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Miriam Dobson

## Child Sacrifice in the Soviet Press: Sensationalism and the “Sectarian” in the Post-Stalin Era

In 1962, at the height of Khrushchev’s anti-religious campaigns, a propaganda work entitled *In a Nightmare World: A Documentary Essay on the Pentecostal Sect* was published.<sup>1</sup> The twenty-page volume vividly depicts the monstrous nature of “sectarianism” through a series of images and short captions. From the first page, children take centre stage with several photographs of pale, downcast infants at prayer [fig. 1]. Pentecostal youth, the reader learns, are refused medical treatment, denied

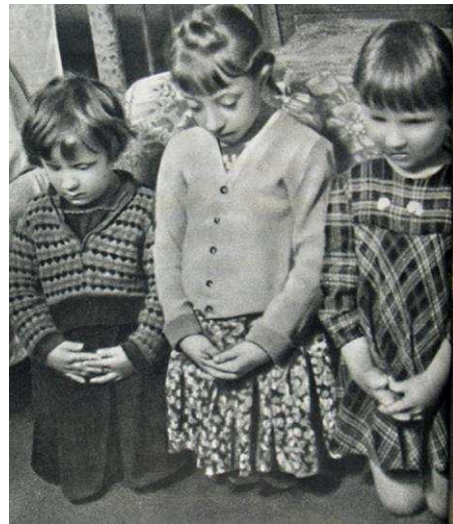


Fig. 1. *V mire koshmara: Dokumental'nyi fotocherk o sektantakh-piatidesiatnikakh* (Moscow, 1962).

access to culture, and miss out on all the joys which normally accompany a Soviet childhood. This dangerous “sect” is presented as a foreign, capitalist, import: US delegates are accused of using the 1959 American exhibition in Moscow to smuggle religious literature into the country and Oral Roberts, the American TV evangelist, is depicted in a bow-tie and angel wings; with coins spilling out from his Bible, he is the epitome of bourgeois religious hypocrisy [fig. 2].



Fig. 2. V mire koshmara:

*Dokumental'nyi fotooчерk o*  
sektantakh-piatidesiatnikakh  
(Moscow, 1962).

Some Pentecostals, In a Nightmare World explains, carry out human sacrifices to atone for their sins. The case of Ivan Fedotov, a leading figure in the Pentecostal church, is recounted. In 1961 he and other leading Pentecostals had been sentenced at a show-trial in the town of Drezna in the Moscow region.<sup>2</sup> Fedotov was charged with inciting a woman to offer her daughter, Tania, as a human sacrifice. According to the version given by prosecutors at the trial and in the press, Tania was saved by friends who interceded in her defense, but In a Nightmare World does not dismiss the possibility that Soviet children would perish at the hands of the “sectarians.” Indeed, the publication also tells the story of a one-year-old murdered by his grandmother, “Praskov’ia”, in a fit of religious ecstasy, while his mother lay in a dead faint nearby. The reader is presented with a shocking sight: in black and white, the body of “Kolia” is laid out on a post-mortem table, his head and legs bruised; next to him, a photograph of his wounded brother “Dima,” head wrapped thickly in bandages, expression dazed and lost. Cartoon footprints drawn along the bottom edge of the photograph suggest the bloody trail of the murderer. They are disconcertingly at odds with the stark horror of the images. [See fig. 3]

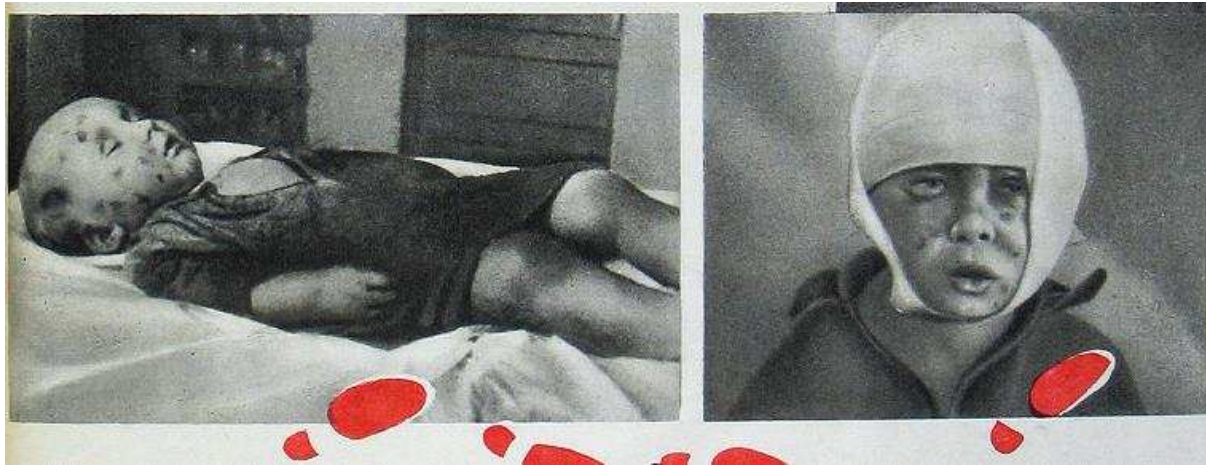


Fig. 3. *V mire koshmara: Dokumental'nyi fotocherk o sektantakh-piatidesiatnikakh* (Moscow, 1962).

This publication was part of a renewed attack on religious life in the USSR in the first post-Stalin decade which included the closure of churches and arrests. Having fallen into abeyance in the Second World War, anti-religious propaganda was revived in the 1950s. Non-Orthodox Christians, such as the Pentecostals, were prime targets. A Soviet study by A. I. Klibanov written in 1969 suggests the importance which in the Khrushchev era had been attached to the “sectarian” (a pejorative umbrella term referring to both non-Orthodox Christian denominations and splinter orthodox groups). According to Klibanov, of the 380 post-1917 works he had located for his study of “sectarianism” a full 199 of them had been published in the years 1955-1966. Roughly half of these recent publications were general overviews of the “sectarian” problem; of the more focused works, the three most problematic “sects” were identified as: the Jehovah’s Witnesses (17% of total publications), Evangelical Christians-Baptists (12%), and Pentecostals (9 %).<sup>3</sup> As Emily Baran argues in her study of Jehovah’s Witnesses, the “danger” represented in the minds of the authorities was acute, even if the numbers of believers relatively

small.<sup>4</sup> Here our attention will be on Protestant groups, particularly the Evangelical Christians-Baptists and Pentecostals.

Evangelical Christian and Baptist communities appeared in the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century, a time when Orthodoxy was both revived and challenged by the rapid pace of socioeconomic change.<sup>5</sup> In the peasant communities of Ukraine, the educated circles of St Petersburg, and amongst the Molokans (an indigenous sect often compared with the Quakers), a sense of spiritual quest was palpable. In the Caucasus and Ukraine, it was often through encounters with the Protestant Germans of the Russian Empire that believers encountered Baptist principles and practices; in the capital the English evangelical Lord Radstock, a member of the Plymouth Brethren, won many followers.<sup>6</sup> These early Protestant communities faced persecution: until 1905 those baptized as Orthodox could not convert to other Christian denominations and even afterwards, limitations on worship and missionary work persisted.<sup>7</sup> The year 1917 had seemingly provided a turning point: for at least some Bolsheviks, the “sectarian” was a potential ally.<sup>8</sup> For a brief moment in the early 1920s evangelical Protestantism seemed to flourish, at least in comparison with the pre-revolutionary period.<sup>9</sup> Evangelical Christians and Baptists were able to organize missionary work, disseminate Christian literature, train ministers, and form agricultural collectives.<sup>10</sup> Pentecostalism, first introduced into the Russian Empire on the eve of First World War, was also able to take root more firmly, with new groups forming as a result of the missionary work by men like I. E. Voronaev, who had returned from emigration in 1920.<sup>11</sup> But the anti-religious movement gained ground in the second half of the 1920s and by the time of Stalin’s Great Break, prospects were bleak: collectivization and the Great Terror both saw significant numbers of Protestants arrested

and prayer houses shut. As early as 1928-9, anti-religious materials presented the “sectarian” as the archetypal class enemy.<sup>12</sup> During collectivization, Baptists were accused of resisting grain seizures;<sup>13</sup> by 1937 they were charged with counter-revolutionary agitation.<sup>14</sup> A lull of sorts occurred in the Second World War and its immediate aftermath, but when propaganda campaigns were revived post-Stalin, even more sustained attention was paid to the “sectarian,” as Klibanov’s figures show.

Why were “sectarians” awarded such attention? Several reasons present themselves. First, as the work of Alexander Etkind demonstrates, the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, officialdom, and the Russian Orthodox Church expressed a fascination with the “exotic” behavior of the “sectarians” and this already provided their Soviet heirs with a rich repertoire of ideas about the strange and disturbing rituals nonconformist groups might practice.<sup>15</sup> Second, the “sectarian” could be easily identified as foreign: the original transmission of ideas from Protestant Germany aided accusations of collaboration during the Nazi occupation;<sup>16</sup> and the huge Baptist and Pentecostal congregations in the USA allowed Protestantism to be disparaged as the “American faith,” particularly during the Cold War.<sup>17</sup> Third, in the 1950s increasing numbers of Pentecostals, including Fedotov, began to organize regular worship outside of the registered congregations; in the early 1960s, some Evangelical Christians-Baptists, critical of outside intervention in congregational life, formed the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists.<sup>18</sup> These splinter groups allowed the loyalty of the whole Protestant church to be questioned.

At first glance the return to aggressive measures against religious communities under Khrushchev might seem to run contrary to the spirit of de-Stalinization, in particular the promise to respect “socialist legality.” Recent work, however, shows how the renewal of the atheist

crusade complemented other dimensions of de-Stalinization, especially the revival of the revolutionary spirit and the renewed quest to build communism (in which, of course, religion had no place). As Andrew Stone argues, the attempt to overcome “peasant backwardness” - including religious belief - was in keeping with the modernizing agenda of the era more generally.<sup>19</sup> Other recent scholarship emphasizes how the Soviet space program was used to encourage a secular worldview.<sup>20</sup> Without disputing the clear link between atheist campaigning and the modernising ethos of the era, I suggest that the fixation with the fiendish, disturbing, “other” reflects a different side to the campaigns, and therefore to de-Stalinization.

