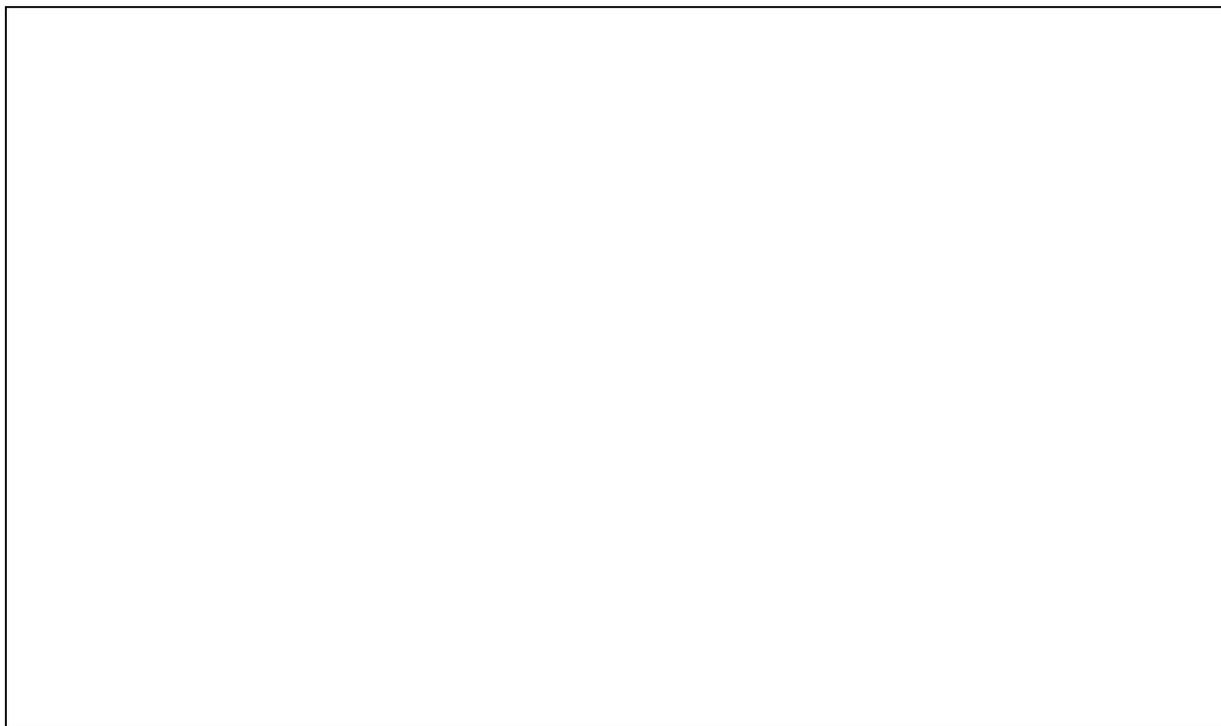
The CPC has served to help spread the liberation theology movement beyond its native Latin America on at least one occasion. [redacted] an Asian CPC official was directed by Moscow to include regional representatives of the World Council of Churches in its preparations for the Second Asian CPC Regional Assembly in Oiso, Japan in October 1984. [redacted] the CPC's rationale for including the WCC was to facilitate the participation of representatives of the South Korean National Council of Churches (KNCC)--an organization known for its commitment to propagating the liberation theology movement in Asia and the Pacific region. The CPC leadership believed that the South Korean government might object to KNCC participation in a Soviet-sponsored conference, but would allow KNCC representatives to attend a WCC event. The Korean delegation was indeed permitted to attend the Oiso Assembly. [redacted]

At least one Soviet cleric has established ties with the indigenous Central American liberation theology movement. In May 1986, Father Izadors Upenieks, a Soviet Latvian Franciscan priest, travelled to Nicaragua as a member of the Soviet Peace Committee. During his stay, he concelebrated mass in a "Popular" (i.e., Sandinista) Church, and endorsed liberation theology in his sermons and in a newspaper interview. [redacted] describes Father Upenieks as a Roman Catholic priest in good standing, but "faithful to the Communist Party, not to the Holy See ...". [redacted]

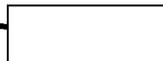
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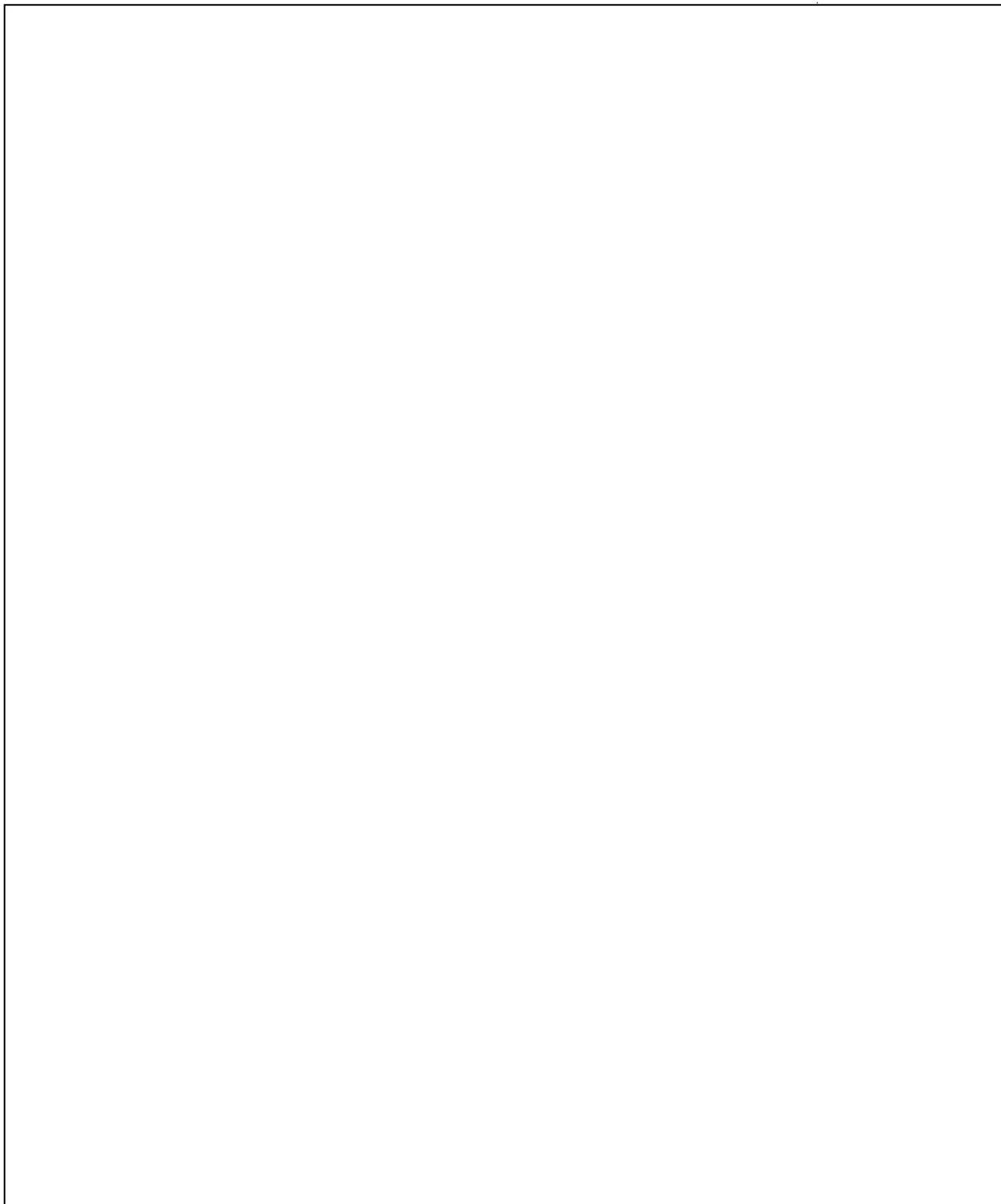
With the exception of closed-access areas such as Israel, the Soviet government appears generally to have curtailed its use of church facilities as intelligence-gathering stations. The payoff has always been of marginal significance, and the risk of compromising the ostensible independence of the Russian Orthodox Church is an important consideration. Careful screening and persistent debriefing of church personnel who are permitted contact with foreign counterparts has nonetheless enabled the KGB to compile extensive personality profiles of Western and Third World religious figures. [redacted]



