

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AND THE REVOLUTION
From 1901 to the Present Day

Vladimir Moss

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We belong to different generations. Not all of us think in the same way, we do not all feel the same way. But we must not think now about what divides us but what unites us. And now all of us connects one feeling – the Bolshevik deadly evil, and our burning desire to eradicate it in the Russian Land.

For we know that as long as it reigns there – there can be no reasonable human life, no spiritual progress; until this evil that threatens both our homeland and throughout Europe will be destroyed.

And since you, dear brothers and sisters, seek to destroy this terrible evil because you are fighting for the triumph of light against darkness, of truth against lies, liberty against violence, Christianity and culture against the abuse and destruction of human beings, you are creating a truly patriotic, even more so, international struggle, and the Church therefore can not fail to bless your great and holy endeavor.

This movement is truly worthy of the name of Liberation, since it seeks not only to liberate humanity from this terrible yoke, but also the human soul from the fierce oppression [of Marxism]. Never was human dignity so deeply humiliated and desecrated as mercilessly as it is today under the Bolshevik government.

The Russian Church never could, and now cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of its people. She gave the world thousands and thousands of martyrs who died in exile and Red prisons: pastors and Orthodox hierarchs, innocent blood which does not cease to cry out to heaven. She prays to the Lord to grant you a few days of testing. We do not know the Lord's timing. However, there are signs of the times in which we can say with confidence that the appointed hour approaches and we already stand before the doors.

Dear instigators and leaders of the Russian Liberation Movement! You, the heroes of the spirit, full of strength; you are destined to accomplish the great cause of national liberation, since you are dedicated to honor, truth and selfless heroism. In times of grave strife, the inner core of the people reach a creative, hardworking vein and then the general national enthusiasm rises to unprecedented heights of achievement.

This holy fire ignites human powers and the human will is driven to perform great deeds. Leaders then arise who would embody the thought and will of the entire people. . . Dear brothers and sisters, unite all around our National Liberation Movement; each should strive together in its path and contribute to the overall great cause of the liberation of our homeland, until the fall of the terrible evil of Bolshevism is complete.

We will rise from the bed of our exhausted Russia and will see the dawn of a new blessed life, full of freedom, reason and joy for the glory of our homeland and all its peoples! Amen..

Metropolitan Anastasy, First-Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside Russia (1944).

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INTRODUCTION: INTIMATIONS OF CATASTROPHE

How has the faithful city become a harlot!
Isaiah 1.21.

Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.
Revelation 18.3.

Archimandrite Cyril (Zaitsev) of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, once said that of all the evils and sorrows produced by the Russian revolution, the most terrible and shameful was the transformation of the official Russian Orthodox Church into an obedient tool of World Communism, the “Soviet church” of the Soviet state. This book describes how this happened.

“The Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate” is the largest Christian Church in the world with the exception of the Vatican. As negotiations intensify to unite the two huge churches, it would be useful to investigate the origins of the Moscow Patriarchate. Most people think it is just the continuation, into the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, of the pre-revolutionary Russian Orthodox Church. But, as this book will attempt to demonstrate, that is not the case. The present-day Moscow Patriarchate was in fact created by Stalin as a crucial element in his anti-religious campaign, the second major attempt to divide the Church and create a “fake” church controlled by the communists in order to deceive the faithful into accepting a form of pseudo-Christianity loyal to Communism and the New World Order instead of the real thing.

Something similar had been attempted during the French Revolution, when the Church was divided into those who swore to uphold a pro-revolutionary Civil Constitution of the Clergy and those who rejected it. On July 12, 1790 a Civil Constitution for the Clergy was passed, rationalizing the Church’s organization, putting all the clergy on the State’s pay-roll. The 135 bishops were cut down to 85, one for each *département*, and provided one *curé* for every 6,000 inhabitants. Bishops were henceforth to be elected (by an electorate including non-believers, Protestants and Jews) without reference to Rome.¹

The dioceses, writes Jean Comby, “were reduced from 235 to 185, one per department, of which ten were archdioceses. There was to be one parish for every 6000 inhabitants. Bishops and priests would be elected by the same electors, including non-Catholics, who elected the various officials of the department or district. In this way, the legislators thought to return to the origins of the church. A bishop would require his metropolitan (archbishop) to install him; he would write to the pope only to inform him of his appointment and to assure him that he was in communion with him.”²

¹ Adam Zamoyski, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 64.

² Comby, *How to Read Church History*, London: SCM Press, 1989, volume 2, p. 112.

The Pope had already, on July 10, pleaded with the King to veto the Civil Constitution, but the king, advised by weak bishops (although only 7 out of 160 took the oath), reluctantly agreed to it. The acceptance or rejection of the Civil Constitution now became a test of faith for Catholics. As opinion polarized, on October 30 thirty bishops from the Assembly signed an *Exposition of Principles*, explaining that, as William Doyle writes, “they could not connive at such radical changes without consulting the Church through either a council or the Pope. Nevertheless patriots saw it as an incitement to disobey the law, and local authorities, clamorously supported by Jacobin clubs, began to enforce it. Bishops began to be expelled from suppressed sees; chapters were dissolved. In October and early November the first departmental bishops were elected. But this time the clergy did not meekly accept its fate. There were protests. ‘I can no more’, declared the incumbent of the doomed see of Senez, ‘renounce the spiritual contract which binds me to my Church than I can renounce the promises of my baptism... I belong to my flock in life and in death... If God wishes to test his own, the eighteenth century, like the first century, will have its martyrs.’ The first elected bishop, the deputy Expilly, who was chosen by the Finistère department, was refused confirmation by the archbishop of Rennes. In Soissons, the bishop was dismissed by the departmental authorities for denouncing the Civil Constitution. It was impossible to dismiss all the 104 priests of Nantes who did the same, but their salaries were stopped. Evidently there was to be no peaceful transition to a new ecclesiastical order, and indignant local authorities bombarded the Assembly with demands for action. Eventually, on 27 November, action was taken. The deputies decided, after two days of bitter debate, to dismiss at once all clerics who did not accept the new order unequivocally. And to test this acceptance they imposed an oath. All beneficed clergy were to swear after mass on the first available Sunday ‘to be faithful to the nation, the King and the law, and to uphold with all their power the constitution declared by the National Assembly and accepted by the king.’ All who refused were to be replaced at once through the procedures laid down in the Civil Constitution.

“The French Revolution had many turning-points: but the oath of the clergy was, if not the greatest, unquestionably one of them. It was certainly the Constituent Assembly’s most serious mistake. For the first time the revolutionaries forced fellow citizens to choose; to declare themselves publicly for or against the new order... With no word from Rome, the king sanctioned the new decree of 26 December, so that oath-taking (or refusal) dominated public life throughout the country in January and February 1791. The clergy in the Assembly themselves set the pattern, in that they were completely divided. Only 109 took the oath, and only two bishops, one of them Talleyrand. As the deadline approached on 4 January the Assembly was surrounded by crowds shouting for nonjurors to be lynched; and the patriots, led unpersuasively by the Protestant Barnave, used every possible argument and procedural ploy to sway waverers. But there were none. And faced with this example from the majority of clerical deputies, it is little wonder that so many clerics in the country at large became refractories (as nonjurors were soon being called)... ..”³

³ Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 143-144, 145.

It was always the Bolsheviks' plan to destroy the Russian Orthodox Church from within in a similar way. So this book takes the story from a description of the state of the Church during the revolutions of 1905 and 1917; then through the first and second pro-Soviet schisms, that of the "Living Church" in 1922 and the second and much larger one of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate (MP) in 1927; then through the descent of the MP into the "heresy of heresies", ecumenism, in the post-war period; and finally into the post-Soviet period under Yeltsin and Putin.

