

Russian Orthodoxy and the Soviet KGB

by Robert Dreyfuss, Middle East Editor

No political intelligence specialist or analyst of Soviet, East European, or Middle East affairs can claim to have even a rudimentary competence in the field without a basic understanding of the nature and activities of the Russian Orthodox Church and the network associated with the Eastern Orthodox Churches of the Balkans and Middle East.

The hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church is the meeting place for a complex web of secret-service cooperation among, principally, the Soviet KGB, the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), and Israel's Mossad. For the past 100 years and more, the covert side of London-Moscow relations have operated chiefly through the diplomatic and ecumenical contacts among the Russian and Eastern Orthodox churches and the official Anglican Church of England. This is equally the case both before and after the Great October 1917 Bolshevik Communist Revolution.

Aside from the Soviet-British-Israeli interface around the Orthodox Church hierarchy, it is this network that operates in close conjunction with the Jesuit and Venetian-Genoese "Freemasonic" faction of the Roman Catholic Church and with the association of Islamic secret societies known generically as the Ikhwan al-Muslimun, or Muslim Brotherhood.

Recent exposés in this journal of the relations between the British SIS and the Muslim Brotherhood—including such Muslim Brotherhood assets as Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Republic of Iran—have been cited in recent weeks by British intelligence spokesmen as having damaged and potentially destroyed a network of secret associations dating back to the late 19th century, when British agent and pan-Islamic organizer Jamal al-Din al-Afghani first established the British SIS "Islamic card."

Now, in this report and in a forthcoming *EIR* series on the Orthodox Church, it is no exaggeration to state that literally centuries of patient work by British and Russian secret operatives will be destroyed by simple exposure to the light of day.

On Oct. 6, 1981, it was the intelligence nest associated with the Orthodox Church and the loosely affiliated Egyptian Coptic hierarchy that carried out the Muslim

Brotherhood assassination of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. Run jointly by the British, Soviet, and Israeli secret services, that assassination is only the tip of the iceberg of dirty operations whose perpetrators inhabit the Orthodox environment. Whether it is the Khomeini regime in Iran, the rise of radical Theology of Liberation cultists in Latin America, Cuban military adventurism in Africa and Central America, the 1970s revolution in Ethiopia, or the emergence of a peasant communist regime in Afghanistan under KGB sponsorship, the clear and unmistakable hand of the Russian Orthodox Church can be identified.

Inside the Soviet Union, the clergy of the old Russian Church are associated with the ideologues in the Soviet Politburo, grouped around old Comintern hack Boris Ponomarev, Mikhail Suslov, KGB chief Yuri Andropov, and the U.S.A.-Canada Institute think tank of Georgii Arbatov and the Club of Rome's Dzhermen Gvishiani of the Vienna systems analysis school. These gentlemen preside over the KGB's extensive apparatus both inside the U.S.S.R. and throughout Eastern and Western Europe, with a particular focus on the Balkans, Romania, and the Middle East.

Because the KGB is known to exercise a careful supervision of the hierarchy and clergy of the state Russian Orthodox Church, some naive specialists in Soviet affairs have concluded that the Russian Orthodox Church is "controlled by the KGB." But, as *EIR* will demonstrate, exactly the reverse is true: the Russian Orthodox Church, and an associated cult of mystical Russian motherland devotees, is primary in the relationship, and, in a sense, controls the KGB and the Suslov-Ponomarev clique.

In this sense, the Russian Orthodox Church is a "Trojan Horse" for British and Venetian-Byzantine influence inside the U.S.S.R.

Since the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church has served as the principal mediator for the Soviet state with the British SIS. To the extent that the Soviet KGB is involved in the world peace movement, disarmament organizations, and ban-the-bomb organizations in the West, its influence is primarily conducted through the Russian Orthodox Church via the apparatus of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches.

The Anglican Church—which since the 1600s has been the official arm of the reactionary Scottish aristocracy and the British state—maintains close ties to the Russian and Middle East Orthodox Church through a system of relations with other Christian, anti-Vatican churches. A web of Anglican bishops in Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus oversees the relations of the Anglicans to the Orthodox, along with Swedish, Swiss, and Balkans operations of the Anglican Church and the British SIS. The interchange for these ties is the Freemason-con-

trolled ecumenical movement.

For many decades, the key fulcrum for Soviet-British cooperation and the point of intersection between the Anglican and the Russian Orthodox churches has been the Middle East. Since the early 1950s, for instance, the KGB-SIS convergence has centered on the case of the famous triple agent H. A. R. "Kim" Philby, the British spy who "defected" to Moscow in 1963 while maintaining intact his relations with the British SIS. Philby, whose last seven years before 1963 were spent in Beirut, Lebanon, is the son of Harry St.-John Bridger Philby, the premier British agent of the British India Office and Arab Bureau from World War I until his death in 1960.

