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## Unsuccessful Orthodoxy in Russian Heartlands

FELIX CORLEY

The Russian Orthodox Church may be the dominant and most visible religious group in the Russian Federation, but its performance in different regions of the country has been patchy. Even in regions that share common features – geographic, ethnic, economic and social – the Church has made a big impact in some, but little headway in others. Here we look at how the Church has fared in the postsoviet era in four Russian heartland provinces – Astrakhan<sup>3</sup>, Yekaterinburg, Saratov and Omsk.<sup>1</sup> In all these regions the Orthodox Church has failed to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the end of restrictions on religious activity a decade ago and it is now suffering because of what many perceive as the authoritarian and backward-looking leadership offered by the local bishops. The article looks at what common features the Orthodox Church in these regions has and examines the consequences of failure to present a dynamic witness.

### Saratov<sup>2</sup>

Saratov had a vibrant circle of Orthodox intellectuals by the end of the 1980s, thanks in part to the benign influence of the local hierarch, Archbishop Pimen (Khmel'evsky). Consecrated bishop in 1965 and appointed to the diocese of Saratov and Volgograd (as it was then), Pimen had had a chequered career, joining the Zhirovitsy Monastery in Belorussia during the Nazi occupation. In the 1950s – in a sign of trust from the Soviet authorities – he served in the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem. On his return to Russia he served in the Trinity–St Sergius Monastery in Zagorsk, for some of the time as deputy head. The internal Council for Religious Affairs assessment of the Russian Orthodox bishops, drawn up in the 1970s by Vasili Furov, placed him in the third, least-loyal category. He retained contacts with many of the dissident artistic community, including the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and the opera singer Galina Vishnevskaya (he officiated at their wedding), and the writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. He also devoted great attention to the local intelligentsia in Saratov, inviting many for supper every two weeks at the height of the Brezhnev era, when such contacts were frowned upon. He also conducted a concerted campaign to raise the intellectual level of his local clergy, inviting men with higher secular education to serve as priests in the diocese.

In 1988, as Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost*' made the political and religious situation more open, Pimen issued a sharp condemnation of communism. He also began to criticise obscurantism and nationalist tendencies within the Orthodox Church at a time when many of the clergy were seeking a new theological foundation

in fundamentalism or nationalism. In 1993 Pimen went so far as to condemn anti-semitism and rejoiced that it was less prevalent in his diocese than elsewhere. 'I am happy that here in Saratov we do not have antisemitic publications', he declared in an interview with a Saratov newspaper. 'Several publications of this kind were sent to me from St Petersburg, but I threw them into the stove at once.'<sup>3</sup> As many in the Orthodox Church were turning away from ecumenism, Pimen spoke of Protestantism and Catholicism in welcoming tones. In the 1993 interview he declared: 'It is better for a person to be a Protestant at least, rather than an atheist'. He publicly associated himself with the Orthodox priest and troublemaker Fr Gleb Yakunin, the standard-bearer of political liberalism and anticommunism in the Church.

On an organisational level, Pimen was able to set to work rebuilding parish life when restrictions on opening and reopening of places of worship were lifted. Between 1988 and 1993 the number of registered Orthodox parishes in Saratov *oblast'* jumped from 12 to 93. (Saratov *oblast'* has a population of some 2.7 million people over an area of 100,200 square kilometres.) Pimen devoted a great part of his energies in his final years to the reestablishment of a seminary in Saratov, which reopened in 1991. The seminary that had reopened in 1947 had been closed in 1960 during Khrushchev's persecution, but during its 13-year existence had produced graduates who were to gain leading positions in the Church nationally, while on a local level it did much to create and foster the Orthodox intelligentsia in the city. Pimen was aware of the key role the seminary had played in the postwar era and was equally keen to see it play a new role in postcommunist Saratov. Under his guidance the seminary taught secular as well as religious subjects (including the history of philosophy and psychology) and Pimen brought in secular teachers from Saratov University. The seminary's statute was a democratic document that gave wide powers to the Academic Council.

By the *perestroika* era of the late 1980s the previously illegal Orthodox groups that had allowed some intellectual activity to flourish and Christian literature to circulate clandestinely were able to come into the open. They were welcomed by the archbishop. 'Pimen's liberal and open policy brought the Church closer to the intelligentsia in Saratov than in any other region in Russia', Sergei Filatov comments. It seems that the majority of the Orthodox intellectuals shared Pimen's tolerant and liberal view of their faith.

However, the atmosphere in the diocese was to change radically in the wake of Pimen's death in December 1993, and the open approach to religious life was to be reversed. Since his death the diocese has been troubled as it comes to terms with a new, more closed style of leadership.

Pimen's immediate successor was Bishop Nektari (Korobov), who had previously served as priest of the cathedral in Sochi. Nektari brought with him to Saratov a monk, Roman (Matyzhov), who took control of diocesan affairs. 'The new diocesan leadership spoke with great irritation of the liberal practices which prevailed under Pimen', Filatov notes. 'Purges of personnel began and threats were issued to the leadership of the seminary and popular priests. Practically the entire Saratov clergy complained to the Patriarchate about Roman Matyzhov.' Nektari's rule was abruptly brought to an end in November 1994 when he was killed in a car crash. In summer 1995 the Patriarchate removed Matyzhov from office and he disappeared, not before threatening that he would 'be back again'.

Nektari's successor, appointed in July 1995, was Aleksandr (Timofeyev), who had had a long career as a teacher within the Church. In the 1970s he had worked at the Moscow Theological Academy in Zagorsk, becoming rector in 1982. In 1986 he had

been appointed chairman of the Synodal Education Committee. After unspecified complaints from staff and students he was retired in 1991, only to reappear in 1993 as archbishop of Maikop and Armavir in the North Caucasus.

On his arrival in Saratov Aleksandr is reported to have remarked that 'the diocese is one of the most neglected' and proceeded to set up a large bureaucracy to run it, including departments that handled military, educational and prison affairs. Ministry in prisons and military units was to become a key feature of Aleksandr's rule. In 1996 he halted publication of the diocesan newspaper founded by Pimen in 1991, *Saratovskkiye yeparkhial'nyye vedomosti*, which had been published quarterly in a print-run of 2,000 copies. Aleksandr chose instead another paper, *Pravoslavnaya vera*, published independently by a group of Orthodox nationalists, to be the official organ of the diocese.