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The collapse of the Russian Church in the revolution was not unexpected, having been prophesied from the time of the great hermit, St. Seraphim of Sarov, and by several great ascetics during the nineteenth century. Among the spiritual sicknesses coming from the West and identified by the holy elders as contributing to this fall was indifferentism, what we would now call ecumenism, that is, an increased tolerance for Christian heresies to the extent of placing them on a par with Orthodoxy. Although Church leaders stood firm in Orthodoxy, the spirit of Anglican indifferentism was infectious. Ecumenism, together with Protestantism, Darwinism, Liberalism and Socialism began to sap the foundations of Holy Russia.

Thus in the 1850s St. Ambrose of Optina wrote: "Now many educated people bear only the name of Orthodox, but in actual fact completely adhere to the morals and customs of foreign lands and foreign beliefs. Without any torment of conscience they violate the regulations of the Orthodox Church concerning fasts and gather together at balls and dances on the eves of great Feasts of the Lord, when Orthodox Christians should be in church in prayerful vigil. This would be excusable if such gatherings took place on the eves of ordinary days, but not on the eves of Feasts, and especially great Feasts. Are not such acts and deeds clearly inspired by our enemy, the destroyer of souls, contrary to the commandment of the Lord which says: carry out your ordinary affairs for six days, but the seventh (festal) day must be devoted to God in pious service? How have Orthodox Christians come to such acts hated by God? Is it not for no other reason than indiscriminate communion with believers of other faiths?..."⁴

In 1863 St. Theophan the Recluse described how western indifferentism had begun already centuries before: "Have you heard of the indulgences of the Pope of Rome? Here is what they are: special treatment and leniency, which he gives, defying the law of Christ. And what is the result? From all of this, the West is corrupt in faith and in its way of life, and is now getting lost in its disbelief and in the unrestrained life with its indulgences.

"The Pope changed many doctrines, spoiled all the sacraments, nullified the canons concerning the regulation of the Church and the correction of morals. Everything has begun going contrary to the will of the Lord, and has become worse and worse.

"Then along came Luther, a smart man, but stubborn. He said, The Pope changed everything as he wanted, why shouldn't I do the same? He started to modify and to

⁴ St. Ambrose, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Sergiev Posad, 1908.

re-modify everything in his own way, and in this way established the new Lutheran faith, which only slightly resembles what the Lord commanded and the holy apostles delivered to us.

“After Luther came the philosophers. And they in turn said, Luther has established himself a new faith, supposedly based on the Gospel, though in reality based on his own way of thinking. Why, then, don't we also compose doctrines based on our own way of thinking, completely ignoring the Gospel? They then started rationalizing, and speculating about God, the world and man, each in his own way. And they mixed up so many doctrines that one gets dizzy just counting them.

“Now the westerners have the following views: Believe what you think best, live as you like, satisfy whatever captivates your soul. This is why they do not recognize any law or restriction and do not abide by God's Word. Their road is wide, all obstacles removed. But the broad way leads to perdition, according to what the Lord says...”⁵

And again he wrote: “If any man shall say to you, here is Christ; or lo, He is there, believe him not.' (Mark 13.21). Christ the Lord, our Saviour, having established upon earth the Holy Church, is well pleased to abide in it as its Head, Enlivener and Ruler. Christ is here, in our Orthodox Church, and He is not in any other church. Do not search for Him elsewhere, for you will not find Him. Therefore, if someone from a non-Orthodox assemblage comes to you and begins to suggest that they have Christ - do not believe it. If someone says to you, 'We have an apostolic community, and we have Christ,' do not believe them. The Church founded by the Apostles abides on the earth - it is the Orthodox Church, and Christ is in it. A community established only yesterday cannot be apostolic, and Christ is not in it. If you hear someone say, 'Christ is speaking in me,' while he shuns the [Orthodox] Church, does not venerate or know its pastors, and is not sanctified by the Sacraments, do not believe him. Christ is not in him: rather, another spirit is in him, one that appropriates the name of Christ in order to divert people from Christ the Lord and from His Holy Church. Neither believe anyone who suggests even some small thing alien to the [Orthodox] Church. Recognize all such people to be instruments of seducing spirits and lying preachers of falsehood.”⁶

The danger of religious indifferentism was especially noted by St. Ignaty Brianchaninov, a disciple of the Optina Elder Lev: "You say, 'heretics are Christians just the same.' Where did you take that from? Perhaps someone or other calling himself a Christian while knowing nothing of Christ, may in his extreme ignorance decide to acknowledge himself as the same kind of Christian as heretics, and fail to distinguish the holy Christian faith from those offspring of the curse, blasphemous heresies. Quite otherwise, however, do true Christians reason about this. A whole multitude of saints has received a martyr's crown, has preferred the most cruel and prolonged tortures, prison, exile, rather than agree to take part with heretics in their blasphemous teaching.

5 St. Theophan the Recluse, *Sermon on the Sunday after Nativity, December 29, 1863.*

6 St. Theophan the Recluse, *Thoughts for Each Day of the Year, Moscow, 2010, p. 40.*

"The Ecumenical Church has always recognised heresy as a mortal sin; she has always recognised that the man infected with the terrible malady of heresy is spiritually dead, a stranger to grace and salvation, in communion with the devil and the devil's damnation. Heresy is a sin of the mind; it is more a diabolic than a human sin. It is the devil's offspring, his invention; it is an impiety that is near idol-worship. Every heresy contains in itself the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, whether against the dogma or the action of the Holy Spirit."⁷

"The reading of the Fathers clearly convinced me that salvation was undoubted in the bosom of the Orthodox Russian Church, something of which the religions of Western Europe are deprived since they have not preserved whole either the dogmatic or the moral teaching of the Church of Christ from her beginning."⁸

St. Ignaty was especially fierce against the heresy of Papism (Roman Catholicism): "Papism is the name of a heresy that seized the West and from which there came, like the branches from a tree, various Protestant teachings. Papism ascribes to the Pope the properties of Christ and thereby rejects Christ. Some western writers have almost openly pronounced this rejection, saying that the rejection of Christ is a much smaller sin than the rejection of the Pope. The Pope is the idol of the papists; he is their divinity. Because of this terrible error, the Grace of God has left the papists; they have given themselves over to Satan – the inventor and father of all heresies, among which is Papism. In this condition of the darkening [of the mind], they have distorted several dogmas and sacraments, while they have deprived the Divine Liturgy of its essential significance by casting out of it the invocation of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of the offerings of bread and wine, at which they are transmuted into the Body and Blood of Christ... No heresy expresses so openly and blatantly their immeasurable pride, their cruel disdain for men and their hatred of them."

St. Ignaty was pessimistic about the future of Russia: "It is evident that the apostasy from the Orthodox faith is general among the people. One is an open atheist, another is a deist, another a Protestant, another an indifferentist, another a schismatic. There is no healing or cure for this plague."

"What has been foretold in the Scriptures is being fulfilled: a cooling towards the faith has engulfed both our people and all the countries in which Orthodoxy was maintained up to now."

"Religion is falling in the people in general. Nihilism is penetrating into the merchant class, from where it has not far to go to the peasants. In most peasants a decisive indifference to the Church has appeared, and a terrible moral disorder."⁹

7 Brianchaninov, *Pis'ma*, no. 283; translated as "Concerning the Impossibility of Salvation for the Heterodox and Heretics", *Orthodox Life*, January-February, 1991.

8 Brianchaninov, "Lamentation", in *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 2003, p. 20.

9 Brianchaninov, in S. Fomin and T. Fomina, *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestvoiem*, Moscow, 1994, vol. I, pp. 339, 340.