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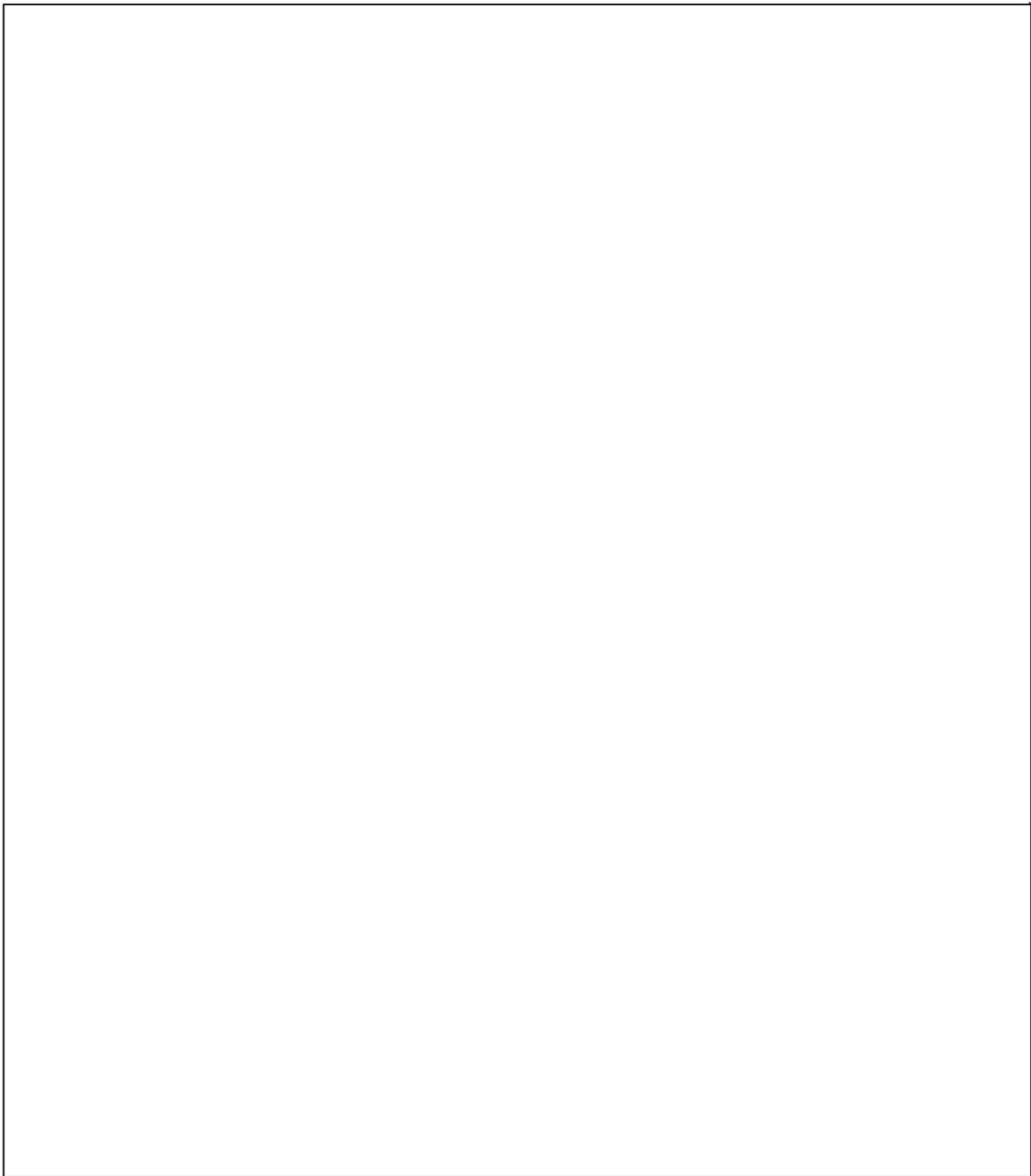
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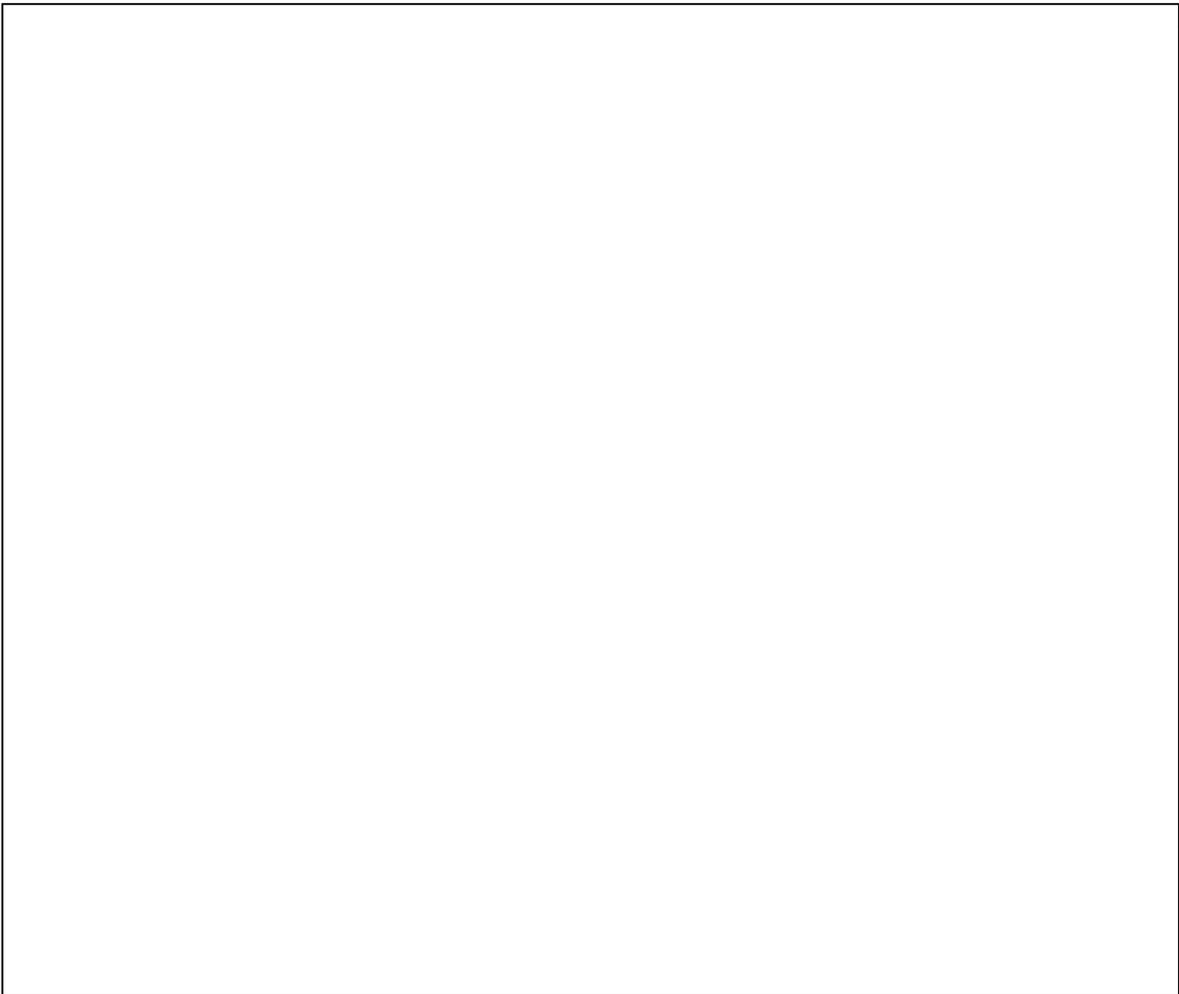
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The French government has repeatedly denied the entry visa applications of Archbishop Kirill--(Vladimir Mikhaylovich Gundyayev) currently of Smolensk, formerly of the Leningrad suburb of Vyborg--for security reasons, and has indicated to the Soviet MFA that it will refuse all further applications of the Archbishop on the same grounds. While the French government may have irrefutable evidence that Kirill has engaged in espionage, it is possible that his visa denials are the result of domestic pressure exerted by the