In this time of political and social upheaval, there was a need to consolidate Soviet values; identifying and castigating transgressors was one way to do so.<sup>21</sup> Stories of Protestants’ ritual violence were used to promote a dichotomy between the atheist, decent, and Soviet community on the one hand, and the religious, depraved and “American” community of Pentecostals and Baptists on the other. Descriptions of believers’ excessive emotions (uncontrolled dancing, crying, and moaning) established a comparison between their hysterical, strange, and “savage” (dikii) behavior and the rational and disciplined habits of the Soviet world.<sup>22</sup> In depicting the monstrous behavior of the evangelical “other” the press aimed to produce passionate responses from their reader.<sup>23</sup>

The impetus behind these anti-sectarian initiatives came from various quarters. By the second half of the 1950s, state officials worried that the return of believers from the Gulag were revitalizing unregistered religious groups. At the same time, journalists and editors enjoyed the additional room for maneuver. With some of the strictures of the Stalinist period lifted, and with a new pressure to raise their circulation figures, newspaper editors sought to make their

publications more lively and engaging; stories of the bizarre, violent, and strange behavior of the “sectarian” proved enticing material.<sup>24</sup> Journalists did not abandon their long-established role as “educators,” however, and some were instrumental in nudging the party leadership towards more stringent measures against believers.<sup>25</sup> A combination of such interests led to the first case to be investigated in this article, which itself influenced later campaigns. Reactions to such stories, discussed in the second half of the article, suggest that they resonated in the public imagination. The campaigns seemed to validate the expression of intense animosity against those who, by nature of their religious beliefs and life choices, were identified as different. This was, of course, the intention of the campaign, but by admitting the presence of the uncivilized and untamed within Soviet society, the regime risked generating fears which might themselves prove disorderly. Harassment of religious communities never ceased, but from 1964 Moscow tried to rein in some of the more extreme formulations.

Through examination of two case-studies, this article will suggest key reasons why the campaigns, in their most sensational form, were curbed even before Khrushchev’s ouster from power and despite the regime’s ongoing commitment to inculcating atheism. First, if religion was established as the irrational, hysterical antithesis to rational, Soviet modernity, it inevitably generated notions of the believer as mad. How then should a society which was trying to reinvent itself as humanitarian and law-bound, deal with such people? Could the “mad” be punished? Second, the sensationalist formulations rendered voluntary atheist work with believers problematic. If the “sectarian” was such a monstrous figure, could she really be reasoned with? Could citizens be mobilized for such risky work? Third, the campaigns had the potential to run out of control, with Soviet citizens themselves identifying targets and demanding punishment.



By focusing on children, the press hit a raw nerve, for many citizens seem to have had existing concerns about their own offspring's welfare and safety. In this anxious context, the distinctive family values of Protestants, who often had large numbers of children, made them easily identifiable as "other" and ready targets for scape-goating. As the second case shows, anger and hostility could escalate exponentially, here directed toward a mother who – despite her large brood – apparently perverted maternal values. In both cases examined the "killer" was a woman. As we shall see, media accounts also charged men with involvement in bloody rituals but they were invariably church ministers: in contrast, the lay-person who got swept away by her religious fervor to commit violence against a child seems more likely to be a woman, perhaps reflecting entrenched notions of the female as a disturbing presence.<sup>26</sup>

In terms of the chronology of the anti-religious campaigns, the established literature identifies a four-month operation from July to November 1954 and a second more sustained initiative from 1958/9 to 1964.<sup>27</sup> The years 1955-1957 have been defined by one historian as the "most liberal years for religious believers since 1947."<sup>28</sup> This article explores cases which fall on either side of the campaign's peak: the death of Kolia in 1955 and that of another young child, "Viktor", in the city of Mtsensk in Orel oblast in 1966. As such, they allow insight into the inception and aftermath of the anti-religious crusade and suggest that neither the beginning nor the end were clear-cut. Whilst the main wave of propaganda materials can indeed be dated to the end of the decade, anti-sectarian sallies were possible in the mid-1950s and, as argued here, might even offer the template for the later, more sustained campaigns. And once the ball had been set in motion, it was hard to stop: journalists, local officials, and ordinary citizens continued to find the

“sectarian” an alarming figure even after high-ranking figures in Moscow had called a halt to the more extreme aspects of the campaign in 1964.

### Pentecostalism and Charges of Ritual Violence

As the Second World War drew to a close, the Soviet state adopted a new policy towards religion: regulation and control in lieu of the brutality of the 1930s. The Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC) was created for this purpose, with one of its tasks to oversee the running of the newly established All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB). In August 1945, leading Pentecostals agreed to join the AUCECB, although this decision remained contentious amongst many believers and Soviet officials remained wary of them. In 1951, the chairman of CARC, I. V. Polianskii, wrote a memo on the religious situation in the country in which he raised alarm about the practices of Pentecostal communities which remained outside the control of the AUCECB (and therefore CARC): speaking in tongues masked anti-Soviet agitation, he alleged, and their talk of the end times was evidence they longed for the defeat of Soviet power. Polianskii identified continuities with earlier non-conformist religious traditions, writing: “During prayer services, groups of ‘pentecostals’ (shakers [triasuny]) who represent the vestiges of reactionary, intensely mystical sects, employ physically exhausting practices, such as hysterical ecstasy and nervous shaking, which lead to fainting and psychiatric illness.”<sup>29</sup>

By the mid-1950s, some Pentecostals had left the registered AUCECB congregations, believing the conditions imposed on them by membership too spiritually restrictive. In January 1956,

Polianskii wrote an internal memo urging officials to be on their guard, and to pay particular attention to Pentecostals who had recently been released from the camps and who were playing a key role in the emergence of these new groups.<sup>30</sup> He wrote: “[t]he Christians of Evangelical Faith [Pentecostals – MD] have certain teachings which lead to the physical and psychological crippling of people, to cases of killing, the chopping off of hands, and other forms of sacrifice [zhertvoprinoshenie] as a way to atone for sins, cases of psychiatric illness and madness, suicide and so on.”<sup>31</sup>

By the end of the decade the charges against Pentecostals had migrated from internal reports by state officials like Polianskii to the media. In 1961 a popular antireligious film, *Clouds over Borskoe*, depicted the pernicious influence of a group of Pentecostals who, at the end of film, try to crucify the young heroine Ol’ga.<sup>32</sup> Here we see a clear transmission from the pre-revolutionary literature on “sects” whose practices allegedly included ritual imitations of Christ’s crucifixion.<sup>33</sup> The Soviet addition was that Ol’ga was to be actually sacrificed, had she not been saved just in time. *Komsomol’skaia pravda* had run a similar story just a few years earlier.<sup>34</sup> Medicalized language was common in the press, again sometimes a direct echo of terms used in discussion of the khlysty and other mystical Christian sects before 1917.<sup>35</sup> In one press piece, the reader learnt of the Pentecostals’ “convulsive arm movements,” spasms, and contagiousness, terms common in earlier anti-sectarian texts.<sup>36</sup> Other press materials told of believers’ descent into mental illness requiring extended psychiatric treatment.<sup>37</sup>

Although the pre-revolutionary era provided a rich set of images and ideas about both the sickness and violence of the “sectarian,” it seems to be in the Soviet era – and specifically under Khrushchev – that cruelty towards children became a regular feature of anti-sectarian tracts.<sup>38</sup> In

October 1960, *Izvestiia* reported on the killing of a three-year old boy in Krasnodar region: in the midst of worship, a “prophetess” cried out “in a hysterical voice” that only by sacrificing the blood of a “lamb” could their sins be washed away; the pastor wrenched a boy from his mother’s arms and killed him.<sup>39</sup> Even when articles covered less serious religious “offenses,” they frequently began with references to other (unrelated) violent crimes allegedly carried out by “sectarians,” such as the suffocation and beheading of children. In 1961, for example, the Saratov local newspaper printed an article about Pentecostal preachers who discouraged their followers from consulting doctors and tried to convert young people but it began by detailing three more sensational cases: an eight-year-old had almost been suffocated by believers in Ukraine; a female sectarian had chopped the head off her daughter in a bout of religious fanaticism; and a man had tried to crucify his wife.<sup>40</sup> But importantly, the accusation of sacrificial child-killing became fundamental to the most high-profile case against Pentecostals in this period: the arrest and trial of Ivan Fedotov.<sup>41</sup> His arrest was granted significant media coverage: in addition to the book of images described above, his case was also covered in *Izvestiia* and *Literaturnaia gazeta*, and a newsreel of the trial regularly screened.<sup>42</sup>

Why did child sacrifice make its appearance now? In part it reflects broader concerns about the raising of healthy Soviet children in these years. Susan Reid argues that the 1950s saw a “reinvigoration [...] of the ideology of childhood” and that the notion of the happy Soviet childhood became central to the Khrushchev regime’s legitimacy.<sup>43</sup> The alternative upbringing which Christian families offered became intolerable for the authorities; as Olena Panych comments, with reference to Evangelical Christian-Baptist families, children were “at the center of a political struggle.”<sup>44</sup> In the press, many articles were devoted to the way children were

damaged, physically and psychologically, by a religious upbringing, one piece referring to children “whose childhood has been taken away from them.”<sup>45</sup> But the specter of the child-killer took matters a step further. I argue here that the notion of the sectarian child-killer had its roots in a very specific case: the death of Kolia, apparently killed by his grandmother, Praskov’ia, in 1955. Invariably press articles on Fedotov in 1960-61 made reference to this earlier crime.<sup>46</sup> In the three-quarter-page spread devoted to his trial in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, a significant portion of the text was about Praskov’ia, not only because she was mother to one of the women on trial, but because she provided the story with real horror: Fedotov’s “victim” could be seen playing happily in a photograph at the top of the page, while allusion to Kolia’s death five years earlier gave her escape story a sinister twist.<sup>47</sup> Praskov’ia’s tragic story thus led not only to her own execution but also to her demonization in the antireligious campaigns which followed.<sup>48</sup> For this reason, her case warrants closer inspection.