Aleksandr laid great emphasis on collecting money from parishes. 'Fathers, bring the money!' reportedly became a standard phrase he used when greeting parish priests. Even parishes that were building new churches were required to pay a quarter of their income to the diocese. The bishop even declared that there were too many parishes and too many priests and that this accounted for the low diocesan income. 'As long as I am here,' he vowed, 'not one new church will be built.' So far he has kept his word.

Aleksandr's views and leadership style were as uncongenial to Saratov's liberal Orthodox intelligentsia as had been Nektari's. The first to be unpleasantly surprised by the new hierarch and the monks he had brought from the Trinity–St Sergius Monastery were the liberal priests in Saratov itself. Archpriest Nikolai Agafonov, the rector of the seminary, aroused Aleksandr's dissatisfaction for his promotion of secular subjects in the seminary, his use of non-clerical teachers and his open attitude to Catholics and Protestants. Aleksandr made the seminary's life more difficult by commandeering a sumptuous building in the centre of Saratov – representing half the space of the seminary – and turning it into his residence; the seminary chapel of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary became his office. Agafonov also came under heavy fire in the Moscow media, including the radio station *Radonezh* and the journal *Moskva*, from Orthodox nationalists who were outraged that he had invited Catholic priests to lecture about Catholicism in the seminary and had spoken of Catholics as members of a 'brother Church'.

Aleksandr 'reorganised' the seminary in January 1996 and Agafonov was removed as rector, to be sent as priest to the small and remote village of Nizovoye in Tatishchevo *raion* (in 1997 he transferred to a parish in Volgograd in a different diocese). Addressing the seminarians on his dismissal, Agafonov told them: 'We are now ruled by an atheist, an enemy of the Church', a remark for which he later repented. Other priests who had been lecturing at the seminary since Pimen's time were removed and transferred to parish duties. The secular teachers did not wait to be sacked. They resigned, sending a letter of protest to all the Saratov newspapers (although none published it). All secular subjects in the humanities were then struck from the curriculum. Aleksandr forced all the remaining priests on the seminary staff to cease their work at the diocese's only Orthodox grammar school (one of Pimen's favourite projects), causing outrage among Saratov's intelligentsia, who were already beginning to distance themselves from the Church. By January 1997 the seminary had 140 students, with some 35 in each year. Laypeople were also able to take theological courses there. However, whether because of Aleksandr's changes and reputation or not, almost all the 1996 graduates of the seminary declined to proceed to ordination.

Aleksandr also transferred a popular priest, Archpriest Lazar' Novokreshchenykh, from rector of the cathedral to priest of the ruined Kazan' Cathedral on the outskirts of Saratov. Novokreshchenykh (who had been the editor of *Saratovskiyе yepar-khial'nyye vedomosti* until it was closed down by the bishop) was considered the spiritual father of the local intelligentsia and had followers as far away as Moscow. The Brotherhood of the Holy Cross (*Bratstvo svyatogo kresta*) which he had set up in 1989 at Pimen's initiative began to disintegrate, and many of its members and other Orthodox intellectuals who had been loyal to Pimen joined the Brotherhood of Ss Cyril and Methodius (*Bratstvo sv. Kirilla i Mefodiya*), which is headed by the layman Aleksandr Yakovlev (one of the spiritual sons of Lazar').

More in keeping with Aleksandr's taste is the St George the Victorious Society (*Obshchestvo Georgiya Pobedonostsa*), a patriotic Orthodox group headed by Archpriest Georgi Kalabin. Established during Pimen's tenure, it was registered as a social rather than as a religious organisation to escape the bishop's censure. In 1994 the society founded *Pravoslavnyaya vera*, of which Kalabin was editor. Pimen's successor, Bishop Nektari, was more favourably disposed and appointed Kalabin priest of the Cathedral of the Descent of the Holy Spirit in Saratov. Soon after his arrival in Saratov Aleksandr appointed him as one of his closest clerics and, as noted above, turned *Pravoslavnyaya vera* into the diocesan paper.

The changes in the diocesan leadership have also affected the Church's relationship with the local political leadership. Archbishop Pimen had established good relations with the local governor, Yuri Belykh, the chairman of the regional Duma, A. P. Kharitonov, and the mayor of Saratov, A. P. Malikov. By 1996 the authorities had returned all the churches confiscated during the Soviet period. The authorities in Saratov had encouraged the holding of Easter processions through the town. While Pimen sought expressions of respect towards the Church from the local political leadership he did not seek large-scale financial support, contenting himself with symbolic sums amounting to little more than several thousand dollars per year. Although the diocese encouraged regular press campaigns against charismatic Protestants and 'totalitarian sects', it did not call for administrative measures against them.

The current governor of Saratov *oblast'*, Dmitri Ayatskov, who took office in 1996 after serving as deputy mayor of Saratov, has long expressed his respect for the 'traditional religions', above all Orthodoxy, Islam and the Old Believer faith. A friend of Patriarch Aleksii, Ayatskov financed the construction of the St Dmitri Donskoy Church in his home village of Stolypino (Kalinino) in the mid-1990s. However, with Aleksandr's appointment as bishop in July 1995 Ayatskov and other leaders, including Kharitonov and the mayor of Saratov, Yu. N. Aksenenko, began to distance themselves from the diocesan leadership. In 1996, for the first time since the end of the Soviet period, the local political leadership failed to attend the Easter liturgy.

Ayatskov's proclaimed programme gives the Churches a key role in regional life and calls on them to play their part in the charitable, cultural and social fields. Since his appointment as governor Ayatskov has stepped up the regional administration's involvement in religious policy. Responsibility was transferred from an administration official, Vladimir Anikeyev, to the first deputy governor Vyacheslav Volodin, who heads the Council for Relations with Religious Associations attached to the governor of the *oblast'* and created in December 1996. Council membership includes Orthodox, Muslims, Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Adventists and Old Believers. However, Ayatskov has had little success in joint activities with Aleksandr. The

bishop has turned down proposals by Ayatskov and Volodin to organise religious processions in Saratov on various feasts, including Easter, Trinity and the feast of Ss Cyril and Methodius, to bless monuments to the victims of communism and to expand work in hospitals. 'We will not take part in political stunts!' Aleksandr is reported to have told his closest circle; and he has told his clergy: 'These authorities are bad, it is impossible to have anything to do with them.' Some priests believe the bishop does not like the local political leadership because they are not communists. Ayatskov and Volodin, who do not hide their hostility to the bishop, have taken their opposition further. Ayatskov has reportedly asked Patriarch Aleksii to name a new bishop to the diocese. Meanwhile Ayatskov and Volodin maintain friendly relations with the liberal clergy who have fallen out of favour with the new diocesan administration, especially with Agafonov.

