

ALL RELIGIONS FACE COMMON RUSSIAN FOE

Soviet Atheism Attacks Orthodox Greeks, Evangelicals and Jews With Weapons of Social Ostracism, Confiscation of Property and Anti-Religious Propaganda—Ministers and Families Barred From Jobs.

(By William Henry Chamberlain, Staff Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor)

The Christian Science Monitor says: All forms of religion in Russia today are living through a major crisis. This crisis is no less severe and poignant because, as a result of the Soviet, consorship and of the general conditions of life under the worlds most sweeping and ruthless dictatorship, its details are largely hidden from the eyes of the outside world.

Russia is a land of many races and of many faiths; but the tragedy of its religious life affects equality the priests and ministers and devout adherents of all its various creeds. The Orthodox priest lives in great poverty and social obloquy. His children are excluded from the higher schools and from state employment (and almost all employment in the Soviet Union is state employment) unless they ostentatiously repudiate him and break off connection with him.

Evangelicals "Dangerous"

At any time his little church may be marked for demolition and he himself may be packed off in a freight car to forced labor in a bleak northern timber camp after a secret arrest and "trial" before a star-chamber tribunal on a vague and unspecified charge of "counter-revolution".

The Baptist, the Evangelical Christian minister who believes in a different from of faith from the Orthodox priest, who teaches his simple peasant or working class parishioners that faith in the Bible and right, living are more important than ritualistic observances, is in no better plight. A spokesman for the Union of Militant Atheists, the chief Soviet anti-religious organization, told me that "the sectarians are our most dangerous enemies, because they do not uphold obvious superstitions"; and Soviet legislation in some respects bears harder on sectarians than on the Orthodox Church.

For instance, the Baptists and other evangelical groups had developed a far-flung network of charitable, educational, sport and recreation clubs and circles, and this had considerably strengthened their influence among the youth. The Soviet law on religious activity of 1929, which marked the transition from a policy of anti-religious propaganda and discrimination to one of definite persecution, made all these organizations illegal with one stroke of the pen.

Jews Scattered

The seminary and general headquarters which the Baptists maintained in Moscow have been closed; they have no means of training ministers; and their present ministers, lay preachers and active members know very well that they are in constant danger of arbitrary arrest and banishment.

The Orthodox priest and the evangelical minister have their companion

in the Jewish rabbi of the city or small town in Ukraina, or Western Russia. Before the war the rabbi was the center of a close-knit Jewish community life, which held together with firmness and tenacity in the face of the systematic Tsarist policy of racial discrimination, punctuated by occasional programs.

Today the rabbi perhaps finds satisfaction in the fact that there is no discrimination against Jews on racial grounds. But he sees the religious life which he has cherished, the specifically Jewish community spirit breaking up and disintegrating; the younger Jews will go to the Communist youth club, not to the synagogue, which, like the church, may be closed at any time.

And the Mohammedan mullah, accustomed to sound the call to prayer from the minaret of his mosque in the mountains of the Caucasus or the oasis of Central Asia, discovers that the doctrine of Lenin is more powerful than the armies of the Tsars, which once overran these Moslem lands, but did not break the faith of their inhabitants in Islam. In the Mohammedan parts of Russia also traditional religious institutions are crumbling.

Religious Books Excluded

This crisis of religion is in part attributable to the prodigious impact of the new ideas which were ushered in by the revolution. But it is at least equally attributable to the ruthless persecution of religion which in an integral part of general Soviet policy. For the first time in history all the administrative and propaganda resources of an immensely powerful dictatorial state have been cast into the scale against all forms of religion.

While propaganda for atheism is lavishly encouraged, it is impossible to print or to import religious books or publications or to present the claims of religion in public addresses or debates. Teaching in the schools must be not only non-religious faith may mark a student for dismissal from the university, an employee for loss of his post and subsequent blacklisting in the state service. The constitutional right of every Soviet citizen "to profess any or no form of religion", like many other features of that document, is systematically violated in practice.

I know of a case when some young men who had been guilty of nothing, but studying for the priesthood were banished to an extremely hot and unpleasant place in Central Asia.