Kolia’s death first came to public attention in June 1956 under the stark newspaper headline “fanatics” (*izuvery*).<sup>49</sup> The authors were A. Bezuglov, who held a position at the Procuracy, and V. Perel’man, a young journalist. Friends since their days as law students, the two had published their first joint article just two weeks earlier, a piece about a woman who had killed a hated daughter-in-law and her three-year-old child.<sup>50</sup> Bezuglov possibly knew of Praskov’ia’s crime from his work for the criminal justice system, whilst Perel’man was keen to make it as a journalist and soon became a regular contributor to *Trud*, the trade union newspaper aimed at workers and characterized by light stories.<sup>51</sup> For Perel’man and his friends, at least, the first article was a real “sensation” (*sensatsiia*) and Perel’man later admitted that at this time he sought

to write only articles which would “strike a spark in the soul of the reader” and incite their “anger and sarcasm” (gnev i sarkazm).<sup>52</sup> Kolia’s story fitted the bill.

The opening paragraph of the Trud article set the scene of the tragedy: “For three days Praskov’ia’s hut appeared empty. The door was locked. The shutters closed. But, if you listened carefully, there was the muffled sound of singing, or praying. Whether song or prayer, it didn’t matter to the passers-by – what happens in a person’s own home is their own business after all...” In this morass of indifference, the collective-farm agronomist – the scientist of the village – was the only one to take action: walking past the hut he heard the soul-splitting cry of a child and, finding the door locked, broke through the window and discovered the murder scene. Having seized the reader’s attention, the article then back-tracks to recount the life of Praskov’ia, a widow working in the kolkhoz stables in “L.,” Kalinin oblast, who had allegedly been a long-time member of the Pentecostal sect (although in fact evidence from her court files suggest she was only a very recent convert, if at all).<sup>53</sup> According to the article, she first made a trip to Drezna to see two of her daughters, both Pentecostals; then on to another daughter and son-in-law, Fedia, in Novgorod oblast, neither of whom were believers. Having successfully won over the mother of her son-in-law to Pentecostalism, Praskov’ia returned home to L., partially satisfied. She invited to tea her neighbor and members of her family – her son, another daughter, and her two grandsons (Kolia and Dima), who all lived nearby. Praskov’ia recounted her travels accompanied, the reporters claimed, by a series of strange shrieks. Remembering the resolute atheism of her son-in-law in Novgorod oblast, Fedia, she became impassioned. She instructed her son to take pen and paper and write the following: “Fedia, understand what the Heavenly Father, who created heaven and earth, has done for you. In order that he saves you, I will send

you a pair of two doves. One dove is a token of the Holy Spirit; the other is full of the Holy Spirit. And when the Communists take your soul, remember that you have the second dove in your heart, and that it can help you fly away. Call louder to the Heavenly Father, call louder, and he will come and take you...”<sup>54</sup> Typical of what would prove a rather ambiguous text, the significance of the doves was left unexplained for the reader.<sup>55</sup>

The article simply accelerated the narrative: the son and daughter fell asleep briefly during the night but Praskov’ia woke them at dawn and wrapped them in white sheets; naked, the three prayed hysterically for three days. No one saw, or at least admitted to seeing, Praskov’ia kill her grandson Kolia with a two-meter plank or beat his brother Dima half-to-death.<sup>56</sup>

The killing of Kolia took place almost a year and a half before it was reported in the press. In that time, Praskov’ia wrote at least two petitions in which she pleaded for clemency, without denying the killing. The first letter, addressed to the Supreme Court in January 1956, was largely written in the passive form, conveying a sense of Praskov’ia’s failure to control events: “Kirov oblast court punished me severely as if I had done it deliberately. But I have never been evil. A violent craziness happened to me on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.”<sup>57</sup> The second letter, addressed, to the Supreme Soviet, began by identifying herself, giving her address and birthdate, and then stated: “A misfortune happened to me.” She describes how she returned home on 2 February 1955 in terrible pain. “A violent craziness took hold of me. I don’t remember what happened to me in order for me to be able to kill a 9-month-old child. This is very hard for me. If I had been in good health, I would never have done this.”<sup>58</sup> She said little about her faith in either letter; it did not appear central to her understanding of the crime, although she recognized that it had significance for the authorities: “My faith is orthodox. I don’t know any other. I just know that we didn’t have

churches in the village and that I had the Gospels. But this didn't make any difference to my life. There's nothing about me that would make me give a child to God as a sacrifice."<sup>59</sup> The handwriting and broken syntax make Praskov'ia's letters hard to follow, both for the present-day researcher and for officials at the time.<sup>60</sup> All the same, her letters suggest an alternative reading to the one provided in Trud on at least two matters: her mental health and her faith.

Her claim to have suffered some kind of mental breakdown was corroborated by the doctors who first treated her. According to psychiatrists at the Litvinov Psycho-Neurological Hospital in Kalinin she had a "primitive personality" (*primitivnaia lichnost'*) and at the moment of committing the crime was in a hallucinatory and hysterical state. In their assessment, she was not legally accountable (*nevmeniaemaia*), her mental disorder so deep that she could not give a clear account of her own actions or control them.<sup>61</sup> However, opposition to the Kalinin diagnosis – its origins unclear from the available records – led to Praskov'ia being moved to the Serbskii Institute in Moscow where she spent almost five months. Specialists at the hospital – later infamous for its maltreatment of dissidents – now declared her fit to stand trial.<sup>62</sup> The possibility of a diagnosed psychological condition was entirely absent from the Trud article: it painted her as a fanatic, but did not even raise the possibility that mental illness might explain her actions.

The religious nature of the crime also developed over the course of 1955 and 1956. When the Kalinin oblast court heard the case in December 1955, the verdict focused primarily on the violence of what happened and the irrefutable nature of the evidence, with little mention of her faith; the letter dictated to Fedia was cited primarily as evidence of Praskov'ia's prior intention to murder the two boys, not her unorthodox religious ideas. Indeed in summing up the court denounced the killing as a crime against the family, stressing the fact that Praskov'ia had "a duty



to take special care of the victim” but in fact took advantage of his “helpless situation.”<sup>63</sup> The death penalty was awarded.

Following hearings in January and May (at which this punishment was upheld), the Russian Supreme Court wrote a summary of the case in June 1956 which shows how interpretations of the crime had evolved since the hearing in Kalinin the previous December. Now, as concerns about Pentecostal activity grew, it was presented not so much as a crime against the sanctity of the family, but as a religious offense. The report gave a long description of the prayer session which preceded the killing. “Standing in front of them,” it claimed, “[Praskov’ia] acted like some kind of holy person, summonsed up ‘God’s son’ and announced to all attending that she had a ‘vision,’ and that her daughter had come to believe in God, and that her son-in-law Fedor was also moving towards the faith.” That same evening, it continued, she baptized her daughter in the new faith, putting her fingers into her mouth “to chase the devil” away.

It is not, of course, impossible for someone to admit to a crime she did not commit, but if we are to believe her petitions, Praskov’ia did end the life of her own grandson. Significantly, this tragedy happened for reasons very different from the ones presented by the Supreme Court, or by Bezuglov and Perel’man. Over the long months between the murder and the final stage in the legal process, the case was transformed in two important ways: Praskov’ia was turned into a committed and fanatical Pentecostal and the medical diagnosis of insanity was quashed, although the press coverage gave readers little doubt about her dangerous depravity.

The publication of the *Trud* article did not come at the height of the press campaigns but it set the template for subsequent coverage.<sup>64</sup> It also embodied some of the contradictions inherent in

these campaigns. The main body of the piece painted Praskov'ia as a monster and encouraged horror and disgust. Yet the concluding paragraphs took a rather different tack and addressed the “problem” of religion more generally, particularly the nefarious impact religious practice allegedly had on productivity. Lamenting the way religious festivals interfered with work rates and school attendance, and bred binge-drinking, fights and even knifings, the article called for greater attention to be paid to moral education (*vospitane*), particularly in the countryside. These were themes central to the propaganda attacks on all denominations, especially Orthodoxy.<sup>65</sup> Inspired by the article the conscientious reader was to meant commit herself to “cultural-educational work” (*kul'turno-prosvetitel'naia rabota*), including individual chats and sincere conversations with believers and heated debates at meetings. (Here we perhaps see the hand of Bezuglov: in 1956 he also published a short pamphlet entitled *This Concerns Everyone* in which he preached sobriety, warned against hooliganism, and championed the importance of Soviet, rather than capitalist, morality, themes echoed here.<sup>66</sup>) The result is problematic: the blend of sensationalism on the one hand, and calls for renewed atheist work on the other make it a difficult text. Readers were urged to enter into instructive dialogue with Christians, but the kind of long-term, patient work this required was surely difficult to reconcile with the passions unleashed by the article's depiction of such an alien, incomprehensible, and violent world.

