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Journal contact information

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Aims and scope

"Changing Societies & Personalities" is an international, peer-reviewed quarterly journal, published in English by the Ural Federal University. CS&P examines how rapid societal-level changes are reshaping individual-level beliefs, motivations and values– and how these individual-level changes in turn are reshaping societies. The interplay of personality traits and sociocultural factors in defining motivation, deliberation, action and reflection of individuals requires a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge. Since an interdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the causes and consequences of the contemporary world's changing socio-political institutions, moral values, and religious beliefs, the journal welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions from a wide range of perspectives in the context of value pluralism and social heterogeneity of (post)modern society. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to

- Value implications of interactions between socio-political transformations and personal self-identity;
- Changes in value orientations, materialist and post-materialist values;
- Moral reasoning and behavior;
- Variability and continuity in the election of styles of moral regime and/or religious identity;
- The moral bases of political preferences and their elimination;
- Social exclusion and inclusion;
- Post-secular religious individualism;
- Tolerance and merely 'tolerating': their meanings, varieties and fundamental bases;
- Ideologies of gender and age as variables in political, moral, religious and social change;
- Educational strategies as training for specific social competences;
- Social and existential security.
- The journal publishes original research articles, forum discussions, review articles and book reviews.

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EDITORIAL

Do We Still Need to Defend the Right to Say What We Disapprove?

Elena Stepanova

Institute for Philosophy and Law, Ural Branch, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Yekaterinburg, Russia

The idea of the freedom of conscience as an outcome of the long history of religious conflicts in Europe emerged in XVII–XVIII centuries as protection of minority ('dissident') religious beliefs, which for various reasons stood outside the mainstream Christian confessions and established churches. Since then, it is widely acknowledged that the freedom of conscience as the preserve of individual belief both framed by and independent of theological standards is the core of the human rights and civil liberty.

For many centuries, Christianity was quite intolerant towards deviations of the mainstream dogmas; the deviations were considered heretical and severely punished. When Christianity became official religion of the Roman Empire, "religious freedom was replaced by religious oppression as enemies of the Church and enemies of the State became more of less interchangeable. Moreover, since many 'enemies of the State' were also Christian, this resulted in wars which pitted believers against believers". (Evans, 1997, p. 2) Similar developments arose in non-Christian societies outside Europe, albeit to a different degree: for example, in Muslim lands, the dominant religious forces imposed various limitations on minority religions, although in general, intolerance of other religions was not as extreme as in Europe. The common development in the medieval period of the European history was the unity of the state central authority and the dominant religion, which was aimed at the prevention of practicing of other religious beliefs. It was almost impossible to view conscience outside a theological framework: "The result was that while the minority approach towards religious belief might have differed from the majority, thereby raising an issue of conscience, a similar oppressive outcome resulted when, or if, the minority assumed power" (Hammer, 2018, p. 12).

The Reformation generally recognized the individual conscience, but only in the framework of the word of God. Nevertheless, the idea of the personal

stepanova.elena.a@gmail.com

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understanding of Scriptures inevitably led to the freedom of thought outside Christian dogmatic. The next stage of the freedom of conscience was the recognition of the religious freedom in post-Westphalian Europe. The diversification of Christianity during the Reformation and the rise of the secular states resulted in the acceptance of personal liberty and individual freedom of belief including atheism and agnosticism. Two writers – Pierre Bayle in France and John Locke in England – developed ideas of the independent approaches to ethics based on conscience as the internal source of ethical knowledge, and religious toleration based on the recognition of the inherent limitations of the human's ability to comprehend the nature of a deity.

Gradually, human beings acquired the privilege of a reasonable inquiry into nature, society and human subjectivity. It was a sense, in Charles Taylor's words, that "freedom of conscience was a value that should be espoused, independent of confessional adherence, that there was something retrograde in its violation, something uncivilized". (Taylor, 2007, p. 259) In political practice, it resulted in the separation of church and state, which was for the first time articulated in the US Constitution, thus legitimizing the very term "conscience" as opposed to "religion". So, the right to freedom of conscience emerged through centuries as an independent right that need not centre on religious beliefs (Hammer, 2018, p. 26), thereby comprising the right to freedom of thought and religion.

In the XXth century, freedom of conscience was codified in the international human rights system as the forming part of the corpus of human rights, because it is assumed that without freedom of conscience there could be no real freedom of speech, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association or participation in social life. The creation of the League of Nations following the World War I generally indicated that religious tolerance was recognized as a fundamental concept to ensure peaceful coexistence among countries in the world. Although the League's Covenant did not contain special article on the freedom of conscience, later the principle was fully implemented in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", which was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. The Article 18 of the UDHR states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

Today, in most parts of the world freedom of conscience, thought and religion is taken for granted, and many people look at is as a natural human right. Nevertheless, we do not have to forget that this right has been acquired in quite recent times, and the way to it was dramatic (Bury, 1913). Even in nowadays, article 18 is violated constantly, and millions of people around the world continue to be oppressed because of their beliefs.

At the same time, the UDHR in general, and Article 18 in particular remains the subject of serious debates. It is generally agreed that the UDHR was adopted in the aftermath of the World War II as an attempt to ensure that such a catastrophe would never take place again. Nevertheless, eventually the universality of the

Declaration has been questioned due to the undermining of contextualization, or acknowledging cultural differences that exist between societies in different parts of the world. Religious beliefs and moral standards are shaped by the particular social-cultural context, and the very concept of the freedom of conscience and freedom of religion emerged in Western European Christian context; it means that its content and significance could not be the same everywhere and for everyone.

Contemporary 'post-secular' societies are characterized by religious diversity and deprivatization of religion. They embrace freedom of conscience and allow each individual to decide for himself/herself how to pursue the ultimate meaning of life. They are marked by the fact that religious beliefs – both historical and new ones – as well as atheism, agnosticism and non-religious lifestyles, are equally viable options. Nevertheless, post-secularism (whatever it means) challenges two main principles of secularism – equal respect to all beliefs, and freedom of conscience – and its two operative modes – separation of religious institutions and state, and state neutrality towards religions. Consequently, the popular expression, which is prescribed to Voltaire: the willingness to defend to the death the one's right to say what is disapproved – remains a disputable subject.

The current issue of *Changing Societies & Personalities* discusses some aspects of the freedom of consciences and freedom of religion in past and present.

Ivan Strenski's *On an Antinomy in the Discourses of Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Conscience* introduces the new section of the journal – ESSAY – and opens discussion on the questions: Can freedom of religion and religious freedom really be separated in reality? Does not the one actually require or entail the other? In reflecting on the distinctiveness of the terms "freedom of conscience", "freedom of religion", and "religious freedom", as well as their interconnection, Strenski goes back into the genealogies of the notions and argues that freedom of conscience and freedom of religion not necessarily imply each other. He uses some decisions of the US Supreme Court, as well as historical examples, as illustrations of the controversy of individual and institutional religious freedom.

Tatyana Nikolskaya in the paper *Human Rights Advocacy of Baptist Initiators* stresses that knowing the history of Protestants in the USSR is especially important due to resent cases of violations of the religious freedom and non-traditional denominations' rights in Russia, as well as the necessity not to forget about tragic pages of persecution and discrimination in the past. The paper elucidates the unknown pages of Evangelical Christians and Baptists' struggle for the right of believers, which according to the author formed the only mass human rights movement in the USSR. Although Evangelical Christians and Baptists traditionally were not interested in political and civil activity, in 1960th many of them started to participate in the struggle for the independence from the state and the right to freely profess their faith being influenced by the assurance in weakening of totalitarian power in the Khrushchev's "thaw". This did not came true, and hundreds of people were convicted of religious activities and sentenced to prison. Nikolskaya devotes special section of her paper to the participation of women-believers in human rights activities, and underlines: "It remains a mystery how these women, mostly

burdened by families, managed to travel so actively around the country, to study a lot of complicated cases, to write and send letters of intercession…" Finally, she stresses the mixed consequences of the human rights activities of Baptist Initiators, and mentions criticism of the Initiators' protection of the rights of believers from within their own Baptist community because of a fear to complicate their situation, and of persistent unwillingness to engage in politics.

Mark S. Cladis's paper *Solidarity, Religion, and the Environment: Challenges and Promises in the 21st Century* argues that religion and solidarity should not be treated as anomalies in modernity because solidarity plays an important role in establishing freedom of conscience and individual rights. In addition, religion and solidarity could be seen as cultural resources in dealing with the environmental problems. He stresses that "both religion and solidarity can act as double-edged swords" in a sense that they could contribute to peace and justice, as well as reinforce oppressive social practices. In exploring religion and solidarity, Cladis refers to E. Durkheim who had discovered religion as social ideas, beliefs and practices that shapes a society's moral universe, and *solidarité* as an enduring source of human social identity and fellowship. Mentioning the today's suspicion about the concept of solidarity due to doubt in common ground among diverse human communities and individuals, Cladis insists that solidarity remains a powerful notion, which celebrate diversity as a precious public resource.

Gnana Patrick in the paper *Religion and the Subaltern Self: An Exploration from the Indian Context* introduces the concept of the Subaltern Studies Project (SSP) and the interface between religion and the subaltern self in the Indian context. The term "subaltern" was taken from Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci who meant by it the subjected underclass under the dominant power influence. The term underlines the recognition of the historically subordinate position of various groups because of race, class, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc., and seeks to provide them a voice and agency. The author clarifies the relationship between the subaltern studies and the post-colonial studies in their approach towards religion and stresses the difference between them. The basic argument of the paper is that religion, considered on its own, could be an emancipatory experience for the subaltern self, due to its effective interpretive potential for the subaltern self to take on the caste system, which remains deeply entrenched into the Indian collective consciousness. Examples from the pre-modern and modern periods of the history of India are observed in order to support the argument.

In the BOOK REVIEW section, Anatoliy Denysenko reviews the Roman Soloviy's volume *Fenomen poiavliaiushcheisia tserkvi v kontekste teologicheskikh i ekklesiologicheskikh transformatsii v sovremennom zapadnom protestantizme* [The phenomenon of the emerging church in the context of the theological transformations of the ecclesiastical transformations in contemporary Western Protestantism, 2017]. He considers the book as one of the most important not only in the Ukrainian (post-) Protestant theological environment, but also in the ecclesiastical sphere of the evangelical communities of the post-Soviet space. In reflecting on the nature of (post-) Protestantism and the phenomenon of the "Emerging Church", Denysenko

following Soloviy in the search of a new Christian theology, which could find new ways of expressing the Gospel in the contemporary culture.

The discussions on the freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and religion freedom in the past and present will be continued in the subsequent issues of our journal.

We welcome suggestions for thematic issues, debate sections and other formats from readers and prospective authors and invite you to send us your reflections and ideas!

For more information, please visit the journal web site: https://changing-sp.com/

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ESSAY

On an Antinomy in the Discourses of Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Conscience

Ivan Strenski
University of California, Riverside (UCR), USA

Religious freedom, freedom of religious conscience's worst enemy?

In reading closely a recent celebrated anthology on religious freedom, *Politics of Religious Freedom* (Danchin, Hurd, Mahmood and Sullivan, 2015), I found myself both highly stimulated and informed by the discussions therein, even when I found myself disagreeing. Yet, one irritating feature of the logic of discourse that turns up in this collection kept nagging at me. This would ordinarily be a small point but I believe the same oddity turns up in almost everything I have read about religious liberty. This is the failure to distinguish two senses of the term, "religious liberty." The first sense refers to institutional freedom or sovereignty. I shall apply the convention, "freedom of religion" (FR) for this first sense of "religious liberty." But, a second sense, denoting individual freedom of conscience, belief, practice and so on, also circulates in the discourse of religious liberty. This, I call "religious freedom" (RF). And, in order to avoid confusion with the term, "religious liberty," I shall reserve that term for general uses bringing both "freedom of religion" with "religious freedom" under the same umbrella. This means that term, "religious liberty," as commonly used in the literature thus includes both the institutional, "freedom of religion" and individual, "religious freedom."

Why does this distinction matter? Why, in particular, does it matter to "freedom of conscience"? Untangling these two usages, so often smuggled in under the cover of "religious liberty," can, I urge, make a difference to discussions of freedom of conscience, because freedom of conscience often suffers at the hand of freedom of religion, as does religious freedom itself.

In applying this convention, I am also aware that, although conceptually distinct, some FR and RF may have practical, material relations to one another. Thus, it may be the case that, FR, such as freedom of conscience, or freedom to practice one's religion, are only possible given FR, given some degree of sovereignty of the religious community of which a given individual can form

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strenski@ucr.edu

a conscience. How then are these two notions of freedom distinct – both logically, and as it happens, in their historical genesis?

The first, "freedom of religion" arose from a Papal declaration of freedom, made by 12th and 13th century pontiff, Pope Gregory VII, marking what legal historian, Harold Berman called the Papal Revolution. Gregory laid down a statement of Papal sovereignty over that of the Holy Roman Emperor. We may be more familiar with this principle from Thomas Becket's opposition to King Henry II. The *raison d'être* for his martyrdom was the defense what Beckett called "the freedom of the Church," an institutional matter. Later, in 1215, in the *Magna Carta*, King John affirms the very same *institutional* freedom in the following words: "First, that we have granted to God, and by this present charter have confirmed for us and our heirs in perpetuity, that the English Church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished, and its liberties unimpaired." (England, 1215) Interestingly, in the decision of the *Hosanna-Tabor* case, the justices cited this very clause of the *Magna Carta*.

> Controversy between church and state over religious offices is hardly new. In 1215, the issue was addressed in the very first clause of *Magna Carta*. There, King John agreed that "the English church shall be free, and shall have its rights undiminished and its liberties unimpaired." The King in particular accepted the "freedom of elections," a right "thought to be of the greatest necessity and importance to the English church." (Alito and Kagan, 2012)

In the US Supreme Court decision, Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC ruling, SCOTUS forbade the government from applying equal opportunity employment law to the case of a worker fired from her job with the church. The worker had fallen ill, and after recovering, wanted to reclaim her job. But, the firing was upheld, and the freedom of the church to do so was accommodated at the expense of the civil rights of the employee, because the employee was classified as a "minister" by the church.

Critically, neither the *Magna Carta* itself nor the *Hosanna-Tabor* case affirms *individual freedom of conscience*, or religious freedom. From Alito's decision, it should be clear about what (or whose) freedom is being affirmed, both by the *Magna Carta* and by SCOTUS. Plainly, it is institutional sovereignty, not personal liberty that both documents affirm. It is not, therefore, the right to believe according to the dictates of conscience *against* the authority of his religious community. It is, rather, the freedom (or sovereignty) of religious *institutions* that is affirmed – indeed, often to rein in believers with deviant consciences.

Part of the reason for this logical difference may be the different genealogies of these two notions. The differences between institutional freedom of religion and religious freedom (of individual conscience) have been traced to their difference geneses by historians like John Neville Figgis, Harold Berman, Martha Nussbaum and others. Pope Gregory VII's so-called 12th century "Papal Revolution" asserts the freedom of the Church, of religion, while the value of religious freedom (of conscience) arises in the liberality of the 17th century Dutch Republic and the colonial experiments of Roger Williams. (Berman, 1983; Figgis, 1997; Figgis, 1998; Nussbaum, 2008)

It has become commonplace; however in the West, to regard the religious liberty to be identified exclusively with *sacrality of conscience*, the right to believe whatever one chooses. Historically speaking, this conception of religious liberty ignores that sense of religious liberty understood as the freedom of an institution, people, nation and such. It further tends falsely to collapse the notions of institutional freedom and freedom of belief or conscience into each other. This results in the irony of Becket being held up as a paragon of religious freedom or independent conscience when, in fact, he was simply obeying hierarchically derived order in representing the claims of the Roman Church against the kingdom of Henry II!

The differences in these two notions of religious liberty are thus at the very least *historically deep*. The depth of logical difference can better be appreciated by the frequent way claims to the rights of conscience are asserted *against* the authority or freedom of religious institutions, rather than in their behalf. I submit that while institutional freedom of religion may indeed "protect the individual" from a predatory State, it may also disadvantage the individual with respect to their church. In the *Hosanna-Tabor* case, the United State Supreme Court's siding with the church over against the rights of an individual freedom of conscience demonstrates just such conflict within the notion of religious liberty. Sometimes freedom of religion, freedom of a church, for instance, demands compromising of the freedom – religious or otherwise – an individual's freedom or well-being. For instance, any number of critical Roman Catholic theologians, trying to assert theological *Lehrfreiheit* at Catholic institutions, as well as Roger Williams, William Robertson Smith, Galileo Galilei, Ridley and Latimer, Michael Servetus, Thomas Moore, Hans Küng, or the Network's "Nuns on the Bus" might complain of being oppressed by their churches. In their cases, the State stood by, exposing them to the predations of their religious institutions. In such cases, I think we can fairly say that freedom of religion (FR) militates against religious freedoms (RF).

Other burdens of freedom of religion's unburdening

One might extend this line of thought further and look anew at cases where the freedom of religion, that is, of religious *institutions*, is asserted to the disadvantage of the individual enjoyment of *civil* goods. In the United States, two recent and quite different cases, US Supreme Court decision, *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby* (2014) and compounded case of *Zubic v. Burwell* (2015) serve nonetheless as examples of the kinds of rulings in which judicial exemptions granted to religious institutions, at least on the face of it, *disadvantaged* individual enjoyment of legitimate civic goods, including freedom of conscience, made possible by general laws. Both rulings, and adjustments made to them, make these cases complex.

Without wanting grossly to oversimplify them, I simply want to shift the point of view from that of a putatively burdened religious institution to the other side. Yes, one can understand how the federal mandate to offer contraceptive support to women employees of Hobby Lobby, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and so on, might conceivably put these organizations into moral straits. And, yes, governmental

officials did accommodate the scruples of the religious plaintiffs so that their women employees could receive contraceptive services from non-religious, public sources. Still, the women involved were "burdened" – keep waiting through periods of uncertainty and deprivation of their legitimate civic goods, guaranteed to them under general law.

While these are not cases where the interests of (institutional) freedom of religion *directly* conflict with religious freedom (of conscience), they are cases where (institutional) freedom of religion does "burden" the enjoyment of legitimate civic goods. Here, it is not freedom of conscience that suffers, but simply the enjoyment of common civic goods ensured by general law. An individual citizen's legitimate enjoyment of civic goods that has, thus, been "burdened" by the claim of a religious institution to have been "burdened," in turn, by general law. I should immediately note, however, that the courts have commonly tried to balance these burdens upon the general citizenry over against those of religious plaintiffs. In the Little Sisters of the Poor case, for instance, the Federal government provided the contraceptive services from which the nuns sought exemption. The "burdening" of the general citizenry seems to be the social cost of freeing religious institutions from "burdens." I believe that the equity of such civic burdening ought to be given further scrutiny. As to freedom of conscience, I have noted how institutional "freedom of religion" differs *conceptually* from this "religious freedom" – an individual liberty. This difference even extends to one of different historical origins – religious freedom, the free conscience, emerging later in the 17th century Dutch Republic, while freedom of religion dated from the assertion of Papal independence from the Holy Roman Emperor. Interestingly, freedom of religion (FR) often excludes conscience-linked religious freedom (RF), as admirers of Roger Williams, William Robertson Smith, Galileo Galilei, Ridley and Latimer, Michael Servetus, Thomas Moore, Hans Küng, or the Network's "Nuns on the Bus" and a whole parade of religious dissenters can variously testify.

More frequently than optimal, no attempt is made to distinguish the two – with the notable exceptions in the Danchin, Mahmood, Shackman, Sullivan collection of Elizabeth Castelli (Castelli, 2015), Saba Mahmood (Castelli, 2015), Winni Sullivan (Castelli, 2015). Readers suspicious of my insistence upon this distinction might rightly ask at least two questions straightaway. First, can the two really be separated in reality? Does not the one actually require or entail the other? Second, why would it make a difference to distinguish the two kinds of discourse? What is gained?