Aleksandr's style of leadership has alienated the local political leadership, then; and also, more importantly, has alienated a large sector of the local Orthodox population, not just among the liberal Orthodox intelligentsia. Many have reportedly left the Orthodox Church and joined the Old Believers (especially the Belokrinitsa Concord, one of several local Old Believer groups) or the Catholics. The refusal of graduating seminarians to go on to become priests is also a sign of alienation and will make it increasingly difficult for the bishop to name priests to parishes.

#### **Astrakhan'<sup>4</sup>**

Just as Saratov had been ruled in the 1970s and 1980s by a bishop who enjoyed widespread popular support, so had Astrakhan'. Bishop Mikhail (Mudyugin), who ruled the diocese from 1968 to 1980, and Bishop Feodosi (Dikun), who ruled from 1980 to 1990, did as much as was possible in the changing conditions of the later Soviet era to preserve and enhance church life. They were helped by a relatively benign policy from the local administration. Like Saratov, Astrakhan' itself had a circle of Orthodox intellectuals, some of whom later became priests and Orthodox activists.

Feodosi had arrived in Astrakhan' from the Poltava diocese with a reputation as the only Orthodox bishop to speak out publicly against Leonid Brezhnev's anti-religious policies. Soon after his arrival he revived the practice of religious libraries in churches, initiated at the end of the last century by the local bishop Yevgeni (Shereshilov). The first was established in the Protecting Veil Church and Feodosi insisted it be open to all, regardless of their religious faith. He began a campaign to regain confiscated churches, but had not made much progress by the time of his transfer to Ukraine in 1990.

His successor was the young and energetic Bishop Filaret (Karagodin), who soon became embroiled in conflict with the local communist bosses, mainly over the return of churches. Filaret was especially keen to regain the Church of the Assumption in the Astrakhan' Kremlin. However, his conflict with the communists also had a more ideological side. He stood as a candidate in the local elections on the liberal Democratic Russia ticket and was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Astrakhan' *oblast'*. The ousting of the communists from local power also helped the Orthodox Church and Filaret was able to build strong ties with the new rulers. The new governor, Anatoli Guzhvin, also a 'democrat', immediately ordered the return of the Assumption Church and other churches, as well as the St John the Baptist Monastery. Filaret was also able to begin the construction of new churches and was successful in attracting the young, the intellectuals and Cossacks to the Church.

In the wake of Filaret's transfer to become bishop of Dmitrov, he was replaced in October 1992 by Bishop Iona (Karpukhin), who, like Filaret, arrived in Astrakhan' as a newly-ordained bishop. A native of Moscow, Iona had studied at both the Theological Seminary and the Academy at Zagorsk. In 1967 he became a lecturer there. Before being appointed to Astrakhan' he served as a dean in Moscow. As in Saratov with the arrival of Bishop Nektari, Iona's arrival in Astrakhan' brought a radical change in atmosphere in the diocese. Just as Bishop Nektari had brought with him a close colleague who took over day-to-day handling of affairs, Iona brought with him Fr Mikhail Pristaya, who became diocesan secretary, and one of Pristaya's relatives, Fr Miroslav Pidlusky, who became priest of the Assumption Church.

The construction of new churches and the restoration of regained churches all but came to a halt. Plans to expand theological education were halted. Contacts with the intelligentsia and students were abandoned. Relations with the local Cossacks soured. Within his first three years in Astrakhan' Iona had pensioned off almost all the senior clergy held in respect by the local Orthodox community. Among his most high-profile victims was the head of the St John the Baptist Monastery, Iosif (Mar'yan), who was well known from his days as an activist in underground Orthodox circles in the Soviet period. Iona accused him of financial mismanagement, appointing in his place the lay brother Filipp (Treshchev). Only one respected Astrakhan' priest survived the purge, the elderly Archpriest Viktor Gnatenko of the St John Chrysostom Church. Four of the diocese's priests could bear the pressure no longer and transferred to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

Like Bishop Aleksandr in Saratov, Iona has concentrated his efforts on boosting the diocese's revenues, even at the expense of pastoral provisions. He has frozen the construction of new churches, believing that they cost money and dilute the income of parishes that already exist. As a result, the diocese, which encompasses the territory of Astrakhan' *oblast'* (44,100 square kilometres – about the size of Denmark) with a population of a little over a million, half of them in Astrakhan' itself, has just 37 parishes. This modest figure compares badly with other dioceses of similar population, which generally have at least 100 parishes. Because he does not intend to build or open more churches, Iona has decided not to open any theological colleges, considering that there will be no call for large numbers of new priests.

Iona's financial acumen has led him to be described within the diocesan administration as a 'financial wizard' (*'blestyashchi finansist'*). To boost revenues he has brought in a brigade of workers from Moscow to man a semi-automated candle production line, which is now offering fierce competition to the Moscow Patriarchate's own production facility at Sofrino. The diocese sells candles not only to neighbouring Orthodox dioceses, but to the Old Believers as well, portraying such contacts as 'assistance'.

The village clergy complain that Iona makes off with funds they have collected. Distrust of the bishop has reached such a point that when they hear he is to visit, the priests hide valuable silver altar-ware, carpets and building material for fear he will take them. When Iona planned to replace the antique chandeliers and candleholders in the cathedral with products made at Sofrino there was concern that he was thinking more of his residence at the Elevation of the Cross Church in Moscow, where he spends a month at a time. Activists organised a year-long rota to man the cathedral to prevent the removal of the fittings.

Many believers are dissatisfied by what they regard as the bishop's lack of concern for the liturgy. Services have been shortened. Large church choirs, which require funds to maintain, have been dissolved. Iona's 'patriotic' preaching and his constant

calls for believers to support the authorities at all levels have evoked complaints. There is also dissatisfaction that money collected to renew the poorly-maintained wooden shrine containing the relics of St Iosif in the Assumption Church in the Astrakhan' Kremlin has not been spent on improving the shrine. Protests were unleashed in spring 1997 when Iona refused a monastic funeral to Rim (Chernov), who had been secretly tonsured as a monk by Feodosi in the 1980s, but whom Iona had removed.