### Baptists and Samosud

Although the waning of the anti-religious campaign is normally associated with Khrushchev's ouster from power in October 1964, the shift began some months earlier.<sup>67</sup> Following a Central Committee Plenum at the end of the previous year, the January 1964 editions of *Nauka i religii*

and *Kommunist* published a long text by the party's lead ideologue, L. F. Il'ichev. Although he called for a new atheist "crusade," Il'ichev hinted at subtle changes: a stronger emphasis on individual work to dissuade believers from their erroneous convictions; greater involvement of the intelligentsia, particularly academics and students. More propaganda was encouraged, but the focus was now to be on the role of the atheist than on the believer: in some films to date, Il'ichev lamented, "the image of those fighting the intoxicant of religion [bortsov s religioznym durmanom] is far less vibrant than that of the clergymen or the leaders of fanatical sects."<sup>68</sup>

Behind the scenes, a new approach to religion stressing the importance of legality emerged at least as early as June 1964, with local officials discouraged from employing the extra-legal measures that had been common over the past decade.<sup>69</sup> The atheist crusade was increasingly at odds with Khrushchev's own much-vaunted promises to observe legality (*zakonnost'*) and with regard to the Protestant communities at least, it was proving counter-productive: some outspoken believers were challenging the restrictions placed on religious worship and openly criticizing the leadership of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) for agreeing to implement policies they considered detrimental to spiritual life.<sup>70</sup>

One of the most striking features of the discussions taking place in 1964-5 is the repeated criticism of the press for its portrayal of the "sectarian." A 1965 report to the Central Committee from A. A. Puzin, the current chairman of CARC wrote: "Many officials in the localities have developed incorrect ideas about sectarians and about the correct way to fight against sectarian beliefs. To a large extent the press is responsible for this. Often all sectarians are depicted in the press as enemies of the Soviet state, as moral freaks, fanatics, and parasites [*moral'nye urody, izuvery i tuneiadtsy*]. Many can't even contemplate the fact that a sectarian can be a decent

person [chestnyi chelovek].”<sup>71</sup> In the same year, the CARC plenipotentiary for Leningrad oblast made a similar point, noting that “under the influence of the press and other factors, rank-and-file workers in the party-state apparatus, and even their superiors, have a tendency to view Russian Orthodox believers as something which can be tolerated, but other believers as sectarians – that’s to say as some kind of strange abnormality [neponiatnoe urodstvo].”<sup>72</sup> At another CARC meeting, the editors of a Donetsk newspaper were criticized for printing an article headlined “Tragedy in the village of Novo-Mikhailovka” about “sectarian-baptists” who had burnt a nine-year-old girl at the stake. “This crime did indeed take place,” explained CARC leaders, “but [the perpetrator] was not a believer and had no connection with Baptists. According to medical opinion, [the perpetrator] did not commit the crime because of religious fanaticism, but as a result of mental illness.”<sup>73</sup> These comments were part of a wider attack on the press which began in 1965. Concerned about a surfeit of salacious stories, the party leadership began to criticize newspapers for printing “sensationalist” material.<sup>74</sup> The kind of human interest stories which Perel’man had so relished – in which people had often behaved in a violent, scandalous, or immoral fashion – became less common.

As senior officials tried to implement the new importance attached to observing legality, they faced an additional challenge from the newly formed Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (CCECB) which protested against outside intervention in congregational life. In the first few months of 1966 press materials criticized members of the CCECB for flouting Soviet legislation on where and when worship could take place, but the techniques used to stigmatize “sectarians” in the Khrushchev-era were not revived.<sup>75</sup> As our second case study will demonstrate, however, the sinister specter of the sectarian child-killer had not disappeared from

the popular imagination. When confronted with the killing of a local child, citizens turned to the figure of the sectarian “fanatic” to make sense of this troubling event, even though the perpetrator was identified as a Baptist, rather than one of Fedotov’s Pentecostals, previously the main target of such charges.<sup>76</sup>

On 26 May 1966 CARC headquarters received a report from S. N. Vysotskii, an official in Orel oblast, regarding the murder of a small boy three days earlier.<sup>77</sup> According to Vysotskii, “Natasha’s” husband had returned home from work on 23 May to find her on the glass-enclosed veranda with a neighbor’s three-year-old son and a knife. The police were called but Natasha refused to open the door, and, in clear line of view, she stabbed the child in the neck, shouting “this is in the place of a future pioneer tie.” The report identified Natasha as being a member of the CCECB because, in searching her home, a copy of the “Appeal to Mothers” and the samizdat magazine *Bratskii listok* had been discovered; the family motorcycle was cited as evidence that she acted as courier between different underground groups. The report may have been in reaction to a recent CARC circular warning its officials about the activities of the Council of Churches, but the author was also clearly alarmed by local reactions to the killing.<sup>78</sup> Vysotskii noted that many people were demanding the death penalty, and reported that on the day of the funeral (25 May), almost “the entire town” accompanied the coffin and body. “The police were forced to take measures in order to prevent reprisals, or *samosud*, against R.’s home,” he wrote. Vysotskii also suggested that the boy’s mother (assumed at this stage to be a fellow “sectarian”) knew about the murder plans, and that “typically” she and the boy’s father, as believers, were unmoved by the tragedy. Several of the claims made in this first report turned out to be false, or

exaggerated; the dramatic words attributed to Natasha at the moment of the murder are not confirmed in any witness statements or petitions;<sup>79</sup> the boy's parents were not believers.

With time, the authorities would discover more about Natasha's life. Born in 1934 in a village in Tula oblast, she had seven years schooling before moving to Mtsensk where she worked as a seamstress. By her thirties, Natasha had given up work and given birth to seven children, for which she had received an award for motherhood.<sup>80</sup> Unlike Praskov'ia, Natasha had the support of well-educated family members who wrote petitions on her behalf.<sup>81</sup> Her uncle composed two long letters, in which he portrayed himself and his family as reasonable, Soviet citizens and Natasha as a misguided, but essentially decent, woman.<sup>82</sup> According to his petitions, Natasha was drawn to the Baptists as a result of the materially difficult life she led in Mtsensk: the family of nine was living off her husband's salary of 80 roubles and the family cow; her husband spent the last of their money on the motorcycle; and he beat her for refusing abortions on religious grounds. When, in the spring of 1966, her son "Volodia" was accepted into the pioneers the situation reached crisis-point, although, the uncle insisted, Natasha had not opposed his joining.<sup>83</sup> Because of the family's limited living space, Volodia often stayed with extended family, but in April an argument between Natasha and a relative – also a Baptist – led to the boy returning home, and in the move, his pioneer tie being lost. "This argument," wrote the uncle, "arose NOT on religious grounds – entirely the investigator's invention – but because of manure which had been set aside for fertilizing their garden plots."<sup>84</sup> But as Natasha was a known believer, the school took Volodia's lost pioneer tie as a sign of protest. She was summonsed before the parents' committee, harangued for three hours, and threatened with the removal of her children.

This was no empty threat: during the early 1960s a number of Baptists who ran into conflict with the regime had their children taken away and the pressure exerted on families was enormous.<sup>85</sup>

In her uncle's view, these events led to Natasha's mental breakdown. When Volodia brought a letter home from school for his father, Natasha only glanced at it briefly before concluding that a reference to "two forms" (which in fact related to the children's trip to summer camp) was evidence that the process of removing her children had begun. According to several witnesses, the uncle said, she now began to behave "like a madwoman." Frenzied, she repeatedly asked her neighbor (the mother of the murdered boy) for "TWO FORMS."<sup>86</sup>

Natasha did not deny that she had committed a murder and, although more literate than Praskov'ia, she too struggled to understand what had happened. In a petition to the Supreme Soviet she wrote: "I committed a terrible crime: on the 23 May of this year I killed 3-year-old Viktor. More than a month has gone by now. My memory of that horrific day is gradually returning to me and I vaguely remember what I did, though why I did this crime I can't explain, not just to the court but even to myself." Her religious feelings were simply not relevant here, she said, reminding her reader that one of the basic tenets of the Baptists' faith was "do not kill." If the police had not frightened her, the murder would not have happened, "although," she finished, "they would still have had to take me away, just to hospital instead of prison, because I still don't remember what happened or what I did on 24 [sic] May."<sup>87</sup>

As with Praskov'ia, the state of Natasha's mental health and nature of her belief became points of contestation. When the case was first heard on 17 June 1966, Orel oblast court was told that medical experts unanimously agreed Natasha showed no signs of psychiatric illness; they

identified a “psychopathic character” (*psikhopaticheskaia lichnost’*) but she was conscious of her actions and therefore accountable for them (*vmeniaemaia*).<sup>88</sup> Seemingly inexplicable deeds – such as giving away the family cow – were interpreted not as evidence of madness, but of religious conspiracy: the cow was a gift to lure her neighbor into the sect.<sup>89</sup> In addition to the uncle’s efforts, two lawyers wrote in defense of Natasha, downplaying her religiosity (noting that she was not even a full member of a Baptist congregation) and, like the uncle, arguing that there were clear signs of insanity.<sup>90</sup> The family’s campaign seems to have worked, at least in part: the Russian Supreme Court reviewed the case for a second time on 3 November 1966 and, although Natasha was still considered accountable for her actions, she was reprieved from the death penalty and instead sentenced to fifteen years’ imprisonment.<sup>91</sup>

Some Mtsensk residents were surely disappointed, their anger against the “sectarians” already in full throttle. In the days immediately following the killing, groups of concerned citizens gathered, gossiped, and debated the case, often calling for the death penalty to be awarded.<sup>92</sup> Some of these meetings had an official feeling, and brief, formal, minutes [protokoly] were produced; others appear more impromptu. Collective letters were dispatched to local and national courts, as well as to the editors of the regional newspaper, *Orlovskaiia pravda*. Inserted into Natasha’s legal dossier, these unpublished texts show that local inhabitants had come to fear the existence of a conspiracy: this single killing had far wider, and disturbing, implications than first apparent, they claimed.<sup>93</sup>

On 25 May, at a meeting held at the school attended by Natasha’s children, 45 people signed a “resolution” which demanded the death penalty and – in language redolent of the Stalinist era – deplored “the crime of an enemy of the people who chose the sabotage route” (*prestuplenie*



*vraga naroda, staviashego na put' diversii*).<sup>94</sup> She had not acted alone, the letter-writers alleged, pointing the finger at the “baptist-schismatics” (*baptisty-raskol'niki*) and demanding the liquidation of the sect.

On 27 May a group of thirty-five female workers from the Mtsensk Aluminium Casting Factory wrote a collective letter in which they lamented the fact that a “terrorist act” had happened in their own town. As at the meeting two days earlier, they saw a conspiracy, writing: “How long will a small band of sectarian-throatcutters poison our life? How long will bloodthirsty ‘brothers and sisters in Christ’ celebrate the end of their fasts by feasting on our children?”<sup>95</sup> Whilst the influence of pre-revolutionary ideas about Christian sects had played a part in the way Soviet officials viewed Pentecostal practices, here we can detect other influences: the accusation of throat-cutting, fasts, and feasting, and the ritualistic drinking of blood are all reminiscent of the Jewish blood libel.<sup>96</sup> These additions suggest that whilst anti-sectarian sentiment had been encouraged by the campaigns of the Khrushchev era, its populist articulation may have drawn on, and adapted, existing anti-semitic traditions.