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relatively sizeable and influential Russian emigre community in France. The French branch of the Russian Orthodox Church predates the Russian Revolution and is not subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate.

Implications and Outlook

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

NOT TRUE
The locus is on mailing + calling list - to be used when appropriate.
That person will argue that the Soviets are NOT using him!

The focus often appears to be less on disseminating Soviet propaganda than on developing long-term personal and professional relations with Western and Third World clergymen. In a recent lecture restricted to Party propagandists, Vadim Zagladin, First Deputy of the CC International Department, reportedly encouraged closer ties with non-Communist religious peace activists. "Christians play an important role in Communist Parties in many countries," he is quoted as saying. "For example, in France and Italy.... The overall CPSU approach to religion should not create obstacles to cooperation with such groups."

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**Could be why
NCAFF is being
cut back in funding*

There appears to be a realization among Soviet propagandists that "traditional" active measures and propaganda activities have become ineffectual among the more sophisticated target audiences of Western Europe and North America. For example, Soviet Politburo Member Ligachev is reported to have stated that he considers the long-established Soviet fronts as having been thoroughly exposed in Western circles and therefore no longer useful. The Christian Peace Conference, the religious component of this older generation of fronts, may be slated for cutbacks in funding and tasking. None of these fronts, including the CPC, is likely to be eliminated entirely, however, as they remain useful for propagandizing in the Third World. [redacted]

[redacted]