"The people is being corrupted, and the monasteries are also being corrupted," said the same holy bishop to Tsar Alexander II in 1866, one year before his own death.¹⁰

Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow feared "storm-clouds coming from the West", and advised that rizas should not be made for icons, because "the time is approaching when ill-intentioned people will remove the rizas from the icons."¹¹

Another pessimist was St. Makary of Optina, who wrote: "The heart flows with blood, in pondering our beloved fatherland Russia, our dear mother. Where is she racing headlong, what is she seeking? What does she await? Education increases but it is pseudo-education, it deceives itself in its hope. The young generation is not being nourished by the milk of the doctrine of our Holy Orthodox Church but has been poisoned by some alien, vile, venomous spirit, and how long can this continue? Of course, in the decrees of God's Providence it has been written what must come to pass, but this has been hidden from us in His unfathomable wisdom..."¹²

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Visions from above seemed to confirm that apocalyptic times were approaching. Thus in 1871 the Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, Count Alexander Petrovich Tolstoy, had the following vision:

"It was as if I were in my own house standing in the entrance-hall. Beyond was a room in which on the ledge between the windows there was a large icon of the God of Sabaoth that gave out such blinding light that from the other room (the entrance-hall) it was impossible to look at it. Still further in was a room in which there were Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich Konstantinovsky and the reposed Metropolitan Philaret. And this room was full of books; along the walls from ceiling to floor there were books; on the long tables there were piles of books; and while I certainly had to go into this room, I was held back by fear, and in terror, covering my face with my hand, I passed through the first room and, on entering the next room, I saw Protopriest Matthew Alexandrovich dressed in a simple black cassock; on his head was a skull-cap; in his hands was an unbent book, and he motioned me with his head to find a similar book and open it. At the same time the metropolitan, turning the pages of this book said: 'Rome, Troy, Egypt, Russia, the Bible.' I saw that in my book 'Bible' was written in very heavy lettering. Suddenly there was a noise and I woke up in great fear. I thought a lot about what it could all mean. My dream seemed terrible to me - it would have been better to have seen nothing. Could I not ask those experienced in the spiritual life concerning the meaning of this vision in sleep? But an inner voice explained the dream even to me myself. However, the explanation was so terrible that I did not want to agree with it."

¹⁰ *Zhizneopisanie Sviatitelia Ignatia Brianchaninova*, p. 485. In the last decade of his life the holy hierarch composed notes for an agenda of a Council of the Russian Church that would tackle the grave problems facing her. See <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1968>.

¹¹ Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 349.

¹² St. Makary, *Letter 165 to Monastics*, in Fr. Leonid Kavelin, *Elder Macarius of Optina*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1995, pp. 309-310.

St. Ambrose of Optina gave the following interpretation of this vision: "He who was shown this remarkable vision in sleep, and who then heard the very significant words, very probably received the explanation of what he had seen and heard through his guardian angel, since he himself recognized that an inner voice explained the meaning of the dream to him. However, since we have been asked, we also shall give our opinion...

"...The words 'Rome, Troy, Egypt' may have the following significance. Rome at the time of the Nativity of Christ was the capital of the world, and, from the beginning of the patriarchate, had the primacy of honour; but because of love of power and deviation from the truth she was later rejected and humiliated. Ancient Troy and Egypt were notable for the fact that they were punished for their pride and impiety - the first by destruction, and the second by various punishments and the drowning of Pharaoh with his army in the Red Sea. But in Christian times, in the countries where Troy was located there were founded the Christian patriarchates of Antioch and Constantinople, which flourished for a long time, embellishing the Orthodox Church with their piety and right dogmas; but later, according to the inscrutable destinies of God, they were conquered by barbarians - the Muslims, and up to now have borne this heavy slavery, which restricts the freedom of Christian piety and right belief. And in Egypt, together with the ancient impiety, there was from the first times of Christianity such a flowering of piety that the deserts were populated by tens of thousands of monastics, not to speak of the great numbers of pious laity from whom they came. But then, by reason of moral licentiousness, there followed such an impoverishment of Christian piety in that country that at a certain time in Alexandria the patriarch remained with only one priest.

"... After the three portentous names 'Rome, Troy, Egypt', the name of 'Russia' was also mentioned - Russia, which at the present time is counted as an independent Orthodox state, but where the elements of foreign heterodoxy and impiety have already penetrated and taken root among us and threaten us with the same sufferings as the above-mentioned countries have undergone.

"Then there comes the word 'Bible'. No other state is mentioned. This may signify that if in Russia, too, because of the disdain of God's commandments and the weakening of the canons and decrees of the Orthodox Church and for other reasons, piety is impoverished, then there must immediately follow the final fulfillment of that which is written at the end of the Bible, in the Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian.

"He who saw this vision correctly observed that the explanation given him by an inner voice was terrible. Terrible will be the Second Coming of Christ and terrible the last judgement of the world. But not without terrors will also be the period before that when the Antichrist will reign, as it is said in the Apocalypse: 'And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and death shall flee from them' (9.6). The Antichrist will come during a period of anarchy, as the apostle says: 'until he that restraineth be taken away from the midst' (II Thessalonians 2.7), that is, when the powers that be no longer exist."¹³

¹³ St. Ambrose of Optina, *Pis'ma* (Letters), part 1, pp. 21-22.

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St. Ambrose's identification of "him that restraineth" the coming of the Antichrist with the Russian Tsardom had long roots in the patristic writings. St. John Chrysostom, Blessed Theophylact and others identified him with the Roman emperor, whose successor, as being the emperor of "the Third Rome", Russia, was the Russian Tsar.

Metropolitan Philaret had restated the political teaching of Orthodoxy with exceptional eloquence in the previous reign. And now St. Theophan the Recluse wrote: "The Tsar's authority, having in its hands the means of restraining the movements of the people and itself relying on Christian principles, does not allow the people to fall away from them, but will restrain it. And since the main work of the Antichrist will be to turn everyone away from Christ, he will not appear as long as the Tsar is in power. The latter's authority will not let him show himself, but will prevent him from acting in his own spirit. That is what he that restraineth is. When the Tsar's authority falls, and the peoples everywhere acquire self-government (republics, democracies), then the Antichrist will have room to manoeuvre. It will not be difficult for Satan to train voices urging apostasy from Christ, as experience showed in the time of the French revolution. Nobody will give a powerful 'veto' to this. A humble declaration of faith will not be tolerated. And so, when these arrangements have been made everywhere, arrangements which are favourable to the exposure of antichristian aims, then the Antichrist will also appear. Until that time he waits, and is restrained.

"... When these principles [Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality] weaken or are changed, the Russian people will cease to be Russian. It will then lose its sacred three-coloured banner." And again: "Our Russians are beginning to decline from the faith: one part is completely and in all ways falling into unbelief, another is falling into Protestantism, a third is secretly weaving together beliefs in such a way as to bring together spiritism and geological madness with Divine Revelation. Evil is growing: evil faith and lack of faith are raising their head: faith and Orthodoxy are weakening. Will we come to our senses? O Lord! Save and have mercy on Orthodox Russia from Thy righteous and fitting punishment!"¹⁴

And again, he wrote: "Do you know what bleak thoughts I have? And they are not unfounded. I meet people who are numbered among the Orthodox, who in spirit are Voltaireans, naturalists, Lutherans, and all manner of free-thinkers. They have studied all the sciences in our institutions of higher education. They are not stupid nor are they evil, but with respect to the Church they are good for nothing. Their fathers and mothers were pious; the ruin came in during the period of their education outside of the family homes. Their memories of childhood and their parents' spirit keeps them within certain bounds. But what will their own children be like? What will restrain them within the needed bounds? I draw the conclusion from this that in one or two generations our Orthodoxy will dry up."

¹⁴ St. Theophan, in Fomin and Fomina, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 346, 347.

As St. Ignaty Brianchaninov wrote: “We are helpless to arrest this apostasy. Impotent hands will have no power against it and nothing more will be required than the attempt to withhold it. The spirit of the age will reveal the apostasy. Study it, if you wish to avoid it, if you wish to escape this age and the temptation of its spirits. One can suppose, too, that the institution of the Church which has been tottering for so long will fall terribly and suddenly. Indeed, no-one is able to stop or prevent it. The present means to sustain the institutional Church are borrowed from the elements of the world, things inimical to the Church, and the consequence will be only to accelerate its fall. Nevertheless, the Lord protects the elect and their limited number will be filled.”¹⁵

December 1/14, 2021.

St. Philaret the Confessor, Metropolitan of New York.

¹⁵ Sokolov, L.A. *Episkop Ignatij Brianchaninov* (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov), Kiev, 1915, vol. 2, p. 250. Italics mine (V.M.).