In a similar fashion, concerns about protecting “Soviet” childhood largely reflected the emphasis of the Khrushchev-era atheist campaigns, but also acquired new nuances. In their collective letters, anxieties about child welfare related in particular to the practical issue of ensuring children were adequately supervised. Women from the Mtsensk Aluminium Casting Factory seemed to worry that whilst they were at work their children were in danger: “How long will we fear for our children so that at lunchtime we run home with the single thought: ‘is our son alive?’”<sup>97</sup> Such concerns are understandable: child-care had become more available in the post-Stalin years, but the provision was not universal and not always satisfactory, particularly outside

of the capital cities.<sup>98</sup> Parents still used informal child-care arrangements, relying on support from family, neighbors, or perhaps older siblings. Indeed the question of who had been minding Viktor on the day of the murder was one of the disputed aspects of the case: although the (unpublished) court verdict, as well as the uncle's testimony, implied that his mother left Viktor in Natasha's care, the account published in *Orlovskaiia pravda* said the three-year-old was left playing alone in the courtyard (dvor).<sup>99</sup>

Similar concerns about the supervision of children surface in another letter, signed by 53 workers. It opens in an upbeat fashion: "The town of Mtsensk lies on the picturesque bank of the river Zusha. All around things are being improved and new homes and children's nurseries are being built. In 1962 the Mtsensk factory produced its first run of secondary non-ferrous metals. The people of the town are carrying out creative, constructive work."<sup>100</sup> The authors thus began with a socialist realist narrative of progress: life in the city is improving; at work, people are productive, contributing to the economic output of the nation; at the same time, their domestic life is being transformed with new homes and – significantly – the provision of day-care for their children. Yet there was a threat to all this: "[A]longside hardworking citizens live real snakes which slither into our society and put on the mask of a lamb. In our town sectarians have been breeding and poison the souls not only of adults but also of children."<sup>101</sup> Progress is thus vulnerable: all the impressive achievements of Soviet construction, and reconstruction, could so easily be taken away, and the nation's young contaminated. Like the women of the Aluminium Casting Factory, these workers suspected a ritual killing: "R. lured [zamanila] into her home the neighbor's boy who often played with her children, took a blunt table knife and brutally [zverski] cut his throat, drank human blood."<sup>102</sup> Again this recurrence of the blood libel appears borne of

parents' anxiety about the care of their children whilst at work: "Amongst the inhabitants of the city sinister rumors about the mass murder of children are circulating. Parents cannot work calmly at their place of employment."<sup>103</sup>

Letter-writers resented the authorities' failure to protect them.<sup>104</sup> Apparently fearing that Soviet laws might prove too "humane" [gumannyi] (as one small group of "mothers" put it), some Mtsensk inhabitants had apparently taken action into their own hands at the boy's funeral.<sup>105</sup> The Aluminium Casting Factory women described what happened:

Only thanks to the community [*obshchestvesnost'*] of the town was a civil ceremony arranged (they wanted to bury him in their own way [oni khoteli *pokhoronit' ego po-svoemu*]). The parents stood by like bystanders while complete strangers sobbed. [...] Outraged people threw stones at the parents, even though they only knew about the circumstances and causes of the death from rumors.<sup>106</sup>

The women appear to have mixed feelings: they are implicitly critical of the stone-throwers who acted aggressively without knowing the whole story, but are themselves incensed by the idea of funeral rituals carried out "their own way."<sup>107</sup> They resented that "sectarian" families raised their children in a different, non-Soviet manner, with their own "laws and commandments."<sup>108</sup> Large Baptist and Pentecostal broods – in contrast to the wider trend for reduced family size in these years – were an unmistakable sign of the different life-choices some Soviet citizens were making.<sup>109</sup> Whether the fact that Natasha, as mother of seven, had previously been decorated for her child-bearing services played a part in this escalation of public rage is difficult to gauge, but certainly some women were angered that she bore the "title" (*zvanie*) of mother. One letter,

written by five women, asked: “Can she really be called a mother? She is not worthy of this distinguished title [vysokoe zvanie].”<sup>110</sup> The workers of the Mtsensk Aluminium Casting Factory seemed to fear the killing somehow reflected badly on them as mothers: “This woman-beast does not have the right to bear the title of woman-mother, and in doing so brings shame on us.”<sup>111</sup>

When, more than a week after the murder, the Soviet press at last intervened to offer an official interpretation, the *Izvestiia* journalist presented his article as a response to the public outcry witnessed in Mtsensk.<sup>112</sup> Repeatedly criticizing the local authorities’ failure to carry out “explanatory work” in the town, the journalist, N. Shtan’ko, noted the “fantastical conjectures,” “monstrous versions of this tragic story,” and rumors about “sectarian terror” which were circulating. The police had allegedly been required to stand guard over Natasha’s home to prevent enraged citizens destroying it, as well as providing protection to Mtsensk’s “sectarians” against “elemental anger” (*stikhiinyi gnev*). In using the term “elemental anger” the *Izvestiia* journalist implied that citizens’ rage, although it had been fed by atheist propaganda in recent years, was not the mature, Soviet response required.<sup>113</sup> The article was thus, at least in some respects, in keeping with the dictates of the new more restrained approach whereby believers were to be condemned for breaking laws, not simply vilified. Indeed, once he had identified Natasha as part of the CCECB, Shtan’ko used the case to condemn the movement’s leaders for “refusing to recognize the laws of the Soviet state.”<sup>114</sup> Yet Shtan’ko, who built his career on being a journalist responding to popular concerns, and who had written positively about “people’s anger” towards sectarians five years earlier, did not entirely dismiss the conspiracy ordinary people suspected.<sup>115</sup> “[People] saw that the tragedy happened as a result of religion, they knew that the killing was accompanied by actions reminiscent of some kind of ritual,” wrote

Shtan'ko. Before the murder, he claimed, Natasha had dressed the little body in a specially prepared, clean vest (raspashonka). He thus hinted at a pre-meditated, ritualistic element to the crime, without having any evidence to support his claims, or providing any detail. The possibility that the crime was a religiously-inspired, quasi-ritualistic murder carried out by a fanatic was not entirely rejected, but the more vitriolic formulations of Khrushchev's anti-religious campaigns eschewed.

Shtan'ko also felt it necessary to tackle the question of insanity. Again he tried to hew a middle way between the more incendiary formulations which prevailed before 1964 and the rather more moderate line CARC had taken since. "It is difficult to imagine," Shtan'ko wrote, "that a person who was psychologically well would do such a thing. But even if R. had experienced psychological derangement (psikhicheskii sryv), is it not clear why that happened?" He blamed the pernicious nature of religious belief preached by the leaders of the CCECB. Shtan'ko addressed them directly:

Prophets of evil, you sow only evil, although you produce lofty phrases about kindness and loving your neighbour. In what a sinister light we now see the principal idea you use to inspire your congregation: "Don't obey earthly laws, obey the law of God!" Who could have predicted what monstrous form this idea would take in the fevered [vospalennyi] mind of a half-literate fanatic leafing through the Holy Scriptures to find an instruction from God about how best to prove her faith!<sup>116</sup>

In light of Shtan'ko's articles in 1961-2 which denounced the psychological damage inflicted by religion, his position is hardly surprising: even if Maria's crime was symptomatic of some kind

of mental disturbance, he argued, she was not deserving of much empathy, given that it was her beliefs that had made her unwell in the first place.

Having embraced sensationalism in its treatment of “sectarians” under Khrushchev, the press now tried half-heartedly to rein in the more extreme responses. But, both before and after the media’s intervention, passions ran high in Mtsensk. As they composed collective texts, citizens described their emotions – fear, horror, alarm, anger, and indignation. The sense of community articulated by crowds who met to observe the funeral, to threaten Natasha’s home, or to write letters, appears brittle: on the one hand, citizens expressed pride in Soviet childhood, motherhood and the nation’s progress towards a better future; on the other they were anxious, quick to extrapolate from one murder to a wave of terror and ritual killings, and indignant that the state did not do more to ensure their children’s welfare.

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During the unsettled years of de-Stalinization, Soviet identity was in flux: pride in the past was marred by Stalin’s discrediting, the status of erstwhile heroes (and enemies) now in question. In the climate of the Cold War, it was imperative to reaffirm a narrative of progress: Soviet culture was modern, secular, and civilized – and infinitely superior to the benighted values of the West. Anti-religious campaigns were central to this re-shaping and re-launching of Soviet patriotism; their emphasis on atheism’s scientific foundations was intrinsically linked with the Soviet claim to represent modernity on the world stage.

The campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s also had another side, however, for they were reliant on depicting the uncivilized “other.” Soviet citizens were urged to rally against the

dangerous, wild, and uncontrolled figure of the sectarian, lurking within their own society. Why Praskov'ia killed her grandson, and the state of her mental health, is now impossible for the historian to reconstruct, but what is clear is that she was used as a kind of macabre cause célèbre as the anti-sectarian campaigns reached their zenith in the early 1960s. And yet this sensationalist approach undermined important aspects of the Khrushchev project, particularly the regime's attempt to re-invent itself as a government concerned with humanitarianism and the observance of due legal process. Whilst the notional believer could be represented as depraved and deranged in the press, when it came to real-life cases like those of Praskov'ia and Natasha, there were those – relatives, doctors, lawyers – who believed that mental illness prohibited sentencing.

The press attacks on “sectarians” had encouraged emotional responses, suggesting they resonated with existing animosities towards communities whose religious practices were strange, and whose moral codes – particularly governing family size – marked them out as “other.” Outbreaks of hostility were often sparked by local incidents.<sup>117</sup> In Mtsensk men and, in particular, women took to the streets and meeting-halls in the wake of a tragedy that had happened within their city, to articulate anxieties about the safety and well-being of their children. These fears had been stoked by a decade of press campaigns which insisted on the uncontrolled violence of “sectarians” like Natasha. Yet the crowd's violence was itself alarming, requiring police presence on the city streets to prevent escalation.