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

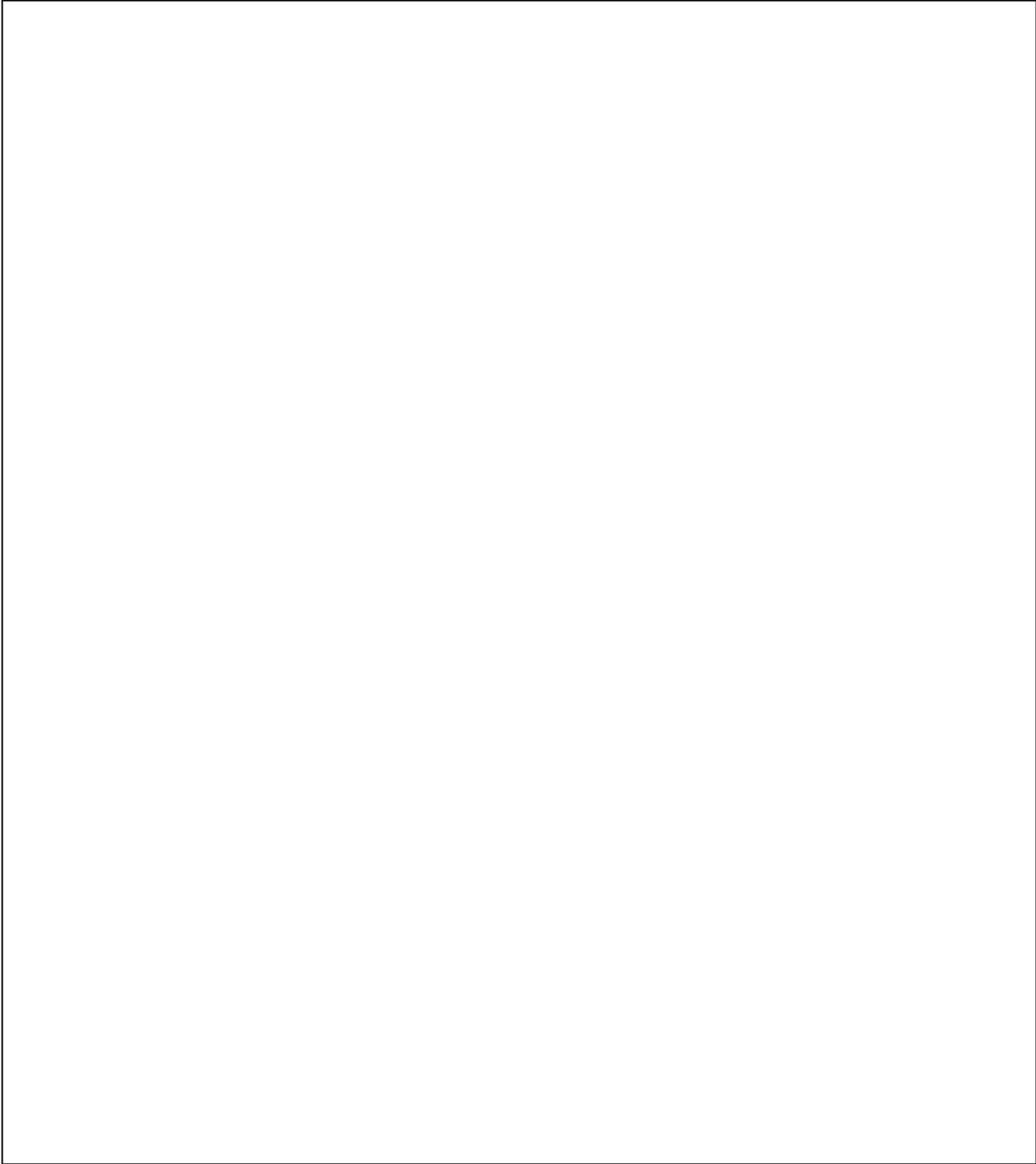
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In light of the perceived decline in effectiveness of traditional religious fronts, the Soviets are likely to place greater emphasis on bi-lateral religious relations. For instance, the United States and the Soviet Union exchange church delegations annually. This approach has the advantages of enabling religious propagandists to present Soviet society to visiting clerics in a favourable light, as well as ensuring foreign fora for the dissemination of Soviet propaganda. [redacted]

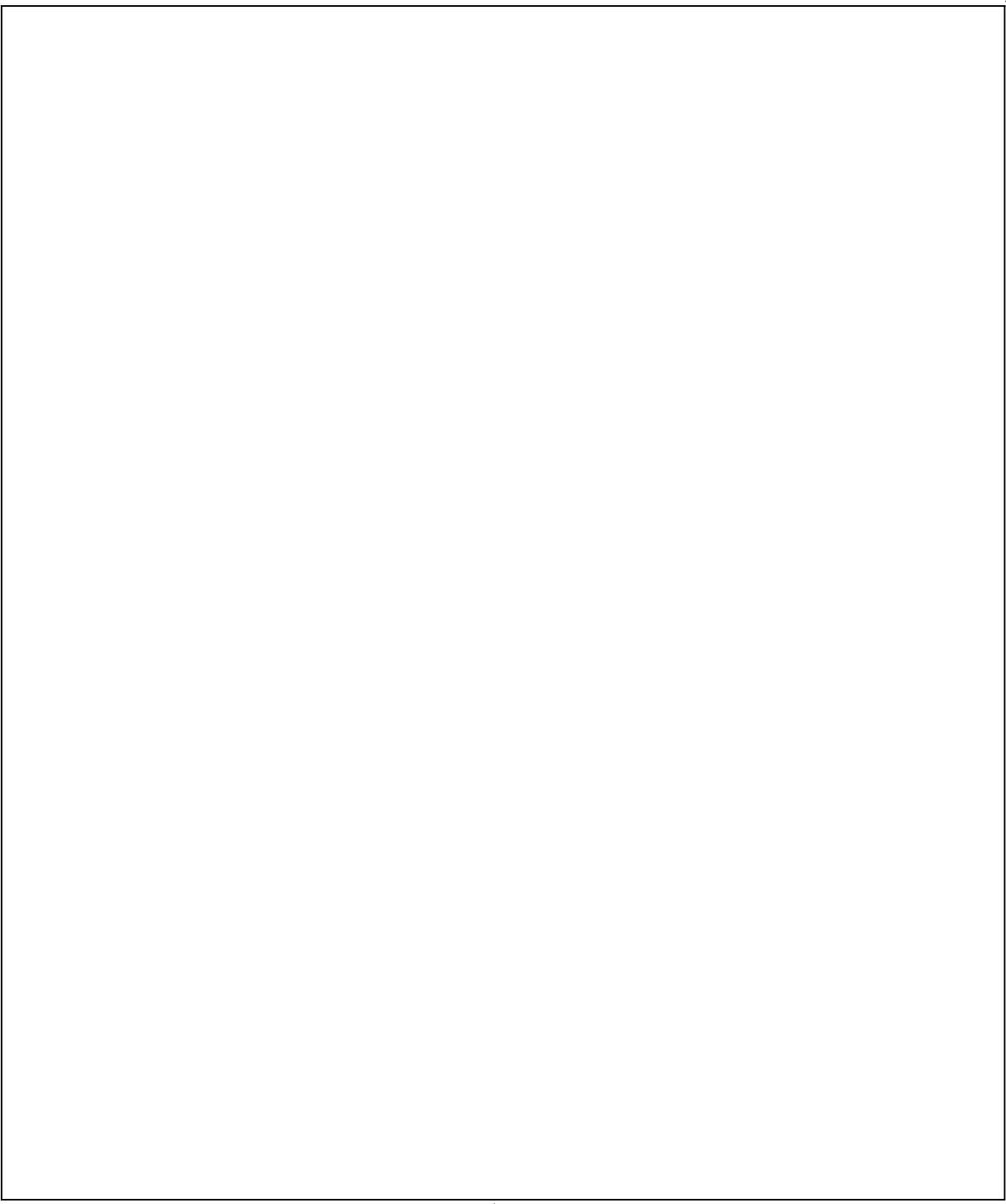
In the Third World, we anticipate that Soviet religious active measures and propaganda activity will become increasingly refined to reach specific audiences. For example, Soviet propaganda may begin to endorse and encourage the spread of liberation theology in Latin America. This would also reflect a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