The bishop has aroused such opposition among the local faithful that a group of activists, including intellectuals and Cossacks as well as ordinary people, have begun to petition the higher church authorities for his removal. The group even goes so far as to call the bishop and the diocesan secretary 'enemies of the Church'. A leading figure in the group is Vladimir Moskvichev, a doctor who was the 'elder' ('*starosta*') of the Assumption Cathedral in Filaret's time. Many ordinary believers consider Iona to be 'not a real bishop'. One group of parishioners wrote to Patriarch Aleksii to demand the bishop's removal, and even organised a collective visit to Moscow to this end, but without success.

The ataman of the Cossack forces, Vitali Yegorov, who supported the activists, wrote a personal letter to the patriarch also calling for Iona's removal. When news of this leaked out the response from the diocesan leadership was swift. The diocesan secretary, Fr Mikhail Pristaya, was also the Cossack chaplain and he immediately organised a gathering of the Great Cossack Circle. The meeting, held in August 1996, removed Yegorov as ataman. The diocesan paper, *Svet pravoslaviya*, which had been founded that year with financial sponsorship from a local company, Kaspormput, made clear its approval for the move:

A negative evaluation was given of the activity of the leadership of the Cossack forces and dissatisfaction and concern over the process of the rebirth of Astrakhan' cossackry was expressed. The ataman of the Astrakhan' Cossack forces, V. P. Yegorov, was removed from the office he held by the Great Cossack Circle for failing to abide by the Temporary Statute of the Cossack forces, failing to carry out the duties of ataman of the forces and numerous and malicious violations of Cossack traditions.<sup>5</sup>

Iona's attitude to other faiths is generally hostile. He dislikes the Catholics, who have an active presence in Astrakhan', and tries to use his influence with the local political leadership to oppose their work. He declined to meet the head of the Roman Catholic Church in European Russia, Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, during his visit to Astrakhan'. However, he pulled out all the stops when Mufti Talgat Tajutdin visited, joining other religious leaders and regional officials at the airport, possibly at the instigation of the local authorities.

The good relations governor Anatoli Guzhvin maintained with Bishop Filaret continued for a while under Filaret's successor Bishop Iona, and the governor initially continued the system of material support for the Orthodox Church (it received 80 million roubles in 1996). Guzhvin, a baptised Orthodox believer, also continued to attend church on major feasts. However, in early 1997 his attitude to Iona began to change. There is speculation that the governor was becoming increasingly aware of the bishop's unpopularity and began to feel he was getting little return for the financial support he was giving him. He stopped going to services that Iona conducted and even stopped meeting the bishop. He began to receive representatives of those who opposed Iona. The final straw for the governor came when Iona refused to accept back the bishop's residence in the Astrakhan' Kremlin without complete



restoration at the expense of the regional budget. The bishop had long pressed for the return of the residence and the Officers' Club had been moved out at his insistence.

Just as Guzhvin's attitude to Iona was changing, so was his attitude to two local officials, Vitali Mizov, who headed the directorate for work with citizen's associations, and Aleksandr Savin, Mizov's deputy and the head of the department for links with religious confessions. The two officials had decided the region's religious policy up till then, maintaining close ties with the Orthodox diocese (Mizov was also the head of a local Orthodox children's charitable fund). The two had devised a 'policy of balance', rewarding loyal, apolitical denominations with subsidised water, gas and electricity while trying to restrict groups that kept their distance, like the Catholics (in 1996 they had tried to deprive the Polish Catholic priest of his local residence permit and were constantly putting pressure on Archbishop Kondrusiewicz to replace him with a Russian). The two also planned a local law on religion to protect 'traditional' faiths and restrict new faiths. However, as Guzhvin became increasingly disillusioned with Iona, he began to distance himself from this policy and handed responsibility for religion in early 1997 to the deputy governor Vladislav Vinogradov. He set up a social-political committee under the governor, which included representatives of all the biggest local religious groups. By its very structure, the committee gave Iona the same voice as other local leaders and undermined any exclusive claims he might have been inclined to put forward.

### **Yekaterinburg'**

Bishop Melkhisedek (Lebedev) ruled the Sverdlovsk (later Yekaterinburg) diocese from 1984 to 1994, a period that covered the entire transformation from strict state control over religious life through *glasnost'* and *perestroika* to the uncertainties of the independence era. The bishop was frequently the target of articles in the national press in the 1990s for alleged misdemeanours.<sup>7</sup>

Melkhisedek was mainly known for his opposition to the monument by Ernst Neizvestny to the victims of Stalin's repressions which, he argued, was not in keeping with Russian church tradition for memorials to those tortured and murdered: he would have preferred a chapel to be built or cross to be put up. The issue was discussed widely in the local press and turned the liberal papers against him; the latter then accused him of real and imagined sins, undermining his authority. Those who worked with him in the diocesan administration consider that he was a victim of circumstances who had fallen under the influence of right-wingers. They note that he was highly educated and had a good library. He had allowed the liberal Moscow Orthodox priest Fr Georgi Kochetkov to establish his own communities in Yekaterinburg. Melkhisedek built up parishes in the diocese until there were more than 135 and some 200 priests, a reasonable total for a diocese encompassing a region of 194,800 square kilometres with a population of 4.7 million people.

However, Melkhisedek was transferred to Bryansk in 1994 and replaced by Bishop Nikon (Mironov), who was in his early 30s and regarded as a rising star. Born in the Altai region into a family of collective farm workers, Nikon had become close to Archbishop Mefodi (Nemtsov) of Irkutsk in the early 1980s when he began work in the diocesan candle factory. When Mefodi was transferred in 1982 to Voronezh diocese, Nikon followed, becoming chief clerk of the diocesan administration, rising to secretary of the administration in 1985. Ordained deacon in 1983, Nikon completed external studies at the Theological Seminary at Zagorsk, during which time he was ordained priest. In 1989 he became priest of the Cathedral of the Pro-

tecting Veil in Voronezh and was appointed bishop of Zadonsk and auxiliary bishop of Voronezh and Lipetsk in 1993. Nikon's career in the Church has been closely tied to Mefodi, who has long been regarded with suspicion for his close ties to the KGB during the Soviet period.