If the anti-religious crusade was intended to establish a community of atheists who were enlightened, resolute, and rational, then the disturbing specter of the child-killer was counter-productive for it served to generate disorderly emotions. Moscow tried to curb the campaign's

more sensationalist aspects in 1964, to rein in the press, and to move to the more academic approaches favored by scholars like Klibanov.<sup>118</sup> Yet this was not always so easy. Journalists, local party officials, and activists could, in Sonja Leurhman's terms, prove risky "transmitters."<sup>119</sup> In some regions, outlandish charges and absurd show trials were held well after the supposed end of the campaigns.<sup>120</sup> Certainly, it is fair to say that the sectarian "fanatic" did not instantly disappear from the Soviet imaginary in 1964. Indeed, many observers have argued that the stereotypes which Khrushchev's anti-religious campaigns fostered survived not only his ouster from power late in that year, but even the end of communist power almost three decades later.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V mire koshmara: Dokumental'nyi fotoocherk o sektantakh-piatidesiatnikakh (Moscow, 1962).

<sup>2</sup> On this case, see T. K. Nikol'skaia *Russkii protestantizm i gosudarstvennaia vlast'* (Saint Petersburg, 2009), 179. For a full account of the trial from the perspective of the Pentecostal community, see Liudmila Shokhova, *18 let gulaga iz zhizni episkopa Ivana Fedotova* (Moscow, 1992), 35-68. In order to protect the identity of the people involved, in the specific cases discussed below I have used pseudonyms (indicated at first usage by quotation marks – for example, "Praskov'ia").

<sup>3</sup> A. I. Klibanov, *Religioznoe sektantstvo i sovremennost'* (Moscow, 1969), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Emily Baran, "Faith on the Margins: Jehovah's Witnesses in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova, 1945-2010," PhD thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Paul W. Werth, "Lived Orthodoxy and Confessional Diversity: The Last Decade on Religion in Modern Russia," *Kritika*, 12 (Fall 2011): 849-865.

<sup>6</sup> For fuller accounts of this history, see Heather J. Coleman, *Russian Baptists and Spiritual Revolution 1905-1929* (Bloomington, 2005), 13-18; Sergei I. Zhuk, *Russia's Lost Reformation: Peasants, Millennialism, and Radical Sects in Southern Russia and Ukraine, 1830-1917* (Baltimore, 2004); Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*.

<sup>7</sup> Coleman, *Russian Baptists*, 28.

<sup>8</sup> Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich, a senior Bolshevik administrator with a life-long interest in sectarians, was one of the most outspoken proponents of this line. He believed sectarians had natural affinities with the Revolution. His career and ideas are discussed in Aleksandr Etkind, *Khlyst. Sekty, Literaturny i revoliutsiia* (Moscow and Helsinki, 1998), 631-674. His research on the skoptsy is also analyzed in Laura Engelstein, *Castration and the Heavenly Kingdom: A Russian Folktale* (Ithaca, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> A. I. Savin warns against seeing the NEP as a "golden age." See A. I. Savin, "Repressii v otnoshenii evangel'skikh veruiushchikh v khode 'kulatskoi operatsii' NKVD," in M. Iunge, B. Bonvech, R. Binner (eds), *Stalinizm v*



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sovetskoi provintsii 1937-1938gg.: Massovaia operatsiia na osnove prikaza no. 00447 (Moscow, 2009), 303-342 (310). For a discussion of the origins of the golden era idea, see Coleman, *Russian Baptists*, 154-157.

<sup>10</sup> Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 69-77; Coleman, *Russian Baptists*, 154-179.

<sup>11</sup> Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 77-79.

<sup>12</sup> A. I. Savin, "Infernal'nyi vrag. Protestantskie tserkvi v sibirskoy presse, 1928-1930 gg.," <http://zaimka.ru/religion/savin1.shtml> (last accessed 12 April 2013). Also published in German: "Das Bild des absoluten Feindes. Angehörige der Freikirchen in der regionalen sibirischen Presse 1928–1930" in *Die Ruslanddeutschen in Rusland und Deutschland. Selbstbilder, Fremdbilder, Aspekte der Wirklichkeit*, ed. Detlef Brandes, Elvira Barbašina und Dietmar Neutatz (Essen, 1999), 50–72.

<sup>13</sup> "Kulatskaia popytka – sorvat' khlebozagotovka," *Pravda*, 27 July 1930, p. 1; "Vytravit' ostatki proshlogo," *Pravda*, 25 February 1932, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> "Profsoiuzy i vybory v Verkhovnyi Sovet SSSR," *Pravda*, 18 October 1937, p. 3; "Agitatsiia i propaganda v izbiratel'noy kampanii," *Pravda*, 4 November 1937, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Etkind, *Khlyst*.

<sup>16</sup> P. Kaushanskii, "V chem vred baptizma," *Agitator*, 22 (1960), pp. 41-44 (p. 43); "Pod maskoi blagochestiia," *Pravda*, 25 August, 1961, p. 6. Such charges were, it should be noted, also used against Orthodox targets, including bishops who had lived under German occupation. See Dmitry V. Pospelovsky, *A History of Marxist-Leninist Atheism and Soviet Anti-Religious Policies*, vol. 2: *Soviet Antireligious Campaigns and Persecutions* (Basingstoke, 1988), 103.

<sup>17</sup> On the American origins of Pentecostalism see V. Mishin, "'Otsy i deti,' piatidesiatnikov," *Nauka i religiia*, May 1960, pp. 27-30; on Baptist connections with the USA, see E. Tsvetogorov, *Sektanty i chto oni propoveduiut* (Novosibirsk, 1960), 70; I. N. Uzkov, *Chto takoe religioznoe sektantstvo* (Moscow, 1956), 1-3.

<sup>18</sup> Michael Bourdeaux, *Religious Ferment in Russia: Protestant Opposition to Soviet Religious Policy* (London, 1968); Walter Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals since World War II* (Kitchener, Ontario and Scottsdale, Penn., 1981); Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 201-215, 227-243.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew B. Stone, "'Overcoming Peasant Backwardness': The Khrushchev Antireligious Campaign and the Rural Soviet Union," *Russian Review*, 67 (April 2008): 296-320.

<sup>20</sup> On the role of science in the anti-religious campaigns, see Michael Froggatt, "Renouncing Dogma, Teaching Utopia: Science in Schools under Khrushchev," in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev era*, ed. Polly Jones (London and New York, 2006), 250-266; Victoria Smolkin-Rothrock, "Cosmic Enlightenment: Scientific Atheism and the Soviet Conquest of Space," in *Into the Cosmos: Space Exploration and Soviet Culture*, ed. James T. Andrews and Asif A. Siddiqi (Pittsburg, 2011), 159-194.

<sup>21</sup> Brian LaPierre makes a similar argument in his discussion of hooliganism under Khrushchev. See Brian LaPierre, *Hooligans in Khrushchev's Russia: Defining Policing, and Producing Deviance during the Thaw* (Madison, 2012).

<sup>22</sup> For example, in a 1958 letter published in the Kuibyshev oblast newspaper, ostensibly written by a girl who had broken with the "sect," Pentecostal practices are described as "strange and savage for our times" (*stranny i diki dlia nashego vremeni*). ("Pis'mo v redatsiu: Moia oshibka," *Volzhskaia Kommuna*, 14 December 1958, pp. 3-4.) See also P. Kaushanskii, "V chem vred baptizma," *Agitator* 22 (1960), pp. 41-44; "Makrobesy," *Pravda*, 22 February 1962, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Anti-religious texts included graphic descriptions of violence, techniques to build suspense, and a fascination with the naive, innocent child-victim. See Joy Wiltenburg, "True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism," *The American Historical Review*, 109 (December 2004): 1377-1404.

<sup>24</sup> As Simon Huxtable argues, "yellow" journalism was always deplored within the journalistic milieu, but the establishment of *Sovetskaia Rossiia* in 1956 was representative of a mid-decade appetite for "interesting, punchy stories." See Simon Huxtable, "A Compass in the Sea of Life: Soviet Journalism, the Public, and the Limits of Reform after Stalin, 1953-1968," PhD thesis, Birkbeck College, University of London, 2013, pp. 114-117.

<sup>25</sup> In April 1958 a *Literaturnaia gazeta* special correspondent, V. D. Shaposhnikova wrote to M. A. Suslov, Central Committee Secretary, raising her concerns about the poor state of anti-religious work. She centered her report around an account of her visit to a Baptist church in 1953. Following this letter, the Central Committee's Propaganda and Agitation section organized a conference on the state of atheist work. *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii* (RGANI) f.5, op. 33, d. 91, ll. 23-31.

<sup>26</sup> Christine D. Worobec, "Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Prerevolutionary Russian and Ukrainian Villages," *Russian Review*, 54 (April 1995): 165-187; Glennys Young, *Power and the Sacred in Revolutionary Russia: Religious Activists in the Village* (University Park, 1997), chapter 9.

<sup>27</sup> On the first campaign, see Joan Delaney Grossman, "Khrushchev's Anti-Religious Policy and the Campaign of 1954," *Soviet Studies*, 24 (January 1973): 374-86. David Powell notes a rise in the quantity of anti-religious propaganda in the second half of 1958. This would seem to be the result of the conference held in the spring of that year organized by the Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda Department. David E. Powell, *Antireligious propaganda in the Soviet Union: A study of mass persuasion* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), 87.

<sup>28</sup> Dmitry V. Pospelovsky, *A History of Marxist-Leninist Atheism and Soviet Anti-Religious Policies*, vol 1: *A History of Soviet Atheism in Theory and Practice, and the Believer* (Basingstoke, 1987), 73-75.

<sup>29</sup> Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI) f. 17, op. 32, d. 487, ll. 36-78 (l. 71). The term "triasuny" was associated with certain khlysty groups in the pre-revolutionary period. See M. N. Priemysheva, *Tainye i uslovnye iazyki v Rossii XIX v.* (Saint Petersburg, 2009), 193. According to a Pentecostal history, the term was first used to refer – with negative connotations – to Pentecostals by the Evangelical Christian leader, Prokhanov, in 1914. The pejorative application of the term to Pentecostals became common practice in the Soviet era. V. I. Franchuk, *Proсила Rossiia dozhdia u gospoda*, <http://www.awakeningbibleschool.com/reading/books/> (last accessed 30 April 2013).