Ministry is Suspect

In travelling about the Russian country districts I repeatedly learned of instances when persons who had been selling candles or performing other minor offices in connection with the local church had been singled out for special victimization during the process that was euphemistically described as "the liquidation of the kulaks as a class". To be a priest or a minister

is to be a member of the most dangerous profession in the Soviet Union today.

The circumstances of Russia's crisis of religion are very imperfectly known abroad. In this respect there is a noteworthy difference between the church controversy which has been proceeding in Germany for more than a year and the situation in Russia. There certainly has been, from time to time, state pressure against leaders of the German Church opposition; yet its leaders have succeeded in making their case pretty well known abroad through sermons, pamphlets and direct interviews, granted to foreign correspondence.

The isolation which is imposed on Russian leaders of religious faith is infinitely greater. Any communication to the foreign press of concrete details of arrests, arbitrary closing of churches, conditions of priests and ministers in concentration camps would entail the sternest immediate reprisals not only against the individual who made it, but against any one who was even remotely associated with him.

The course of the sole interview, which the acting Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Sergei, granted to foreign journalists confirmed very strongly instead of dispelling the impression of extreme repression. At a time when persecution of religion, was especially intense in the winter of 1929-1930, the Metropolitan was quoted in Izvestia (it was the first and last time within recent years that a Russian ecclesiastic was interviewed for the benefit of the Soviet official newspaper) to the effect that there was no persecution of religion in Russia.

Metropolitan Secretive

Through the mediation of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, foreign newspapermen were permitted to put supplementary questions to him in writing and to meet him personally. However, this personal meeting was of extremely brief duration. The Metropolitan visibly took fright at the first concrete questions about the numbers of churches which had been closed and the numbers of priests who had been executed and banished, and rushed off with somewhat undignified haste, murmuring as he retreated from the room:

"Oh, I couldn't answer such questions. I must consult—the Holy Synod". The latter according to the general surmise of the correspondents was a euphemism for the Gay-Pay-Oo.

In the present atmosphere of extreme repression and persecution, and with a wall of secrecy erected between the experiences of Russian religious bodies and the outside world, one can only hazard a conjecture as to the probable future course of developments. It seems probable that there will be a continued diminution in the number of openly self-confessed believers, partly because of the effect of the stream of anti-religious propaganda, partly because of the likelihood of discrimination and persecution.

At the same time the faith of those groups which are prepared to stand by their convictions will become more intense. If religion is to survive at all in the unequal conditions of struggle which the Soviet regime has created for it, this result can only come about as a result of the exercise of exceptional faith and devotion.

CITY CHURCHES WELL ATTENDED ON SUNDAY

Interesting services were held at the various churches in this city and vicinity on Sunday. The weather conditions being favorable, the congregations at all services were large. The churches featured Lenten messages.

At St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, the minister, Rev. Dr. G. E. Ross spoke on "The Renewal of Society Through the Cross," in the morning, and on the seventh of the series of addresses on Practical Christianity in the evening. The evening subject was "The Christian and Business Life."

At Brunswick Street Baptist church prayer meeting was held at 10.30 o'clock in the morning, other services being at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. The pastor, Rev. G. W. Guion continued his series of messages on "The Mission of Renewal."

"Renewal of Society" was the topic of the morning sermon at Wilnot United church. The Sunday school Brotherhood class met in the afternoon in Pythian Hall, and in the evening the minister, Rev. J. W. Bartlett, took as his subject, "The George Habit," a message to those "who let George do it."

The usual services were held in the Gibson Memorial United church and also in the Devon Baptist church. At the former the minister, Rev. W. A. Burge, took as his theme for the day, "The Fourth Word from the Cross." Special music featured. Services were held at South Devon Nashwaakiss and Kingsley. At Devon Baptist church morning prayer took place in the vestry at 10.30 a.m. "The Divine Touch," and "The Human Touch" were the correlating sermons preached by the pastor, David L. Kennedy, B.Th., at morning and evening services.

Services of special import were held at Christchurch Parish church. A confirmation class was held at 3.45 o'clock. In the evening a united service of witness was conducted at Christchurch Cathedral, Ven. Archdeacon A. F. Bate conducted. At the Cathedral Rev. H. T. Buckland spoke and in the evening His Grace Archbishop Richardson spoke on the Evangelization of Canadian Life.