The first question can be answered easily, and in fact has implicitly been so by Castelli. She argues that – institutional – freedom of religion, such as that enjoyed by the Roman Catholic Church, does not *necessarily* establish religious freedom for the individual. In fact, it creates a circle of sovereignty around its member, ruling out recourse to, say, US courts, to overrule the Church. Think how this ring of sovereignty was breached – and thankfully so – in the case of the Catholic Church pedophile scandals. Nevertheless, religious freedom means that the freedom of the church sanctions a regime of discipline of – individual – religious freedom, such as in the case of doctrinal dissidents or irregulars. Freedom of

religion entails the actual requirement of "submission to the Magisterium," as Castelli reminds us. (Castelli, 2015).

It is important to make this distinction because the only reason Castelli thinks her analysis catches the Vatican in a contradiction about religious freedom is that she fails to understand the difference institutional freedom of religion from individual religious freedom. Of course, in the Catholic context, "Religious freedom emerges as nothing more than a mode of shoring up the Magisterium… not a set of values that shelters and protects acts of conscience…" (Castelli, 2015) That's what freedom of religion is all about! The Church's assertion of religious freedom is an assertion of institutional sovereignty, the right to rule within its own domain. In fact, this principle of institutional sovereignty very principle giving it jurisdiction over the consciences of its adherents, and which denies them religious freedom. Castelli has no cause for surprise, nor reason to think she has pulled "gotcha" move on Magisterial autocracy, by pointing to what is not really an inconsistency at all. Castelli's dare that "bishops should put their money where their collective mouth is and to defend religious freedom in their own polity," reflects Castelli's fundamental confusion about the difference between institutional sovereignty or freedom and individual freedom of conscience. (Castelli, 2015) Not only do the two differ, but the sovereignty won in freedom of religion is precisely what makes denial of individual religious freedom possible and legally unassailable. Of all American heroes of individual religious freedom, Roger Williams again knew this best of all, given his own experience of religious oppression constructed in the interests of the freedom of religion of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

An interesting experiment might be to see which has been the greater oppressor of religion, its free exercise and so on – sovereign – free – religious institutions or the Erastian state, as so often posed today as oppressor-in-chief of religion? Given how long sovereign religious institutions have engaged in censure, ostracism, expulsions – or worse – of dissidents, heresy operations, excommunications, enforced or regulated orthodoxy and orthopraxis, regulations daily life, and so on, what are the odds? Compared to this history could state limitations upon religion, in retrospect, then have been cumulatively greater? The results of such an inquiry would, at the very least, be interesting.

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ARTICLE

Human Rights Advocacy of Baptist Initiators

Tatyana Nikolskaya
Saint Petersburg Christian University, Russia

ABSTRACT
Among Soviet believers who spoke in defence of their rights, the Baptist Initiators stand out. They collected information about persecutions, provided prayer, moral, material support, human rights assistance to convicted co-religionists and their families and opposed state interference in the affairs of the church. In defending the rights of believers, they also appealed to international public opinion. Women were extensively involved in this activity. In 1964, the Council of Relatives of Prisoners was created, which issued a special "Bulletin". Although activists within the movement were regularly subjected to repression, their activities objectively influenced the adjustment of Soviet religious policy towards Evangelical Christian Baptists.

KEYWORDS
Evangelical Christian-Baptists, Initiators, human rights activities, Council of Churches, Council of Relatives of Prisoners

Introduction

In contemporary Russia, Russian Protestants (Evangelical Christians, Baptists, Pentecostals and Seventh Day Adventists) are generally contented with their situation. During the time that has passed since 1991, an entire generation has grown up, who may not any more face persecution on account of their faith, but who are at the same time vaguely cognisant of Soviet realities. It can be said that in their entire 150-year history, Russian Protestants have never enjoyed so much freedom or so many opportunities for the development of their churches and various associated activities – as well as for their personal prosperity.

In order to resolve emerging legal issues, Protestant organisations and large communities engage professional lawyers to deal with the protection of their clients' interests. The present Russian authorities do not impede the

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niktk@spbcu.ru

existence of unregistered religious groups or entire denominations – i. e. those who do not conform to state registration: among them, the International Union of Churches of Evangelical Christian Baptists (IUCECB) and the United Church of Evangelical Christians (UCEC).

However, some recently developing circumstances have begun to cause concerns within the Protestant community. Following the adoption of the so-called "Yarovoya Law", repeated cases have been established when Protestants of different denominations are liable for violations of the missionary activity rules.

On April 20, 2017, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation took the decision to liquidate the Administrative Centre of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia and all its local religious organisations, and to confiscate their property. The main accusation was "extremist activity", although, in reality, the adherents of this organisation profess pacifist principles. Thus, 175,000 Russian citizens were deprived of the right to freely profess their faith, as well as to receive legal protection against increased attacks (Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia, 2017). The Christian community showed mixed reactions to this event: some expressed satisfaction that the authorities had "banned heretics"; others interpreted this case as a dangerous precedent that could be used against other denominations.

As for the media space, at least at the state level, the coverage of the "sectarian" theme has so far been rather cautious. For example, in 2015, news reports about the mass murders in the city of Gyumri (Armenia) and Nizhny Novgorod did not place special emphasis on the confession of the murderers, despite the fact that in the first case the guilty was the son of a Pentecostal pastor, and, in the second, a parishioner of the Seventh-day Adventist church. At the same time, on Russian television, tendentious programmes periodically appear, in which so-called "sectarians" are accused of fraud, political unreliability or even subversion (for example, the television programme "The Conspiracy Theory. Espionage under the Guise of Religion", shown on October 16, 2017 on the Zvezda TV channel).

In this context, attempting to address the historical experience of Russian Protestants becomes a highly relevant endeavour: what were the consequences of protection of their own and other believers' rights; how did they perceive persecution and discrimination in the past by the state and society; how did this take place and with what results?

When studying the history of the dissident movement in the USSR, the majority of attention has tended to be focused on political and national communities. The human rights movement associated with Russian Protestantism has been studied to a significantly lesser extent, despite it arguably being more significant in terms of the number of people involved and the degree of its influence. If the political dissidents were grouped mainly in closed circles of intellectuals in a number of large cities, tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people, both church members and their relatives, were involved in the human rights struggle of Russian Protestants (Baptist Initiators, Adventist reformers, Pentecostals), representing different social strata, nationalities, professions, level of education and places of residence. It can therefore be claimed

that Protestants formed the only mass human rights movement in the USSR among the Russian people.

Among Soviet believers who spoke in defence of their rights, Baptist Initiators are especially prominent. In the 30 years from 1961 to 1991, they actively participated in human rights activities: collecting information about persecutions, providing prayer, moral, material and legal assistance to convicted co-religionists and their families, opposing state interference in church affairs and campaigning for the rights of believers – including the right of the parents to give their children religious education – to be respected. They sent delegations and letters with petitions to government bodies, party and state institutions and the mass media of the USSR, as well as to international actors.

Despite the existence of laws on freedom of conscience and the assertions of Soviet propaganda that persecutions for religious faith were absent in the USSR, the real situation was rather different. a number of prohibitions restricted church activities. Many religious communities lacked state registration, for which they were fined and persecuted, including the arrests of ministers and activists. Officials of the Council for Religious Affairs, which was responsible for regulating religious organisations, interfered in the internal life of churches. Believers, especially so-called "sectarians" (i. e. non-Russian Orthodox), often experienced discrimination in educational and professional spheres, as well as ostracism and contempt in the wider society. In the late 1950's, a large-scale anti-religious campaign was launched across the country.

The beginning of the Initiators movement dates back to August 1961. a group of Evangelical Christian Baptist ministers, headed by Gennady Kryuchkov and Alexei Prokofiev, issued an encyclical letter, which announced the creation of the Initiative Group for the preparation and holding of the All-Union Extraordinary Congress of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (ECB). This "Initiative Group" has given its name to the "Initiators' movement" or "the Initiators" – both terms are widespread in the literature and historiography.

Kryuchkov and Prokofiev were concerned not so much by the intensification of persecution and the outbreak of the anti-religious campaign, as by (as they saw it) the excessive accommodation of the leadership of the All-Union Council of ECB (AUCECB) towards state structures. The trigger for the establishing of the Initiative Group was the AUCECB's issue of some instructive documents, which significantly limited intra-church activities.

In 1962, supporters of the Initiative Group finally withdrew from their subordination to the AUCECB. As a result of this schism, the alternative church structure of Evangelical Christian Baptists headed by the Council of Churches (CC) of the ECB was established in the USSR (Nikolskaya, 2009, pp. 202–203). While in terms of doctrines the Initiators were almost identical to their loyalist colleagues, nevertheless, they placed a special emphasis on the independence of the church and the state. Without trying to change anything fundamentally in the Soviet system, the Initiators consistently, for many years, sought to influence the Soviet government and local authorities to accurate execution of their own laws on freedom of conscience, as well as those international human rights provisions recognised by the USSR.

The activities of the Initiators were diverse: the creation of an independent church structure, the publication of Christian literature and periodicals, the organisation of children's Sunday schools and youth summer camps, etc. Due to the space limit, in this article we will consider only one area of their activity: the struggle for the rights of believers.

Causes of the phenomenon

Traditionally, Evangelical Christians and Baptists were not interested themselves in political and civil activity; to this day, many consider politics to be a matter unworthy of a Christian. Even such an authoritative Evangelical leader as Ivan Prokhanov, the Chairman of the Union of Evangelical Christians, in the beginning of XX century, did not find the support of his co-religionists in his attempt in 1906 to create a Christian political party called "Union of Freedom, Truth and Peace" (History of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia, 2007, p. 71). The majority of believers remained apolitical and simply loyal to the state. They considered the main task for their churches to be the spread of the good news about Christ to all people, regardless of their political views. In addition, one of the guiding principles of Baptism is the separation of church and state, which believers tended to interpret as political neutrality. Last, but not least, Russian Baptists had before them the example of the Orthodox Church, which following the 1917 revolution, paid a brutal price for their political support of the autocracy.

What then happened in the 1960s to prompt a significant proportion of ECB to start to participate in activities, which used to be non-typical for them? Firstly, they were influenced by the historical situation of the late 1950s and early 1960s: the Khrushchev's "thaw"; the weakening of totalitarian power; the de-Stalinisation and partial democratisation of Soviet society; the mass liberation of political prisoners; the emergence of glasnost and relative freedom of speech together with a wearing of the "Iron Curtain", and improving relations with the countries of the capitalist world.

Secondly, believers, especially of the younger generation, possessed increased social self-awareness and were more inclined towards civic engagement. Consequently, many Baptists saw human rights activity in terms of an opportunity to change their plight. Unwittingly, this process was partially facilitated by the appeals of Soviet government propaganda for citizens to liberate themselves from the "legacy of Stalinism" and return to "Leninist norms". Many Baptists understood this in terms of the non-intervention of the state in the internal affairs of religious societies. The alleged heyday of the 1920s, glorified in the era of the "thaw", was associated with the relative religious freedom that the Baptists had enjoyed under Lenin.

It is therefore no accident that Initiators interpreted the oppression of believers as a "shameful legacy of the period of the personality cult (i. e. Stalinism – T. N.), which holds sway over the minds of many responsible workers and entire institutions" and expressed the hope that "as democracy and freedom deepen, those restrictions, which are in the regulations and laws now, should also be removed" (Memorandum of the Organising Committee, 1962, pp. 4–5). References to the struggle against the personality cult were also contained in other statements, for example, in a letter from

the Rostov-on-Don group of the ECB, which was received in 1962 by the secretariat of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: "Moreover, we live at a time when in our country the personality cult, under which we had no right to write with the entreaty that is set forth in this statement, has outlived its usefulness." (Letter from the ECB group of the Baptist Church, 1962, p. 13) The actions of the Initiators were also influenced by political dissidents.

Thirdly, the leaders of the movement were able to provide a spiritual (theological) justification for human rights activities. In short, their position can be expressed as follows: the intervention of an atheistic state in the internal affairs of believers and the "conciliatory" position of the AUCECB ministers had led to a spiritual weakening of the church. Therefore, a revival of the church was impossible without a struggle for its independence from the state, for the right to freely profess its faith, and to educate its children (religious education of one's own children was illegal in Soviet Union).

In "The First Epistle of the Initiative Group to the Church of God" from August 23, 1961, it was stated that "Satan through the AUCECB has brought the church into an emasculated and fragmented state", and that "until the church cleanses itself and takes up a proper state in the eyes of the Lord, the Lord cannot bless us…" (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 34). This idea was repeated many times in church documents and sermons throughout the Soviet period. For example, the statement of the Organising Committee (dated October 17, 1963, which was illegally distributed among delegates during the All-Union meeting of the ECB church) read:

> It is not a secret that the main difficulties that the Baptist Church is currently experiencing are caused by its ministers' infidelity to God, the infidelity, which has been expressed in the church's illegal and criminal connection to the world. It is no secret that this connection is designed to incorporate the church into the world, leading to its decomposition and ultimate destruction. (Kryuchkov, 2016, p. 424)

Finally, the "human factor" had a special role to play here: the active position, energy and personal authority of the leader of the movement – Gennady Kryuchkov, the long-term Chairman of the CC ECB. From the very beginning, Kryuchkov consistently made the case to his actual and potential supporters concerning the need for civil activity. For example, according to Kryuchkov's recollections, even his closest associate Alexei Prokofiev was embarrassed by the concepts and methods of action unfamiliar to Baptists: "Where do you get all this from: initiative group, organising committee, congress? Where did you learn all this? For me, there is only the Bible, and nothing else is needed." I answer: "It is necessary to know the laws of the country and, in order to defend oneself against lawyer-liars, it is necessary to be no less than these lawyer-liars, it is necessary to know not only the Word of God. […] We are living in a society, which has got its own laws." (Kryuchkov, 2011, p. 12) Indeed, Kryuchkov was well acquainted with Soviet laws and civil rights, and insisted that other believers find out how to use legal knowledge.

It seems that if the movement had been headed by another person, the history of the Initiators could have developed differently, most likely following the pattern of so-called illegal Pentecostals: they firmly held onto their faith (for which they were persecuted), but they did not try to defend their rights before the state (with the exception of attempts to leave the USSR).

Thus, human rights activity was not an ultimate goal for the Initiators: it was rather a means to help solve internal church tasks. Most of the participants of the movement were not opponents of the Soviet system as such: apart from religious issues, they were loyal citizens of their country, more appropriately comparable with the communists of the "sixties" than with radical dissidents.

At the same time, one cannot help noticing a certain evolution in the positions of the Initiators: as events unfolded, one part of the believers being tired of persecution and satisfied with certain concessions made by the state, moved to more moderate positions, while the other part continued going in their anti-Soviet sentiments (up to the extent of renouncing Soviet citizenship).

Letters to state and party bodies

In August 1961, the Initiative Group appealed to the leadership of the AUCECB with a written proposal to convene an extraordinary church congress. Having failed to find support there, on August 23, 1961, the leaders of the movement independently sent an appeal to the head of the government N. S. Khrushchev with a request to allow the congress.

The first documents and actions of the Initiative Group show that the leaders of the youth movement were not categorically inclined, but rather hoped to start a dialogue between the leadership of the AUCEB and state structures. The fact that they themselves offered to hold a church congress contradicted neither state laws, nor Baptist principles (which were rather democratic), or the rules of the AUECB. Unlike the Pentecostals, who founded the Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith at a secret meeting in Kharkov and only then appealed to the authorities to register it, the Initiative Group insisted on holding precisely a lawful congress that was authorised by the government, which testifies to its desire to act strictly within the law, and indicates certain hopes of achieving concrete results in the context of the "thaw".

Soon, at the call of the Initiative Group, in the communities of the ECB, a campaign began to send letters and addresses to the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, as well as other state bodies, including party and government leaders. All these letters and appeals contained a request to allow the convocation of a church congress. During the period from August 21 to December 30, 1961 alone, 272 letters (according to other sources, around 400) from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Kazakhstan were received by the party and Soviet authorities with requests to permit the congress; the number of signatures in each letter ranged from 1 to 113. In 1962, the flood of letters receded sharply, but resumed in the autumn of 1963, when the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults received 173 petitions about the congress. For the first time in many years, faced by the mass civil activity of believers, the authorities became alarmed.

At the end of November 1961, the regional commissioners received the following instruction: "The Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults recommends that you take appropriate measures to prevent the illegal activities of the so-called 'Initiative Group'… on the territory [you are responsible for] …" (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 203, 206).

People who had signed letters were warned, threatened and summoned for interviews with the authorities. However, the believers continued to insist their demand be met. It is likely that these events influenced the decision of the authorities, who in 1963 allowed the convening of All-Union Conference-Congress of the ECB church – an assembly that had not taken place since 1944. In 1966, another congress took place (History of ECB of Russia, 2007, pp. 165, 167–168). Both of them were held under the supervision of the AUCECB, which prompted the Initiators to refuse to recognise their outcome and persevere to achieve the convocation of "their own" congress.

Another line of activity taken by the Initiators was the writing of requests for the protection of individual co-religionists (whether arrested or subjected to discrimination) and (in cases of dispersal of assemblies, closing, confiscation of prayer houses, etc.) entire communities.

According to the official data, in the period from 1961 to 1964 alone, 806 people were convicted of religious activities for different periods and more than 400 people were deported for "parasitism" in accordance with the Decree of May 4, 1961 (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 217). As for Evangelical Baptist Christians, on February 23, 1964 (the date of the founding of the Council of Relatives of Prisoners), there were 141 convicts in the USSR, age ranged between 23 and 76 years (History of Evangelical Christian Baptists of Russia, 2007, p. 167). In 1964, the believers were shocked when the arrested Baptist Nikolay Khmara died in prison as a result of beatings during interrogation (this fact was later recognised at a meeting of the Supreme Court of the USSR on October 12, 1964) (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 217). Within one and a half month after Khmara's death, the Council of Relatives of Prisoners (CRP) of the ECB was established.

Over time, a system of collecting signatures to support appeals and petitions was established in the communities of the CC ECB. The Council of Relatives of Prisoners carried out thoroughgoing campaigns both in defence of convicted ministers as well as with regard to parents who had been deprived of their children. Often, members of the community, when faced harassment, wrote petitions independently (the latter, however, included not only the Initiators, but also members of the communities of the AUCECB).

For example, the Leningrad community of the CC ECB was meeting in the house of Protsenko in the village of Kuzmolovsky in the Leningrad oblast. Following the decision of the Vsevolozhsk People's Court of April 4,1984, the house was confiscated (the head of the family, Vladimir Protsenko, was at that time in custody), church members sent a petition addressed to the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) Central Committee, L. I. Brezhnev and to the USSR Prosecutor General. 81 persons signed the letter (Bulletin CRP, 1984, pp. 52–54).

In an era when a simple signature under the letter was an act of civic courage, many thousands of believers of the ECB participated in the intercessory campaigns. However, there were cases when people later repudiated their signatures or exculpated

themselves in terms of their incompetence. For example, in December 1967, members of the CC ECB communities in Tula and Novomoskovsk sent a collective letter (190 signatures) to government agencies, in which they described circumstances concerning the bullying of children of believers in schools. However, in the report of the plenipotentiary A. I. Krapivina in 1968, it is detailed that some of the Baptists repudiated their signatures, while others, according to the authorities, gave unconvincing explanations. As a result, the letter was found to be slanderous, although it is more appropriate to assume that some of the signatories subsequently "wavered" in fear for themselves or their children (Bartov, 2017, pp. 130–131).

Although the Initiators did not succeed in all cases, their petitions attracted the attention of the authorities to the problems of the rights of believers, encouraging them to understand these problems, or at least to provide explanations for the authorities' actions.

Delegations to the leaders of the CPSU and the government

It was not only through written petitions that Baptists Initiators tried to defend their rights. From time to time, entire delegations made their way to Moscow seeking meetings with the party and the government officials. For example, in August 1965, 105 believers of ECB from different parts of the USSR arrived in Moscow to ask for a meeting with Anastas Mikoyan, then Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. a few days later, he agreed to accept the five representatives of the delegation, which took place in September 1965 (albeit without achieving any significant results) (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 239).