<sup>30</sup> When released from prison in 1956 A. I. Bidash played an active role in promoting an independent Pentecostal community. He and M. M. Shokhov were arrested in January 1957, although Shokhov was later released. Shokhova, 18 let gulaga, 24-25; Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 139-141, 160-161; M. Burdo [M. Bourdeaux], S. V. Filatov (eds), *Sovremennaia religioznaia zhizn' Rossii: opyt sistematicheskogo opisaniia*, vol. 2: *Protestantizm* (Moscow, 2003), 293-304.

<sup>31</sup> Tsentral'nyi arkhiv goroda Moskvy (TsAGM) f. 3004, op. 1, d. 6, l. 117. For an example of the kind of local report which might have influenced Polianskii's view of Pentecostals as "fanatics" engaged in ritual killings, see Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF) f. 6991, op. 3, d. 102, l. 157-158.

<sup>32</sup> *Tuchi nad Borskom*, dir. Vasilii Ordynskii (Moscow: Mosfil'm, 1960, premiere 1961). According to Powell, the film was seen by 25 million viewers. Powell, *Antireligious propaganda*, 99. Reviews in the press were not uncritical, however. See "Tuchi nad Borskom," *Nauka i religiia*, April 1961, pp. 89-90; and "Tuchi v iasnyi den'," *Izvestiia*, 5 April 1961, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Etkind, *Khlyst*, 43-44. For a fuller discussion of the pre-revolutionary origins of many Soviet ideas about "sectarians," particularly Baptists, see O. I. Panych, "Mif pro baptystiv u radians'komu suspil'stvi 1950-1980-kh rr.: marnovirstvo i propaganda," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 2011 (May-June), 121-140.

<sup>34</sup> Another example of believers charged with planning sacrifice is found in "From the Courtroom: Children of God," *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, 28 April 1957, p. 4. The court case on which the article is based suggests that the accused had previously been Baptists but were now members of a group which called itself the "children of God." GARF f. 8131, op. 31, d. 78492.

<sup>35</sup> In 1965, a work on the history of "sects" in the Russian Empire and USSR quoted at some length from V. M. Bekhterev who described "hysterical convulsions" (istericheskie sudorogi) typical of the worship practised by the khlysty, skoptsy, and malevantsy. The Soviet author then noted that Bekhterev's words "are fully applicable to the Pentecostals." See F. Fedorenko, *Sekty, ikh vera i dela* (Moscow, 1965), 331-332. Another atheist text said that Pentecostals and Khlysty were similar because of the spiritual nature of their worship: Tsvetogorov, *Sektanty i chto oni propoveduiut*, 17. See also Etkind, *Khlyst*, 42-3.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, V. Mishin, "'Otsy i deti,' piatidesiatnikov," *Nauka i religiia*, May 1960, pp. 27-30; "Sakta izuverov razoblachena," *Pravda*, 21 June 1962, p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> "Makrobesy," *Pravda*, 22 February 1962, p. 4; N. Shtan'ko, "Zhivoe i mertvovoe," *Izvestiia*, 18 June 1961, p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> The charges of ritual child-killing are not, of course, unprecedented. On their earlier history, see David Frankfurter, *Evil Incarnate: Rumors of Demonic Conspiracy and Satanic Abuse in History* (Princeton, 2006) and R. I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance, 950-1250*, 2nd edition (Malden, MA, 2007). In the writings about Christian sects in Russia, however, child sacrifice does not seem to be a common feature, although in his novel, *Petr i Aleksei*, D. Merezhkovskii describes a young man joining a khlyst community and saving a baby from such a fate. See Etkind, *Khlyst*, 193.

<sup>39</sup> A. Blekh, "Izuvery," *Izvestiia*, 6 October 1960, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup> I. Iavchunovskii, "Makrobesy derzhat otvet pered narodom," *Kommunist* (Saratov), 21 June 1961, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 160-161.

<sup>42</sup> "Priamoi razgovor," *Izvestiia*, 13 December 1960, p. 6; "Sviatyie ubiitsy," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 15 October 1960, p. 2; "Sviatoshi – ubiitsy," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 13 May 1961, p. 4. See the 1960 documentary film *Eto trevozhit*

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vsekh, available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0GBmjLcZT8>. For a review, see “Eto trevozhit vsekh,” *Nauka i religiia*, February 1961, pp. 89-90.

<sup>43</sup> Susan E. Reid, “Khrushchev in Wonderland: The Pioneer Palace in Moscow’s Lenin Hills, 1962,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, 1606 (2002), 11.

<sup>44</sup> Olena Panych, “Children and Childhood among Evangelical Christians-Baptists During the Late Soviet Period (1960s-1980s),” *Bogoslovskie razmyshleniia*, 13 (2012): 155-179 (172)

<sup>45</sup> “Eto trevozhit vsekh,” *Nauka i religiia*, February 1961, pp. 89-90. See also G. Kulikovskaia, “Mat' li ona?” *Ogonek*, 19 July 1959, pp. 22-24; K. Beliaev, “Zachem kalechit' detei?,” *Nauka i religiia*, January 1960, pp. 39-42; P. Kaushanskii, “Iad baptizma i deti,” *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, October 1960, pp. 61-63; V. Mishin, “‘Otsy i deti,’ piatidesiatnikov,” *Nauka i religiia*, May 1960, pp. 27-30; L. Serdobol'skaia, A. Chlenov, “Detstvo na kolieniakh,” *Nauka i religiia*, June 1960, pp. 25-28; “Pod maskoi blagochestiia,” *Pravda*, 25 August, 1961, p. 6; “Makrobesy,” *Pravda*, 22 February 1962, p. 4; N. Aleksandrova, “Oslushnitsa,” *Izvestiia*, 22 July 1965, p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> “Priamoi razgovor”; “Sviatye ubiitsy”; “Eto trevozhit vsekh.”

<sup>47</sup> “Sviatoshi – ubiitsy,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 13 May 1961, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> In addition to the repeated references in materials relating to the Fedotov trial, she also appeared in other atheist texts. See, for example, Tsvetogorov, *Sektanty i chto oni propoveduiut*, 38-39.

<sup>49</sup> A. Bezuglov, and V. Perel'man, “Izuvery,” *Trud*, 10 June 1956, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> For information about Bezuglov’s career, see

[http://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/B/BEZUGLOV\\_Anatoliy\\_Alekseevich/Bezuglov\\_A.A..html](http://publ.lib.ru/ARCHIVES/B/BEZUGLOV_Anatoliy_Alekseevich/Bezuglov_A.A..html) (last accessed 17 April 2013). Bezuglov went on to a successful career as a procurator, professor of law, and writer of crime fiction. For information about Perel'man see his memoir: Viktor Perel'man, *Pokinutaia Rossiia: Krushchenie* (Tel-Aviv, 1977).

<sup>51</sup> John Murray, *The Russian Press from Brezhnev to Yeltsin: Behind the Paper Curtain* (Aldershot, 1994), p. 4 and p. 243.

<sup>52</sup> Perel'man, *Pokinutaia Rossiia*, 15-16.

<sup>53</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 14, d. 918, l. 8.

<sup>54</sup> Bezuglov and Perel'man, “Izuvery.”

<sup>55</sup> In Jewish law, a purification ritual existed in which parturient women presented an offering of two doves at the temple and in Luke 2:22-24 Mary and Joseph sacrifice two birds following the birth of Jesus. The dove is commonly associated with sacrifice, which would fit with its usage in the *Trud* article, though it also has a more widespread symbolism as the embodiment of the Holy Spirit because of its appearance at Jesus’ baptism. See Leviticus 12: 6-8; Luke 2: 22-24; Seth Ward, “The Presentation of Jesus: Jewish Perspectives on Luke 2: 22-24,” *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 21 (2003): 21-39.

<sup>56</sup> Bezuglov and Perel'man, “Izuvery.”

<sup>57</sup> GARF f. A 385, op 14, d. 918, ll. 15-16.

<sup>58</sup> GARF f. A 385, op 14, d. 918, ll. 18-19.

<sup>59</sup> GARF f. A 385, op 14, d. 918, l. 16 ob.

<sup>60</sup> In Praskov'ia's file, both letters appear in manuscript version. The letter to the Verkhovnyi Sovet has been typed up but here too some words are missing; evidently the clerk also struggled with her writing.

<sup>61</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 14, d. 918, l. 4.

<sup>62</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 14, d. 918, l. 5.

<sup>63</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 14, d. 918, l. 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> It is worth noting that there is no reference to this piece in the protocols of the editorial board’s meetings for 1956, which suggests the piece was not considered problematic. It has, however, also prevented tracing the editorial thinking behind the piece. GARF f. R-9613, op. 8, d. 65.

<sup>65</sup> Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics*, 43; Stone, “‘Overcoming Peasant Backwardness.’”

<sup>66</sup> A. A. Bezuglov, *Eto kasaetsia vsekh* (Moscow, 1956). The widespread observance of religious holidays in the countryside – and their potential to descend into drunkenness and violence on occasion – is well-documented for this period. See Vladimir A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprisings in the Soviet Union: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years* (Armonk, NY, 2002), 163.

<sup>67</sup> Pospelovskiy, for example, sees Khrushchev’s fall as a turning-point, albeit one that did not ultimately bring an end to the persecution of believers. Pospelovskiy, *A History of Marxist-Leninist Atheism*, 97-98. See also M. V. Shkarovskii, *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' i Sovetskoe gosudarstvo v 1943-1964 godakh* (Saint Petersburg, 1995), 107.

<sup>68</sup> L. F. Il'ichev, "Formirovanie nauchnogo mirovozzreniia i ateisticheskoe vospitanie," *Nauka i religiia*, January 1964, pp. 5-29 (26). The article also appeared in the January edition of *Kommunist*.

<sup>69</sup> In June 1964 CARC plenipotentiaries from across the USSR were called to Moscow for a conference on "the liquidation of administrative excesses in relation to believers and religious organizations on the part of local authorities." This was followed by a conference on 12 October convened by A. F. Gorkin, chairman of the Supreme Court of the USSR, about malpractice in the sentencing of believers. See GARF f. 6991, op. 4, d. 147 and d. 173.