I. THE TSAR AND THE CHURCH (1901-1917)

1. RUSSIAN CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

A particular problem for Russia, and an obstacle to the Russian Church's attempts to lift the people from the abyss, both political and spiritual, that threatened at the beginning of the twentieth century, was the relationship of the Church to the State.

The Russian Orthodox Church existed in a close unity with, and in some respects dependence on, the Russian State. On January 25, 1721 Peter the Great issued his *Spiritual Regulation*, which abolished the patriarchy and instituted in its place "The Most Holy Governing Synod". "The activity of the Synod," writes Professor Michael Babkin, "was controlled by a secular person appointed by the emperor – the over-procurator of the Holy Synod, who was the official representative of the authority of his Majesty. The juridical basis of the foundation of the institution of the over-procurator was the necessity of reporting to the supreme power on the course of church affairs. The over-procurator's function was to preserve the interests of the State in the sphere of ecclesiastical administration and to control the organs of power of the Russian Orthodox Church in the centre (the Holy Synod) and locally (the spiritual consistories)... On the whole the competence of the over-procurator was limited to administration and did not extend to the sphere of the confession of faith or ecclesiastical law.

"Juridically, the participation of the emperor in church affairs raised the status of the Russian Orthodox Church and its decrees. The acts of the Holy Synod were published 'by order of his Imperial Majesty' in the form of ukases, directives or laws which became part of the collection of laws of the Russian Empire.

"The unity of Empire and Church based on the Orthodox faith, although it was not without its inadequacies, was on the whole very fruitful. The Empire supported the Russian Church morally and materially through the institution of the over-procurator, freed the episcopate from routine bureaucratic-chancellery work (linked, for example, with economic activity and the seeking of sources of finance), and supported its educational and missionary activity... In the Basic Laws there were more than a thousand articles protecting the privileges and property rights of the Russian Orthodox Church. The hierarchs were de facto high spiritual satraps of the Empire. According to the Table of Ranks, metropolitans, archbishops and bishops were equivalent to the first three classes of military and civil officials.

"Although the Russian Orthodox Church was literally merged with the Russian Empire, it did not possess the rights of a juridical person and did not have self-administration. However, such rights were bestowed on the Holy Synod, parish churches, monasteries, spiritual-academic institutions and other church structures which possessed immovable property and capital."¹⁶

¹⁶ Babkin, "Sviaschenstvo i tsarstvo: dukhovenstvo Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi i sverzhenie monarkhii (nachalo XXv. – 1918g.)" (The priesthood and the kingdom: the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Overthrow of the monarchy (the beginning of the 20th century to 1918), May, 2010, <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=news&id=77984>, pp. 1-2.

In spite of these not inconsiderable advantages, the structure of Church-State relations in Russia was not ideal from an Orthodox point of view, being closer to the Protestant caesaropapist model (Erastianism) than to the traditional Orthodox “symphony of powers”. This was first pointed out by the Slavophiles in the 1840s, and was reiterated by many of the intelligentsy in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Persuaded by these criticisms, as well as his own deep knowledge and love of pre-Petrine Russia, in 1901 Tsar Nicholas II removed from the Constitution the phrase describing the sovereign as the “Supreme Judge” of the Church. In this way he signalled that he was prepared to undertake a far-ranging reform of Church-State relations, bringing them back to the true “symphony” that had prevailed under the Muscovite tsars. The next step he had in mind was the convening of the first Council of the Russian Orthodox Church since 1667. For whereas the Tsar always viewed liberal developments in politics with suspicion, this was not the case with regard to Church-State relations, where he understood that freeing the Church from the dead hand of the State would ultimately be to the benefit of both Church and State.

However, there was here concealed a great danger that “freedom” for the Church would be understood as part of the democratic revolution in political life that the liberals were calling for. Properly understood, freedom for the Church from the State did not mean the democratization of the Church herself (the Church is not a democracy, but a theocracy, a sui generis mixture of monarchical, oligarchical and democratic elements under the overall rule of God), but her ability to run her own affairs without interference from the secular power. It might entail a certain “freeing up” of the internal structure of the Church at several levels – less bureaucracy generally, more control of bishops over their own dioceses, more independence of parishes to elect their own priests, buy their own property, etc. – but this was not the essence of the matter. The essence of the matter was that, freed from secular control, the Church would be more free to follow her own rules as embodied in the Sacred Canons of the Church, thereby giving more place to *God* to rule His Church in accordance with her real inner nature. The result would be a true renovation of Church life, a release of new streams of vivifying grace into the flagging organism.

Unfortunately, however, the movement for the return of the Church to her canonical norms was seen by many in the Church in the context of the general movement to limit the powers of the Tsar. Thus “on the border of the 19th and 20th centuries right until the February revolution, the representatives of the higher reaches of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church acted in such a way as to limit the participation of the emperor in ecclesiastical administration and to ‘distance’ the Church from the State. A confirmation of this is the shortening, from January, 1900, of the commemoration of the emperor at the proskomedia (the initial stage of the liturgy, the central Christian service), and also the shortening, from February, 1901, of the ‘loyal allegiance’ part of the oath for those being ordained to the episcopate and the removal of the oath for members of the Holy Synod. An indicator of the striving of the higher reaches of the hierarchy to raise their intra-ecclesiastical status was constituted by the processes taking place at the time of the gradual increase in the liturgical titles of the hierarchs, and also the increase in the commemorations of the diocesan bishops.

"... At the same time the clergy quite demonstratively declined from working out a theological point of view with regard to the power of the tsar. On the whole, it supported the 'rational' estimates that the jurists, political commentators and historians gave to tsarist power. Moreover, there was no clarification of such questions as the ecclesiastical prerogatives of the emperor and the so-called sacred rights of the Anointed of God. Even with regard to whether the anointing of the tsar was a church sacrament or not there was no unity among the hierarchs."¹⁷

The over-procurator of the time, Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostsev, was strongly opposed to the prevailing liberal currents, and in general to any change in Church-State relations. In fact, as events were to prove, he was more to the "right" on these questions even than his former pupil, Tsar Nicholas. However, in 1901 he was reluctantly forced to allow the convening of a series of 20 religio-philosophical meetings between the "God-seeking" intelligentsia and the clergy in St. Petersburg. This was the idea of D.S. Merezhkovsky, V.V. Rozanov and a Synodal official, V.A. Ternavtsev.

It answered to a definite turning away of a part of the intelligentsia from sixties-style positivism to some kind of religion. As often as not, however, the conversion was not to Orthodoxy but to some vague kind of mysticism or theosophy. Moreover, many of these intellectuals were primarily interested in introducing their liberal political ideas into Church life; they wanted the Church to be renovated, not by slow, cautious reform from above that always remained faithful to the dogmatic and canonical bases of Orthodoxy, but by a revolution from below in which they saw themselves, rather than the bishops or the Tsar, as taking the leading role. Nevertheless, if these "God-seekers" were ever to acquire true Orthodoxy, they needed to encounter the Church in her more learned representatives. Hence the significance of the religio-philosophical meetings, which were chaired by a rising star of the Russian Church, Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky).

"Sergius," writes G.M. Soldatov, "was popular in circles waiting for the introduction of 'democratic' reforms in the State. In his sermons and speeches he criticized the relationship between the ecclesiastical and state authorities in the Russian Empire."¹⁸ This would have been a risky subject to raise only ten years earlier; but times were changing rapidly, and Sergius, as his future career proved, was always sensitive to how the times were changing, and accommodated himself to them accordingly... At the same time he did make a fair point in the eighth of the religio-philosophical meetings, arguing that only if the State ceased to use the Church as a weapon would it become possible 'to raise the question of freedom of conscience. Otherwise it will be only by virtue of indifferentism that the State can give freedom to the sects along with the Church'. But 'Russian State power cannot be indifferent or atheist if it does not want to renounce itself'.¹⁹ In other words: if the State was truly the defender of Orthodoxy, as it claimed, it should free the Church from political tasks

¹⁷ Babkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 3.