The climax of the Initiators' public acts was their massive delegation on May 16–17, 1966. In April 1966, at a meeting in Kiev, the ministers of CC ECB decided to appeal to the government of the USSR with a petition in defence of the rights of believers; for that, a delegation of representatives of communities from different regions of the country was to be sent to Moscow. Those wishing to join the action were to come to Moscow in the morning on May 16, 1966, and, at a prearranged time, to approach the entrance of the Central Committee of the CPSU on Staraya Square (Kujawski, 2014, p. 332). The petition contained certain requests: to allow the convocation of a church congress, to stop the persecution and interference of the state in the affairs of the church, to recognise the CC ECB and to permit the exercise of the right to religious education of the children (Zavatski, 1995, p. 281).

However, KGB units had evidently already got wind of the upcoming action. Some of the believers, when trying to take a leave at their jobs for these days, were refused. Many others, being already on their way to Moscow, were removed from trains by the militia or detained at airports (Kujawski, 2014, p. 333). Nevertheless, on the appointed day, according to various sources, 400–600 Evangelical Christian Baptists from different cities and regions of the USSR came to Moscow (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 232, 234): for example, from the Kiev community – 13 people (Bogdanova, 2014, p. 53); from Leningrad and Pskov – 5 (Kuyavsky, 2014, p. 333); from the Gorky region – 7 (Yudintseva, 2014, pp. 12–13), and so on. In referring to the figure of 430

people, the Initiators themselves cite the opinion of the employees of the General Prosecutor's Office that if everyone were to get to Moscow, the number of delegates would reach more than 1500 people (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 238).

Evgeniy Kujavsky, a minister of the CC ECB community in Leningrad wrote:

> On the eve, Brother Mikhail Khorev came to Leningrad to visit us. All our fellow servants and zealots of the work of God gathered together. Brother Mikhail said that it is necessary to go to such a thing voluntarily, since it is not known how this can all end. Five people agreed to go: Vasily Baluev, Alexander Dementyevich Zavyalov, Sister Lida Semenova, a deacon-elder from Pskov and me. (Kujawski, 2014, p. 333)

Upon arriving in Moscow, participants of the delegation then met in the Ilyinsky Park near Staraya Square, where the building of the Central Committee of the CPSU was located. Here they dispersed at random: some walking around the square, others sitting on benches, etc. Exactly 10 minutes before the start of the action, all participants simultaneously moved to the entrance of the Central Committee to get there exactly at 9 o'clock (according to Kujawski, 10:00). For 2–3 minutes a crowd almost 100 metres long and with a density of 4–5 people was formed at the entrance. When the attendant came out of the door, one of the members of the clergy loudly read out the statement, which was then handed over for transmission to the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee. After some time, the military security officer proposed that the participants go to a small side street near Staraya Square, where the reception and information department of the Central Committee was located (Kujawski, 2014, pp. 333–334).

The believers followed to this small side street, where they spent the whole day waiting and fasting, and every two hours they pray together on their knees. Following attempts to persuade them to disperse, the authorities then tried to chase them away with the help of a water sprinkler (Kujawski, 2014, p. 334). According to the memoirs of the delegation Galina Yudintseva, the believers spent the night right there in the alley: "They spread out newspapers on the asphalt and those who could sleep, slept right there." (Yudintseva, 2014, p. 13)

The next day, many participants of the delegation fasted again; again, every two hours, they held a prayer. Their anticipation was prolonged. According to the memoirs of E. N. Kujawski,

> … The authorities could expect that if they kill the clock, some of us would start leaving the place, and that only a small group would stay for negotiations; that group would then be subjected to beatings (as it had already occurred twice) and then either forcibly sent home or put to the trial. However, not only our number did not reduced; on the contrary, a forty more people joined us. (Kujawski, 2014, pp. 334–335)

When, despite entreaties and warnings, the delegates moved to the entrance of the Central Committee of the CPSU at Nikitsky Pereulok, some buses drove up

to the location of the action. Militia officers then seized the participants and herded them onto the buses. A. I. Zudin, one of the militia officer, was later testifying at the court against G. K. Kryuchkov and G. P. Vince:

> They prayed on their knees as well as standing up. It was rather unpleasant to watch such a huge mass of people kneeling down. They spent the whole night at the building of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The following day their number increased up to about 500 people. […] Semichastny [the Chairman of the KGB] told them that if they do not leave, he would be forced to put things in order. The buses were provided. […] We put them into the buses by force, as they were singing. (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 234)

According to Vasily Ryzhuk, a minister, the delegates were taken by bus first to a racecourse, and then, in the evening, to the Lefortovo prison for filtration (Ryzhuk, 2012, pp. 49–50). Some of the detainees were sentenced to 10–15 days in prison; many others were given fines to pay and other administrative penalties (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 239). For example, with the exception of Vera Shuportyak, who became the subject of criminal proceedings, the Kiev delegates were escorted by militia officers back to their homeland after 15 days accompanied by the police (Bogdanova, 2014, p. 53). On May 19, 1966, S. C. George Vince and Mikhail Khorev (CC ECB ministers) came to learn about the fate of detained delegates; they both were arrested in the reception room of the Central Committee of the CPSU. On May 30, 1966, Gennady Kryuchkov, the Chairman of the CC, was arrested in a Moscow apartment (Bratskiy Listok, 1966, No. 6).

Not all participants of the delegation were ready for such an outcome. For example, G. Yudintseva recalled: "My friend […] was in a cell with a sister from Sumgait. This sister lamented: 'There is no oil here, and they will not provide sausages …' Apparently, going to Moscow, she did not anticipate the worst." (Yudintseva, 2014, p. 13)

During the summer alone, about 10 trials of ECB were held in Moscow (Bratskiy Listok, 1966, No. 8). The arrests continued over the following months. In September 1966, Church Union members N. G. Baturin and P. A. Yakimenkov, who had been in the delegation, were sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment (Bratskiy Listok, 1966, No. 10). November 29–30, 1966, Moscow trial of G. K. Kryuchkov and G. P. Vince, who, among other things, were accused of "organising a demonstration" (both received 3 years of imprisonment) (Nikolskaya, 2009, pp. 234–235). M. I. Khorev was sentenced to 2.5 years (Khorev Family, 2012).

The delegation of ECB (CU) on May 16–17, 1966 became the largest civil protest action of the "stagnation" era. Information about this event immediately became of international significance. Within both the USSR and elsewhere, the Initiators began to be talked about in terms of a numerous, well-organised, purposeful and selfless religious "opposition movement". Later, some of the young participants of this action joined the ranks of clandestine ministers: for example, the evangelist Joseph Bondarenko (later one of the leaders of the movement of the autonomous churches of the EBC), the workers of the underground publishing house "Christianin" Svetlana Beletskaya,

Galina Yudintseva, and others. Young people in the CC communities were brought up to admire the example of the boldness and self-sacrifice of delegates. At the same time, the mass arrests represented a serious blow to the movement. Such large-scale actions on the part of Initiators were not to be repeated.

Appeal to international public opinion

In terms of a distinct form of human rights activity, special mention should go to the appeal to international public opinion. Soviet Baptists took an ambivalent attitude towards the states of the capitalist world. On the one hand, despite their propensity for isolationism, they were people of Soviet upbringing and consciousness who did not want to go against their homeland – especially under the conditions of a "cold war" that could easily become a "hot" one. The memory of the suffering and numerous victims of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) was still fresh in their minds. These simple Soviet people sought peace and were genuinely perplexed when the initiatives of the Soviet government met the mistrust or hostility of other countries. Anti-Soviet propaganda, which was conducted from abroad with the help of radio and imported literature, was also perceived by many people as untrustworthy.

On the other hand, it was no secret to the Soviet people that the standard of living and the degree of freedom in the Western countries was much higher than in the USSR. Protestants knew this, perhaps, better than others did. During the 1960s – 1980s foreign guests often appeared in the prayer houses of significant Protestant communities in the large cities – whether famous people like the American pianist Van Cliburn, a Baptist, or various unknown tourists. Fashionably dressed, self-assured and contented with their lives, they showed better than any propaganda that the life of a Christian needs not consist solely of tears and suffering.

The contradictory attitude of believers to their state was expressed by Herman Gortfeld, a Baptist from the city of Frunze (in Kirghiz SSR), who wrote in a letter to L. I. Brezhnev with a request of emigration (dated December 21, 1973): "I do not have any bitterness about the domestic policy of our state, there is no bitterness towards the authorities, but I'm tired of shuddering every time I see a militiaman or a KGB officer." (Bulletin CRP, 1973, p. 28)

In the late Soviet period, many believers sought understanding, sympathy and help outside the Soviet world. More often, it was expressed in apolitical forms – communication with foreign co-religionists, receiving religious literature from abroad, etc. However, some believers also began to look elsewhere for sources of legal protection. For example, following his arrest in Moscow, Andrei Amalrik (a dissident writer) saw in the militia station "an old woman dressed in black – a sectarian from Tambov, detained near the embassy of Sierra Leone, which she wanted to enter to pass on letters about the persecution of believers… the Sierra Leoneans would certainly have been surprised to see her if she had managed to get there." (Amalric, 1991, p. 378)

The Initiators were certainly not so naive. They established regular contacts with foreign coreligionists and Christian missions (for example, the "Slavic Mission" in Sweden), through which information of a human rights was agilely transmitted

abroad. Those convicted of religious activities aroused widespread sympathy in the West on the one hand, as innocent victims of the Soviet regime, on the other, as willing or reluctant opponents of this regime. Many foreigners who visited the USSR or worked there tried to find out about the fate of these prisoners. For example, on the April 6, 1980 in Leningrad, the US Consul General Buchanan and his wife came to the registered Evangelical Christian-Baptist church for the morning Easter service. In a short conversation with the church ministers, he enquired about "the recent arrest in Leningrad of some prominent Baptist preacher, whose name he did not mention. The Consul General tried to find out from the interlocutors whether this was indeed the case and who exactly was arrested." (Zharinov, 1980) It seems the American diplomat was referring to M. V. Khorev, a CC ECB minister, who was in hiding and had actually been arrested in Leningrad on January 27, 1980, shortly before the events described (Khorev Family, 2012).

Following the creation of the Council of Relatives of Prisoners, information on the persecution of ECB believers in the USSR was regularly transmitted abroad. Particularly resonant was the story of the death under suspicious circumstances of Ivan Moiseyev (a member of the unregistered community of the European Baptist Church), a soldier who was serving in the Soviet Army. According to the official version, the young man drowned while swimming in the Black Sea near Kerch. However, his relatives and co-religionists residing in Volintiri in the Moldavian Socialist Soviet Republic claimed that when the zinc-lined coffin was opened, abrasions and burns were found on the head and body of the deceased. Already on August 1, 1972, two weeks following the death of the young man, UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim sent a statement on behalf of the Moiseyev family to the Soviet Defense Minister Andrei Grechko, the Secretary General of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev and other authorities: "… by the conviction of faith in God, our son and brother Moiseyev Ivan Vasilievich died of terrible martyrly torture …" The Moiseyev's demanded the appointment of a medical expert commission to find out the circumstances of Ivan's death, as well as for the "criminals who tortured him to be found and brought to justice." (Bulletin of the CRP, 1972, pp. 6–9)

The limits of this article do not allow going into this ambiguous story in detail; however, it is significant that the believers directly addressed not only the leaders of their own state, but also the UN. However, although the story of Moiseyev received a broad international response, in the end this did not help to shed any light on the circumstances of his death.

To what extent were the efforts of believers to communicate internationally effective? In fact, the development of international contacts combined with the signing of a number of international human rights treaties forced the Soviet government to pay more attention to public opinion in other countries.

Georgy Vince, giving an interview following his arrival in the US, said "whenever there was any campaign seeking to offer us support in the West, our treatment by the prison guards and administration changed for the better. In the absence of such support, the conditions of detention immediately deteriorated." (Zavatski, 1995, p. 487) Baptist prisoners also received moral encouragement from knowing that they had

not been abandoned, that thousands of people in the world were praying for them, participating in campaigns for their release and providing all possible assistance to their families.

There are known cases when Evangelical Christian-Baptist prisoners received early release: for example, A. M. Vatulko, A. P. Pilipenko and E. N. Barin, released early in the beginning of 1978 (Bulletin CRP, 1978, p. 19); though it is not clear whether the influence of domestic and foreign human rights defenders was the cause here, or whether there might have been other reasons for mitigating the fate of prisoners (for example, their good behaviour). But, of course, the international prominence of George Vince, the Secretary of CC ECB, was a contributing factor in his eventual fate. In April 1979, instead of five years after exile, he was deprived of Soviet citizenship by a decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and expelled from the USSR. Vince's family were also given permission to leave along with him. According to the memoirs of his daughter Natalia, the deportation occurred as part of the exchange of five Soviet dissidents for two Soviet spies detained in the United States (Vince, 2000, pp. 164–165, 169). According to his recollections, the minister himself interpreted this decision as "blatant lawlessness" and only left his native country reluctantly (Vince, 1994, p. 250).

Soviet political dissidents (in particular A. D. Sakharov) were also involved in the defence of Baptist Initiators. For example, on November 13, 1970, after a hunger strike had been declared by N. B. Vladykin, the presbyter of an unregistered community of ECB in Tula, a telegram was received by L. N. Dagayev, the Chairman of the Tula City Executive Committee:

> Concerned about the hunger strike of the Baptist Vladykin held in protest against the actions of local authorities to confiscate his house allegedly in connection with the religious meetings held there. I hope that the violations of Vladykin's rights may be redressed. His life is in danger. Sakharov, Academician, three-times Hero of Socialist Labour. (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 281)

Information about the Initiators regularly appeared in the samizdat journal "Chronicle of Current Events." Initially, it was handed over by Boris Zdorovets, but later, some of the Initiators established contacts with political dissidents, for example, Peter Vince (Zavatski, 1995, p. 486).

At the same time, under the conditions of the Cold War, the theme of freedom of conscience in the USSR perforce assumed a political character, and, in order to compromise the Soviet regime, sometimes unverified rumours, exaggeration or falsification were employed. For example, the Protestant pastor, the leader of the organisation "Jesus Christ to Help the Communist World," Richard Wurmbrandt became the hero of the scandal, publishing a photograph of Dutch or German kids dressed in striped dressing gowns after a swimming pool, claiming they were young Soviet prisoners for faith (Zavatski, 1995, p. 484). Soviet propaganda eagerly seized on this story, disclosed by foreign journalists, with the goal of discrediting not only Wurmbrandt, but also all foreign defenders of Soviet Christians (For example, see:

Vistunov, Tyutryumov, 1980, p. 93). Such cases genuinely increased the distrust of many Soviet believers towards foreign organisations and the media.

Participation of women in human rights activities

Women were also extensively involved in the CC activity of promoting human rights. They collected and placed signatures under petitions, prayed for prisoners, helped their families financially and emotionally… The wives and mothers of convicted ministers had a particular role to play in this respect. According to Soviet legislation, only close relatives had the right to find out the fate of the arrested person, to represent his/her interests and to solicit for mitigation. Within the Initiator movement, women also had to be concerned about arrested husbands, sons, etc. Yet in 1964, a new structure appeared, an unusual one for Russian Protestants: The Council of Relatives of Prisoners (CRP).

The date of the formation of the CRP is considered to be February 23, 1964, when Lydia Govorun, Nina Yastrebova and Lyubov Rudneva met to organise petitions for persecuted co-religionists (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 454). The CRP set the following tasks: to collect all available information about persecution, to transfer this information to international institutions, to create petitions to the authorities to stop persecutions, and to organise assistance to the families of the prisoners (Belyakova & Dobson, 2015, pp. 351–352).

At first, the Council of Relatives of Prisoners was led by Lydia Govorun from Smolensk, who in 1963 was deprived of parental rights with respect to her 9-year-old son Seryozha. The mother had no choice but to assert her rights regarding her child. After the believers went public with this story, the verdict of the court was declared to have been “in error”. According to Deputy Prosecutor B. Kravtsov, Govorun was guilty solely of leading the boy to worship and “as a mother, she is innocent of wrongdoing” (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 197). In 1966, L. K. Govorun was arrested and sentenced to 3 years’ imprisonment (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 459). Then, for a long time, the CRP was led by Lydia Vince, the mother of the twice-convicted George Vince, the Secretary of the CC. When, in 1970, she was also sentenced to 3 years, the CRP was briefly led by Galina Rytikova (Zavatsky, 1995, p. 283). After the departure of Lydia Vince to the US, together with her exiled son, she was replaced by Alexander Kozorezov (“Affirm, o God, what You did for us!”, 1989, p. 9).

Since 1970, in addition to regular lists of prisoners distributed among the believers, the illegal “Bulletin of the ECB Council of Relatives of Prisoners” was regularly published. This samizdat publication presented information about all cases of persecution known to the CRP (arrests, searches, dispersals of prayer meetings, harassment of children, etc.), as well as the texts of petitions and any responses to them (typically negative).

It remains a mystery how these women, mostly burdened by families, managed to travel so actively around the country, to study a lot of complicated cases, to write and send letters of intercession, and above of all these, to prepare the forthcoming issue of the “Bulletin” under the conditions of its legal proscription. Not all believers approved of this activity, considering the primary task of a married woman to be the

upbringing of their own children, and not the public activity. In addition to L. Govorun and L. Vince, eight other participants in the ministry's service were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 463).

Nevertheless, the CRP continued to operate right up to the time of Perestroika. For believers, it became a kind of authority, to which one could turn for help. According to the memoirs of Nikolay Boyko, the CC minister, in 1968, following his arrest, the authorities attempted to take away the children from his family. Then his wife Valentina "went to the Council of Relatives of Prisoners and sent a telegram to Brezhnev about all the lawlessness committed against the small children, also reporting this to the whole church. After the petitions, the persecution of the children stopped." (Boyko, 2007, pp. 65–66)

Bot only family women, i.e. the wives or mothers of convicted ministers, engaged in human rights activities. For example, one of active human rights defenders was Aida Skripnikova, a believer from the Leningrad Community of the CC ECB. Born in 1941 to a Christian family, she came to Leningrad from the Urals as a young girl, and subsequently went to work for a building trust (Serdobolskaya & Vistunov, 1976, p. 118). In 1961, Skripnikova joined the movement of Baptist Initiators in Leningrad, participating in the writing and dissemination of religious and human rights materials; she was summoned to the public court with a group of other girls for the distribution of evangelistic leaflets (Nikolskaya, 2009, pp. 207–208). Her poems and polemical articles, actively disseminated via samizdat, were also transmitted abroad. In 1968, Aida Skripnikova was arrested and sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for the systematic distribution of materials from the CC ECB, containing "knowingly false fabrications defaming the Soviet state and social system" (Belyakova & Dobson, 2015, p. 186). Despite remaining an ordinary member of the church, Skripnikova acquired almost higher prominence abroad than male ministers. She became the subject of many books, articles and radio programmes, with thousands of believers around the world praying for her and standing up in her defence. In this case, the personal disinterestedness of A. M. Skripnikova in terms of copyright to her work is illustrated by the fact that N. Belyakov and M. Dobson, the authors of the work "Women in the Evangelical Communities of Post-war USSR" published her works with the permission of Radio "Svoboda" / Radio "Svobodnaja Europa" (which were storing the materials in samizdat form) and not that of the writer herself or her relatives.

Evidently, Aida Skripnikova not only possessed courage and sincere faith, she also was a very gifted author, although she had no opportunities – and, probably, no desire – to develop her talent purposefully. In the USSR, there was a system of literary associations (lito) for novice authors, through which virtually all future writers had passed. However, the desire for a professional and creative career was not welcomed in the Protestant milieu during the Soviet era. In addition, if a Baptist girl had brought her verses about God to lito, she would at best have received advice to "change the subject"; at worst, exposed to ridicule, mockery, or even being reported to KGB. We can say that Skripnikova nevertheless realised her literary gift (including in the area of human rights activities).