Finally, the celebration of the Millenium of Christianity in Russia in 1988 will serve as an important indicator of future trends in Soviet religious policies. The post-Brezhnev religious propaganda apparatus will have been in place and able to prepare carefully its treatment of the event. We can expect a foreign media blitz calculated to show both Moscow's deference to religious conviction, as well as ostensible worldwide religious support for Soviet peace initiatives. [redacted]

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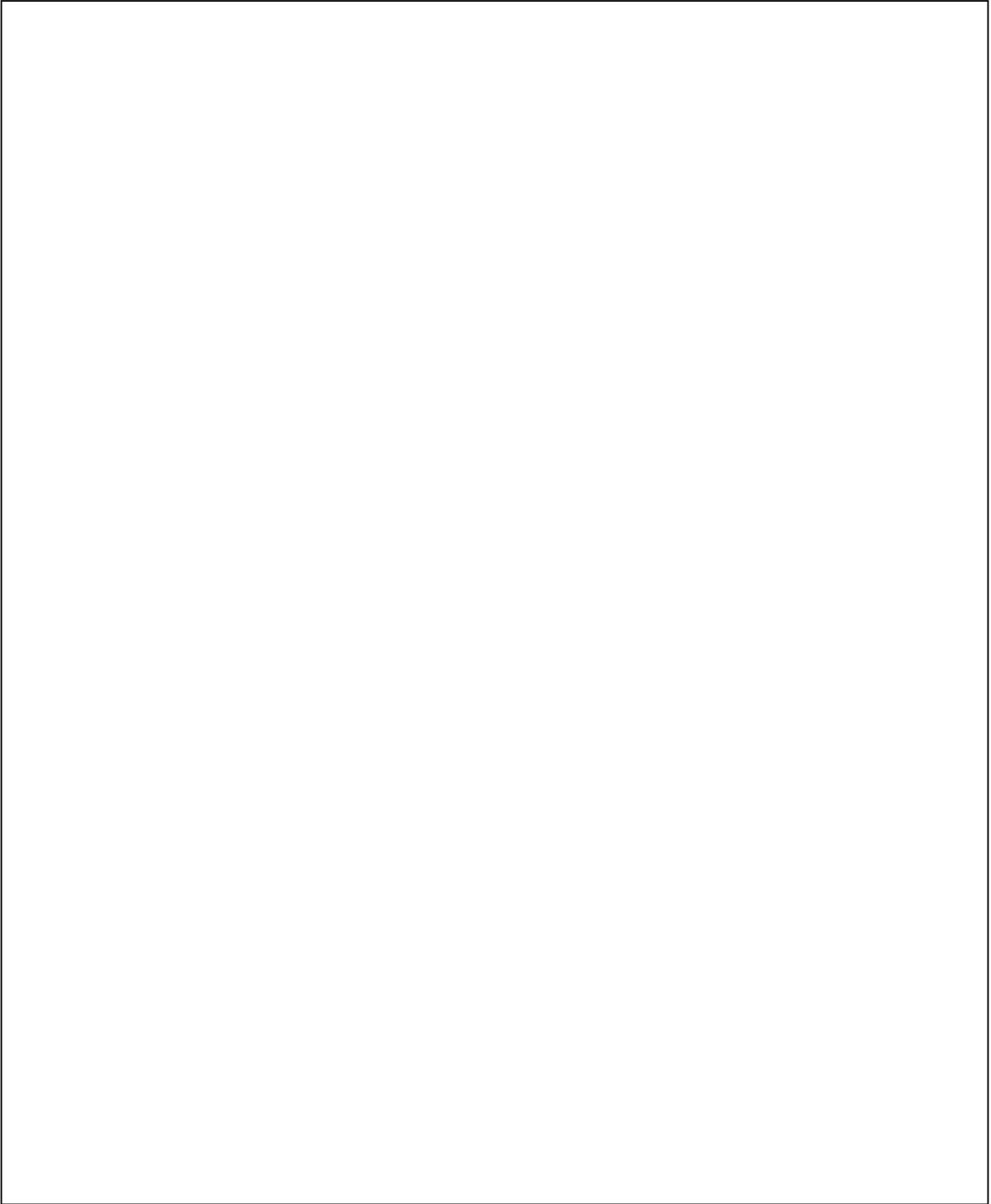
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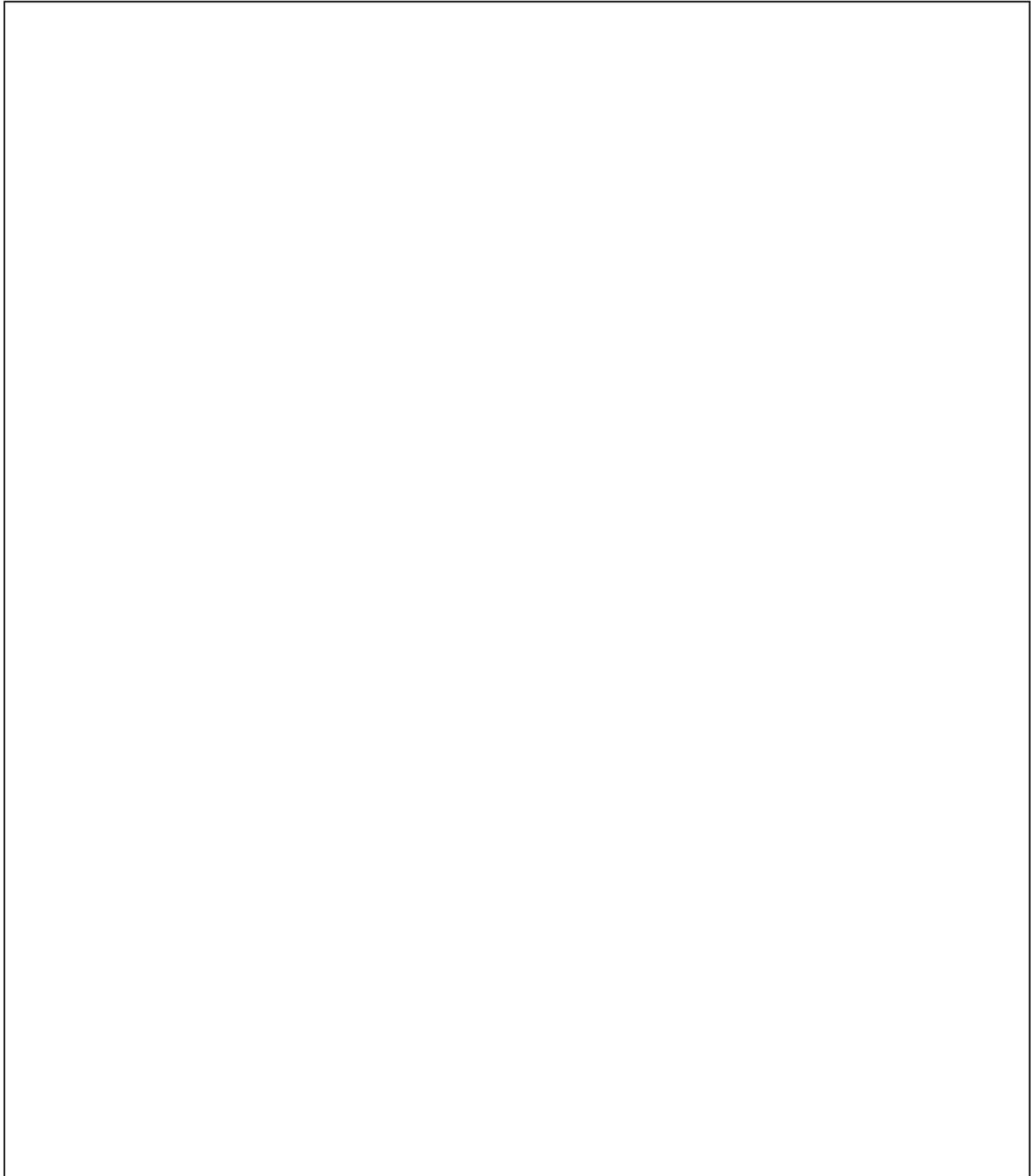