As in Saratov and Astrakhan', the arrival of a new bishop was accompanied by a radical shake-up in the diocese. Power was concentrated in the hands of the bishop and there was a purge of priests with higher education and those unskilled at money-making. There was a sharp increase in the diocese's income and in money remitted to Moscow. The diocesan secretary Archpriest Vladimir Zyazev openly admits that the purge was for economic reasons and claims it was directed against abuses in parishes and negligence on the part of the clergy. He is reportedly fond of declaring: 'There are no poor parishes, just lazy priests.' However, allegations soon surfaced in the local press of massive extortion from parishes and the removal of valuable icons and altar-ware,<sup>8</sup> a charge that is repeated in official reports. Whatever the truth of these allegations, they began to be widely believed.

Nikon built a large complex close to the cathedral to house the diocesan administration. He set up various departments within the administration, including charitable, publishing, missionary and educational departments. Among the diocesan publications were a monthly paper, *Pravoslavnaya gazeta* (established in 1994 with a print-run of 20,000 copies), a journal, *Yekaterinburgsky yeparkhial'ny vestnik* with good quality printing, and an educational bulletin, *Golos pravoslaviya*. However, their theological level left something to be desired. An article 'Church marriage'<sup>9</sup> showed little knowledge of canon law or Orthodox tradition. This may reflect the generally low level of education among the diocesan clergy. The purge of educated priests saw many retired off while others were banned under various pretexts. The local liberal Orthodox intelligentsia likewise asserts that the theological level of the Yekaterinburg Theological Academy is low.

There was also an external faculty in Yekaterinburg of the St Tikhon Institute in Moscow, set up under Melkhisiedek, but its future was threatened when Nikon all but cut off diocesan financial support. The rector in Moscow, Fr Vladimir Vorob'yev, became pessimistic about the branch's very survival, pessimism that was fully justified. In his report to the diocesan gathering in Moscow in December 1998 Patriarch Aleksii noted that 'on the eve of the first graduation the Yekaterinburg diocese closed its branch of the St Tikhon Institute after not having paid wages to the lecturers for the entire year.'<sup>10</sup> Immediately after this gathering the Holy Synod set up a commission 'to study the situation and consider the complaints that have come in from the Yekaterinburg diocese'.

Within months of his arrival Nikon's actions provoked the formation of an opposition within the diocese; it gradually became more organised. The groups loyal to Fr Kochetkov, which had almost gone underground, played a key role, joined by concerned priests who began to write joint letters to the media. *Ural'sky rabochi* published excerpts from several such letters, which accused Nikon of arbitrary behaviour reminiscent of the KGB.<sup>11</sup> Also mentioned was the public burning in September 1994 under orders from the diocesan leadership of books by liberal Orthodox theologians, including Aleksandr Men', Alexander Schmemmann, John Meyendorff and Ivan Il'in. However, it was not until the further public burning of works by Men', Schmemmann, Meyendorff and Nikolai Afanas'yev in May 1998 that controversy reached the worldwide Orthodox community. One priest who had refused to take part in the public burning, Oleg Vokhmyanin, was banned from exercising his priestly ministry by Nikon.<sup>12</sup> The burnings drew wide condemnation

from Orthodox leaders and intellectuals. Metropolitan Theodosius, head of the Orthodox Church in America, was among those who wrote a letter of protest to Patriarch Aleksii. Nikon subsequently denied to the Holy Synod that the burning had ever taken place and restored Fr Vokhmyanin to the ministry.

One sign of Nikon's unpopularity among the clergy was the defection to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad of five priests in 1998, among them Fr Vladislav Petkevich, who had formerly served in the cathedral. The opposition came to a head in May 1998 at a diocesan gathering, when a group of priests spoke out against Nikon. Most of their complaints ostensibly focused on money, with condemnation of the unjust collection of contributions from parishes, the designation of fixed sums to be remitted to the diocese regardless of the wealth of a parish and the removal from churches of valuable altar-ware. Also attacked was the bishop's habit of transferring priests from one parish to another. These complaints were aired largely within the Church, but this was to change in summer 1998 when 55 priests (half the clergy in the diocese) sent 90 complaints against the bishop to the Holy Synod. At the end of 1998 three leading figures from monastic communities, the deputy abbot of the St Nicholas Monastery at Verkhotur'ye, Tikhon (Zatekin), the deputy abbot of the Most Merciful Saviour Monastery in Yekaterinburg, Avraam (Reidman), and the head of the New Tikhon Convent in Yekaterinburg, Sister Lyubov', met Patriarch Aleksii and handed over a complaint against Nikon. The synodal commission, headed by the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archbishop Sergi of Solnechnogorsk, received 85 reports totalling 160 pages from priests of the diocese. The complaints focused not only on the removal of valuable items from churches and the extortion of funds, but on the drunkenness, swearing and even perversion of clerics and seminarians. There were also allegations that Nikon had beaten the Sverdlovsk regional governor's representative for Verkhotur'ye, Aleksandr Kapustin.

These complaints were not initially successful. At the Holy Synod's session from 31 March to 1 April 1999 a decision was taken that the 'ringleaders of the complaint process', Igumen Tikhon and Igumen Avraam, should be removed as deputy abbots, the many clerics who had sent in complaints were criticised and Bishop Nikon himself was rebuked 'for negligence in ruling the diocese and for not paying necessary attention to the spiritual life in the diocese's monasteries, which had led to the situation that had arisen'. Metropolitan Sergi maintained that the complainants had failed to present convincing proof of the bishop's guilt.<sup>13</sup>

On 5 April 1999 a diocesan council meeting was held in Yekaterinburg, where some of those attending expressed their disagreement with the decisions taken in Moscow. However, the two igumens complied. Igumen Tikhon was given a parish in Verkhotur'ye, while Igumen Avraam went to a skete in the New Tikhvin Convent where he had long been the spiritual father. However, Avraam continued to criticise Nikon publicly.