As it was mentioned above, the Council of Relatives of Prisoners operated up until the time of Perestroika. In September 1987, it was reorganised into the Department of Intercession of the CC ECB (Kryuchkov, 2008, p. 463). The Department continues to operate up to this day, making public some cases of violations of the rights of coreligionists, mainly in the countries of the former USSR.

Attitude of ECB to human rights activities

Paradoxically, while the Initiators' protection of the rights of believers brought them international fame and even succeeded in encouraging the omnipotence Soviet power to make some concessions, this very human rights activity turned out to be most vulnerable to criticism from within their own Baptist community. Their appeal to the authorities, especially to foreign entities, met the most persistent criticism and rejection. Kryuchkov wrote in his memoirs: "They say that if there were no activities of the Initiators Group, there would be no persecutions" (Kryuchkov, 2011, p. 8) – an opinion, he probably heard on many occasions. Y. F. Kuksenko, a prominent minister, who later withdrew from the movement, believed that the May 1966 delegation was not only useless, but actually intensified the arrests; its numerical strength did not contribute to the organisation of negotiations, but rather appeared as an annoying challenge and "demonstration of power" to the authorities (Kuksenko, 2005, pp. 133–134).

In addition to a natural fear that this would only complicate their situation, believers sustained a persistent unwillingness to engage in politics. Even the members of the CC communities were embarrassed to turn for help to the authorities and not to God. In their materials, the Initiators underlined their avoidance of using "political" concepts like "demonstration", "protest", "human rights", etc.

Human rights activities were even more negatively perceived by loyal Baptists. For example, Sergey Fadyukhin, the AUCECB minister, recalled that in 1966, in an interview with George Vince, he among the errors of the Council of Churches he listed the following: "In your messages and leaflets you criticise not only the actions of the AUCECB, but also the actions of the government and authorities. […] And the greatest mistake, which is very difficult to make up for, is that you asked for help abroad." According to Fadyukhin, Vince replied that "we did not want and do not want to receive approval or reprimand from abroad. […] But there are unreasonable people among us …" (Almanac on the History of Russian Baptism, 2004, pp. 257–258).

The actions of the authorities against the Initiators sometimes affected loyal Baptists. For example, in 1976, following the appearance of an article about G. P. Vince in "The Literary Gazette", the authorities of the Novgorod region decided to "deal with" the unregistered community of the ECB in the settlement of Parfino, which was incidentally on the side of AUCECB. R. V. Nikolaeva, a community member complained in a letter to L. I. Brezhnev: "Representatives from the region began to come to us; I was summoned to the headquarters two times. These visitors from the region came to our workplaces and gave talks; we were held

up in front of all our colleagues as people who represented a threat to society…" (Nikolskaya, 2009, p. 271).

Finally, Soviet propagandists skilfully used the genuine or imaginary international links of the Initiators in order to compromise them. According to the memoirs of Nikolay Boyko, the CC minister, in 1968, following his arrest in Voznesensk (Mykolayiv oblast, Ukraine), rumours of his alleged anti-Soviet ties with the United States were circulating in the city. During the trial, local residents tried to get into the hall to look at the "material evidence": "concerning the weapon, the store of which was allegedly found in my house; the radio, via which I supposedly communicated with America". Learning that this evidence did not exist, the residents were outraged by the deception, with some even expressing sympathy for Boyko (Boyko, 2007, p. 69–70). But many Soviet people considered not only "subversive" activities, but also any appeal to foreign entities to be criminal.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the human rights activities of Baptist Initiators had mixed consequences. On the one hand, their speeches and petitions with references to Soviet laws combined with international publicity objectively influenced the adjustment of Soviet religious policy. In the second half of the 1960s, the process of registering ECB communities intensified; the authorities even introduced a system of autonomous registration for communities who were ready to comply with legislation on cults, but did not want to join the AUECB. In a number of cases, Baptists managed to get children returned to their parents, to mitigate the fate of convicted ministers, and so on.

However, the human rights activities of the Initiators led not only to concessions by the authorities, but also to persecution, new arrests and trials. The persecution of Baptist Initiators in various forms continued up until Perestroika. Only then did the position of believers in the USSR change dramatically. The last CC ECB prisoners were released in late 1988 (Consoled by Common Faith, 1990, p. 23).

The contemporary successor of the Council of the Churches is the International Union of Churches (IUC) ECB, which was given this name in 2001 at the congress in Tula ("The Lord … visited His people and created deliverance to him", 2001, p. 5). Nowadays the Initiators pay special attention to the study of their history, constantly publishing new documentary materials, memoirs and research. For this purpose, a special Historical and Analytical Department was established at the IUC ECB. According to the official concept, the positive changes in the country were brought about by the human rights activities of the Initiators ("intercession ministry"), combined with their faithfulness to God:

> The open speech of the Initiative Group's ministers in defence of the violated rights of believers broke the 30-year silence of the church. Their fearless call to action marked a new milestone in the history of the brotherhood – the revival of the intercession of the whole church! […] Like a fertile stream, the numerous petitions of the Initiative Group, the Organising Committee, churches, groups

> and individual believers of the brotherhood, stirred and revived the once-silent camp […] Everything that the brotherhood requested in petitions with prayer and fasting according to the will of God – was realised … (Intercession – the Spiritual Heritage of the Awakened Church, 2009)

However, now, the International Church Union of the ECB is perhaps the "quietest" Protestant denomination in Russia, standing away from any public activity. Meanwhile, Protestants of other denominations perceive the human rights experience of the Initiators rather as heroism (or delusion) of the recent past, and not as a practical example to be followed.

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ARTICLE

Solidarity, Religion, and the Environment: Challenges and Promises in the 21st Century

Mark S. Cladis
Brown University, Providence, USA

ABSTRACT
The relation among solidarity, religion, and the environment is a timely and pressing topic – or cluster of related topics. It has become clear that religion plays a salient role in forging social solidarity and, in the process, of shaping cultural perspectives that pertain to politics, education, the economy, and the environment. In this article, I do the following: (1) I argue that religion and solidarity should not be treated as anomalies in modernity, and that both religion and solidarity continue to play a significant role in local and global events; social solidarity in particular remains an essential condition for addressing many challenges that confront the globe today, including social justice and environmental degradation. (2) Drawing mainly on the work of the social theorist, Emile Durkheim, I show the role solidarity plays in establishing freedom of conscience and individual rights (moral individualism), moral pluralism, moral education, economic justice, and political community; this broad discussion will constitute the greater part of this article. Finally, (3) I discuss the relation among religion, solidarity, and environmental degradation; I argue that religion and solidarity can provide important cultural resources to combat global trends that threaten the environment.

KEYWORDS
Durkheim; social solidarity; religion; freedom of conscience; environmentalism; moral pluralism

1. Introduction: scope and qualifications

The relation among solidarity, religion, and the environment is a timely and pressing topic – or cluster of related topics. Many of today's pressing political

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mark_cladis@brown.edu

and social concerns are illuminated by an understanding of the religious beliefs and practices that lie beneath and within the news headlines. Whether one ventures into the religions of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, and Europe, one sees how the formation and transmission of beliefs, behaviors, values, rituals, texts, institutions, and forms of community have a considerable influence on global and local events. In particular, it has become clear that religion plays a salient role in forging social solidarity and, in the process, of shaping cultural perspectives that pertain to politics, education, the economy, and the environment. In this article, I will do the following:

- I will argue that religion and solidarity should not be treated as anomalies in modernity, and that both religion and solidarity continue to play a significant role in local and global events; social solidarity in particular remains an essential condition for addressing many challenges that confront the globe today, including social justice and environmental degradation.
- Drawing mainly on the work of the social theorist, Emile Durkheim, I will show the role solidarity plays in establishing freedom of conscience and individual rights (moral individualism), moral pluralism, moral education, economic justice, and political community; this broad discussion will constitute the greater part of this article.
- Finally, I will discuss the relation among religion, solidarity, and environmental degradation; I will argue that religion and solidarity can provide important cultural resources to combat global trends that threaten the environment.

Before I turn to these sections, I wish to make a couple of qualifications. First, I need to make it clear that both religion and solidarity can act as double-edged swords. That is to say, religion can contribute to healthy social reform and wise environmental practices as well as to reactionary social oppression and rapacious environmental practices. And solidarity, for its part, can sustain efforts for peace, justice, and environmentalism, but it can also support militaristic agendas and oppressive social and environmental practices. In this article, I do not wish simply to celebrate religion and solidarity. Religion and solidarity assume a variety of socio-historical forms, some admirable, some deplorable. But in either case, religion and solidarity are worthy of our attention, and they are necessary topics for a better understanding of the state of the social and physical environment today.

Finally, I wish to say something about the scope of this article. Although I will often allude to a variety of global developments, most of my references will be rooted in North Atlantic democratic social and intellectual traditions. It is in these traditions that I have been trained; it is in these traditions that my own normative, social vision has been shaped. Still, I hope and I believe that my claims in this article have broad implications for the world in which we all live.

2. Religion and modernity

It would be naïve and probably dangerous to fail to attend to the religious aspects of life together and life alone. The manner and language of religion – so familiar in

society, so alien in the academy – is gaining critical consideration. Scholars in the social sciences and in political and legal theory are turning their attention to the relation among religion, law, and politics. If our attention was once diverted from this triad, it was in part, due to what are now largely discredited theories about the inevitable march of secularization. There was an assumption that the world would increasingly abandon religion that the actual state of the world would come to match an ideal of the European Enlightenment, namely, an enlightened age free of strife, free of religion.

The assumption was doubly flawed. First, it was based on an erroneous interpretation of the Enlightenment as a monolithic force that discounted religion (as opposed, for example, to the Enlightenment itself having religious origins and objectives). And second, it was based on the view that modernity would necessarily usher in secularism, that is, an age in which religion had no significant standing. Yet sociologists and religious studies scholars, among others, have come to realize that religion as an intellectual, cultural, and political force is not, in fact, waning on the globe. Today, this realization should be clear to anyone even vaguely familiar with current events. Among the majority of the planet's inhabitants, including those in North America, religion is thriving.

And by religion I do not here mean a broad, Durkheimian notion of religion – that is, religion as any set of beliefs and practices that forge moral community. Don't get me wrong: I like Durkheim, and later in this article I will rely heavily on Durkheim's work. But here when I claim that religion is still very much alive, I mean religion as it is commonly understood, that is, such historical traditions as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. I would like to suggest that religion is alive not in spite of modernity, but rather because modernity and religion are not necessarily antagonistic. It is simply no longer useful to think of religion as an anomaly in the modern age. The same claim could be made of community, tradition, and *solidarity*. In other words, neither religion nor *Gemeinschaft* should no longer be considered a *relic* of a by-gone era.

3. Emile Durkheim, solidarity, and twenty-first century democracy in a global age

In this section, I consider the nature and place of solidarity in the work of Durkheim, and what lessons that work may hold for pluralistic, democratic societies at the outset of the twenty-first century. In particular, I explore Durkheim's notion of solidarity in his work on moral individualism, democracy, pluralism, moral education, economic justice, and globalization. I look to Durkheim because I believe he can help us think critically about the obstacles we face in achieving a genuinely multiracial, multicultural democracy. Such an achievement, I believe, is the hope – but thus far, not the reality – of the democratic experiment that has been taking place in the U. S. This is an experiment that has global consequences, and hence it is worthy of our consideration. It is a worthy challenge to endeavor to fashion a democratic republic in which individual rights are protected and the public life is inclusive, lively, and just.

Solidarity, I will soon argue, need not be construed as sameness or uniformity. Rather, it can be akin to what Cornel West has expressed using the metaphor of the jazz band. "The interplay of individuality and unanimity," West declares, "is not one of uniformity and unanimity imposed from above but rather of conflict among diverse groupings that reach a dynamic consensus subject to questioning and criticism. As with a soloist in a jazz... band, individuality is promoted in order to sustain and increase the creative tension with the group – a tension that yields higher levels of performance to achieve the aim of the collective project." (West, 2001, pp. 150–151) Honoring both individual rights and common projects – these twin poles, with all the tension between them – mark Durkheim's work, his vision, his challenge. And this may capture a challenge of democracy in the twenty-first century. My fundamental question of Durkheim, then, is this: How can he assist us in formulating a model of solidarity that includes and supports freedom of conscience and diversity? Also, how can his work help us envision paradigms of co-operation on such shared projects as eradicating racism, protecting the environment, and achieving social justice?

3.1 Durkheim and solidarity

We associate the concept of social solidarity with the life and thought of Durkheim, and for good reason. He was committed to it, both theoretically and practically. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912] 2001), arguably his most important book, Durkheim set himself the task of discovering an enduring source of human social identity and fellowship – *solidarité*. Durkheim treated religion, broadly understood, as dynamic social ideals, beliefs, and practices that shape a shared perception of, and therefore life in, a society's moral universe. One finds religion wherever public, normative concepts, symbols, or rites are employed. Religion, in this view, is variously found in modern and in (what we once called) postmodern societies. The upshot of this, morally and epistemologically, is that human life is, in a significant sense, life together. This is Durkheim's response, and challenge, to a long tradition of Cartesian and Spencerian individualistic thought.

Elementary Forms was Durkheim's last book, but from the start of his career, the task of solidarity can be found: the task of understanding its various sources and forms, and of evaluating its appropriate shape or type for a society in light of sociohistorical circumstances. Durkheim's own sociohistorical circumstances account, in part, for his life-long interest in and commitment to solidarity. As a French Jew raised in the warmth and security of a tightly knit Jewish community, David Émile Durkheim was early on exposed to the complex, often conflicting values of the Third Republic – liberty, equality, and solidarity. It is not much of an exaggeration to say that every major subject Durkheim investigated became for him a lens through which to examine the nature and condition of solidarity in contemporary democratic society.

In *Elementary Forms*, for example, Durkheim claimed that totemism among the aborigines of Australia was not in itself his principal object of study. Rather, it was an avenue "to yield an understanding of the religious nature of man, by showing

us an essential and permanent aspect of humanity." (Durkheim, 2001, p. 3) This "permanent aspect of humanity," as it turns out, is the human need and capacity to relate socially. Another example: Durkheim's sophisticated epistemology, or what is sometimes known as his sociology of knowledge, provided a way for philosophers and others to let go of the idea that reason is a transcendent, ahistorical faculty, yet without having to jettison all notions of objectivity. In Durkheim's mind, his work on epistemology – socializing the idealists and the empiricists – was especially significant insofar as it contributed to the view that there can be no radically private human existence. To exist in a world is to understand that world, and understanding is comprised of shared, collective representations. This is not only an empirical description of human cognition, but is also a normative position, for it challenges the atomistic assumptions of a methodological individualism that Durkheim found morally unacceptable. Epistemology, then, permitted Durkheim to feature once again the profoundly social nature of humankind.

Even Durkheim's investigations of modern individualism became a vehicle to explore social solidarity. Durkheim made the surprising claim that there is a form of contemporary individualism, what he called moral individualism that emerges from the solidarity that marks North Atlantic democracies. Think of moral individualism as a cluster of dynamic beliefs and practices, symbols and institutions that support the dignity and rights of the individual. This modern cult of the individual has all the attributes of traditional religion. It possesses robust, sacred symbols that express collective sentiments; it reaffirms and protects itself by means of both positive and negative rites, for example, public celebrations of defenders of individual rights or the prosecution of those who would violate such rights. Commitment to the rights and dignity of the individual is a principal thread, Durkheim argued, in the moral fabric that weaves together the diverse citizens of a modern democracy. It provides the shared moral identity of "we, the people." Moral individualism – as opposed to atomistic or utilitarian individualism – became for Durkheim an answer to the question: What can provide the basis of a common good in the democratic societies of his day?

The important task before me is to consider whether Durkheim's work on solidarity is still germane for reflection on present-day democratic societies – especially democracies marked by pluralism, multiculturalism, and globalization. My challenge is not to defend Durkheim's work – I am not dedicated to him – but rather to investigate his relevance for what I am dedicated to: robust, just, and inclusive democracies in an age of diversity and globalization.

3.2 Solidarity held in suspicion

Solidarity is a concept widely held in suspicion today and often for good reason. On epistemological grounds, many doubt that there is a shared, universal human nature that could provide common ground among diverse human communities and individuals. And when solidarity does seem to emerge, it is often interpreted as either a contingent confluence of individuals with a shared cultural or ethnic inheritance, or an enforced uniformity that merely gives the impression of solidarity. In this latter

view, solidarity is a form of imperialism or colonialism. Alien norms, practices, and symbols of identity are imposed by the powerful on those lacking power. Solidarity turns out to be hegemony. Debates in the U.S. over multiculturalism, diversity, and what have come to be known as "cultural wars" have focused our attention on many insidious practices carried out in the name of solidarity. Yet these debates also have had the unintended consequence of leading us to think, once again, about the social significance and merit of solidarity. As we wrestled with the importance of respecting "difference," we also asked about the shared context in which these debates took place. Who is the "we" engaged in these contests and disputes? Focusing on difference led to discussions about the possibility of common ground or solidarity. Moreover, as the language of human rights increasingly became something of a shared – though vague – global vocabulary, many social activists began speaking of a global or world solidarity centered on such goals as eradicating torture, hunger, racism, and the exploitation of women and children. Solidarity, today, is a contested concept. But this much is clear: solidarity is not simply a quaint term unworthy of our consideration. For better for worse, it remains a powerful notion. To think otherwise borders on self-deception.

Recent debates over the role and significance of solidarity are not without precedent. When Durkheim championed the need for solidarity and strategies to enhance it, he was addressing the entire French republic, but especially his fellow intellectuals, socialists, and other progressive peers. Solidarity, in Durkheim's vision, was to embrace all citizens, but it was based on a particular – far from neutral – set of goals and ideals: the protection and extension of human rights; an economy accountable to human welfare (as opposed to the maximization of profit); the freedom of critical inquiry; and a secular state that respected yet was not based on religion. Not long after Durkheim's death, however, his work was placed in a conservative canon of sociologists who, motivated by a nostalgic sense of by-gone days of community and uniformity, advanced solidarity for the sake of social control and order. It was Durkheim's commitment to solidarity, along with his historicist approach, that placed him in this conservative legacy.

This regrettable placement continues to distort our view of Durkheim's fundamental commitments and goals. Durkheim investigated the webs and patterns of social order for the sake of establishing social justice. Many have attributed conservatism to Durkheim because of his commitment to viewing humans and their moral principles and practices as ineluctably rooted in their social milieus. The logic here goes something like this: social theorists who begin and end with human situatedness can never rise above present or past social ideals, customs, and institutions. These allegedly conservative theorists are bound to the stagnant status quo. Yet Durkheim's sensitivity to the historical, far from tying him to a status quo, exposed him to social change and diversity. That exposure helped him to envision progressive social change, and also to recognize the fragility of many cultural and legal accomplishments. The rights and dignity of the individual, for Durkheim, are important pieces of moral, social progress. They are not, however, immutable. They are subject to immoral threats as well as to moral amelioration. Durkheim maintained

that moral progress requires a social solidarity that is willing to wrestle with social problems and achieve social change. Human rights, for example, cannot be realized by the law or the courts alone, but rather they require shared social beliefs and practices that support the legal system.

The "fact of diversity," then as Durkheim and Rawls roughly call it, need not entail moving beyond solidarity, as if solidarity and diversity were oppositional, or as if "justice for all" could be accomplished by leaving solidarity behind. The often-assumed incompatibility, then, between social diversity and social solidarity deserves to be examined. What is solidarity? What does it mean to live in a shared social and geographic setting? What are the basic requirements of social life? What are the social implications of our shared need for shelter, nutritious food, clean air and water, work, repose, and safety? What kind of social cooperation is needed for citizens to move about unencumbered, to have access to public transportation, to drive or walk in peace? What are the requirements for achieving such collective goals as economic justice, environmental practices, and the eradication of discrimination based on race, gender, or sexual orientation? Why should pluralism or globalization negate the need for cooperation in achieving basic, daily, shared human goods and future collective aims?