Kim Philby, now a general in the Soviet KGB, has been the subject of continuous controversy amid repeated exposés of his activities and those of his collaborators in the British SIS for three decades.

But Philby—father and son—only administered a secret apparatus operated jointly by the SIS and KGB throughout the Middle East through the mechanism of the Eastern Orthodox Church—particularly the dominant factions of the Antioch and Jerusalem Arab churches of the Orthodox movement.

For almost a century, the Russian Orthodox Church has had a special relationship to the Antioch and Jerusalem Orthodox Patriarchs. Those relations were maintained—and developed—by the Orthodox Church under Moscow after the Soviet revolution.

In Jerusalem, for instance, since 1857 the Russian Orthodox Church had established the "Russian Ecclesiastical Mission" in Jerusalem and had amassed extensive land holdings and church property in the region of Palestine. With the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948, the Israeli government seized control of these properties—at the time nominally under the jurisdiction of anti-Soviet church forces—and handed them over to the Soviet Union and to the control of the KGB-affiliated Moscow Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The KGB and the Russian Orthodox Church have since utilized the vast holdings of the church in Palestine and Israel to fund the activities of Arab terrorists and the Communist Party of Israel. The rapid growth of the Israeli Communists (Rakah) in Galilee, for instance, was due in part to funds provided by the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow through Jerusalem's holdings in Nazareth, which has a Communist mayor.

Since 1967, with the rupture in diplomatic ties between Israel and the U.S.S.R., the Ecclesiastical Mission of the Russian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem has been the only representative of the Soviet state in Israel! In large part, the ongoing U.S.S.R. contacts with Israel's Mossad are carried out through Jerusalem via the Orthodox Church. Overseeing the operation in

Jerusalem is Mayor Teddy Kollek. Kollek, a self-admitted paid operative of the British SIS, was the best man at the 1935 Vienna wedding of Kim Philby to the woman who allegedly recruited Philby to the Soviet spy service. In an interview in New York last month, Kollek told *EIR* that he had been a close associate of Philby in Vienna. Today, Kollek is the chief Israeli representative of the Aspen Institute, a British SIS think tank associated with Robert O. Anderson, Occidental Petroleum's Armand Hammer, and Henry A. Kissinger, which directed the operation that toppled the Shah in 1979 and installed Khomeini in Teheran.

Parallel with the KGB/Russian Orthodox role in the Jerusalem Mission and Israel's Mossad, the post-World War II period also saw a dramatic rise in the activities of the U.S.S.R. vis-à-vis the Antioch Orthodox Church.

According to Arab intelligence sources, the rapid growth of the Syrian Communist Party after World War II was chiefly the result of the impact of a regional tour of the Middle East by the Patriarch of Moscow, Alexei, in 1945. Visiting Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, Patriarch Alexei revived the links between the Russian Orthodox and Arab Eastern Orthodox churches. Much of this activity involved shared assets with the British SIS in the Arab world, under the supervision of Philby et al. after World War II.

The Freemason connection

The links between Moscow and Antioch after World War II actually stem from a historically crucial tie that was established between Moscow and Antioch in the late 19th century.

It is here the real secrets of the SIS-KGB cooperation began to be uncovered.

During the 19th century, the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church was increasingly taken over by a mystical, goddess-worshipping cult-apparatus which, though overtly Christian, secretly engaged in pagan blood rituals. This fundamentalist Russian religious revivalism began in 1793 with the Slavic translation of an old Orthodox mystical text by a monk from the Russian monasteries on Mount Athos in Greece, and it spread throughout Russia during the 1800s across a vast underground of monasteries and remote churches. Like Ayatollah Khomeini's perverse version of Islam, the cult faction of the Orthodox Church in Russia was fanatically anti-Western and opposed the industrialization and modernization of Russia. During the entire 19th century, the Orthodox Church increasingly cast its spell over the Russian peasantry and developed cult adherents among the intelligentsia.

The Russian Orthodox Church as the "mother" of dozens of Russian secret societies variously leftist and anarchist, as well as extreme proto-Nazi cults of Russian

chauvinism. The anarchist currents of Bakunin and Herzen, the cult theologians like Vladimir Solovev, and the later Orthodox revivalists like Berdyaev and Bulgakov can all be traced back to the "Mount Athos" monastical movement of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is to these kooky gentlemen that Suslov and Ponomarev owe their pedigree.