¹⁸ Soldatov, "Tolstoj i Sergij: Iude Podobnie" (Tolstoy and Sergius: Images of Judas), *Nasha Strana* (Our Country), N 2786; *Vernost'* (Fidelity), N 32, January 1/14, 2006.

¹⁹ Sergius Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune peremen* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes), Moscow, 2000, p. 117.

and a bondage that was alien to her nature. Otherwise, freedom would simply help the sectarians and atheists to fight against the Church, while she remained unable to defend herself freely. Thus the questions of Church reform and freedom of conscience were inescapably linked...

Deacon Andrei Psarev writes: "Bishop Sergius, like many others at the time, held the Czar responsible for the shooting of the procession on January 9, 1905 (Bloody Sunday). The Imperial family, in turn, was not well disposed toward him. One of the far-right Russian patriots of the time, Alexander Dubrovin, wrote to Metropolitan Antony (Vadkovskii), whose vicar Bishop Sergius was: 'The patriots have been persecuted, but Antonin is still there, as is Sergius, who served a blasphemous *panikhida* to the insurrectionist Schmidt on behalf of the rebels [Schmidt was executed in 1906; he led the uprising on the cruiser *Ochakov*, was a member of the Sebastopol Revolutionary Committee, and gave the orders to bombard the Black Sea ports — A.P.], and you protected him even when a theft of money was discovered to have taken place in the Academy and he was at fault.'

"Fr. George Gapon, the well-known workers' leader, was also a protégé of Bishop Sergius; he was connected with both the revolutionaries and the secret police. Sergius even thought that, when Gapon became a widower, he might be made bishop. In his book *Krushenie imperii* [*Downfall of an Empire*], Mikhail Rodzianko wrote that when Oberprokuror Sabler proposed elevating Archimandrite Barnabas, a protégé of Rasputin's, to the rank of bishop, this proposal was unanimously rejected by the Synod under Metropolitan Antony Vadkovskii. However, when the latter fell ill and Archbishop Sergius assumed the presidency of the Synod, the matter was resolved affirmatively by a majority of the members of the Synod."²⁰

It was not only liberals like Sergius who favoured Church reform. The former revolutionary-turned-monarchist L.A. Tikhomirov published an article arguing that the State should "give the Church independence and the possibility of being the kind of organization she must be in accordance with *her own* laws, while remaining in union with her".²¹ The problem was that both conservatives and liberals could argue for Church reform, but for completely different motives. Tikhomirov wrote as one who had seen the revolution from within, and turned away from it with all his heart, acknowledging the only true defence against it to be the strengthening of Church consciousness among the people. The liberals, on the other hand, were motivated, not by a desire to see the Church free and therefore able to exert a more powerful influence on society, but rather the opposite: a desire to humble the State and destroy the Church's influence once and for all. As for the liberal *bishops* such as Sergius, they leapt onto the band-waggon of the reform of Church-State relations, and of what later came to be called *renovationism*, in order to further their own careers...

²⁰ Psarev, "Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhny Novgorod as Deputy Patriarchal Locum Tenens to Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa", 1999, academia.edu.

²¹ Tikhomirov, "Gosudarstvennost' i religia" (Statehood and religion), *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), March, 1903, p. 3; in Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

2. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AND TOLSTOY

Another liberal-renovationist cause that Bishop Sergius espoused during the religio-philosophical meetings was the supposed injustice of the novelist Tolstoy's excommunication from the Church.²² Tolstoy was in essence a Protestant, who stood for a Christianity reduced to "pure" morality without the Church or the sacraments. He not only preached his own Gospel (according to his own translation published in Geneva), and created his own sect: he also subjected the teaching and the sacraments of the Orthodox Church to ridicule, as in his novel *Resurrection*.

Tolstoy was opposed among the clergy especially by St. John of Kronstadt, who wrote of him that he had "corrupted his moral personality to the point of deformity and mortification", and that he had "made himself into a complete savage with regards to the faith and the Church, because of his lack of education in the faith and piety since his youth." St. John appealed for help: "Holy warriors of the heavenly Church, take up arms, take up arms for the Church of God on earth. She, the beloved bride, is impoverished, she suffers from the savage attacks on her from the atheist Lev Tolstoy..."

St. John especially bemoaned Tolstoy's influence on youth: "Our young intelligentsia have subverted the social and educational order, they have taken politics and the law-courts upon themselves without having been called to do so by anyone; they have taken to judging their masters, their teachers, the government and all but kings themselves; together with their head, Lev Tolstoy, they have judged and condemned the universal and fearful Judge Himself... Verily, the day of the dread Judgement is near, for the deviation from God which was foretold has already occurred and the forerunner of the antichrist has already revealed himself, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped."²³

Tolstoy was the first twentieth-century antichrist in the precise sense of the word (I John 2.22, 4.3; II John 7), and, in Lenin's famous phrase, "the mirror of the Russian revolution". But Bishop Sergius, following the popular trend, defended him against the decision of his own Synod. Soldatov writes: "Sergius compared Lev Tolstoy to Julian the Apostate, whom, as he said, no council had condemned and who had not been excommunicated, but who was an apostate from Christianity. For that reason,

²² The Church had anathematized Tolstoy on February 20-23, 1901 in the following words: "In his writings Count Lev Tolstoy has blasphemed against the holy sacraments, denying their grace-filled character, has not venerated the Orthodox Church as his Church, has spoken evil of the clergy, has said that he considers that to venerate Christ and worship Him as God is blasphemy, while saying of himself, by contrast: 'I am in God, and God in me'. It is not the Church that has rejected him, casting him off from herself, but he himself has rejected the Church: Lev himself has of his own will fallen away from the Church and is no longer a son of the Church, but is hostile to her. All attempts of the clergy to admonish the prodigal have failed to produce the desired fruits: in his pride he has considered himself cleverer than all, less fallible than all and the judge of all, and the Church has made a declaration about the falling away of Count Lev Tolstoy from the Russian Orthodox Church." (Gubanov, op. cit., p. 701).

²³ St. John, in Nadieszda Kizenko, *A Prodigious Saint: Father John of Kronstadt and the Russian People*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000, p. 249.

he said, 'it was not necessary to excommunicate Tolstoy, since he himself consciously left the Church'..."²⁴ After the revolution, Bishop Sergius would become one of the leaders of the pro-communist "Living Church", and then became the first Soviet patriarch through the mercy of the former seminarian Stalin...

Deacon Andrei Psarev writes: "Bishop Sergius, like many others at the time, held the Czar responsible for the shooting of the procession on January 9, 1905 (Bloody Sunday). The Imperial family, in turn, was not well disposed toward him. One of the far-right Russian patriots of the time, Alexander Dubrovin, wrote to Metropolitan Antony (Vadkovskii), whose vicar Bishop Sergius was: 'The patriots have been persecuted, but Antonin is still there, as is Sergius, who served a blasphemous *panikhida* to the insurrectionist Schmidt on behalf of the rebels [Schmidt was executed in 1906; he led the uprising on the cruiser *Ochakov*, was a member of the Sebastopol Revolutionary Committee, and gave the orders to bombard the Black Sea ports – A.P.], and you protected him even when a theft of money was discovered to have taken place in the Academy and he was at fault.'"²⁵

St. John of Kronstadt, a fervent monarchist, was opposed not only to Tolstoy, but also to the whole "proto-renovationist" current in the Church led by Bishop Sergius. "These people," he wrote, "are rejecting the Church, the sacraments, the authority of the clergy and they have even thought up a journal *The New Way* [which published reports on the religio-philosophical meetings in St. Petersburg]. This journal has undertaken to search for God, as if the Lord had not appeared to people and had not revealed the true way. They will find no other way than in Christ Jesus, our Lord. [...]. It is Satan who reveals all of these new ways and stupid people who don't understand what they are doing and are driving themselves and their nation to ruin by spreading their satanic ideas among the nation."²⁶

Fr. John had great influence with the royal family, and the tsar visited him secretly. This influence was noted and feared by a new player in church and court circles – the false elder Gregory Rasputin. As Bishop Theophan (Bystrov), inspector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, later witnessed to an Extraordinary Commission of the Provisional Government in 1917: "Rasputin indicated with unusual skill that he had reservations [about Fr. John]... Rasputin... said of Fr. John of Kronstadt... that he was a saint but, like a child, lacked experience and judgement... As a result Fr. John's influence at court began to wane..." However, Fr. John was supported by the better clergy: for example, by the future metropolitan and hieromartyr Fr. Joseph (Petrovykh), who wrote: "Lack of faith, impiety and all kinds of harmful tendencies are now pouring over Holy Rus' in a still more swollen river. They were restrained by

²⁴ Soldatov, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Psarev, "Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhny Novgorod as Deputy Patriarchal Locum Tenens to Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa", 1999.

https://www.academia.edu/40461025/Metropolitan_Sergius_of_Nizhny_Novgorod_as_Deputy_Patriarchal_Locum_Tenens_to_Metropolitan_Peter_of_Krutitsa?email_work_card=title.