Durkheim affirmed that solidarity, in some form or forms, is all but inevitable for any society. The question for us, then, is not: "Solidarity – *should* we have it?" The question is, "What kind of solidarity – or *solidarities* – do we *already* have, and what kind should we have?" My own view is that an appropriate form of solidarity for democratic, political communities must not only tolerate diversity but also celebrate diversity as a precious public resource. Solidarity, in Durkheim's account, embraced all citizens, but it was based on a particular – far from neutral – set of democratic ideals, beliefs, and practices, including: the protection and extension of human rights; an economy accountable to human welfare (as opposed to the maximization of profit); the freedom of critical inquiry and reform; and a secular state that respected yet did not privilege religion.

3.3 Moral individualism, pluralism, and education

In 1835 Tocqueville wrote, "individualism is a word recently coined to express a new idea. Our fathers only knew about egoism" (Tocqueville, 1969, p. 506). This provocative claim about "a new idea" is not entirely correct (think of the celebration of "individualism" in Montaigne's *Essays* or Rousseau's *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*). Moreover, it was not the case that everyone in Tocqueville's age would have agreed that there are forms of individualism that are not synonymous with egoism. Even in Durkheim's age – and still today – some identified individualism with egoism. "Individualism is the great sickness of the present time... Each of us has confidence only in himself, sets himself up as the sovereign judge of everything..." This quotation is not from MacIntyre's *After Virtue* but from Ferdinand Brunetière's "After the Trial," which appeared in the *Revue des deux mondes* (Brunetière, 1898, p. 445). Brunetière, a Catholic literary historian and critic, denounced individualism

and claimed that it was debilitating France's moral foundation and solidarity. It is the "intellectuals" who carry this disease, and if they are not checked, he warned, traditional virtue and values will wither as moral relativism and hedonism spread. In the same year, Durkheim published a response entitled "Individualism and the Intellectuals." In it, Durkheim discussed "the argument, always refuted and always renewed," that "intellectual and moral anarchy would be the inevitable result of liberalism" (Durkheim, 1973, p. 49). Some varieties of liberalism, Durkheim conceded, are egoistic and threaten the common good of societies by encouraging the individual to become excessively consumerist and preoccupied with narrow self-interest. But there is a strand of liberalism, Durkheim argued, which is moral and social. This strand, I noted, Durkheim called moral individualism, and he claimed that "not only is [moral] individualism not anarchical, but it henceforth is the only system of beliefs which can ensure the moral unity of the country." (Ibid., p. 50) In liberal, democratic nations such as France, the people's character and their solidarity are promoted by the liberal practices and ideals of moral individualism.

This turns out to be a surprising and powerful defense of democratic liberalism. Durkheim did not appeal to universal principles derived from natural reason or from any other tap into an "objective," ahistorical moral reality. He situated his defense in history, specifically French history. France's modern, moral traditions, Durkheim argued, are largely constituted by liberal, pluralistic institutions and values that protect the rights and dignity of the individual. To neglect these traditions is to court moral anarchy. It is Brunetière then, the conservative who speaks of "solidarity above all" who, according to Durkheim, threatens the moral fabric of society.

This argument, like most of Durkheim's work, belongs to a distinctive French narrative, a narrative of struggle and accomplishment, of the Revolution and the Constitution. His arguments are not for all societies, even if they can be applied to many – certainly to our own. Mostly, however, his is an insider's argument: written for the French, by a Jewish Frenchman. Durkheim provided a distinctive reading of Rousseau and Kant, among others, attempting to locate them in a republican tradition that describes rights and duties as the result of a commitment to public, not only private, concerns. He worked to piece together his own account of his favorite varieties of liberalism (as well as offering complex criticisms of his least favorite forms of liberalism, for example, of what he called economic individualism and crass utilitarianism). This was no invention from scratch. a set of liberal, democratic traditions already existed. But Durkheim was well aware of competing liberal traditions, such as those of the classical economists and utilitarians, as well as competing solidarity traditions, such as those of the Royalists and the conservative Roman Catholics. Durkheim wanted to establish the authority of moral individualism by arguing that it, in fact, represented France's most morally progressive and legitimate traditions.

We can think of moral individualism as having two components. Moral individualism is characterized by (1) a set of social beliefs and practices that constitute a pervasive shared understanding, which supports the rights, and dignity of the individual; and (2) a plurality of social spheres that permits diversity and individual autonomy, and furnishes beliefs and practices, which morally associate

individuals occupying a particular sphere. The first component, briefly mentioned and then rejected in *The Division of Labor* (1893) was developed in the Dreyfusard article, "Individualism and the Intellectuals," after having been initially proposed in *Suicide* ([1897] 1951) the preceding year. The second component was explored in *The Division of Labor* and later enhanced in *Suicide* and especially in Durkheim's lectures published as *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* ([first French edition, 1950, published posthumously] 1992) – lectures written around the same time as the Dreyfusard article.

A robust social defense of democratic liberalism requires both components. The first element ensures that a diverse citizenry cares for a common political community that is sustained by, among other things, beliefs pertaining to the sanctity of the individual. The second element ensures that as individuals pursue their rights, they reside within a multitude of relatively distinct and protected social spheres that provide shared meanings and identities. We can label this second component as Durkheim's understanding of moral pluralism and a plurality of morals, especially as described in *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*. a plurality of morals refers to the diverse sets of goals and values, and the varying levels of homogeneity that characterize groups in the domestic, occupational, civic, and international spheres. Moral pluralism, in contrast, pertains to the relation between the beliefs and practices of the political community and the beliefs and practices of such associations or groups as churches and synagogues, ethnic organizations and activist alliances. This can include associations that can be said to rest upon comprehensive religious, moral, or philosophical doctrines. The solidarity of the political community, in Durkheim's view, does not require broad agreement from these associations on every issue. Social solidarity, in other words, does not require social homogeneity. On some issues, however, such as the protection of diversity, widespread agreement is desirable. Moral pluralism, then, refers to a plurality of communities and associations that promote distinctive practices and beliefs, and yet also contribute to – or at least do not threaten – common public projects and goals.

Think of Durkheim's moral pluralism as standing in opposition to three models of society: society as (1) a group of disparate individuals; (2) a group of disparate, morally self-sustaining, homogeneous communities divorced from the larger political community; and (3) a single, national, homogeneous community. The moral pluralism that Durkheim envisioned captures the merits and avoids the limits of the three models. It sustains a multitude of diverse communities (model two), all sharing a common, albeit limited, set of obligations and goals (model three), including individual and group rights and liberties (model one). Durkheim would have agreed with progressive communitarians that human association is a social good that is necessary for well-being. With progressive liberals, however, he also would have agreed that no one community, including the political one, has a monopoly on virtue or the good life. Happiness and an ethical life are not contingent on participation in any single, privileged community, but are procurable in a variety of spheres and groups.

Nonetheless, moral pluralism, as Durkheim conceived it, does support the solidarity of a shared political community, a community that encompasses all others. This social realm aims for inclusion and open critical reflection. At times, the most salient thing that needs to be agreed on may be what needs to be discussed. We can agree on the need to debate such pressing issues as how to pursue economic justice and environmental safeguards, balanced budgets and social services, citizens' security and global peace. Potential agreement rests on the fact that diverse citizens share a common history and future, and often care about the problems and promises that are germane, not only to a particular community, but to the broader community in which all participate. No secondary group should attempt to block its members from taking part in this wider life of common pursuits.

One of the best – and most misunderstood – examples of Durkheim's capacity to connect social solidarity with pluralism and conflict is his work on moral education (Durkheim, 1956–1961). Its heterogeneous character, embracing critical thought and shared traditions, autonomy and community, human diversity and social solidarity, offers a nuanced description of and challenge to liberal, democratic institutions. Durkheim championed various perspectives of society's shared understanding as a means to cultivate students' dispositions for critical thinking. Critical thought and the stories a people tells about itself go hand in hand, in Durkheim's view, because social critics, faced with changing circumstances, draw deeply from their social inheritances as they forge new paths and criticize old ones.

Durkheim held that future citizens of democracies need to know about styles of belief and practices other than those of the family or local group. He emphasized the need to accustom students to the unfamiliar in order that they can appreciate otherness and to identify the stranger as a fellow human. The study of history and literature are especially helpful in developing democratic skills and virtues, according to Durkheim. Studying history, for example, enables students to have an appreciation for the rich complexity of social life, and to develop a critical understanding of their own society's place in history. The study of history promotes critical thinking because it both discloses to students their society's distinctive shared understandings and exposes them to unfamiliar ways of life. Accustoming students to the unfamiliar enables them to value diversity and "the richness of life," and to acquire novel ways to cope with suffering.

History, then, plays a critical role in moral education:

> It is by learning to become familiar with other ideas, other customs, other manners, other political constitutions, other domestic organizations, other moralities and logics than those which he is used to that the student will gain a sense of the richness of life within the bounds of human nature. It is, therefore, only by history that we can give an account of the infinite diversity of the aspects which human nature can take on. (Durkheim, 1938, pp. 208–209)

Awareness of such pluralism is an essential aspect of moral education, because it thwarts the desire to designate a parochial moral vision as universal and then

impose it on all humanity. Literature also figured importantly in Durkheim's approach to moral education, and for many of the same reasons. General and abstract talk about the practices and hopes of a people will not make a vivid impression on students. Thick descriptions are required, and literature can deliver these. The detail found in literature allows the student "to touch [the manners, ideas, and institutions of a people] with his own hands," to "see them alive." (Durkheim, 1977, p. 332)

Moral education, then, in Durkheim's view, takes place at the junctures of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the past and the present. Schools are to foster in students the capacity to evaluate contemporary practices in light of alternatives found in foreign or past cultures, in new developments taking place within contemporary society, and in longstanding ideals that need to be more fully realized in social practices.

3.4 Economic justice, the political community, and globalization

I have rehearsed Durkheim's notion of moral individualism and moral pluralism, for these concepts are foundational for grasping Durkheim's basic position on solidarity and diversity. Further, I focused on his complex approach to moral education as an example of how he combined his commitment to both solidarity and diversity. I now wish to explore briefly how this pair of commitments informs his substantive positions on economic justice; the relation between secondary groups and the state; and globalization. My chief question of Durkheim, however, remains the same: Can he assist us in formulating a model of solidarity that acknowledges pluralism and globalization?

Durkheim's commitment to enhancing social solidarity was fueled, perhaps above all, by his worry over a private economy that put the maximization of profit above human social welfare. His multifaceted study on professional and civic ethics was motivated by his belief that economic institutions should be accountable to a society's civic life – at both the regional and national level. His worry was that as modern societies become increasingly individualistic, shared aims lack the strength to guide the economic life in light of prevailing conceptions of justice. So he imagined ways to broaden or extend democratic practices that could bring a moral influence to the economic life. This move is entirely consistent with Durkheim's belief that there are moral dimensions to our shared civic life. The economy, in his view, should not be understood as a discrete, amoral, private realm, but rather as an integral moral component of the public life. Hence, in Durkheim's lectures on professional ethics and civic morals, he concentrated on the economic sphere, for he believed that "the greater part of its existence is passed divorced from any moral influence." (Durkheim, 1992, p. 12) The classical economists, Durkheim claimed, failed to see that "economic functions are not an end in themselves but only a means to an end; that they are one of the organs of social life and that social life is above all a harmonious community of endeavors." (Durkheim, 1992, p. 16)

To make matters worse, the ethos of the economic sphere, marked by individual and corporate egoism, threatened to dominate other social spheres: "This amoral

character of economic life amounts to a public danger." (Ibid., p. 12) Durkheim's fear was that, due to the prominence of the economic sphere in modern societies, its amoral character would spread to other spheres.

How did Durkheim account for this "moral vacuum" in the economic sphere? Social institutions, given their historical character, change. "For two centuries," Durkheim claimed, "economic life has taken on an expansion it never knew before." (Ibid., p. 11) While this sphere grew and began to dominate society, a new "ethic" emerged that sought to deliver society from the traditional regulation of popes and monarchs and guilds. These old monitors were to be replaced by a new, impartial one: the guiding hand of the spontaneous market. Durkheim, however, considered this spontaneous regulation as essentially no regulation. In *Suicide*, for example, he stated that "for a whole century, economic progress has mainly consisted in freeing industrial relations from all regulation... and government, instead of regulating economic life, has become its tool and servant." (Durkheim, 1951, pp. 254–255)

In his lectures on professional ethics and civic morals, while discussing the economic world, which seems to lie "outside the sphere of morals," Durkheim asked,

> Is this state of affairs a normal one? It has had the support of famous doctrines. To start with, there is the classical economic theory according to which the free play of economic agreements should adjust itself and reach stability automatically, without it being necessary or even possible to submit it to any restraining forces. (Durkheim, 1992, p. 10)

Yet Durkheim went on to note that a stable and just economic sphere "cannot follow of itself from entirely material causes, from any blind mechanism, however scientific it may be. It is a moral task." (Ibid., p. 12) Why a moral task? Because we should not expect just economic social practices to emerge spontaneously from private contracts or "supply and demand" or from any other liberal market devices. a moral task is at hand because people must do something to bring peace and justice to the economic sphere. Human effort and planning are required, but this in turn depends on some sense of shared purpose and common aims.

I will not discuss at length the most famous of Durkheim's solutions to the moral bankruptcy of the economic sphere, namely, his call for the formation of occupational groups – a new democratic space located between private lives and large, civic institutions. I do want to comment on, however, the premise of Durkheim's hope for the establishment of occupational groups. His premise was that ethical practices are a product of human association; that practical moral reasoning emerges from working together, from shared practices. Workers, isolated from each other and from the shared purposes of their work, cannot create for themselves a healthy working environment, for example, fashioning practices pertaining to workers' dignity, treatment, and fair compensation. Durkheim's solution was to infuse the economic sphere with moral principles internal to the various, particular activities of the various occupations – whether they be farming, banking, or factory work. The role

of occupational groups, then, is to provide moral connections between vocational practices and the internal goods and external goods relevant to them.

In order that external goods support – as opposed to vitiate – internal goods, various economic activities that a Spencerian would call private would need to be viewed in a more public light. First, the workers involved in a particular occupation would have a greater voice concerning its just operations. Second, the economic sphere in general would no longer been seen as a radically private one but as a realm subject to the political community. This is not necessarily a call for socialism. But it is Durkheim's warning that moral economic practices will not develop under the present conditions of a Spencerian free market.

From one perspective, occupational groups are centers of moral life, which, although bound together, are distinct and relatively autonomous. In order that moral principles internal to each group emerge, the groups should, as Durkheim noted, "develop original characteristics." Together these groups form the economic sphere. From another perspective, however, these groups are tributaries fed by shared traditions and institutions, by common projects and interests, by social solidarity. This latter perspective needs mentioning lest we lose sight of Durkheim's conviction that the economic sphere needs to be accountable to the wider political community.

Without a sense of ourselves as a people with shared perspectives, problems, and goals, we will not be able to tackle such a pressing and massive problem as an economic sphere unaccountable to democratic institutions. Durkheim himself was not sanguine about the emergence of morally sustaining spheres of economic justice. He often wrote as if liberal society is taking on the character of a Hobbesian war of all against all. At such moments, he seemed to doubt the possibility of robust shared commitments and aims. This pessimism, however, did not lead to moral paralysis but to increased commitment to the tasks at hand.

There is a social sphere, Durkheim tells us, which is greater in scope than the various secondary groups. It is the political community. Inquiry into the nature of this sphere and its relation to other social spheres and to the state is necessary for an intelligent reading of Durkheim's notion of a plurality of social spheres that are nourished by solidarity. If, for example, the domestic or the economic spheres are entirely independent of the political one, or even dominate it that might suggest a precarious laissez-faire pluralism that could lead to a society's domination by a single sphere. On the other hand, if the other spheres are dominated by the political community or the state, that might suggest an open door to nationalism or fascism.

The political community, according to Durkheim's normative understanding of it, encompasses a plurality of secondary groups without becoming one itself. It includes all without being dominated by any. In Durkheim's idiom, the political community and the state are not the same. The state refers to "the agents of the sovereign authority," while the political community refers a shared public space which includes all secondary groups. Far from being in radical opposition to the various secondary groups contained within the political sphere, Durkheim contends that "the state presupposes their existence... No secondary groups, no political authority, at least no authority which can legitimately be called political." (Durkheim, 1992, p. 45) In his

lectures on professional ethics and civic morals, Durkheim championed a model of the state that is neither laissez-faire liberal nor nationalistic. The state, if legitimately representing the ideals and goals of the democratic political community, supports moral individualism and pluralism.

There is a dialectical relation between the state and its plural secondary groups. From this dialectic, in Durkheim's view, emerges the social solidarity of the political community, and such solidarity, in turn, sustains the dialectic. Solidarity is not the result of state sponsored coercion, nor of a natural harmony among secondary groups. Rather, it emerges from, and contributes to, the dialectical relation between the democratic state and its various secondary groups. Solidarity of the political community, then, does not work against pluralism, but rather is constitutive of its very existence. And the health of the political community requires a rich variety of secondary groups. Unlike Rousseau who feared secondary groups, Durkheim did not support the Social Contract model of the state in which diverse individuals have a direct relation to the state, but not to each other. Not only did Durkheim not fear secondary groups and the pluralism that they represent, but he defended their vital role in providing a variety of moral homes for individuals and in contributing diversity and dynamism to the political community.

What is the relation between the solidarity of the democratic nation-state and what some call the global community or village? Did Durkheim have a position on globalization or on the possibility of a social sphere larger than the nation's political community? Durkheim maintained that there is an international sphere that, in a limited sense, encompasses the political community. The political community, according to Durkheim, has no sovereign above it except that of the state. This sovereign, however, is relative and needs to be qualified. It is accountable to the political community, and Durkheim also insisted that it is also accountable to the international community (Durkheim, 1915). In *Elementary Forms* Durkheim claimed that

> … there is no people, no state that is not involved with another society that is more or less unlimited and includes all peoples, or states with which they are directly or indirectly in contact. There is no national life that is not dominated by an inherently international collective life. As we go forward in history, these international groupings take on greater importance and scope. (Durkheim, 2001, pp. 321–322)

Durkheim provided two different yet related accounts for the rise of what could be called global ethics. In one account, global ethics emerges from the recognition of duties that apply to all individuals, regardless of national boundaries. In his lectures on professional ethics and civic morals, he claimed that there are "duties independent of any particular grouping... This is the most general sphere in the whole of ethics, for it is independent of any local or ethnic conditions." (Durkheim, 1992, p. 110) These duties pertain to protecting the rights and dignity of humans – for example, protection from cruel humiliation, mutilation, murder, or theft.

The second account is closely related to the first, for it is a sociohistorical explanation for the development of international human rights. He claimed that "the group no longer seems to have value in itself and for itself: it is only a means of fulfilling and developing human nature to the point demanded by the current ideals." (Ibid., p. 112) For example, increasingly nations justify their existence by their efforts to protect individuals from unnecessary suffering – "a hateful thing" – as opposed to in the past when the nation – a personification of God or the sacred – was the object of highest regard. Durkheim claimed that increased pluralism accounts for this transfer of sacred regard from the pride of the individual nation to the dignity of the individual – wherever she or he lives. He wrote, "with the increase of diversity among the members of all societies, there is no essential characteristic in common except those derived from the basic quality of their human nature. It is this quality that quite naturally becomes the supreme object of collective sensibility." (Ibid., p. 112)

We have already seen this logic in Durkheim's communitarian defense of moral individualism: our shared understanding is centered on the dignity and rights of the individual. Now, however, Durkheim has taken this logic from a national to a global level. Given the high level of human diversity in the international realm, shared beliefs and practices are thin, except for the overlapping commitment to the global ethic of human rights. Durkheim's prediction is that as members of diverse nations associate and work on common issues, international ethics will become more substantive. Increasingly, "national aims do not lie at the summit of the [moral] hierarchy – it is human aims that are destined to be supreme." (Ibid., p. 73)

Yet Durkheim was not entirely sanguine about what we today call globalization. He feared anomie on an international scale as the global economy increasingly sought the maximization of profit above all else. He noted that what might look like a promising "world state" may in fact turn out to be but another form of "egoistic individualism." (Ibid., p. 74) His worry was that unregulated concentrations of power would subvert the sovereignty of citizens and their ability to work for normative domestic and global aims. Durkheim, of course, knew nothing about the environmental costs of a global economy unleashed from normative beliefs and practices. Yet he did anticipate the social harm and suffering that would flow from a global economy modeled on anomic, national economies.