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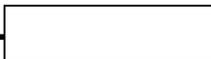
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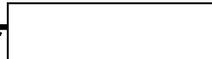
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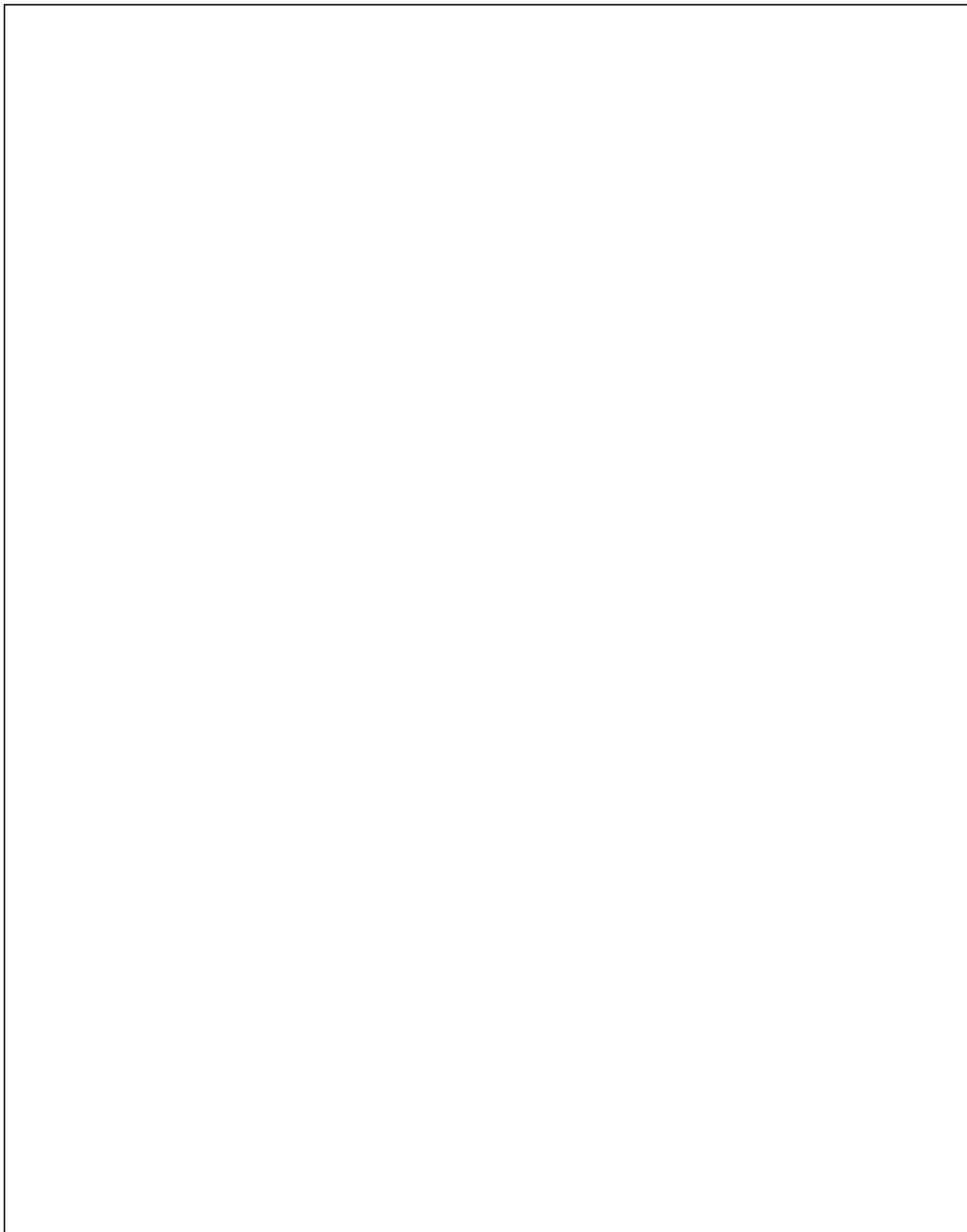
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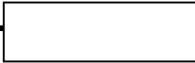
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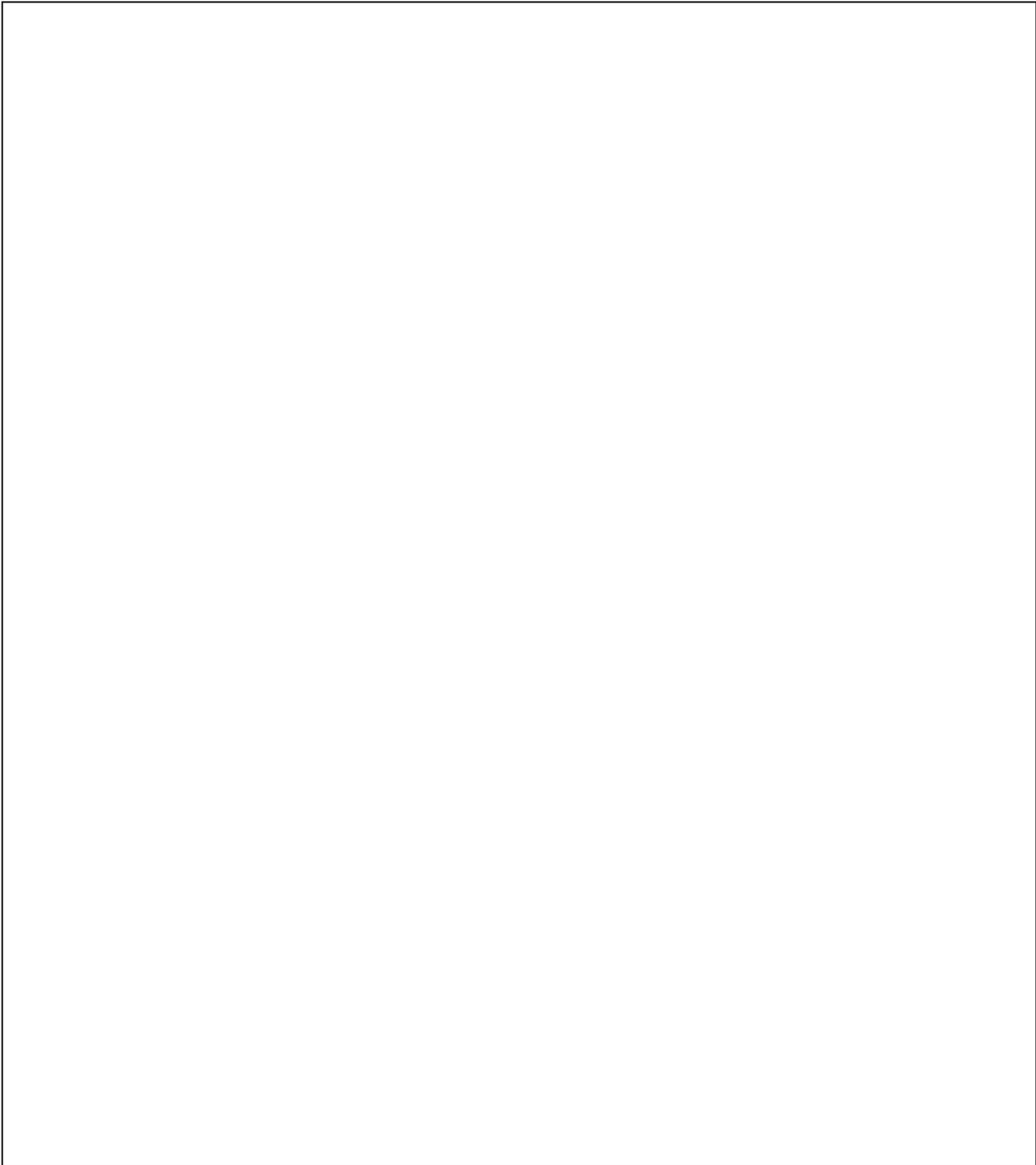
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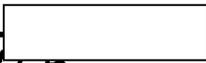
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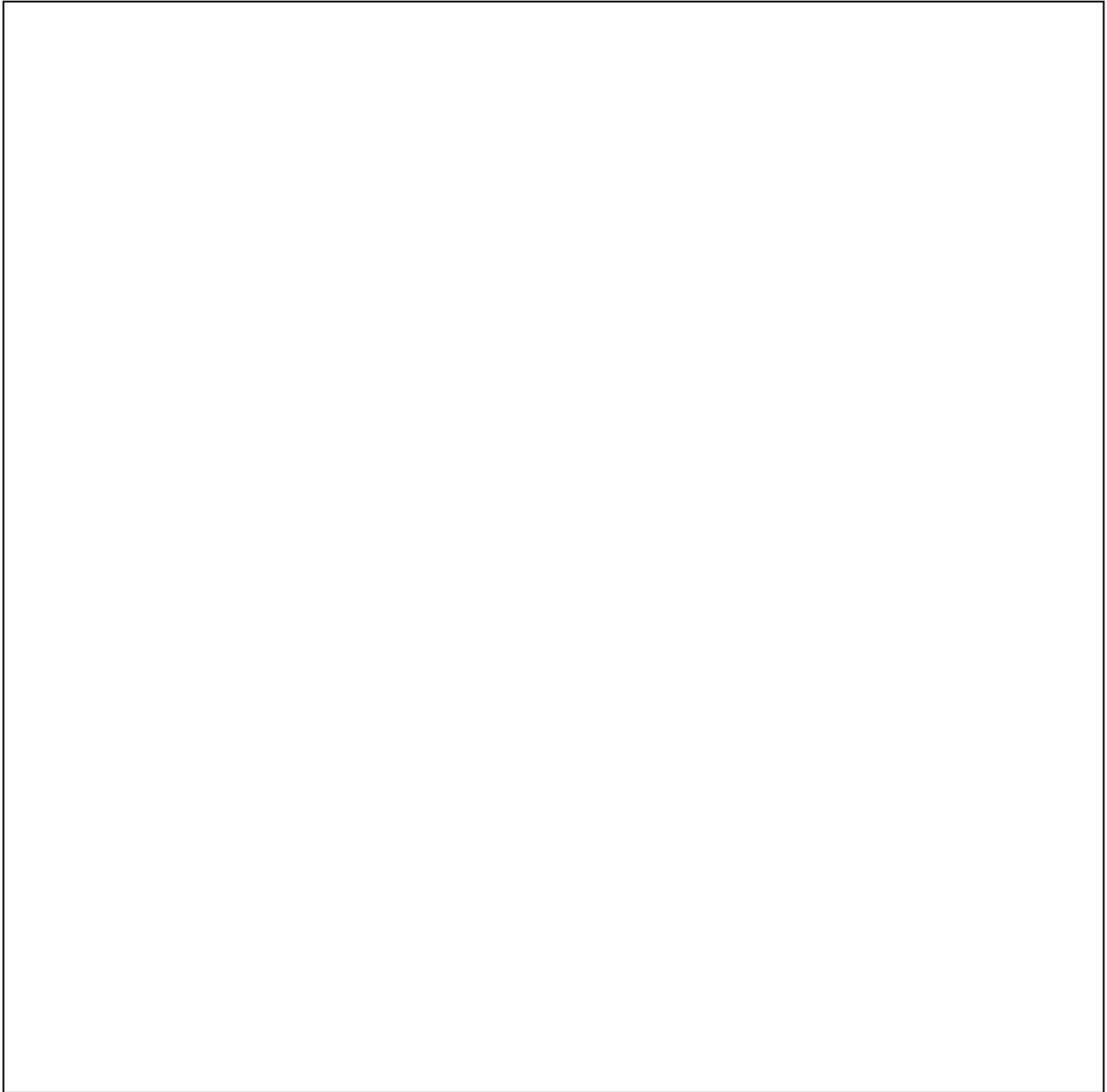