With neither side in the argument willing to back down, the dispute raged not only within the Church but also in the local and even national media. Some believed the revolt was a sign of monasteries exerting their rights at the expense of bishops, others that this was simply a case of an 'amoral' bishop, others again that this represented a dispute between commercial groups. The dispute came onto the streets on 25 April 1999, when some 300 believers and dozens of priests gathered for a *moleben*' at the site where Tsar Nicholas and his family had been executed in 1918. After the service an improvised meeting was held with outspoken criticism of Nikon and calls for him to be tried in accordance with church canons. 'Nikon is a sodomite and heretic', 'We cannot tolerate the bishop's mortal sin', 'A man who has committed the sin of

sodomy cannot be a priest, let alone a bishop' were among the sentiments expressed.<sup>14</sup> From May the centre of opposition to Nikon was based in Nizhni Tagil, led by Fr Gennadi Vedernikov, priest of the Aleksandr Nevsky Church there, and Fr Foma Abel', dean of all the labour camps in the region.<sup>15</sup> Nikon for his part made his base in the Saviour–Transfiguration Monastery in Kamensk-Ural'sky.<sup>16</sup>

In June 1999 the diocesan administration sent the text of a letter in support of Nikon to all parishes, demanding that all priests sign it on pain of punishment if they refused. Many who refused to sign were immediately removed from church service. That month 11 parish priests signed an appeal to Patriarch Aleksii declaring their refusal 'to consider as having legal canonical force the decrees and instructions of an individual who has been proved to have committed such serious crimes'. That same month the Department of Internal Affairs of Sysert *raion* launched a criminal case against Nikon under Article 133 of the Criminal Code, which covers forcing others into sodomy by exploiting the material or other dependency of the victim. On 27 June a procession took place from the site of the murder of the tsar's family to the bishop's residence, with more than a thousand laypeople and 24 priests calling for Nikon's removal from office.

Fr Abel' and Fr Vedernikov were invited to Moscow for a meeting at the patriarch's residence several days later. The meeting was organised by the local deputy in the State Duma, Anatoli Katkov, who had spoken several times with Metropolitan Sergi, at his constituents' request, about the situation in the diocese. Metropolitan Sergi and a number of priests were at the meeting, but the patriarch did not attend. As Vedernikov noted afterwards, 'It became clear that the main problem as Moscow saw it was not the reason for the conflict, but the effect it had had on the general public. It turned out that it was not Nikon but we who were guilty of everything.' They were asked to repent in writing for having taken the matter to the press if they were to stand any chance of remaining priests. Vedernikov recognised that he and his colleagues had contributed to the harm done to the Church by the dispute, but believed they should repent only once the dispute had been resolved.<sup>17</sup>

The church leadership was already bowing to public pressure, however. At the Holy Synod meeting in mid-July 1999 Nikon was removed as bishop and sent to the Pskov Monastery of the Caves. He was replaced by Archbishop Vikenti (Morar') of Abakan and Kyzyl.<sup>18</sup>

Much of the diocese's activity under Nikon was directed against 'sects' and new religious movements, which had gained a wide following in Yekaterinburg. The diocese put constant pressure on the local authorities to restrict their activities and even to deploy the police against them. However, in 1995 the diocese became far more welcoming towards Catholics and Lutherans (possibly under pressure from the local authorities or as a result of receiving western humanitarian aid). That year for the first time Nikon invited the local Catholic and Lutheran clergy to visit him at Easter. The local authorities mostly ignored the diocesan demands for restrictions on minority faiths, but the bishop's attitude led directly to the formation of a Council of Protestant Churches in Yekaterinburg, headed by the local Pentecostal bishop, Pavel Bak, as a means of self-defence.

Nikon enjoyed warm relations with the Sverdlovsk *oblast'* commissioner for links with religious organisations, Yuri Smirnov, who had retained his post from the Soviet era, when he worked for the Council for Religious Affairs. Nikon even presented him with a church award in February 1995, telling him that 'this event will serve to strengthen cooperation and mutual relations between the state structures of the *oblast'* and the Yekaterinburg diocese'. However, with the growing influence of

more liberal religious affairs officials in the city of Yekaterinburg, Nikon was to be disappointed. The local governor Eduard Rossel' removed Smirnov from office and replaced him with Aleksei Medvedev. Nikon was initially unhappy with an *oblast'* law on missionary activity, which was initiated by a communist deputy and Medvedev in March 1995. The bill completely banned all proselytism, and even those religious groups – such as the Orthodox – which opposed the activity of what they considered 'nontraditional' faiths felt this went too far. Just before the law was adopted in October 1996 a provision was inserted exempting the Orthodox, the Old Believers, the Catholics, the Lutherans, the Muslims and the Jews from the blanket ban on proselytism. Nikon became a vocal proponent of the law, though to his disappointment *oblast'* and city officials refused to implement it, pointing out that the law violated the Russian constitution.

Local officials in the Yekaterinburg mayor's office with responsibility for religious affairs had little direct influence on the religious situation in the city but had been able to form an objective picture of life within the diocese. Because of the bishop's attitude and the polarised atmosphere the mayor's office had effectively given up hope that the Orthodox Church in the city could play a positive role, although they still believed that individual local initiatives not under direct diocesan control might be worth supporting. More hope was placed in the Protestants and Catholics, who demanded only political support, and the Old Believers, who wanted financial support from the local authorities also.

Nor did Nikon initially gain much sympathy from local politicians (the area was dominated by the liberal electoral bloc 'Russia's Choice'), despite his best efforts to ingratiate himself with them and present himself as their equal. He sent a letter to all local political leaders declaring that 'the bishop is the living face of God on earth' and suggesting that he was the guardian of the spiritual life of the region. The letter was subjected to scorn in the local liberal media and this set the bishop even more firmly against the media, which he accused of being 'the mouthpiece for propaganda of violence, immorality and every kind of false teaching'.

On his arrival in Yekaterinburg in 1994 Nikon tried to build close ties with the local governor, Aleksei Strakhov, who had been appointed to the post by President Yel'tsin, and the mayor of the city, Arkadi Chernetsky. One politician Nikon kept his distance from was Eduard Rossel', then the speaker of the *oblast'* Duma and under a cloud. Nikon declared that the Orthodox Church rejected the separatism exhibited by Rossel' and even remarked that his German origins made him politically unreliable. At the start of the campaign for governor of Sverdlovsk *oblast'*, ahead of the December 1995 election, Nikon supported Strakhov, which did not prevent the incumbent from seeking large-scale support from the Unification Church and other exotic groups. Rossel' won the election and Nikon immediately forgot his earlier opposition in his eagerness to gain the governor's favour. His first significant success came in early 1997, when Rossel' agreed to finance the construction of a memorial church on the site of the execution of the Romanovs. The governor signed a decree in October 1998 authorising the building of the 'Church on the Blood' financed by a special fund within the regional budget, with completion set for 2003. As the conflict surrounding Nikon became more intense in 1999 Rossel' became increasingly outspoken in his public affirmations of the bishop. He supported him when he met Patriarch Aleksii in February 1999. When he visited Nizhni Tagil in April 1999 Rossel' declared: 'Nikon is a decent fellow. These "scribblers" slandered him and they have now been punished.'<sup>19</sup> The support extended to Nikon by Rossel' had a response from the patriarch, who in late 1997 honoured Rossel' with the award of St