During this period, toward the end of the 19th century, the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy was integrated officially into the British-Venetian project, begun in 1815, to oversee the dismantling of both the Russian and Ottoman empires. From the 1820s Greek revolution to the rise of Balkan nationalism and the awakening of anti-Ottoman Arab nationalism, to the growth of the communist movement in Russia itself, a vast, British-controlled "reform movement" was launched throughout the "East."

Under this umbrella was spawned a series of British-freemasonic movements: the Young Europe tendency, spearheaded by the Young Italy movement and the Propaganda 1 Freemasons of Mazzini's Italian unity movement, along with the Young Turks and the pan-Islamic movement of al-Afghani. There exists ample documentation to prove the connection between these British Empire-run reformers in Europe and the Middle East and the cult apparatus of Eastern Orthodoxy, including, especially, the Russian.

As a subsumed feature of the overall British project, the Russian Orthodox Church in the late 19th century assumed a godfatherly responsibility for an Arab nationalist revolt in the Antioch Orthodox Church. Until 1899, for centuries the Patriarch of the Damascus-based Orthodox Church of Antioch had been a Greek clergyman who led an overwhelmingly Arab-Christian following. But Russia, which had long viewed itself as the "protector" of the Christian community of the Arab East, in a deft operation gave support to an Arab faction which seized control of the patriarchate. Since 1899, then, the Russian church has been identified with a network of Arab Orthodox secret societies that give rise to several of the 20th-century political movements in Lebanon and Syria. The financial power behind the Antioch operation was the Sursok family, of Russian Orthodox origin, the chief aristocratic family of Beirut and the power behind the Beirut Orthodox clergy. The fanatical cult of the "Greater Syria" movement, a Nazi-affiliated movement during the Hitler era, which is today a significant power in the Syrian regime of President Hafez Assad's sectarian Alawite state, is a product of the Sursok family and the Anglo-Russian collaboration in the pre-World War I period.

In pre-1917 Russia, the Orthodox Church had as its chief intellectual and epistemological control-center the famous St. Petersburg Theological Academy. This Academy, which trained generations of Russian Ortho-

dox Church leaders—including the majority of those who served in the pro-Soviet Orthodox Church of the Stalin era—was apparently the center which served as a crucial British command post for the destabilization of Russia in the 1905-1917 period leading to the Bolshevik revolution. The most well-known product of the St. Petersburg Academy was the secret agent Father Gapon, who led the marches of the 1905 Russian revolution. The St. Petersburg Academy worked alongside the Russian Christian Student Federation, itself associated with the British-run, Freemasonic Young Men's Christian Association, the YMCA. Increasingly, this entire Russian church apparatus was integrated into the World Federalist movement that spawned the ecumenical movement, the Esperanto language, the Young Europe movement, the Bahai cult in Iran, and related institutions.

The Orthodox Youth Movement

After World War II, the British SIS and the Soviet KGB jointly sponsored the so-called Orthodox Youth Movement inside the Antioch Orthodox Church. Billed as reform movement active against alleged corruption and decadence in the Antioch Orthodox clergy in Damascus, the Youth Movement—affiliated to the YMCA—is the key to present terrorist and related capabilities of both the KGB and the SIS in the Arab sector.

The "Young Turks" of the Antioch Church largely were trained at two centers, according to Arab and Anglican sources: the Soviet-controlled Academy of St. Vladimir's in Moscow and the St. Sergius Theological Academy in Paris. The Moscow Academy had been revived from its dormant state during World War II, when the Soviet regime under Stalin revived the church as part of the "Great Patriotic War." Until then, the Russian Orthodox Church had remained in an underground state, in combat against the state-sponsored "League of the Militant Godless" in the U.S.S.R. But Stalin found that the Russian population could not be mobilized for the war with Nazi Germany without the active participation of the church, and so the old Russian Orthodox Church was reactivated. Since World War II, the Russian Orthodox Church has played an increasing role in both Soviet foreign affairs and in domestic policy. The theological academy in Moscow became a training ground for KGB/Orthodox Church operatives—in the Arab sector in particular.

St. Sergius in Paris—established before the Russian revolution of 1917—initially joined that faction of the Orthodox Church loyal to the deposed czar against the Soviet state. Gradually, however, as the pressure was eased on the Orthodox Church inside Russia, the leadership of St. Sergius passed over to officials willing to recognize the dubious authority of the Soviet state-

controlled Patriarch of Moscow. Today, according to inside sources, the Paris theological academy of the Orthodox Church is a joint venture of the Soviet KGB—which has infiltrated Red Army priests throughout—and the SIS of London's Anglican Church.