²⁶ Robert Bird, "Metropolitan Philaret and the Secular Culture of His Age", in Vladimir Tsurikov (ed.), *Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow 1782-1867*, The Variable Press, USA, 2003, p. 25.

this powerful personality [Fr. John], who was put forward by the Providence of God to oppose the heretic Tolstoy."²⁷

However, with Fr. John's death in 1908, the renovationist tide gathered strength again.

²⁷ St. Joseph of Petrograd, *In the Father's Bosom: A Monk's Diary*, 3864; in M.S. Sakharov and L.E. Sikorskaya, *Sviaschennomuchenik Iosif Mitropolit Petrogradskij* (Hieromartyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd), St. Petersburg, 2006, p. 254.

3. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AND MONASTICISM

Another arena of conflict between “rightist” church intelligentsy and “leftist” renovationists was *monasticism*. A movement to promote monasticism, not only within monastic walls, but also within the theological academies and seminaries, was led by Bishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), rector of the Kazan Theological Academy.²⁸ Many of his pupils were to occupy important posts after the revolution both inside and outside Russia.

Bishop Anthony placed particular emphasis on pastoral theology in the system of higher theological education, and his devotion and love effected a gradual change in the system of education in the direction of a closer and more constant spiritual and moral intercourse between teachers and taught. Almost every day after supper he would arrange tea-parties with the students in his rooms. "On a long table," writes one of the participants, "there stood a samovar and ten to fifteen glasses, with sugar and jam. One of the students would pour out the tea. Over tea a conversation would begin and perplexities would be resolved. Sometimes quarrels would arise. But in general, there were all sorts of people present, and one could learn much."

Another important influence was Bishop Theophan (Bystrov), who became rector of the St. Petersburg Academy in 1909. Vladyka Theophan enlivened the religio-moral atmosphere in the academy and created a whole direction among the students, a kind of school of “Theophanites”, as they were called. He tried to instil in the students a respect for the lofty authority of the Holy Fathers of the Church in everything that pertained to Church faith and piety. When replying to a question of a theological or moral character he tried to avoid speaking “from himself”, but immediately went to the bookcase and found a precise answer to the question from the Holy Fathers, which allowed his visitor to depart profoundly satisfied. He himself was a walking encyclopaedia of theological knowledge. And yet this was by no means merely book knowledge: because of his ascetic life, he knew the truth of the teachings of the Fathers from his own experience. He would go to all the services, and often spend whole nights in prayer standing in his cell in front of the anoly and the icons. He would even take service books with him on his travels, and read all the daily services.

His very look inspired respect, and soon cases of amazing spiritual perspicacity revealed themselves. Never familiar, always correct and restrained in manner, but at the same time warm and attentive, he was a fierce enemy of all modernism, vulgarity and falsehood. This caused him to have many enemies, but people also involuntarily respected him. Once the famous writer V.V. Rozanov spoke at length to him against monasticism. Vladyka Theophan did not reply with a single word. But his silence was effective, for at the end the writer simply said: “*But perhaps you are right!*”

The debate for and against monasticism also affected the Moscow Theological Academy, where the proponents of monasticism, especially Archimandrite Nikon

²⁸ Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago (Biography of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich)*, volume 1, New York: publication of the Washington-Florida diocese, 1971, pp. 144-151.

(Rozhdestvensky), the future Hieromartyr Archbishop of Vologda, and Archimandrite Joseph (Petrovykh), the future Hieromartyr Metropolitan of Petrograd, were opposed by several of the secular professors. "This polemic between the professors of the Academy and the steward of the Holy Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra, Archimandrite Nikon (Rozhdestvensky) began already in 1902 and unfolded on the pages of the journals *Soul-Profiting Reading* and *The Theological Herald*. The professors subjected monasticism in its contemporary form to sharp criticism and called on the monks to carry out in a practical way the commandment of love for one's neighbour in the form of social service. Archimandrite Nikon defended the contemplative character of monasticism. The articles on both sides were quite sharp in character. In March, 1904 Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow banned an article by the Academy Professor N.F. Kapterev, which was being prepared for the press as a reply to Archimandrite Nikon. On March 18 an extraordinary session of the Academy Council took place for this reason. The decision was taken to protest against the metropolitan's ban. Archimandrite Joseph did not agree with this decision, supported the ban on the publication and expressed himself against N.F. Kapterev's article because of its unbecoming and sharp attacks and even 'the poison of barbs, mockeries and insults directed not only against opponents but also against monasticism itself, but very well concealed under an external mask of objective scholarship'.

"For his words Archimandrite Joseph was publicly and coarsely reproached by the offended N.F. Kapterev, after which he left the meeting. The scene made a bad impression on everyone, but Fr. Joseph was not spared – it was considered that he had received his due for his conceit and his speech against the professorial corporation and one of its most senior members. Professor I.V. Popov in a letter of April 16, 1904 wrote: 'Joseph set off straight from the meeting to the elders at the skete. There he wept and wrote a petition for his retirement...' At Pascha a deputation from the professors was received by Metropolitan Vladimir, who also summoned Archimandrite Joseph. In spite of the warm reception and long conversation with the professors, the ban was not removed, and Kapterev's article was not printed."²⁹

In 1909 Metropolitan Vladimir appointed one of Bishop Anthony's pupils at Kazan, Archimandrite Theodore (Pozdeyevsky), as rector of the Moscow Academy, and then consecrated him as Bishop of Volokolamsk. Vladyka Theodore published a work, *The Meaning of Christian Asceticism*, which became a kind of manifesto of the "new wave" of monastics. And after the revolution Vladyka's Danilov monastery in Moscow would become one of the power-houses of the Catacomb Church.

Bishop Theodore wrote: "Many contemporary renovators of Christianity think it unnecessary to take account of the true attitude of Christianity towards man, his nature and the meaning of life. They create their own ideal of life and judge Christianity in accordance with that ideal. They want to bring in Christianity as the most suitable, so to speak, most vital factor contributing to the realization of their ideal. The most important thing, the question of sin, is completely ignored by them, and they have no idea what it is. That is why, for example, Merezhkovsky, who accuses Christianity of the split between flesh and spirit that destroyed the pagan

²⁹ Sakharov and Sikorskaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

world, has no explanation of where this split appeared among the pagans or why they lived by affirming the flesh. But Christianity says that this destructive split and disharmony in the nature of man was not imposed on man from without, but lives within him, as a consequence of sin... This is the corruption, illness and servitude of man to the flesh, and in order to understand what happened in the soul of man through sin it is necessary to penetrate into the psychology of sin. One should point out that, among the representatives of that part of the intelligentsia which is thinking of going along the path of Christianity, this path is indeed new, because, far from wanting to accept Christianity as it is and always was, historically speaking, they want to find - or, better, invent - in this same Christianity certain new ways of incarnating it in life and, through it, of renovating human life... For the man who is used to living in accordance with the ideals of the new philosophy of life, or in accordance with the moods revealed by the philosophy of Nietzsche and the wild heroes of the works of Gorky, L. Andreyev, etc., it is of course not easy immediately to accept Christianity in its historical integrity, and such people find much in the teaching of the Christian Church that is as strange as it is incomprehensible. The Apostle Paul said that the preaching of Christ crucified appeared as very strange and difficult to accept: for some it was simply a deception, and for others - sheer madness... This same teaching about Christ, crucified and suffering, this demand that man should crucify his passions and lusts, this Christianity imbued with the spirit of compunction and the suppression of the carnal principle in the name of spiritual interests - in a word: the ascetical spirit of Christianity has disturbed the new pagans who seek in the Christianity the truth of life (as they understand it, of course) and has become a stone of stumbling and fall in the task of following Christ. Open the pages of any work of Merezhkovsky, Minsky or Rozanov, and you will see that their articles are mainly occupied with a criticism of monasticism, which is identified with asceticism. This strange phenomenon is the result of the fact that a part of the intelligentsia which is seeking God has approached Christianity with the very definite aim of reforming it, which is nothing other than the same decadence applied to the religious life..."