Daniel of Moscow Second Class. The patriarch's citation noted the great efforts made by Rossel' to hand back confiscated churches, the adoption of a regional law against missionaries and the drawing up of a programme for the return of Orthodox property. 'In the early 1990s the leader of the *oblast'* and his family were already frequently to be seen in churches for services', the citation declared.<sup>20</sup>

Nikon was even more successful in his contacts with the army. The Urals Military District headquarters was located in Yekaterinburg. The diocese was the first in Russia to set up a coordinating committee to handle relations between itself and the local commanders, with whom Nikon had frequent meetings. He even honoured the regional military commissar, Major-General Baturin, with the award of St Daniel of Moscow Third Class. Cooperation has been intense, with chapels being built in military facilities and the Church supplying units with clothing, food, sports equipment and newspapers. Military colleges have a course on the basics of Orthodoxy. The diocese now assists 88 military units and 50 prisons.

The diocese makes use of self-styled Cossacks as guards, despite their controversial reputation in Yekaterinburg as right-wing radicals of unscrupulous morals. There are also accusations that the Cossacks – as well as some senior diocesan clergy – are closely linked to the Mafia. Unprompted, the diocesan secretary, Archpriest Vladimir Zyazev, denied these allegations.<sup>21</sup>

## Omsk<sup>22</sup>

Appointed to head the Omsk diocese in July 1986 was Archbishop Feodosi (Protsyuk), who had previously served as archbishop of Berlin and exarch of Central Europe. He became a metropolitan in February 1997. Feodosi also served as a deputy to the Omsk *oblast'* soviet in 1990–93. Born the son of a village priest in Volhynia (then in Poland), Feodosi was ordained priest during the final months of the Second World War at the age of just 18 and for the next two decades served as a priest in Western Ukraine. He studied during the 1950s as an external student at the Leningrad Theological Academy. He became a monk in November 1962 and three days later was consecrated bishop of Chernigov. He subsequently served in Poltava, Chernovtsy and Smolensk, before being transferred to Berlin in December 1984.

From the moment of his arrival in the Omsk diocese Feodosi ruled with an iron fist, controlling all aspects of diocesan activity. As someone who became a bishop during Khrushchev's persecution of the Church he has always been cautious and has been slow to promote the Church's role in society. He is always very wary about offending the state authorities. He has also intimidated many of the diocesan priests into a state of fear, even refusing to allow them to give interviews to the secular media. As a bishop without secular higher education who graduated externally from Leningrad Theological Academy, he is highly suspicious of education, both secular and religious. 'The kind of people the bishop approves of are not the educated ones, but the loyal ones', a young priest close to him declares. He punishes priests who take any kind of initiative. He banned his priests from baptising using full immersion and, as restrictions were being lifted during the *perestroika* era of the second half of the 1980s, refused to allow his clergy to campaign to regain confiscated churches. It was this refusal that prompted an exodus of several dynamic priests to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in 1988, among them Igumen Yevtikhi Kurochkin. When Kurochkin began to gather signatures for the return of the large church in the town of Ishim, Feodosi himself visited the local administration and told the officials that the diocese had no need of further churches. Even today there are

still only 64 parishes in the whole of the *oblast'* (a region of 139,700 square kilometres, bigger than Bulgaria, and a population of nearly 2.2 million people), 18 of these parishes being in Omsk itself. At the time of the Millennium of Christianity in 1988 a group of priests got together to produce 1000 copies of the Gospels in a kind of *samizdat* form. In the event they were able to produce only 500 copies, but took some to Feodosi, believing he would endorse their work. Instead he immediately informed the local commissioner of the Council for Religious Affairs, and only the fast liberalisation then under way spared the priests from punishment. Another priest, Fr Georgi Gugin, defected to the Catholic Church in 1994, while two monks joined the Baptists.

Scandal has also surrounded Feodosi. Rumours about his allegedly unmonastic personal life have not only been discussed in church circles, but have even reached the press. One local paper alleged that he had been transferred to Omsk from service in Germany for 'fornication' with the wife of a high-ranking figure and that he proposed cohabitation to the wives of priests of the Omsk diocese.<sup>23</sup> Priests who have left the Moscow Patriarchate for the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad have also complained of such alleged misdemeanours.

There have also been complaints about his financial administration. Some priests attribute Feodosi's lack of interest in reopening churches at the end of the Soviet period to the reduction in income that this might entail. There were also reports that he had fired six of the diocesan bookkeepers between 1986 and 1991 for refusing to cover up his alleged financial activity.<sup>24</sup> More recently, Feodosi has opened six sales points for trade in church-related items. It is alleged that the income from these does not reach the diocese or the state. Since April 1996 the diocese and a private company, Rosar, have been engaged in bottling and marketing Achairsky Monastery mineral water (named after a monastery just south of Omsk).

Feodosi's personal style and alleged failings have brought the Orthodox Church into disrepute in Omsk. Having surrounded himself with priests who lack initiative, the bishop runs a diocese that has been extraordinarily passive as far as mission is concerned. To compensate for this he has tried to use the state authorities to strengthen the Church's position by putting pressure on religious minorities. He constantly maintains that there are only three traditional faiths in Russia – Orthodoxy, Islam and Judaism – and argues that no other faiths even have the right to exist. He refuses to meet representatives of the Lutheran and Catholic communities, which are significant in the region. When the Catholics wanted to build a church on a plot of land in the centre of Omsk Feodosi claimed, without providing any proof, that the land had once been an Orthodox cemetery. Catholic plans were successfully halted and a monument to Marshal Georgi Zhukov was later built on the site. In 1994 Feodosi publicly said of the Catholic apostolic administrator for Siberia, Bishop Josef Werth, who was visiting the city: 'There's nothing for him to do here.'