Morning service at St. Paul's United church was broadcast over station CFNB. "The Renewal of Society Through the Cross," was the subject of the pastor in the morning, and "Distinguishing Right From Wrong," the subject of the evening sermon. Rev. George Telford, M.A., B.D., spoke at both services. At the morning service a special tribute was paid to the memory of Mrs. Josiah Wood, C.B.E., wife of a former lieutenant governor, who died over the weekend at her home in Sackville. At the request of a number of friends in this city, the tribute was paid, and was in the form of a violin and organ duet. Prof. Harrison Wade officiated at the organ and Herbert Webber on the violin and they rendered the hymn "Rest in the Lord" very impressively.

New Governor-General

Although no official confirmation has been obtainable it is taken for granted in parliamentary circles that John Buchan, celebrated Scottish novelist and historian, would be Canada's next Governor General. Mr. Buchan has had a very distinguished career and a close connection with dominion and colonial affairs. In the past two years he has been His Majesty's representative as Lord High Commissioner for the Church of Scotland Assembly at Edinburgh. Distinguished career or not he will probably always be better known as the author of those two cracking mystery stories, "The Thirty-nine Steps" and "Greenmantle."

Since writing the above, official rumor has become official fact and Mr. Buchan declares himself as proud and pleased at his selection. He likes Canada because he once fished in the Maritimes—Nova Scotia we'd say.

Awarded Contract For Machine Shop

OTTAWA, March 30—The Brookfield Construction Company, Limited, of Halifax, has been awarded a contract for construction of a machine-shop in the H. M. C. Dockyard, at Halifax, it was announced officially yesterday. The contract price is \$87,269.

WINNIPEG IS REFUSED RAILWAY TAX POWER

WINNIPEG, Man., March 30—Rejecting a charter amendment 34 to ten on division the Manitoba Legislature yesterday denied the City of Winnipeg, the right to tax the railway property.

The bill was sponsored by S. J. Farmer, Labor Member for Winnipeg and a former Mayor of the City. It would have given the City Council authority to "reduce, increase, or cancel" tax exemptions granted railways.

Also defeated without division was another charter amendment, which would have given the Winnipeg City Council powers to borrow money for a housing scheme without a vote by ratepayers.

Discussing his bill which would have permitted taxing of railway property, Mr. Farmer pointed out that it was in line with recommendations made by a special Legislative Committee. The committee reported in favor of taxation of industrial properties, including railways to grant municipalities new sources of revenue. The report has not yet been considered by the Legislature.

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Notice of Sale of Lands

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to the provisions of the City of Fredericton Assessment Act, 1926, there will, for the purpose of satisfying taxes assessed and levied in the said City of Fredericton for the years mentioned hereunder, against the parties hereinafter named, unless the several sums due, together with the costs of this notice, are sooner paid, be sold at Public Auction in front of the City Hall, in the City of Fredericton, at Eleven o'clock in the Forenoon of the FOURTH DAY OF MAY, A. D. 1935, the lands and premises in the said City of Fredericton, hereunder mentioned and set opposite their respective names.

PROPERTY TO BE SOLD:	NAME OF PERSON ASSESSED	ARREARS FOR YEARS:	END TAYLO
All interest in Wharf property between eastern side of Regent Street and westerly side of market slip.	WILLIAM C. CURREY	1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934. Interest \$70.50 \$11.25	
All interest in Wharf property between eastern side of Regent Street and westerly side of market slip.	JULIA CURREY FARQUHARSON	1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934. Interest \$70.50 \$11.25	
All interest in Wharf property between eastern side of Regent Street and westerly side of market slip.	ALLAN R. CURREY	1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934. Interest \$70.50 \$11.25	
All interest in Wharf property between eastern side of Regent Street and westerly side of market slip.	MARION ELIZABETH BERG	1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934. Interest \$70.50 \$11.25	
All interest in Wharf property between eastern side of Regent Street and westerly side of market slip.	JUNE LOUISE CURREY	1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934. Interest \$70.50 \$11.25	

Dated the 12th day of March, A. D. 1935.

FRED I. HAVILAND,
City Treasurer of the City of Fredericton.