Does Durkheim's suggestion for how democratic moral reasoning can govern national economies apply to today's *global* economy? A Durkheimian approach to economic globalization would require a modified version of Durkheim's complex normative account of the dialectical relation among the state, secondary groups, and individuals. The revised Durkheimian model would entail an augmented dialectic that included the global realm more robustly. In this model, the democratic nation would attempt to foster within the nation-state a social order that properly arranges and regards the domains of local community, the wider civic community, and global institutions.

Durkheim held that if global justice is to be achieved, nation-states and local communities need to cultivate in their members a commitment to global, moral

issues. Hence Durkheim claimed that the way to avoid a clash between national and global perspectives is for "each state to have as its chief aim... to set its own house in order and to make the widest appeal to its members for a moral life on an ever higher level... If the state had no other purpose than making humans of its citizens, in the widest sense of the term, then civic duties would be only a particular form of the general obligations of humanity." (Ibid., p. 74)

Global justice, then, requires just states, and just states require sufficient solidarity to work jointly toward the common aims of justice at the local, national, and global level. The Durkheimian lesson is that if we want to achieve social and economic justice, whether we are living among domestic or global diversity, we must remain committed to some form of solidarity. To neglect solidarity is to risk having our most cherished ideals, including the celebration of diversity, drained of their capacity to shape our lives, institutions, and communities.

4. Religion, solidarity, and environmental degradation

Consider the following state of affairs: calculated conservatively, the extinction rate of mammals is now 1,000 times greater than during the last great age of extinction, the ice ages of the Pleistocene epoch (Ehrenfeld, 1993, p. 180); between 1900 and 1965, one half of the forests in developing countries was cleared for log export and for cattle grazing to supply the U.S. hamburger industry, and such logging is not slowing down (Khor, 1996, p. 52); tropical forests are being destroyed at the rate of 168,000 square kilometers per year (Goodland, 1996, p. 214). Although there is disagreement on the exact numbers, few fail to concede that, due to contemporary economic and industrial practices, we are witnessing an unprecedented loss of wetlands, crop diversity, top soil, and fisheries. Such catastrophic losses are matched by the inordinate pollution of the air, water, and land from the massive use of fossil fuels, ozone depleting gases, herbicides, pesticides, industrial chemicals, and heavy metals, among other toxicities. This is a short list of the material and tangible dangers that threaten those who, having forgotten about the basic sources of life, are cutting, polluting, and despoiling the frail ecological systems that sustain human existence.

There is a clear correlation between accelerated environmental degradation and the increased power and wealth of transnational corporations. With little or no concern for the health of local areas but rather for maximizing profits, transnational corporations are usually indifferent to, and sometimes contemptuous of, environmental considerations. The entire food production and distribution system has become dependent on heavy usage of fossil fuels and agricultural chemicals – pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers – and such usage is devastating the planet's ecosystems. Few believe these practices are sustainable. Yet the global agri-food industrial complex is increasingly operating without government supervision, without citizen consent, without assurances to protect the environment. These are some of the challenges that face the globe today.

4.1 Religion and solidarity: double-edged swords

What do religion and solidarity have to do with environmental degradation? Religion and social solidarity have both combated environmental degradation and have contributed to it. Such world religions as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have fostered wise, sustainable environmental practices; but they have also at times (or even at "the same time") undermined such wise practices. The relation between religion and the environment is a complicated topic.

The relation between solidarity and environmental practices is equally complicated. Social solidarity has been at the root of many strong and helpful environmental movements today. But forms of social solidarity have also brought much environmental destruction. The determination to build dams, develop and use chemical pesticides, construct coal-fire and nuclear power plants, build fleets of cars – such developments often require great collective resolve. Although such developments are not necessarily socially irresponsible, they do often lead to problematic environmental outcomes. And in any case, these developments require much collective commitment – social solidarity – to be achieved. In many contemporary cases, social solidarity is not homogenous, and we find one segment of a population committed to environmentally sustainable practices and another segment working toward unbridled economic growth – the kind of growth that may raise the "standard of living" while simultaneously causing great environmental destruction. So once again, the relation between solidarity and environmental practices is a complex one.

For the remainder of this essay, I will focus on religion and the environment. It should be kept in mind that, most of the time, religions generate strong solidarity, and hence much of what I have to say about religion and the environment could equally apply to a discussion about solidarity and the environment.

In my research, I have found evidence that religious commitment that pertains to environmentalism can serve as an occasion for individuals to experience a deepened private life and a more participatory public life. I have analytically organized this evidence – based on social scientific studies, social and political theory, religious studies, and personal interviews – into four categories that represent public and private religious responses to the environmental crisis. The four categories are as follows:

1) Environmentalism as Religion. In many ways, contemporary environmental groups and ecological movements function as a form of religion. That is, sociologically speaking, much contemporary environmentalism exhibits characteristics of religion. There are, for example, a host of environmental groups, such as the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, or Earth First! that can be said to function (from a sociological point of view) as religions. These groups offer a robust vision or way of life that can transform their members' lives.

2) Theological Perspectives on the Environment. This second category pertains to the relation between a religious tradition's beliefs and its perspectives on the natural world. Christianity and Buddhism, for example, have distinctive religious depictions of creation, nature, and the position of humans in the natural world.

3) Organized Religion and Eco-activism. Closely related to the second category, this third category pertains to the relation between religious belief and social practice. Many traditional and new religious groups – churches and synagogues, mosques and temples, Wiccan and other new religious movements – are actively engaged in environmental issues. From involvement in environmental justice to sustainable agriculture to active lobbying, many religious communities are evincing deep environmental commitments. This development has led to the creation of such new organizations as the North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology, the National Religious Partnership on the Environment, and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life. It has also animated a wide range of existing religious organizations – from Christian churches to Jewish synagogues to Buddhist retreat centers.

4) Private Spirituality and Nature. In nature writers such as Annie Dillard and Barry Lopez, in religious authors such as Thomas Berry and Terry Tempest Williams, and more generally in popular culture, there is a growing regard for what can be called the sacred sense of nature. This spirituality of nature tends not to be tied to particular religious traditions, although it is compatible with most of them. It may not be formulated in traditionally theological ways. But there is something traditional about the religious vocabulary that is employed to describe encounters with nature – concepts like healing, wonder, awe, enchantment, transcendence, reverence, immortal beauty, silence, bowing, witnessing, and mystery. There is often a connection between this spirituality of nature – the sacralization of the secular – and heightened civic participation at both local and national levels.

These categories represent opportunities for enhanced commitment to, and affection for, joining together and fostering the social, economic, and natural landscapes that sustain us. However, as I have said, religion can also promote destructive environmental practices.

5. Concluding comments

"Solidarity, religion and the environment" – these three separate yet related topics together form both a promise and a challenge. The challenge is how solidarity and religion can contribute to wise social, economic, and environmental practices for the planet. The promise is the collective strength and wisdom that solidarity and religion potentially offer us as we struggle with twenty-first century challenges.

In this article, I have attempted to do several things:

- I have argued that religion and solidarity should not be treated as anomalies in modernity, and that both religion and solidarity continue to play a significant role in local and global events; indeed, social solidarity remains an essential condition for addressing many problems that confront the globe today, including social justice and environmental degradation.
- Drawing mainly on the work of Durkheim, I have attempted to show the role solidarity plays in establishing individual rights (moral individualism), moral pluralism, and moral education.

- Still drawing on Durkheim, I illustrated the relation between solidarity and economic justice, political community, and globalization.
- Lastly, I attempted to outline the relation among religion, solidarity, and environmental degradation.

Envisioning alternatives to disturbing current global trends may appear to be an exercise in quixotic thought. Yet I firmly believe that quixotic is the view that there are no ecological limits to an extractive economy that fuels exorbitant production and anomic consumption. Fatalism, the belief that the worst aspects of globalization are inevitable, is not an especially reasonable position. Hope is more sensible, if only because it is more likely to bring the needful changes that are becoming increasingly conspicuous. This logic of hope applies to the other concerns I have raised in this article pertaining to social and economic justice. More and more people are recognizing that social and ecological dangers will persist and grow if local populations and global organizations to not work for healthy change. But in order to begin the work of change, one must hope for change. Those who care about a place will do much to protect it, and in the process they will experience the joy of working together with others, and their love of place and fellows will grow still more. My hope is that such affections are contagious. This is solidarity at its best. This is religion at its best.

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ARTICLE

Religion and the Subaltern Self: An Exploration from the Indian Context

Gnana Patrick
University of Madras, India

ABSTRACT
This paper explores the interface between religion and the contours of the subaltern self in the Indian context. While the first part of the essay discusses some of the methodological themes of the academic study of the interface, the second part points out to some salient instances of the occurrences of the interface during the pre-modern and modern contexts of India. Since the Subaltern Studies Project (SSP) is one of the significant historiographical efforts that has emerged in the recent past to explore the agency of the subaltern self, the essay begins with critically observing the way the SSP introduced the debate on subaltern agency, and goes on to explore the interface, taking cue from the view of David Arnold, one of the founding members of the SSP collective, that SSP, at the outset, 'failed to take religion seriously enough.' Basing on independent initiatives of studying religion in relation to the subaltern self, the essay goes on to argue that religion needs be approached as a sui generis reality especially when exploring from subaltern perspective, which, according to the present author, is different even from the post-colonial perspective. The second part of the essay, then, cites examples from pre-modern and modern periods, wherein individuals as mystics and religious leaders or socio-religious movements emerged as typical examples of the interfacing between religion and the subaltern self. Based on these examples, the essay concludes that religion has occurred as singular 'experiences of the subaltern self to interpret itself into emancipatory existence.'

KEYWORDS
Subaltern Studies Project, Sui Generis Approach to Religion, Subaltern Religion and Subaltern Self, Emancipatory Interpretive Existence

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gnanapat@gmail.com

I

Subaltern: the concept, the project and beyond

From the year 1982 when a *Subaltern Studies Project (SSP)* emerged with the initiatives taken by Ranajit Guha and his colleagues, the word 'subaltern' became widely known in the Indian academic and civil spheres. As we know, the SSP itself did not invent the word, but took it from its earlier usages[1], especially by Antonio Gramsci who used it during the early part of the twentieth century. Gramsci identified two layers of consciousness among the subaltern people: one, that which exists among them, on their own, giving direction or meaning to their spontaneous activity of transforming the world through their labour, and the other, that which they 'take in' (oftentimes through imposition) from those who exploit, oppress, and dominate over them. There is then a layer of native consciousness which is free, autonomous and emancipatory, and another a layer of alien consciousness, imposed from outside. This results in a 'contradictory consciousness' in the subaltern mind. As for example, the deterministic belief in fate (converging with *karma* in the Indian context), widespread among the subaltern people, goes contrary to their own wellbeing! Gramsci spoke of the possibility of the subaltern classes of people to emerge as 'agents' of their destiny only when they acquired 'critical consciousness', with the help of 'organic intellectuals' who shared the 'common sense' of the people but converted it into a 'good sense' characterised by critical historical thinking.

Having this Gramscian insight as the backdrop, the *SSP* researched upon the subaltern consciousness as well as their agency, and published in volumes (12 until now) known under the generic title *Subaltern Studies – Writings on South Asian History and Society*. In the very first volume, Guha clarified the meaning of the term 'subaltern' as a "general attribute of subordination … whether it is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way" (Guha, 1982). Contrasting it with the term 'elite', which, according to him, stood for the "dominant groups, foreign as well as indigenous"[2], Guha used the term 'subaltern' interchangeably with the term 'people', which stood for "the total Indian population" (Ibid.) differentiating itself from the dominant elite. The *SSP* revisited the then-existing writings on South Asian history to unearth aspects of subaltern agency that lay buried under the colonial, nationalist and Marxist historiographies, which were then the major historiographical paradigms. It focussed, during its initial phase, primarily upon acts of insurgence or rebellion by peasants against empires of control, the colonial empire in particular. It searched

[1] As David Ludden points out, "[I]n late-medieval English, it (the word 'subaltern') applied to vassals and peasants. By 1700, it denoted lower ranks in the military, suggesting peasant origins. By 1800, authors writing 'from a subaltern perspective' published novels and histories about military campaigns in India and America; …" (Ludden, 2001, p. 4)

[2] Guha identified the foreign dominant group consisting of sections like "British officials of the colonial state and foreign industrialists, merchants, financiers, planters, landlords and missionaries", and the indigenous dominant ones at the national and regional levels, consisting of 'biggest feudal magnates, the most important representatives of the industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie and native recruits to the uppermost levels of the bureaucracy' and the like. (Ibid., p. 8)

such documents as 'police records', 'administrative reports', 'personal diaries', and oral traditions to bring up the elements of peasants' agency that informed their native autonomous consciousness. Thus began a *project* of subaltern studies, which continues until this day with their publications to underscore the agency of the subaltern people.

While this project has initiated discussion and debate on aspects of subalternity primarily in academic circles, we find several social movements, human rights activists, civil rights advocacy initiatives, and 'organic intellectuals', pre-existing or existing parallel to the *project* and contributing in manifold ways for the empowerment and emancipation of the subaltern people in India. The work of Mahatma Phule during the nineteenth century and the contributions of B. R. Ambedkar during the twentieth century are two salient examples among the many. There are a good number of studies upon them, independent of the *SSP*. They have shed more light upon the category of subaltern, treating the latter more emphatically within the Indian specific hierarchy of caste and the conditions of subalternity generated out of it. Caste-hierarchy is perhaps the central problematic of subaltern studies in India. Even the economic problem of poverty, the gender related problem of patriarchy, the marginality of Tribal people and the multiple socio-political exclusions cannot be understood and eradicated without taking into account the way the caste-system works in the Indian society. a plethora of studies have emerged today upon the continuing struggles of the people subordinated by the caste system, especially the most oppressed groups of people called by the generic name Dalits whose life-world, with all its victimhood as well as agency, becomes the anchor of subaltern studies.

Subaltern studies and religion

'How has the *SSP* treated religion?' is a good question to begin our exploration of the interface between religion and the subaltern self in the Indian context. Gramsci, in the context of his thinking of the revolutionary action for socialist transformation, treated religion along with the 'common sense', both of which, according to him, could not produce the critical historical consciousness (individual and collective) necessary for the revolutionary praxis. Religion could not be a critical and historical consciousness premised upon a coherent thinking, because, according to him, religion went with a 'disconnect' between 'thought' and 'action', as he found in the creedal / institutional religion (rather than in religion in its 'confessional' sense)[3]. Gramsci was much worried that the institutional religion, as he experienced Catholicism in Italy, would always endeavour to keep the masses under its control and not allow them to acquire the transformative critical consciousness. However, that he bracketed out the 'confessional' religion would mean that his preoccupation was more on the workings of the institutional religion and less on religion *per se*, leaving the question open.

[3] In his own words: "… the problem of religion taken not in the confessional sense but in the secular sense of a unity of faith between a conception of the world and a corresponding norm of conduct" (Hoare & Smith, 1998, p. 326).

The volumes of *SSP* carried a few essays, which had direct or indirect references to religion. In one of the pioneering essays, Partha Chatterjee, an important member of *SSP*, related the Gramscian understanding of subaltern consciousness to the reality of caste in the Indian context, touching upon the mediatory role played by religion (Chatterjee, 1989). He wrote that, "subaltern consciousness in the specific cultural context of India cannot but contain caste as a central element in its constitution," (Ibid., p. 169) and that the centrality of caste in the subaltern consciousness worked in conjunction with religion. In order to explain this, he drew upon the arguments of Louis Dumont, as found in his well-known work, *Homo Hierarchicus* wherein Dumont had spoken of the caste system as premised upon the triple principles of 'hierarchy, separation and division of labour', which were based on the 'tensive unity' continuously being forged between the opposite principles of purity and pollution. In Dumont's words:

> [T]he three 'principles' rest on one fundamental conception and are reducible to a single true principle, namely the opposition of the pure and the impure. This opposition underlies hierarchy, which is the superiority of the pure to the impure, underlies separation because the pure and the impure must be kept separate, and underlies the division of labour because pure and impure occupations must likewise be separate. *The whole is founded on the necessary and hierarchical coexistence of the two opposites* (Dumont, 1980)

While this co-existence was not easy, Dumont observed that it was the legitimating role played by the Indian *dharma* (universal religio-ethical code) that ensured its continuance. While relating this Dumotian insight with the Gramscian theme of the two layers of consciousness', Chatterjee opines that,

> Religions which succeed in establishing a dominant and universalist moral code for society as a whole can then be looked at from two quite different standpoints. For the dominant groups it offers the necessary ideological justification for existing social divisions, makes those divisions appear non-antagonistic and holds together a potentially divided society into a single whole. For the subordinate masses, religion enters their common sense as the element, which affords them an access to a more powerful cultural order; the element of religion then coexists and intermingles in an apparently eclectic fashion with the original elements of common sense (Chatterjee, 1989, p. 172)

Chatterjee, thus, sees "religion in class-divided society as the ideological unity of two opposed tendencies – on the one hand the assertion of a universal moral code for society as a whole and on the other the rejection of this dominant code by the subordinated." (Ibid.) He goes on to add that, "[I]t is the construct of dharma which assigns to each jati its place within the system and defines the relations between jatis as the simultaneous unity of mutual separateness and mutual dependence" (Ibid., p. 180). For the subalterns, it could be religion that works to construct an alternate

dharma to overthrow the caste system; and we do find such instances of alternate religious traditions, operative among the people from the pre-modern through the modern to our contemporary era[4]. Our objective must be, as Chatterjee opines, "to develop, make explicit and unify these fragmented oppositions in order to construct a critique of Indian tradition…" of the dominant *Dharma* (Ibid., p. 185).

Chatterjee's analysis of the place of religion in the subaltern consciousness could be treated as a good example of the few cases where *SSP* treated religion in its exploration (Guha, 1986). However, David Arnold, one of the seven founding members of the SSP collective, points out in a relatively recent essay published in a volume entitled *New Subaltern Studies* that "[S]ubaltern Studies failed, at the outset, to take religion seriously enough." (Arnold, 2015) This was because, according to him, "[T]he initial Subaltern Studies' view was instrumental in the sense that religion was seen as a means of gaining access to, and locating evidence for, subaltern consciousness and collectivity," and not as a *sui generis reality*. Taking cue from Arnold's criticism, Aparna Sundar, in her study of the Catholic Church among the Mukkuvars of coastal Tamilnadu, argues for the "primary mode of religious engagement" in cultivating such values as participation in public sphere, democracy, interrogating authority, etc. (Sunder, 2014, p. 130) The church, in this case, becomes the arena for learning democratic values of participation, election, and democratic authority by which the people not merely enter into the wider public sphere, but continue to contest the lack of democracy and public sphere also within the church. Religious engagement, on its own, becomes the way 'secular' ideals are nurtured. Thus, we see the emergence of the 'new subaltern studies', which approach religion phenomenologically as a *sui generis* reality, without the modernist and instrumentalist biases. And this approach positions us in a meaningful way to study the relationship between the reality of subalternity and religion.