In his campaign against religious minorities Feodosi relies on the Russian All-National Movement (*Rossiiskoye obshchenarodnoye dvizheniye*), a movement which local journalists claim was set up with the help of the Federal Security Service, the FSB.<sup>25</sup> The ROD – many of whose leaders are close to or even work for the administration of Omsk *oblast'* governor Leonid Polezhayev – holds protests to try to prevent Protestants and others from meeting.

Feodosi is ideologically close to Polezhayev. Religious policy is articulated by the deputy governor with responsibility for ethnic and religious policy, Aleksei Kazannik, who is one of Feodosi's devoted followers. Kazannik has personally obstructed the construction of a Catholic church and the designation of premises for

the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, spoken out against the construction of a Charismatic church, accused the Adventists of using psychotropic drugs and narcotics and attacked Muslim practices.<sup>26</sup> Refusing to allow the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to acquire a building to use as a church, Kazannik declared that the ROCA 'brings schism and tension into the world of Orthodox Christians'.<sup>27</sup> Kazannik's policy of sowing conflict between religious groups and clear favouritism towards the Orthodox Church is not shared by the mayor of Omsk, Valeri Roshchupkin, or his specialist for links with religious organisations, Ol'ga Fedayeva. They have both supported non-Orthodox religious communities and have spoken up for religious tolerance.

Despite the bishop's opposition to dynamic activity, there have been a number of lay initiatives in the area of religious education. In 1994 a theological baccalaureate was established in Omsk University and a religious library was opened in Omsk's Museum of the Siberian Icon.

## **Conclusions**

Several features are common to the four dioceses reviewed in this article. Despite the large territory and population of each diocese the diocesan network of parishes and colleges is very small. For each of the bishops financial considerations appear to be paramount, at the expense of pastoral and educational considerations. Diocesan administration is in the hands of a small group of associates of the bishop, often people he brought with him to the diocese when he was appointed. People are voting with their feet. Some parishioners have joined the Old Believers or the Catholics, while some priests have transferred to other dioceses, to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad or even, in a few instances, to the Catholics or Baptists. The bishops have been instrumental in driving away enthusiastic potential supporters, among them members of the intelligentsia and young people. Conservative bishops are pushing local political leaders to enact local legislation restricting minority faiths. The power of these bishops in the Orthodox Church within their dioceses is immense. The only sanction available against them is that they can be transferred by order of the Holy Synod. Even petitions to the patriarch from senior local politicians (as in Saratov), however, are not always enough to secure the transfer of an unpopular man.

In any diocese the conduct of the local bishop and the style of leadership he introduces has a direct impact on the popularity of the Orthodox Church in the region, the involvement of laypeople in the Church's work and the level of popular support for the Orthodox Church compared to that of other religious groups. The Orthodox Church is faring badly in these four regions compared to other religious faiths, especially Protestantism and Catholicism. In the Omsk diocese the Lutheran Church now claims more congregations than the Orthodox. Other religious groups have been more active in preaching, educational, publishing and charitable work and their style of operation has generally been more open and less scandal-ridden than that of the Orthodox Church in these four regions. Far from emulating the example of more dynamic religious groups, the Orthodox leadership in these dioceses has shown more interest in trying to prevent other religious groups from exercising such an active ministry.

If Orthodoxy is to retain its preeminence as the 'traditional' faith of Russia, it will have to work harder to increase its appeal in regions such as Saratov, Astrakhan', Yekaterinburg and Omsk, which it should be able to regard as part of its heartland.



**Notes and References**

- <sup>1</sup> This article is based on the results of fieldwork in each of these regions conducted by Sergei Filatov and Aleksandr Shchipkov between May 1995 and March 1998.
- <sup>2</sup> This section is based on a January 1997 report written by Filatov on fieldwork conducted by Filatov and Shchipkov. See also Filatov, 'Povolzh'ye: 350 let religioznogo plyuralizma', *Druzhba narodov*, no. 8, 1999.
- <sup>3</sup> *Avtorskoye pravo*, 10 September 1993.
- <sup>4</sup> This section is based on a September 1997 report written by Filatov on fieldwork conducted by Filatov and Shchipkov. See also Filatov, *op. cit.*
- <sup>5</sup> *Svet pravoslaviya* (Astrakhan'), no. 2, 1996.
- <sup>6</sup> This section is based on a May 1995 report written by Shchipkov on fieldwork conducted by Filatov and Shchipkov.
- <sup>7</sup> See for example A. Pashkova, 'Pokhozheniye ottsa Ioanna v Yekaterinburge', *Izvestiya*, 8 September 1993; Milei Smirnov, 'Sluzhil vладыka za butylku', *Izvestiya*, 17 November 1993; S. Dobrynina, 'Skandal prodolzhayetsya', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 January 1998.
- <sup>8</sup> See for example 'Skromnost' ukrashayet vsekh', *Ural'sky rabochy*, 18 November 1994.
- <sup>9</sup> 'Tserkovny brak', *Yekaterinburgskiy yeparkhial'ny vestnik*, nos. 1/2, 1995.
- <sup>10</sup> *Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii*, no. 2, 1999, p. 16.
- <sup>11</sup> See for example *Ural'sky rabochy*, 18 November 1994.
- <sup>12</sup> 'Podverdilsya fakt sozhzheniya knig v Yekaterinburge', *NG-religii*, no. 6, 1998.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with *NG-religii*, 12 May 1999.
- <sup>14</sup> *Russkaya mysl'*, 29 April–5 May 1999.
- <sup>15</sup> *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 7 May 1999.
- <sup>16</sup> *Moskovskiy novosti*, no. 18, 1999.
- <sup>17</sup> *NG-religii*, 14 July 1999.
- <sup>18</sup> Press release from the Moscow Patriarchate, 21 July 1999.
- <sup>19</sup> *Sovershenno sekretno*, no. 5, 1999.
- <sup>20</sup> *Pravoslavnaya Moskva*, no. 29–30, 1997.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview with Filatov and Shchipkov, Yekaterinburg, 1995.
- <sup>22</sup> This section is based on a May 1998 report written by Shchipkov on fieldwork conducted by Filatov and Shchipkov.
- <sup>23</sup> *Molodoi sibiryak*, 4 January 1992.
- <sup>24</sup> *Kommersant*, 6–13 January 1992.
- <sup>25</sup> 'Bratva, pochem opium dlya naroda?', *Vremya*, no. 24, 1997.
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> A. I. Kazannik, *Religioznyye ob'yedineniya v Omskoi oblasti* (Omsk, 1998), p. 5.