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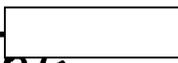
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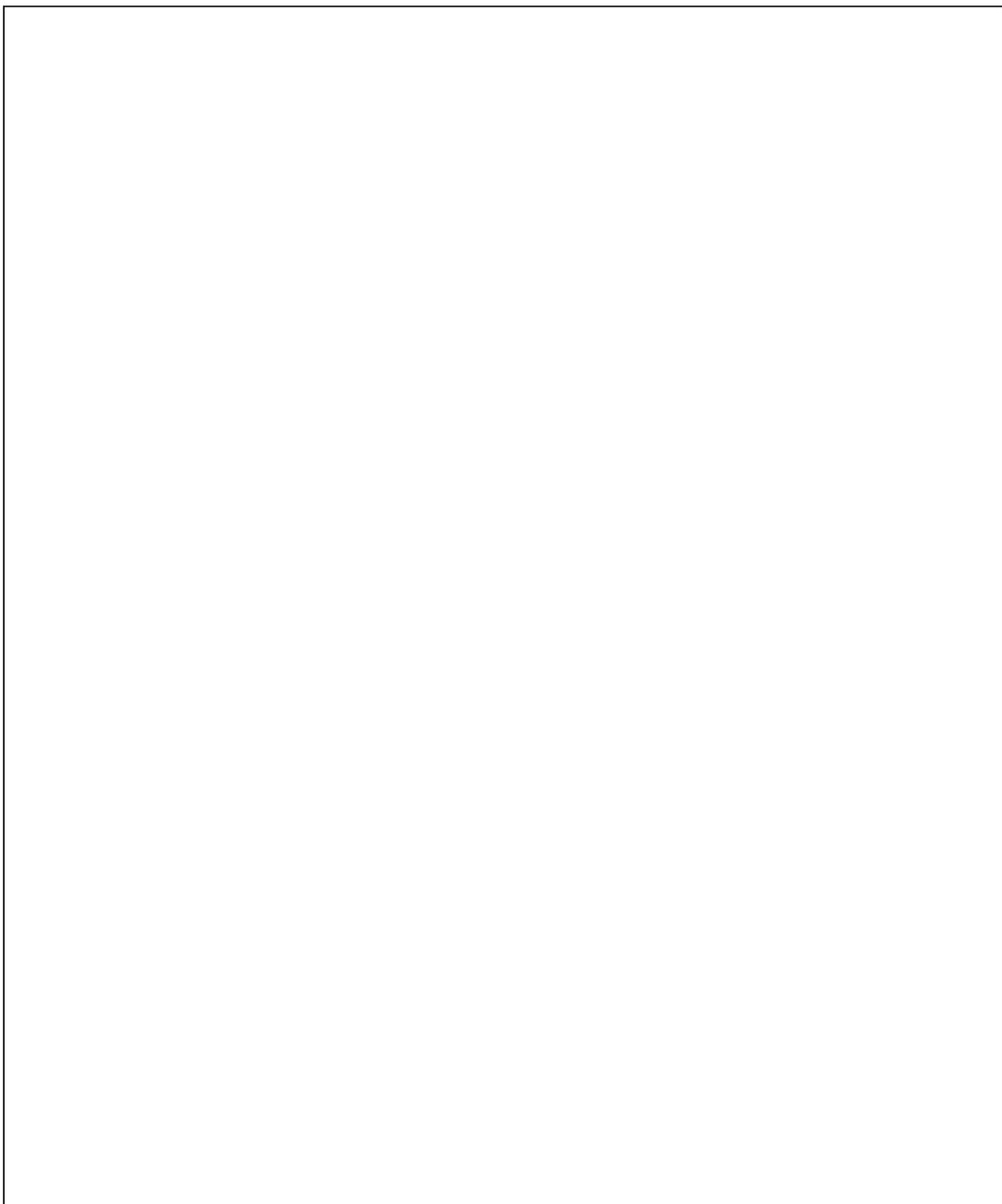