Exploring 'subaltern religions' on their own

It is instructive at this juncture to get to know that a good number of activist-scholars who, though not enlisted among the subaltern studies collective, have studied and contributed to the understanding of subaltern religion. Some selected examples are G. Aloysius, *Religion as Emancipatory Identity – A Buddhist Movement among the Tamils under Colonialism* (1998); *Saurabh Dube, Untouchable Pasts – Religion, Identity and Power among a Central Indian Community 1780–1950* (1998); Manu Bhagavan and Anne Feldaus, *Speaking Truth to Power* (2008); and, Gail Omvedt, *Seeking Begumpura – The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals* (2008). These studies explore the emancipatory potentials of subaltern religions, on their own.

The study by Milind Wakankar entitled, *Subalternity and Religion – The Prehistory of Dalit Empowerment in South Asia*, explores insightfully the saint-poet Kabir's verses as sites, which render the transfigurations of the holy in the lives of the subaltern people. Observing the condition of violence wherein the Dalits were / are "thrown into" by the operation of caste, he notes the "co-existence of the experience of divinity

[4] Starting with the *charvakas*, Jainism, Buddhism, *ajivikas*, the *saktas*, the *tantrics*, etc., the alternate religious traditions embodying dissent have continued to emerge in the Indian context.

and the experience of violence in daily life" of the Dalits (Wakankar, 2010, p. 8), who, however, refuse to submit themselves into "historically neutral and passive form of existence." (Ibid., p. 7) Such a refusal finds expressions in poets like Kabir in whose verses divinity and violence converge to construct a subaltern subjecthood. a mystical fountain gushing forth from the *sangamam* of Islam and 'Hindu' traditions brought forth a corpus of poems, which dwelt upon a transcendent formless God.

Such studies bear testimony to the positive relationship between religion and the emancipatory aspirations of the subaltern people.

Subaltern and post-colonial studies

It is in place here to clarify the relationship between the subaltern studies and the post-colonial studies that has emerged prominently today. Post-colonial studies, a kindred discipline to subaltern studies, has been developing in literary criticism, historiography, philosophy, cultural studies, religious studies, etc., for quite some time now[5]. Though thinkers like Achebe, Franz Fanon, and Du Bois have been bringing out the voice of the colonized in their literatures, it was the set of writings by diaspora writers like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Baba during the second half of the twentieth century, which came to be discussed in the academia as 'post-colonial' writings. The central issue being debated here is the nexus between power – colonial power to be precise, on the one hand, and, knowledge, culture, art, religion, etc., on the other. In his much debated work named *Orientalism*, Edward Said problematized the way the colonial creators of knowledge produced the knowledge of the Orient in such a way that they could instrumentalise it for their colonising agenda. Orientalism, then, was part and parcel of colonialism, and it was this that post-colonial studies explored as one of its targets. The perspective, later on, was applied to fields of literature, culture, art, and religion to critically examine the invisible hands of empires operative behind the texts, which were produced in a given historical context.

Debates are on as to whether the very term 'post-colonialism' is an appropriate one. There are those who dispute the relevance of the chronological implications of the term. They point out to the fact that empire building with the instrumentality of culture, religion, and knowledge-systems have pre-existed the types of colonialism, which emerged from Europe from sixteenth century onwards. There are others who argue that colonialism was not a monolithic category, experienced uniformly by the 'colonized' people; there were variants of colonialism, which were resisted, responded to, or even appropriated by the so-called 'colonized' people. Moreover, the way post-

[5] Some of the important contributions to postcolonial studies include: *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin; *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, by Ania Loomba; and *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: a Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. For more readings, cf. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989). Other often quoted studies by the same authors are Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London: Routledge, 2001), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin, *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1995), and Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2002).

colonialism premised itself upon a commonality of the experience of colonisation starting with North America, Canada, and Australia, to the 'third' world countries from Asia, Africa and South America 'homogenises' the experience of colonisation without due consideration to the specifics of the varying contexts. For example, the Indian experience of colonisation, in a context of the hegemony of the caste, can never be equated with North American or Australian colonial experiences. And therefore, speaking of exploitation, oppression and domination, even in terms of the epistemic empires, need to be context-specific.

There are several aspects of convergence between the post-colonial and the subaltern studies. Both treat the subject as 'dominated over', and both discuss the subject's conditions of subordination in terms of her / his consciousness. For example, Gayatri Spivak, one of the pioneering trio of the post-colonial studies in academic circles, treats the conditions of subalternity as part of the post-colonial critique of coloniality and its empire in her famous question, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'. The voice of the subaltern as the colonized, according to her, is irretrievably lost for contemporary historiography, and the subaltern consciousness, buried under layers of external consciousness cannot stand up. Despite the Spivakian provocative pessimism, the general thrust of post-colonial and subaltern studies is to highlight aspects of agency found among the subordinated or colonized in conditions of subalternity or coloniality.

However, the 'universalizing' tendency of post-colonial critique tends to leave context-specific power-dynamics like caste in India easily elided. Accordingly the subaltern approach to religions and their texts, as they have emerged in the Indian context, is unique and distinguishes itself from the post-colonial approach at least upon the following counts: (1) Subaltern studies in the Indian context deals with the question of subordination especially as it obtains in a hierarchical social condition characterised by the reality of caste, while post-colonialism looks at the universal reality of epistemic and cultural domination as they obtain globally in situations where empires are at work. (2) The reality of caste is more enduring across historical stages of life. The fact that the identity of caste is fixed by birth, and that one cannot wish for changing one's caste, speaks for the truth of its non-negotiability. But, the situation of being colonised, despite the fact that it leaves traces of subordination which are relatively difficult to erase, goes with less 'ascriptivity' and systemic intransigence than caste. For example, identities based on race, colour, gender and caste are more ascriptive and less negotiable than those based on empires, coloniality, first-third worlds, poverty, north – south, etc. Collapsing the subaltern discourse into that of the post-colonial can happen only at the peril of making the emancipatory subaltern discourse dampened.

II

Religion and the subaltern self in Indian history

the argument of this essay is that religion, considered on its own, could be an emancipatory experience for the subaltern self. The 'Dalit Self' is the typical example of a subordinated self in the Indian context, and it would do well to explore the role of

religion in the history of the Dalit self. Nothing can be more appropriate than taking a look at some of the occurrences of religion in the lives of Dalit individuals and movements:

1. Shankar Deva (15th century) of Assam was a good example of a subaltern religious self (Fuchs, 1992)[6]. Some of his verses, whose translation is given below, make a point that a person, even if he / she eats 'dog's meat' or not able to execute ritual sacrifices because of ritual exclusions, 'purifies himself / herself by singing the name of God':

   > The *mlechhas* who eat dogs purify themselves by singing the name of God.
   >
   > The *Chandala* who only sings the name of Hari will properly execute the function of sacrifice…
   >
   > That *Chandala* at the tip of whose tongue there is the message of Hari is to be placed in the highest estimation…
   >
   > One is an ignorant boor who vilifies a *Chandala* who has sung the name of Hari (Ibid.).

Shankar Deva's "creed consisted essentially in *Namkirtan*, i. e., keeping the memory of God in mind and heart, and expressing one's love and devotion to God externally by acts of praise and worship." (Ibid., p. 191) Message of equality was an essential part of the religiosity of Shankar Deva. His followers "felt that they belonged to a community to which high and low were treated alike, where all treated each other as brothers and equals." (Ibid., p. 192) The Brahmins complained against Shankar Deva to the king that he "did not sacrifice to the gods; he did not observe the caste rules; and he treated the Brahmins with disrespect." (Ibid., p. 193) Shankar Deva withstood the persecutions, and finally became a well-celebrated subaltern saint to be remembered even to this day by festivities and other religious activities.

2. Ravidas was a pioneering saint-poet of the fifteenth century from the Chamar community in North India to give leadership to the Chamars to construct a new identity for them. He adopted the brahminic markers like the sacred thread, *tilak*, etc., even while continuing to do his job as a cobbler. His very appearance challenged the Brahmins, and motivated the Chamars to take on a new identity. He chose poetry and religion as vehicles of social protest.
3. A nineteenth century illiterate mystic, Vaikuntasamy, religiously treated the bodily selves of the Shanars, a subaltern community, for an experience of emancipatory identity. The mystic instituted rituals, which treated the people bodily, a ritual known as *Thuvayal Thavasu* ('washing penance') was a case in point. It was a context wherein the Shanars were considered "untouchable, un-seeable, and un-approachable", and were chased away from public places on account of these unmeaning restrictions. It was in this context that

[6] Cf. Stephen Fuchs, *Godmen on the Warpath – A Study of Messianic Movements in India* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1992), 187 ff.

Vaikundasamy required them to undertake this *thavasu* (penance). Further, on, in the same context wherein these people were violently denied the right to wear cloths to cover their upper bosom, there arose in his religious assembly a practice of "worshipping" God in a mirror, with a headgear on. It treated the bodily self of the Shanars with a poignant religiosity, which resulted in a liberated sense of the self.

4. Pundit C. Iyothee Doss (1845–1914) is yet another inspiring Dalit self that sought to interpret its existence into emancipation through its religiously oriented hermeneutical propensity. Spurred by a "deep faith in God" (Sanna, 2007, p. 25), he explored the *Advaitic* vision not merely to satisfy his personal religio-philosophical quest, but also to find in it a remedy for the social discriminatory system. However, his struggle for a dignified social existence kept leading him to search for a more effectively transformative religion, and after reading a booklet given by a Buddhist bhikku, he was drawn to Buddhism, and that became his religious home for life. The Pundit embarked upon the task of constructing a variant of Buddhism known as the "Tamil Buddhism", with the help of Tamil classical literatures. He involved himself in a lifetime hermeneutical task of deconstructing the existing myths, *puranic* tales, and even popular religious practices in order to disclose their original Buddhist character and content, which are liberative.

The religious pursuit of the Pundit went with a sense of enquiry and wisdom. He instructed his readers, or followers, to 'inquire' into everything – beliefs, practices, etc., until they got satisfactory answers to enquiry, experience and sight. He treated experience and vision as two epistemological criteria for the truthfulness of claims – religious or otherwise. He said, "Buddha *thanmam* even if handed down by your great grandfather or grandfather, question it in your own enquiry and experience. If you realise its truth that it would lead to your descendant's, co-villager's and co-countrymen's welfare then believe in it; but if found worthless in your enquiry and experience, leave it; that is why Budhha *thanmam* is named as the true *thanmam* (*meyyaram*)" (Ibid., p. 131) an enquiring religion.

The Pundit's spirit of enquiry shined forth in "deconstructing" some of the age-old *puranic* role models, the role model of Harichandra being the salient one among them. Needless to state the height of normativity this character had obtained in the popular Indian ethos for truthfulness. Gandhi is said to have learned his lesson of truthfulness from listening to the story of Harischandra. The Pundit was quite incisive in deconstructing this 'myth' of the truthfulness of Harichandra. He published an article with the title, "The Story of Harichandra's Truthfulness and the Details of how he became a Liar". He found this role-model characterised with umpteen number of lies, disloyalty to people, anti-women stances, and cowardice even to the extent of not being able to protect his wife. The Pundit was concerned about the concepts of 'truthfulness' and 'lie' that were being discussed in this *puranic* tale. He was agitated at the fact that Harishchandra was extolled as truthful king because he, through trial and tribulations, kept his word to the Brahmins, but, on the other hand, disgracefully

denied the request of two women from the lowly community. This contradiction in the characterisation makes Harishchandra a liar, and problematises the very neutrality of the concepts of truth and lie[7]. He accuses the proponents of the story of lacking in discernment of truth and lie, and of propagating such lies in order to manipulate and cheat the gullible.

The Pundit followed a uniquely linguistic approach, aided by his amazing skill to alliteratively search for the semantics of a given linguistic code, and by his grammatically informed wide knowledge of the classical Tamil literary corpus. It was laudable that he could trace out meanings from such classics as *Manimekalai*, *Sudamani*, *Pinkalai Nikandu*, *Veerasoliam*, *Seevakasinthamani*, *Tirukural*, *Silapathikaram*, *Gnanavetti*, *Muthurai*, *Korkaivendan*, and many more. It was not only the knowledge of the literary sources that gave the uniqueness to his linguistic approach, but also a deep confidence in approaching reality through language. Whether be it religious or social domain, he believed in the power of the language to work out transformations. Perhaps, it was this core confidence, which spontaneously oriented him towards a religious solution to social problems, rather than social remedies on their own. He worked with the claim that the 'genuine knowledge of the real and original meaning of the linguistic codes' (words or phrases) would result in ethical behaviour and religious observances resulting in justice, peace and harmony to the wider society, and to the oppressed in particular.

5. *Ad Dharm*, emergent among the Dalits during the early part of the twentieth century, was a "movement in north-western India that aimed at securing a respectable place for the Dalits through cultural transformation, spiritual regeneration, and political assertion…" (Ram, 2004, p. 900). This "movement aimed at securing a distinct identity for the Dalits, independent of both the Hindu and Sikh religions. Its central motif was that Untouchables constituted a *qaum* (community), a distinct religious grouping similar to that of Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs, which had existed since time immemorial." (Ibid.) This "movement, led by Mangoo Ram, aimed at making Dalits realize their communal pride (*qaumiat*), religion (*mazhab*), and capability for organization (*majlis*), which had hitherto laid buried under the burden of untouchability." (Ibid., p. 901) It "brought about cultural transformation in the lives of Untouchables in Punjab through its emphasis on moral principles. Through promoting a moral code of conduct, the movement tried to bring a sense of self-respect to the state's Untouchables." (Ibid.)

6. Another good example of the subaltern self, pursuing an interpretive religious avenue for egalitarianism was Mahatma Phule (1827–1890). Phule believed in a Creator God – a God who created everything, to whom, we in turn have to offer our gifts in gratitude in the form of 'righteous conduct of treating one another with freedom, dignity and fraternity'. He wrote 33 *akhandas*[8] wherein he expounded

[7] The Pundit contends, "[I]t looks as if there are 'Brahmin truth and lies' on the one hand, and 'Paraiyar truth and lies' on the other hand." (Ibid., p. 95)

[8] Phule used the term 'akanda' instead of the existing word 'abhanga', which means a devotional poetry.

the ethical conduct as a response to the Creator's gift of creation. In his *Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak*[9], he presents these *akhandas*, which dwell upon the criteria for the practice of righteous conduct. Some of the salient ones are:

- Those who admit that men and women have been born independent from birth and are capable of enjoying every right, can be said to practise righteous conduct;
- Those who do not worship the stars and stones, but have respect for the *Nirmik* (Creator) of the universe can be said to practise righteous conduct;
- Those who do not let other creatures enjoy all the things created by the Creator, but offer them in worship to the *Nirmik*, cannot be said to practise righteous conduct;
- Those who express gratitude to the creator, who has created all things, which we are using in this world, can be said to practise righteous conduct (Malik-Goure, 2013, p. 67).

Phule, thus, related faith in a creator God with the ethical duty of treating everyone as equal.

7. The early twentieth century *Satnami*[10] movement of the Chamar community in North India is yet another example of forging an emancipatory self through religion. They were worshippers of the "true name of God." Ghasi Das, who claimed a "divine mission and authority" to fight for the human rights of the Chamars, initiated this *Satnami* movement, for, as in the words of Stephen Fuchs,

> … though the Chamars of Chattisgarh had abandoned their former dishonourable trade as tanners and leather-workers and taken to farming and at the same time strictly observed the traditional Hindu food taboos and rules of behaviour, the higher castes continued to treat them as impure castes with whom they wanted to have no dealings. This social discrimination the Chamars felt the more keenly since by hard work and frugal living they had become fairly prosperous and were in no way inferior to the other farming classes of Chhattisgarh (Fuches, 1992, pp. 218–219).

In this context, Ghasi Das, an extraordinarily spiritual man, initiated the *Satnami* movement by proclaiming seven precepts, which included "abstinence from liquor, meat, and certain red vegetables such as lentils, chillies and tomatoes, because they had the colour of blood; the abolition of idol worship; … the worship of one solitary and supreme God," etc. "The *Satnamis* were bidden to cast all idols from their homes, to dispense with temples and fixed prayers, but they were permitted to reverence the sun, as representing the deity… caste was abolished and all men were to be socially equal…" (Ibid., pp. 220–221). As Saurabh Dube, one of the early scholars to study this movement, opines:

[9] It was written by Phule in Marathi language, and its translation in English would be 'Book of the Universally True Religion'.

[10] *Satnami* literally means 'the true name'.

> The close connection between divine, social and ritual hierarchies located the Chamars at the margins of the caste order, and excluded them from Hindu temples. Ghasidas is believed to have thrown the idols of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon onto a rubbish heap. The rejection of these deities and of the authority of Brahman specialists of the sacred, of temples and the Hindu puja (worship) offered in them was accompanied by the call to believe only in a formless god, *satnam* (true name). The new sect was called *Satnampath* and its members, *Satnamis*. (Dube, 1998, p. 1)

This religious movement contributed much to the emancipatory experience of the subaltern self in the Chattisgarh region of North India.

8. B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956), the exemplary subaltern individual to play a vital role in the formation of the modern constitutional State of India, turned to religion in his search for freedom to the subalterns. His search for a transformative religion landed him in Buddhism, which opened up a hermeneutical engagement for his self. In interpreting Buddhism, he envisioned a Dalit self, assertive, autonomous, free, and responsible. He took a conscious and bold decision to convert to Buddhism. At the time of conversion, he rhetorically said: "If you want to gain self-respect, change your religion; If you want to create a co-operating society, change your religion; If you want power, change your religion; If you want equality, change your religion; If you want independence, change your religion; If you want to make the world in which you live happy, change your religion…" (Ganguly, 2002, p. 334)

Ambedkar's conversion brings to the fore certain questions. As Debjani Ganguly, a post-colonial writer has formulated: "How does one then read this paradox of a secular modem intellectual and political activist seeking recourse to rhetorical devices-genealogies, parables, tales-within-tales-that are the prerogative of men belonging to "archaic" societies?" (Ibid., p. 335). Ganguly herself attempts an answer: "Ambedkar's history-as-critique … transforms the given dominant historiographical mode (i. e., Nationalist and Rationalist) from an *authoritative* one to an internally *persuasive* one." (Ibid.) The power and need of persuasion can much be appreciated in our post-linguistic-turn ethos that values the cultural power for transformation. Ambedkar intuitively took recourse to a source of cultural power with a transcendental reference (religion) that could propose a free self, capable of taking on the dominant self-projected by the traditional Hindu religio-cultural system.

9. Conversion to Christianity and Islam was the other option the Dalit self explored in its saga of struggle for freedom. In spite of the adverse impact of casteism within Christianity, one can still state that Christianity did offer opportunities for the social dignity of the embodied Dalit self. That Christianity mediated a sense of "touchability" of the body is a case in point. The "touchability" Christianity weaned it out from its confinement within an untouchable-touchable ritualised binary. Its religiosity dwelt upon "healing" of the body (Jesus' touching of the

lepers and healing is typical); its theology dwelt upon the possibility of the redemption of the "flesh"; its religious calendar gave importance to the "passion" and bodily resurrection of Jesus; the missionaries were meat-eaters, and therefore identified themselves with the meat-eating Dalits in dietary system; and so on. These aspects of engagement with the body and the religious provision of redemption by divine grace could be said to resonate well with the aspirations for the "touchability" for the Dalit self. It is in place to note here an observation made by Mathew N. Schumalz in his account of the transformation of a "Dalit" Christian (John Masih) to become a charismatic Catholic[11]. In his words, "the most crucial aspect of charismatic Catholicism was its denial of untouchability. When John moved through the audience at prayer meetings, he laid hands on all who came within his reach. Once being of 'something' that defiled, John now became 'someone' who healed." (Schmalz, 2010, p. 194)

Bodily experience of the self, or of an embodied self, is part and parcel of the life-reality of the Dalits. Their person has been constructed, reinforced, and reproduced within a *varna* / caste scheme of reality in terms of their bodily self. Their physic (raciality) has been essentialised through ritual, literary, religious, cultural and social behaviour to the extent of being identified with an unvarying constant of impurity resulting in chronic untouchability; their bodies have been relentlessly reproduced as 'labouring bodies' so as to be ready for rendering their physical labour to the maintainance of a society that is run by a "pure" bodied section of the people (Chatterjee, 1989); their dignity has been affronted with 'untouchability, unseeability and unapproachability' because of the empirical experience of the materiality of their bodies; civil liberties and their freedom of movement have been denied on account primarily of their physicality of existence. It is then nothing but an existential fact that the experience of self for the Dalit is singularly and more acutely embodied than for other classes of people in India. Negativity in their living has got accumulated primarily in terms of their body, a thing that had / has become a predicament rather than a facility. a sense of being "imprisoned" in a world wherein the everyday aesthetics, 'religiosity', opportunities, and even ethics smacks of a scheme of *varna*-based casteism is inescapable for the Dalits.