The Antioch Church "Orthodox Youth Movement" was begun after World War II in the wake of the tour of the region by Moscow Patriarch Alexei. "In 1945-46, the Russians were the heroes of the Arab Orthodox," recalls one source. "Patriarch Alexei's tour of the Middle East was a masterpiece of diplomacy. We were all taken in by it. He was a real magician." Arab sources report that Alexei—openly an agent of the Soviet state though chief of the Russian Church—impressed some Arabs as a religious figure and others as a political, revolutionary figure. He was all things to all men, sources say.

Alexei was aided by the then-Patriarch of the Antioch Orthodox Church Alexander IV. Patriarch Alexander had been installed in 1932 by an operation known to have been run jointly by the Soviet intelligence service and the Russian Orthodox Church, and he ruled the Damascus church until 1958. Patriarch Alexander IV was from the start close to Patriarch Sergei of the Russian Orthodox Church, the first post-revolutionary Soviet leader of the "new" Orthodox Church in Moscow, who himself was a graduate of the cultist Theological Academy of St. Petersburg.

The current leadership of the Antioch Orthodox Church is thus heavily infiltrated, even controlled, by this Orthodox Youth Movement current of SIS-KGB operatives. Patriarch Ignatius IV, who came to power in 1979 in Damascus, is a product of the post-World War II "reforms," under the sponsorship of Bishop George Khodre of Beirut, a Sursok-backed church leader. Recently, Ignatius and Khodre toured the Soviet Union, Romania, and Cyprus on a political-intelligence mission for the Moscow-Antioch axis. The current Archbishop of the Antioch Church in the United States, Philip Saliba of Englewood, New Jersey, is also a creation of the same Soviet- and British-backed networks. Saliba, in particular, is the creation of the Anglican Church foreign-relations chief during the 1950s, Herbert Waddams, and Visser 't Hooft of the World Council of Churches. Both Waddams and Hooft were intimately associated with the Anglican Church SIS network that deployed Kim Philby—and Burgess, Maclean, and Anthony Blunt—as part of the SIS-KGB interface. The liaison to the Russian Orthodox network (and the KGB) for Waddams and the Anglicans in installing Saliba was a former British army officer named Bishop John Wendland, the official envoy of the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow in America from 1963-1968.

In Syria today, the Assad regime is dependent to a

great degree on the support of the hierarchy of the Antioch Orthodox Church. Since 1966, the Assad regime has more and more relied on two cult-like Syrian sects: the Alawite minority sect and the old "Greater Syria" movement. Historically throughout the 20th century, both the Alawites and the Greater Syria cult have maintained close relations to the Sursoks, the Orthodox, and the Jesuit-controlled Uniate churches of Eastern Orthodoxy. Assad, a political survivalist, uses the Orthodox Church as liaison to British, Israeli, and Soviet secret services, as well as to the financial backing for Syria in Muammar Qaddafi's Libya.

To understand the role of the Russian Orthodox Church, especially in foreign policy, the case of the Romanian Orthodox Church—the most powerful church of Orthodox persuasion in Eastern Europe—is instructive. Soviet-Romanian relations, in large part, are handled as a feature of relations between the Russian and Romanian Orthodox Church networks. In recent years, especially, Romania has positioned itself as the liaison between the U.S.S.R. and key Western and Middle East powers.

According to U.S. intelligence sources, the KGB and the Russian Orthodox Church utilize Romania as a channel for manipulating the United States, Israel, and other powers. Henry Kissinger, Max Fisher, the entire apparatus of the Edgar Bronfman-controlled World Jewish Congress, important sections of the Israeli Mossad, and the command center of the old British Balkans task force are closely associated with the Romanian Ceaucescu regime's Orthodox Church apparatus.

Ultimately, however, such cynical manipulations by the KGB can only backfire with catastrophic consequences for the Soviet state itself. For at least a century, the Russian Orthodox Church has been preponderantly controlled by the anti-development peasant mentality of the neo-Malthusian movement. With each passing day that the Soviet leadership allows the Russian Orthodox Church to flourish under the sponsorship of Suslov and Ponomarev, it becomes more and more difficult for any Soviet leader to reverse the trend. The Orthodox Church cult apparatus will gain more and more adherents, and the Soviet Malthusian and Marxist-Leninist ideologues will become stronger and more powerful inside the Communist Party apparatus and the Soviet government. By tolerating this monster, the Soviet leadership will one day find itself engulfed by what it once considered to be a cynical instrument of state power.

The leadership of the Eastern Orthodox Church—including the Russian branch—views Communism in the Soviet Union as a passing phase. Should the Malthusian ideologues in the U.S.S.R. gain power, as the British desire, in the coming period, then not only is the Soviet Union doomed: the world will face the likelihood of an irreversible drift toward thermonuclear war.