"The proponents of the idea that ascetics should do public service make the direct demand that the antiquated institution of monasticism should be reformed by turning monasteries into associations and congregations with a predominantly practical significance. Among secular writers, Merezhkovsky, for example, in his article 'The Last Saint', directly states that 'the whole of ancient eastern and Russian asceticism is imbued with the spirit of hatred and disdain for society'. Berdyaev for some reason represents asceticism as rejoicing in the existence of diabolical evil in the world, for if this evil did not exist, where would ascetics go in their search for reasons to suffer? This is an example of the contemporary misunderstanding of the nature and meaning of Christian asceticism..."³⁰

³⁰ St. Theodore, *The Meaning of Christian Asceticism*.

4. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AND THE NEW THEOLOGY

We see, then, that the ferment in political and social life was matched by a scarcely less varied, if less violent, ferment of opinions and movements in Church life. On the one hand, we see the conservative churchmen such as St. John of Kronstadt and Bishops Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Theophan (Bystrov), Nikon (Rozhdestvensky), Joseph (Petrovykh) and Theodore (Pozdeyevsky). And on the other we see the renovationists such as Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and the heretical intellectuals, such as Tolstoy, Merezhkovsky, Rozanov, Bulgakov and Berdyaev. These debates were to become more rather than less important in the course of time. For it would be largely along the lines drawn in these pre-revolutionary decades that the Church schisms of the post-revolutionary period would develop.

In addition, we should note a current of thought that arose among certain Church conservatives against what was seen to be the dead scholasticism of the contemporary teaching of theology in Russia. A conventional target was the Metropolitan of Moscow Macarius (Bulgakov)'s *Dogmatic Theology*, which, while a splendid handbook for quotations from the Holy Fathers, was considered by many to be lacking in inspiration. Thus Professor Nicholas Glubokovsky, while not denying that the virtues of Macarius' book were "undoubted and huge", nevertheless argued that "the author is dragged towards the past, lives by its traditions and is governed by former methods. For him dogma is a finished theoretical formula that is undeniably obligatory in its abstract, irrefutable completedness. In this case only one scientific operation is permitted in relation to it - the establishment of its truth by the logically interrelated connections of all its parts the crushing force of its external arguments. Hence the whole construction inevitably acquires the character of a priori dryness and bookish lifelessness, and the scientific exposition turns out to be directly scholastic..."³¹

Fairly typical of this tendency was the former Tolstoyan and future hieromartyr-bishop of the Catacomb Church, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov. He advocated a more living, experiential approach to theology in general and anti-heretical polemics in particular. "Our school theology," he wrote, "on the soil of which the struggle against the opponents of the Church is waged, is foreign to religious experience and not only inspires nobody and brings nobody to God, but even kills the living shoots of religious life which are apprehended in the pious family and in church. The disgust or distrust which theology elicits in many alumni of our theological (and sometimes also secular) educational institutions is hardly a secret to anyone. Indifference to the faith or its rejection - that is our heritage.

"Look: who rules the mind and the aroused conscience of the Russian man? Literature, philosophy, science - only not theology, which in its extreme schematism decisively refuses to see the living human soul with its demands, torments and doubts. It does not take the man with his present spiritual requirements and does not

³¹ Glubokovsky, *Russkaia bogoslovskaia nauka v ee istoricheskom razvitii i novejsheem sostoianii* (*Russian theological science in its historical development and contemporary condition*), Moscow: St. Vladimir Brotherhood, 2002; <http://proroza.narod.ru/Glubokovsky.htm>, p. 2.

raise him, cautiously and penetratingly, to a higher level of self-knowledge and self-feeling. This role secular literature has taken upon itself, although unfortunately it is not always in agreement with Christian ideals.

“Who has good success with us in the purely religious sphere? Vladimir Soloviev, Khomiakov, Samarin, Kireevsky, Nesmelov - that is, people who are particularly foreign to the methods of school theologising.

“How do such spiritual writers (who, however, are significant more for those who are not yet far from the Church, and still more those living in it) such as Bishop Theophan, Bishop Anthony of Ufa, Fr. John Sergiev (I have in mind his book, *My Life in Christ*) attract people to themselves? By renouncing the stereotypical, the dead and the deadening, the formal-dialectical method of thinking. They have gone along a new path of theological thought, a path which, it would seem, should most accurately be called ‘psychological’ ...”³²

The call for a more living approach to theology was not, of course, wrong in itself. However, it contained potential dangers. One was that “exciting” but heretical theologians (Novoselov mentions Vladimir Soloviev) were preferred to “boring” but Orthodox ones like Metropolitan Macarius. Another was that false diagnoses of the causes of Russian theology’s supposed “deadness” were offered. As, for example, that it was not Russian enough. Thus, as Protopriest Valentine Asmus writes, “Professor M.M. Tareev of the Moscow Theological Academy tried to demonstrate that Russian Orthodoxy had to cast off the yoke of Byzantine asceticism, which had dried up the Russian religious genius. A vivid representative of ‘the national theology’ was Tareev’s colleague, Vladimir Alexeevich Troitsky, in monasticism Hilarion (he was ordained to the episcopate after the revolution). He shared the ambiguity of Slavophilism, which well understood the universal meaning of Christianity and at the same time was inclined to see in Orthodoxy ‘the wealth of tribal faith’ (Khomiakov), as if it were naturally inherent in the Russians and Slavs as a whole. ‘The spirit of Slavdom is defined by Orthodoxy’ (Troitsky, *The Church as a Union of Love*, Moscow, 1998, p. 333). ‘I always somehow feel a lie in the position of the Slav Catholic’. Everything specifically Catholic ‘must be extremely opposed to the Slavic soul. The betrayal of Orthodoxy is... the betrayal of Slavdom, a going over to a western key in mood and in life’ (this was said about the Poles, p. 334). The remarkable thought of Tertullian that the human soul is by nature Christian is here narrowed to a single tribe taken on its own. The Russian man even in the fall preserves such natural resources as are not to be found in others, and even flirting with the devil is for him child’s play. ‘The German has sold his soul to the devil, but the Russian has given it away in such way that - and in this is the undoubted superiority of the Russian - he can leave the devil, while the German has nothing with which to redeem himself’ (p. 115).”³³

³² Novoselov, “Zabytij put’ opytnogo Bogopoznania” (The Forgotten Path of the Experiential Knowledge of God), 1902, Vyshnij Volochek;

http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=653.

³³ Asmus, “Archiepiskop Ilarion Troitskij i Pravoslavnoe Bogoslovie” (Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky and Orthodox Theology), *Bogoslovskij Sbornik (Theological Anthology)*, issue 7, Moscow, 2001; <http://proroza.narod.ru/Asmus-1.htm>, p. 1.