[11] Schmalz studies John Masih's (a Dalit) religious vision, which "reflect and embody his struggle to undo the place of untouchability. In his effort, he moves through a succession of spaces in which he progressively assumes or deploys new identities for himself" (187–8). "John's family and many Catholics felt they had attained a different kind of place in which they could experience a relative autonomy in their distance from their identity as Chamars." (189) John became a healer and practised a kind of Catholicism "that allowed him to use the power of words to effect the transformation of self. But John's transformation of self was not a simple change in public persona. Instead, it was an appropriation of an inspired and authoritative identity that could be deployed against the oppressive place of life as a Chamar." (190) "While John did not write poetry, he did have a large collection of aphorisms that he composed. Many of the aphorisms had clear Christian meanings: 'if you become trapped "in a cobweb", call out to The Lord… What unified all of these disparate aphorisms was their focus on general notions of selfhood or identity. Indeed, the sequentially numbered aphorisms constituted a record of John's own spiritual epiphanies; they were flashes of self-knowledge arranged in a staccato testimony of insight." (192–3) "These aphorisms were not just tools for memory and mediation; they were weapons for controversy and contestation." (193)

This pathos-filled condition of life generates a search among the Dalits for different avenues to exist, to have a meaningful sense of one's person, to strike respectful relationships, and so on. Religion had been an intimate ally in this search.

By way of concluding: subaltern self and religion in India

Above-mentioned subaltern individuals and movements are some typical examples of the resurgent Dalit selves that manifested in the history of Indian religions. During the pre-modern and the modern periods, religion had indeed been integrated as a resource for the emancipatory project of the Dalit self. In the traditional context, against the school of *jnana-marga*, for example the *advaitic* philosophical systems, which presented a pursuit for an immutable universal ideal self (*atman*), a pursuit from which the subaltern people were excluded, the Dalit saints took to *bhakti* religiosity, premised on a relationality between the *bhakta* and the deity, and through their religious poems and activities, expressed a possibility for the Dalit self to present itself in history, or as per the Gramscian insight, to emerge out of the 'contradictory consciousness' imposed upon them by the dominant.

During the modern era, various features of the Enlightenment got integrated with religion in the construction of the emancipatory Dalit self. Dr. Ambedkar was a good example. Enlightenment values of individual autonomy, equality, justice, liberty, etc., acquired through the western modern education, had matured in him to a level of inspiring radical protest against the 'demeaning' social conditions of the Dalits. They made him a radical interrogator of the dominant religious myths, which reproduced a hierarchical society. While coming out against the dominating Brahminic religion on the one hand, Ambedkar experienced the positivity of religion, in its emanicpatory dimension. It was the latter that steered his person towards an interpretive experience of Buddhism. Religion could be found to be at its best when it inspires a person or a collective to be involved in an interpretive experience of existence. Needless to say that most of the initiators of religions have been not 'founders' in any juridical sense, but interpreters of existing religions. Ambedkar's interpretive confidence cannot be subsumed under an instrumentalist reasoning of a modernist self; but it was a relentlessly searching self that came to religion, the wellspring of transcendence, to nurture the emancipatory identity of the Dalits[12]. Ambedkar, thus, in converting to Buddhism was fulfilling less a project of his modern self than entering into a decisive moment in his search for alternatives that could sustain the emancipatory selves of the Dalits. Ambedkar's modernity, thus, was an open-ended, subaltern modernity, that had radical openness to life, and to all that it offers, including the religious experience[13].

[12] It is in place to note that a contemporary Dalit activist Jignesh Mevani quotes Ambedkar precisely on this point of connection between religion and caste as "the root of the caste system is religion attached to varna and ashram; and the root of the varnashram is Brahminical religion…" (Rajasekaran, 2017, p. 46).

[13] It is insightful to note the fact that in most of the cases of these subaltern leaders, saints, mystics, and movements, proclamation of faith in a supreme God went along with the ethical claim of equality between human beings. The one God becomes the source of a dialogically forged universality of an egalitarian self. And this faith went with the denunciation of idols, rituals, and priesthood, which stood as the pillars of the caste-based hierarchical society.

Religion appears to be an effective interpretive potential for the subaltern self to take on the caste system, which remains deeply entrenched into the collective consciousness, with its own archetypal binary of purity and pollution. The western Enlightenment modernity empowered the Dalit-self up to a point, as it occurred in Ambedkar during his early development. However, it fell short of taking on the metaphysics of caste. Religion, on the other hand, with its metaphysical depth and transcendental ideal, could give the strength for an emancipatory identity to be situated in its alternate cosmogony and utopia. In its linguistic as well as embodied dimensions, religion came into relief as the subaltern self-interpreted itself into emancipation.

Glossary

Ad Dharm – original ethical religion.

Akandas – devotional poetry.

Atman – soul, self, the eternally immutable inner reality.

Advaita – 'Non-dualism', one of the central doctrines of classical Indian philosophical systems; *advaitic* is the adjective.

Bhakti – devotion, piety; *bhakta* – devotee.

Dharma – universal ethical religion.

Dhamma – the Buddhist rendering of the Sanskritic word Dharma; *Thanmam* is a Tamil rendering of the same word; *meyaram*, a Tamil word to mean 'true ethics'.

Dalit – literally, the word 'Dalit' means 'the broken'; in the Indian society, it stands for a conglomerate of a number of communities, which have suffered 'caste' oppression in historical past and continue to suffer, in subtler forms, until this day.

Karma – an Indic belief which holds that actions of a previous birth accrue to a person in the succeeding birth in the form of 'karma'; its implied beliefs are 'rebirth', or 'cycles of rebirth', and 'transmigration of souls'.

Mlechas – a derogatory term for foreigners.

Chandalas – a 'lower caste' that deals with removal of corpuses.

Hari – God Vishnu.

Jnana marga – path of knowledge / wisdom.

Purana – literally 'ancient tradition'; however, it stands for major epics of Ramayana and Mahabharatha; *puranic* is the adjective.

Sangamam – confluence.

Thuvayal Thavasu – It means literally "washing penance"; it was a ritual requiring the adherents to wash themselves, their cloths, etc., in a ritual ambience as a form of penance.

Thavasu – penance.

Tilak – a vermillion mark at the centre of the forehead.

Varna – literally means 'colour'; stands for the archetypal division of caste.

Vaishnavism – one of the two major theistic religious traditions of India; worships Vishnu as the supreme deity.

Vittobha / Vitthala – a Hindu god, considered as a manifestation of *Krishna*, an avatar (incarnation) of Vishnu.

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BOOK REVIEW

Post-Protestantism: Contemporary Exclusions, Critical Theology and Reformation 500 in the Context of the Phenomenon of the "Emerging Church"

Anatoliy Denysenko
National Pedagogical Dragomanov University, Kiev, Ukraine

"How are you gonna be a revolutionary if you're such a traditionalist?"
(La-La Land, 2016)

In 2016, the compilers of the Oxford dictionary declared their Word of the Year to be "post-truth". It will soon become known which term will become the marker of 2017. But this is not the main topic of the present discussion. I venture to suggest that one of the most important terms for thinking Protestants in the year in which 500 years of the Reformation is celebrated (or, rather, remembered) is the term "post-Protestantism" (Longbons, 2013). I am convinced that this word represents a watershed between the Protestantism that we already know – fundamentalist, conservative, denominational, modernist – and a Protestantism, which (at least in Ukraine) is only just emerging: post-fundamentalist, post-conservative, post-denominational and post-modernist.

Following the publication of first the Russian and then the Ukrainian version of the book entitled *The Emerging Church* by Roman Soloviy, Pentecostal author and Head of the Research Centre of the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association (EAAA) (Soloviy, 2014), a revised version of Soloviy's argument is now presented under the updated title *The Phenomenon of the Emerging Church*[1] (Soloviy, 2017) (the book was published with the support of the EAAA Research Centre). As was the case two years ago, this work can today be considered one of the most important books not only in the Ukrainian (post-) Protestant theological environment, but also in the ecclesiastical sphere of the

[1] Soloviy, R. (2017). *Fenomen poiavliaiushcheisia tserkvi v kontekste teologicheskikh i ekklesiologicheskikh transformatsii v sovremennom zapadnom protestantizme* [The phenomenon of the emerging church in the context of the theological and ecclesiastical transformations in contemporary Western Protestantism]. Kiev: Dikh i Litera.

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anatoliy.denysenko@gmail.com

evangelical communities of the post-Soviet space. I am certain that the topics that achieve definition in this work will be the subject of many discussions at pastoral conferences and episcopal meetings, as well as in academic circles.

By "post-Protestantism," I refer to the phenomenon of postmodern ecclesiology, about which Soloviy writes in detail. By its very existence, the phenomenon of the emerging church reminds us that Christianity has already crossed the boundary of Protestantism and passed into the era of post-Protestantism. Moreover, this comes at a time when Protestants of the post-Soviet space are, at best, standing still, and, at worst, looking back, hoping to tie in their current practice to the experience of the early Church. It turns out that if you cannot say anything new and when you cannot adapt your "own" faith to a changing world, then the outcome consists in the so-called turn *ad fontes* ("to the origins"). This is what is referred to in terms of a flight to the (abstract) ideal early Church and (fictitious) impeccable beliefs of the first Christians.

Instead of constantly looking back, one should look to the future, not for the purposes of establishing oneself in modernity, but instead with the goal of adapting oneself to current practice – or, what is more likely, also adapt oneself to the future – which our Protestants somehow cannot embrace. Today our notions are constructed around postmodern culture, not only in terms of the world around us, but also as concerns the Church. This thought is perhaps the most important one expressed in the book *The Phenomenon of the Emerging Church*. The author writes: "Postmodernism increasingly defines the cultural space of our time. How should evangelical theology take cognisance of this cultural situation?" (Soloviy 2017, p. 6) Soloviy, considering the worldview outlook, theological and ecclesiological features of the emerging church, indicates that one of its main advantages consists in its emphasis on the need to formulate new ways of expressing the Gospel in contemporary culture (Ibid., p. 315). The fact that the emerging church has an inherently dissenting character, directed against modernism and its influence on Christianity (Ibid., p. 317), points to its post-Protestant character.

It is widely believed that the decline of spirituality in society around the time of the Reformation, exacerbated by the toxic behaviour of the Church, resulted in the formation of a new principle, which we now refer to as the "Protestant principle". This principle is enshrined in the constant need of the church to engage in self-reflection, to take a critical attitude towards its practice, and experience a constant thirst for reform. On the one hand, the reformers placed an emphasis on the personal choices of an individual person as opposed to the authority and tradition of the institution of the Church. On the other hand, we should not forget that Protestantism reached its apogee during the time of modernity, i. e. exactly the culmination of that against which the postmodern critique is directed. From a cultural point of view, then, the era of Protestantism represents a time of enlightenment, rationality and science. On the one hand, Protestantism – as, in principle, Western ideology *per se* – is fundamentally modern in the sense of its assertion of the primacy of human freedom over any tradition, church authority (or, for that matter, any other form of hierarchical authority). On the other

hand, the very strong emphasis on rationality became a kind of impetus for the birth of the so-called post-denominational "free" churches, which rejected the episcopal (like any other hierarchical) form of government, but at the same time as agreeing with the fundamental principles of Protestantism. It is with exactly such trends in modern ecclesiology that the author of *The Phenomenon of the Emerging Church* is concerned.

Post-Protestantism also characterises the emergence in the theological academic environment of the late 20th to early 21st centuries of such trends as post-liberalism, radical orthodoxy and ecumenism, which tried to take a more holistic, less individualistic, approach to seeing the Christian tradition as a whole. Here, the individualistic approach is presented as characterised by isolation and the creation of so-called theological and ecclesiological ghettos. Soloviy's book, if read in the context of the Reformation commemoration, encourages the assumption that the biggest mistake of modern conservative Protestants (including post-Soviet) is nostalgia for the last "golden age" of biblical Christianity.

While Luther, Calvin and other reformers were known for their openness to the new, advocated dialogue with the modern world, accepted the challenges of the cultural paradigm of their time, and even in some areas were ahead of the curve, post-Soviet Protestants tend to dwell in the past, living off the legacy of Christians who suffered for their faith during the times of the USSR. When, in accepting the challenges of the present, contemporary Western Christianity is attempting to build a tolerable, future-oriented theology and ecclesiology, we are still bogged down with details concerning the Eucharist of the early church.

The well-known German-American theologian Paul Tillich once jotted down in his sermon *Forget and be Forgotten* the following thoughts: "Life could not continue without rejecting the past in the past", "Life uses the past and past battles to simultaneously break through to one's own renewal." (Tillich, 2009) Existing nations, writes Tillich, were not able to discard anything from their heritage; thus, the path to progress was closed to them until the burden of the past broke down its present leading to their demise. Sometimes (even in the context of the Reformation commemoration) we need to ask ourselves: is not the Christian church also excessively burdened by its past and its failure to break down its present? (Ibid., p. 263).

In his book *The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity*, the American professor of Religious Studies Karl Raschke sets out his ideas about the "next Reformation", which, according to him, will by its nature have a post-denominational character. Raschke describes Luther as a man who was not of his time: he was neither a scholastic – that is to say, an academic theologian, wedded to Aristotelian philosophy – nor a humanist in love with Greek or Latin literature. His passion was the Bible, which he studied alongside the Church; the latter, however, though making a concerted attempt to make its message accessible to the contemporary world, was not as meticulous in its approach as Luther himself was. Raschke contends that, according to the standards of his time, Luther would be considered a postmodernist (Raschke, 2005). The Reformation

itself may be seen as a reaction against modernism in its medieval manifestation; the word "modern" comes from the Latin *moderna*, which means "only just" or "just now" (Ibid., p. 110). Reformation, in essence, was a 16th century version of deconstruction (Derrida's terms).

Soloviy dedicated 300 pages of text to a discussion of post-conservative Christianity, which, according to him, is best reflected in the practices of the group referred to as the "emerging church". This text informs us that the movement represents not so much a return to the authentic biblical and theological origins – or even to the Bible as a single guide to faith and practice – but rather consists in a redirection of our attention towards a less modernist (rationalist) approach, in keeping with the culture of postmodernity. In bypassing traditional evangelical theology, this approach offers an alternative, more sustainable post-conservative path.

The origins of the term "emerging church" are derived from the so-called *Emergent Village*, a group of churches that began to coalesce in the 1990s due to a general sense of disillusionment and disappointment in the regular church institutions of the late 20th century. The acknowledged father of the "emerging church" is the American pastor Brian McClaren, who, in his pastoral work, tried to reach out people who had no church affiliations (Ibid., p. 273). The titles of McLaren's books refer to topics that are quintessentially representative of the "emerging church": *The Church on the Other Side (2009); Everything Must Change (2009); a Generous Orthodoxy (2009); a New Kind of Christian (2010); The Last Word and the Word after That (2013)*.

The New Testament is considered by representatives of the "leading churches" as a kind of visual aid for understanding how the early church was able to adapt and evolve in its contemporary world, taking rapid changes into its stride to boldly overcome arising challenges. The Holy Scripture represents the recorded Word of God, which tells how the ancient faith community reacted to situations on the basis of one life context or another. For McLaren, the Church is understood as "a society that shapes disciples who work for the liberation and healing of this world, based on a relationship with Jesus and the glad tidings of the Gospels." (Smith, 2014) The new ecclesiology shows little interest in any the following traditional questions: the nature of the church, the foundations of the church, the church structure, or a different understanding of what the form of government of the church should be. The question of denominational membership is also something that is decidedly not on the agenda. All this is due to the fact that the social group behind what the "emerging church" is trying to achieve is essentially postmodern in its perceptions of the world. All these secondary themes are only of interest to the post-Soviet evangelical community to the extent that it continues to cling to modernist constructions and be guided by its existing precepts.

Although McLaren does not provide an evaluation of the phenomenon of the "emerging church", the attentive reader may note that the representatives of this movement, like those during the Reformation, call for a new theology within the new church, thanks to which a new paradigm could be created by means of

which people who are not already interested in Christ would become interested and the good news about Jesus could be told to unbelievers in a new way. Given the theory and practice of the "emerging church", it is reasonable to assume that in the 21st century it will be the modern mainstream Protestant church that will be identified as representative of the force against which Luther railed, and that the postmodern ecclesiology with its critical theology, which is expressed in a struggle against established concepts and practices, and, corresponding to the spirit of the Reformation, will act as the spiritual descendant of Luther. Notwithstanding the French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard's definition of postmodernism as a suspicion of metanarratives, the Reformation of the monk Luther can be considered as nothing more than a suspicion of the metanarrative of his own church. Like Luther, postmodernism challenges all "comprehensive" or "totalitarian" schemes for explaining reality or claims regarding the status of truth and authority. Such metanarratives include not only political and social ideas, but also religious worldviews, metaphysical philosophies and even complex scientific theories (Olson, 2007).

The question facing Protestants in the year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is rather striking: what are we protesting against today? For the inheritors of the Reformation, the Catholic Church and its practices are no longer the enemy. On the contrary, in some spheres of service, closer cooperation between the two branches of Christianity is increasingly taking place. Into which temple, then, should contemporary reformers enter; who needs to be thrown out of it; whose tables are to be turned over? When all is said and done, on which door is it necessary to nail the 95 theses of today's world? Clearly, everyone must answer this question for him- or herself. However, I will assume the religious postmodernism, which we are only just starting to understand today, is precisely the embodiment of the spirit of the Reformation. Luther recalled that authentic theological thinking revolves around the cross, the Gospels and grace, not self-righteousness, metaphysical debates or the law.

The next Reformation, which I believe is already gradually taking place in the hearts and minds of the young generation of evangelical believers (at least, those not affected by fundamentalism), will occur: (**a**) in an atmosphere of radical humility before the Kierkegaardian "paradox," (**b**) with a rejection of the propositional theory of truth, (c) in the absence of pride, not only in our lives, but also in our thoughts (Raschke, 2005). The pagans of the first century considered Christianity a manifestation of atheism, and that its argumentation was illogical and contradictory. The Roman authorities did not respect Christians. Today's post-Protestantism is referred to in terms of liberalism and even as the first steps towards atheism. Ossified church structures may not respect it, often ridiculing it or considering it provocative and harmful. Nevertheless, post-Protestantism, in the form of an "emerging church", constitutes the starting point of a new theology, which by its inherent nature will be both critical in its outlook and global in its aspect (Raschke, 2016).

November 3, 2017

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More authors	Include all names up to seven. If there are more than seven authors, list the first six with an ellipsis before the last. Author, M., Author, B., Author, E., Author, G., Author, D., Author, R., …, Author, P. (2001).
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Forthcoming article	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (in press). Title of article. *Title of Journal*. doi:xx.xxxxxxxxx
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Other reference types	
Patent	Cho, S. T. (2005). U.S. Patent No. 6,980,855. Washington, DC: U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.
Map	London Mapping Co. (Cartographer). (1960). Street map. [Map]. Retrieved from http://www.londonmapping.co.uk/maps/xxxxx.pdf
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Computer program	Rightsholder, A. A. (2010). *Title of program* (Version number) [Description of form]. Location: Name of producer. Name of software (Version Number) [Computer software]. Location: Publisher. If the program can be downloaded or ordered from a website, give this information in place of the publication information.

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Факс: +7 (343) 358-93-06
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