<sup>70</sup> Miriam Dobson, "The First Dissidents? Discussions of Legality in the 1960s," 105 let legalizatsii russkogo baptizma: Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii, Moscow 2011, 198-203; Bourdeaux, *Religious Ferment*; Sawatsky, *Soviet Evangelicals*; Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 201-215 and 227-243.

<sup>71</sup> GARF f. 6991, op. 4, d. 177, l. 464.

<sup>72</sup> Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 221.

<sup>73</sup> GARF f. 6991, op. 4, d. 147, 128.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas C. Wolfe, *Governing Soviet Journalism: The Press and the Socialist Person after Stalin* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2005), 112-4.

<sup>75</sup> In the mid-to-late 1960s, state policy was two-fold: on the one hand legislation on religious worship was harshly enforced and CCECB leaders were arrested, more than 180 in the peak year of 1966; on the other, more Baptist congregations were granted registration, including a handful which were registered autonomously from the AUCECB. John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (Cambridge, 1994), 133-136. For examples of rather more moderate and nuanced treatment of Protestantism see, for example: L. Mitrokhin, *Gost' ili khoziain? Beseda o baptizme* (Moscow, 1964); "Neuvazhenie k zakonu: pis'mo v redaktsiiu," *Pravda*, 19 February 1966, p. 2; R. Grishin, "Liubov' – ot boga?" *Nauka i religiia*, April 1966, pp. 16-21.

<sup>76</sup> Baptists were often accused of cruelty towards children, though not normally of ritual murder. In one exceptional case, an Orthodox couple was convicted of ritually killing their older son, and attempting to murder their seven-year-old. S. Krushinskii, "Glukhoi ston na kraiu sela Glazatova," *Nauka i religiia*, September 1959, pp. 56-58; see also Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 178.

<sup>77</sup> GARF f. 6991, op. 6, d. 9, ll. 180-181.

<sup>78</sup> For a copy of this 21 May 1966 circular see, for example, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Chernovitskoi oblasti, f. 623, op. 2, d. 205 l. 297.

<sup>79</sup> The image of the "sectarian" destroying their child's pioneer tie had certainly appeared in propaganda materials. For discussion of one case covered in the local press, see GARF f. 8131, op. 31, d. 97865, l. 7

<sup>80</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236 l. 9

<sup>81</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 64; l. 69; l. 70.

<sup>82</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 34-44; 71-72.

<sup>83</sup> It is worth noting that some Baptist children did resist membership of the pioneers. In an oral history interview, V., born 1943, explained that neither he nor any of his siblings joined (interview with V., 25 March 2012, Chernivtsi, Ukraine: AHRC AH1025883-1-7).

<sup>84</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 36.

<sup>85</sup> Nikol'skaia, *Russkii protestantizm*, 190-197. Panych notes that the number of children removed from their parents was relatively low, but the threat agonizing. Panych, "Children and Childhood."

<sup>86</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 38-9.

<sup>87</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 6-8.

<sup>88</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 13.

<sup>89</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 10. As a result, she was sentenced under article 227 (infringement of the rights of citizens under the guise of performing religious rituals) and 102, section «r» (intentional homicide under aggravating circumstances, with particular cruelty). GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 1. See G. P. Tikhonova, A. A. Bol'shakov, *Kommentarii k ugolovnomu kodeksu RSFSR 1960 g.* (Leningrad, 1962).

<sup>90</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, ll. 47- 58; 59-61.

<sup>91</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 78.

<sup>92</sup> Reviewing the case in August 1966, L. Smirnov, Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Court noted that a general meeting with 1230 workers and employees present had voted in favor of the death penalty (GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 3).

<sup>93</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236.

<sup>94</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 20.

<sup>95</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, ll. 30-31.

<sup>96</sup> Using the interviews conducted with Soviet refugees by the Harvard Project, William Korey argued that about 10 per cent of the population was ready to voice violently anti-Semitic ideas, including the notion of Jews as ritual blood-drinkers. William Korey, “Continuities in Popular Perceptions of Jews in the Soviet Union,” in *Hostages of Modernization: Studies on Modern Anti-semitism 1870-1933/39*, ed. Herbert A. Strauss (Berlin, 1993), vol. 2, 1383-1405.

<sup>97</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 30

<sup>98</sup> Melanie Ilič, “Khrushchev and the revival of the zhensoveti,” in *Soviet State and Society under Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. Melanie Ilič and Jeremy Smith (London and New York, 2009), 104-121 (114). See also Catriona Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven and London, 2007), 415; Deborah Field, *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev’s Russia* (New York, 2007), Chapter 6.

<sup>99</sup> A. Nekoshnov and A. Makashov, “Istoki prestupleniia,” *Orlovskaiia pravda*, 3 June 1966, p. 3. For the court verdict see GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 2; for the uncle’s account, see l. 39.

<sup>100</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 22.

<sup>101</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 22.

<sup>102</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 22.

<sup>103</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 22.

<sup>104</sup> “We bring the failure to take action against the sectarians’ sect [sic] to the attention of the people of Mtsensk,” wrote four “women-mothers” (GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 28). The women from the Aluminium Casting Factory wrote: “Why did the city’s public organizations [obshchestvennye organizatsii] close their eyes to the existence of the sect?” (GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 31).

<sup>105</sup> For the reference to “humane” laws, see GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 21.

<sup>106</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, ll. 30-31.

<sup>107</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, ll. 30-31.

<sup>108</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, ll. 30. On concerns about upbringing (vospitanie), see also l. 22.

<sup>109</sup> On family size see Kelly, *Children’s World*, 396.

<sup>110</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 21.

<sup>111</sup> GARF f. A 385, op. 22, d. 2236, l. 31.

<sup>112</sup> N. Shtan’ko, “Proroki i zhertvi,” *Izvestiia*, 4 June 1966, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> In Bolshevik thinking *stikhiinost’* (spontaneity or “elementalness”) was the primitive state which would eventually cede to the desired goal of Soviet consciousness. See Anna Krylova, “Beyond the Spontaneity-Consciousness Paradigm: ‘Class Instinct’ as a Promising Category of Historical Analysis,” *Slavic Review*, 62 (2003), 1-23.

<sup>114</sup> In this *Izvestiia* article, Shtan’ko explicitly named Georgii Vins and Gennadii Kriuchkov. The article in the local press took a similar approach, also blaming the CCECB for refusing to obey Soviet legislation, particularly with regard to children’s education and named several local leaders. Shtan’ko, “Proroki i zhertvi”; Nekoshnov and Makashov, “Istoki prestupleniia.”

<sup>115</sup> N. I. Shtan’ko, *Gde ona, siniaia pitsa?: Komandirovki po pros’be chitatelei (ocherki)* (Moscow, 1981). For earlier articles Shtan’ko had written on religious themes, see N. Shtan’ko, “Zhivoe i mertvoe,” *Izvestiia*, 18 June 1961, p. 6; “Za plotno znaveshennym oknom,” *Izvestiia*, 19 June 1962, p. 6; “Dushi vzaperti: Razgovor s chitateliami,” *Izvestiia*, 22 August, 1962, p. 4. This third piece was a round-up of readers’ responses to the second article which recounted a female Pentecostal’s mental breakdown. When a “sectarian” letter-writer asked why they had to worship behind curtains if they had the constitutional right to freedom of worship, Shtan’ko answered that the curtain was necessary to protect them from the “people’s anger” [ot gneva liudskogo].

<sup>116</sup> Shtan’ko, “Proroki i zhertvi.”

<sup>117</sup> One recent study examines the escalation of animosity toward a tiny group of believers in 1960 in the town of Ocher, Perm oblast. A. L. Glushaev identifies this small group, which met for Bible reading and whose leadership was contested by different “prophets,” as somewhere on the “transition from Baptism to Pentecostalism.” A. L. Glushaev, “‘Lenina, bog dal na zemliu, ... Khrushchev syn mira’: Provintsial’naia zhizn’ evangel’skikh veruiushchikh 1950-1960-kh godakh,” unpublished manuscript.

<sup>118</sup> Miriam Dobson, “The social scientist meets the “believer”: Discussions of God, the afterlife, and communism in the mid-1960s,” work in progress.

<sup>119</sup> Sonja Luehrmann, *Secularism Soviet Style: Teaching Atheism and Religion in a Volga Republic* (Bloomington, 2011), 104-9. On CARC attempts to restrain local authorities in the 1970s and 1980s see, N. A. Beliakova,

“Evoliutsiia otnoshenii vlasti i khristianskikh denominatsii v Belorussii, Ukraine i respublikakh Pribaltiki v poslednei chetverti XX- nachale XXI vv,” kandidatskaia dissertatsiia, MGU, 2009.

<sup>120</sup> Catherine Wanner describes a case in which the pastor of a registered Baptist congregation in Ukraine was charged with advising a man to sacrifice a woman with whom he had committed adultery. The case dates from the late 1960s. See Catherine Wanner, *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism* (Ithaca, 2007), 67-73.

<sup>121</sup> Savin notes that in Russia today, Protestant churches are still viewed negatively and notes that the stereotypical images of the 1920s and 1930s persist (Savin, “Infernal’nyi vrag.”). I would argue that the later and more sustained campaigns of the 1950s and early 1960s were more instrumental here. Panych, whilst emphasizing the earlier roots, also identifies the Khrushchev era as pivotal in this regard (Panych, “Mif pro baptystiv”). On the representation of the “sects” in the media in recent years see Sergei Filatov and Roman Lunkin, “Obrazy Pravoslaviia i Protestantizm v svetskikh SMI: Blagolepie i urodstvo,” *Russian Review* 2006, <http://www.keston.org.uk/russianreview/edition08/03Images.html> (last accessed 12 April 2013). See also T. Lofstedt, “Religious Revival among Orthodox and Pentecostals in Russia: Causes and Limitations,” *Religion, State and Society*, 40 (March 2012): 92-111; R. Poplavsky, “Pentecostal Churches in Russia: Changing Self-images in Inculturation in Tumen,” *Religion, State and Society*, 40 (March 2012): 112-132.