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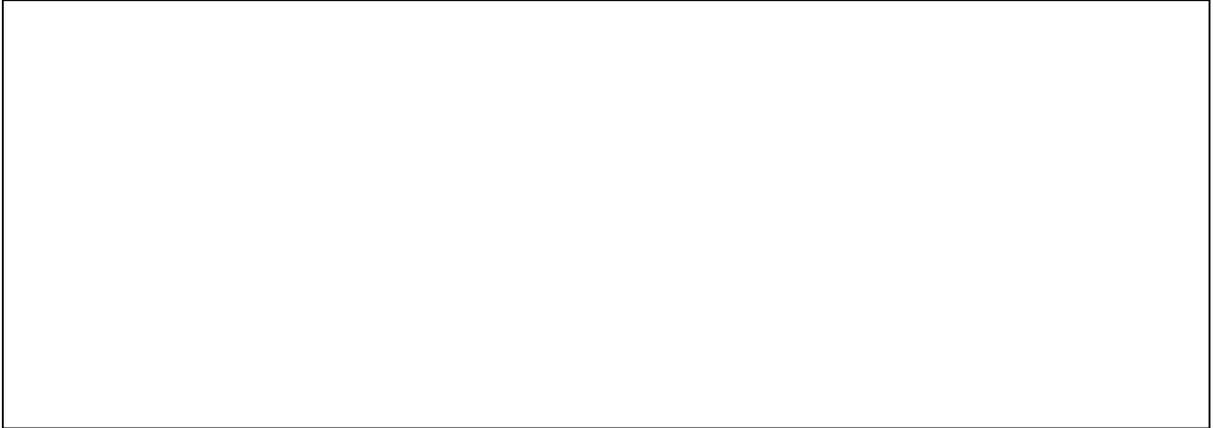
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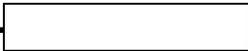
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