Another danger was that the perception was created, whether justly or unjustly, that the reformers were striving to form an elite within the Church that would gradually replace the old cadres. Bishop Anthony in particular was seen as trying to create a core body of learned monks who would replace the old professorial cadres. Thus, “recalling the 1890s, [Professor] N.N. Glubokovsky used to remark that it was precisely at that time that [there arose] the artificial development of a new monasticism, which created a special ‘direction’ in the Russian Church that announced and practised ‘in the spirit of true churchliness’ that ‘everything is permitted, allowed and forgiven to monks’. Later, wrote Glubokovsky, ‘there developed tendentious agitation for the monastic tonsure to be declared one of the sacraments, and if there were meant to be no more than seven, then it was necessary to dethrone marriage and put monasticism in its place, which would serve God following the example of the redemption on the Cross “through the compassionate love” of Christ alone...’³⁴

Glubovsky is here referring to Bishop Anthony’s controversial theory of redemption, according to which Christ saved us simply through the power of His compassionate love and not through offering any kind of “expiation” or “satisfaction” of God’s justice. This product of the new, “living” theology, which was shared by other leading theologians such as Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Archimandrite Hilarion (Troitsky), bordered on heresy, and was to cause major arguments. Thus one of the earliest critics of Bishop Anthony was the future Hieromartyr Archbishop Victor of Vyatka. He noted already in 1912 that the “new theology” of Bishops Anthony and Sergius “would shake the Church”. Later, after Sergius issued his pro-Soviet “Declaration” of 1927, which caused a huge schism in the Russian Church, Archbishop Victor saw in the “Declaration” a direct result of Sergius’ pre-revolutionary teaching on salvation...³⁵

³⁴ Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

³⁵ Hieromartyr Victor, “Novie Bogoslovy” (The New Theologians), *Tserkov’* (The Church), 1912; reprinted by *Orthodox Action*, Moscow, N 1 (11), 2000; Protopriest Michael Polsky, *Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Martyrs of Russia)), 1949-57, Jordanville, vol. 1, p. 601.

5. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH AND "PROTO-ECUMENISM"

Both the Catholics and the Anglicans were adopting a more "eirenical", ecumenist approach to inter-Church relations at this time. On June 20, 1894, Pope Leo XIII issued an encyclical on the union of the Churches "addressed," in the words of Patriarch Anthimus' encyclical in reply dated August, 1895, "to the sovereigns and peoples of the whole world, in which he also called on our Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ to unite with the throne of the Pope, understanding this union in the sense that we should recognize him as the supreme pontiff and the highest spiritual and secular head of the whole Church scattered throughout the earth and the only deputy of Christ on earth and distributor of all grace". The encyclical that the patriarch wrote in reply to the Pope lists all the heresies of the papacy and calls on it to return to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic church. For "truly," continues the encyclical, "every Christian heart must be filled with the desire for the union of the Churches, especially the union of the whole Orthodox world... Therefore in her public prayers [the Orthodox Church] prays for the union of all those who are dispersed and for the return of all those who erred to the correct path of the truth, which alone can lead to the Life of all that exists, the Only-Begotten Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ..."

In 1901 Joachim III, a Freemason, became patriarch of Constantinople.³⁶ He responded to the ecumenical overtures of the Anglicans. Thus according to the leading organ of the patriarchate, "the first impulse towards official communion between the two Churches (Orthodox and Protestant) was provided by the Lambeth conference of July, 1897, in which 194 bishops from the whole Anglican communion came together and unanimously voted for action aimed at the union of the Churches... After this, in February, 1898, Archbishop Friedrich of Canterbury sent letters to the Patriarchs of the East and the Archbishop of Cyprus with copies of the decisions of the conference with regard to the union of the Churches... He asked the Orthodox Church accept the baptism of the Anglicans and allow her priests to give the Divine Gifts to dying Anglicans in places where they did not have their own priests... In September, 1899, in a letter to Patriarch Constantine V the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed the burning desire of the English for clearer understanding and the establishment of closer relations, declaring that it would be difficult to set out the details of such a course and that the longed-for communion should proceed with ever-increasing depth insofar as the determination of some kind of programme towards this end had been shown to be difficult... He pointed out that the communion of the two Churches would become surer through the cessation of proselytism, through visits of Orthodox clergy to London and of the Archbishop of Canterbury and English priests to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople on the great feasts and other official days, and through each Church telling the other of important changes taking place in her... On the basis of an agreement on these points by both sides, mutual correspondence began in December, 1900 and continued. After this various other events took place demonstrating the friendly relations between the two Churches..."³⁷

³⁶ In 1998 he was anathematized by the True Orthodox Church of Greece.

³⁷ *Ekklesiastiki Alitheia* (Ecclesiastical Truth), 1920; in Monk Pavlos, *Neoimerologitismos Oikoumenismos* (Newcalendarism Ecumenism), Athens, 1982, pp. 17-19.

In 1902 Patriarch Joachim demonstrated his “friendly relations” by declaring that Papism and Protestantism were “great ramifications (αναδενδραδας) of Christianity”. But before embarking on this ecumenist course, he wisely decided to issue an encyclical asking all the other Orthodox Churches (except Antioch and Bulgaria, whose hierarchies, for different reasons, he did not recognise) to express their opinions on union with the western churches. He also asked their opinion on the proposed change to the new, Gregorian calendar. This was related to the ecumenical venture, because the difference between the old, Julian calendar used in the Orthodox East and the new, Gregorian calendar used in the Catholic-Protestant West was the first obstacle to the practical implementation of ecumenism – celebrating the major Christian feasts together.

The Local Orthodox Churches were unanimous in their rejection of the new calendar (Alexandria and strife-torn Cyprus did not reply).

As for ecumenism, it is instructive to read the summary of the Churches’ replies by Fortescue: “His Holiness [Joachim III] speaks of the Latins with every possible charity, moderation, and courtesy, and hopes for reunion with us. Which hope may God fulfil. The difference of his tone from that of Anthimos VII, in the famous answer to Pope Leo XIII, is very remarkable. The answers of the sister-Churches, however, show how little they are disposed to listen to the voice of their honorary chief...

“Jerusalem answered cordially and sympathetically. Patriarch Damianos said that it is unhappily hopeless to think of reunion with Latins or Protestants as long as they go on proselytising in the East. But union with the Anglicans is possible and very desirable... Athens answered that no union is possible, least of all with the Old Catholics, who will not give a plain account of what they do or do not believe. Bucharest said that the only union possible would be the conversion of the Latin and Protestant heretics to the one true Orthodox Church; the Old Catholics are specially hopeless, because they have given up confession and fasting, try to unite with the Anglicans, and do not know what they themselves believe... Belgrade likes the idea of union with the Old Catholics especially... Russia answered at great length and very offensively [*sic*]. What, said the Holy Russian Synod, is the good of talking about reunion with other bodies when we are in such a state of disorder ourselves? It went on to draw up a list of their domestic quarrels, and hinted plainly that they were all the fault of the Phanar. For the rest, union with the Latins is impossible, because of the unquenchable ambitions of the See of Rome, which long ago led her to her fall. As for the Anglicans, the Church of Russia has always been well disposed towards them: ‘We show every possible condescension to their perplexities, which are only natural after so long a separation. But we must loudly proclaim the truth of our Church and her office as the one and only heir of Christ, and the only ark of salvation left to men by God’s grace.’”³⁸

³⁸ Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, London: Catholic Truth Society, 1920, pp. 345-347. See also Eleutherios Goutzides, *Ekklesiologika Themata* (Ecclesiological Themes), Athens, 1980, vol. I, pp. 64-67.

When Patriarch Joachim had received all the replies, he published a second encyclical in 1904 which expressed his own moderate, but firm opinion, both about ecumenism and about the first major step necessary in order to implement ecumenism in a practical way – the change from the traditional Orthodox Julian calendar to the papal Gregorian calendar that was in use throughout the West: “The Church is one, in identity of faith and similarity of habits and customs, in accordance with the decisions of the Seven Ecumenical Councils; and one it must be, and not many and diverse, differing from each other both in dogmas and in the basic principles of Church government...”

“This is our opinion concerning the calendar: the Paschalion is venerable and immovable, having been fixed already centuries ago and sanctioned by the constant practice of the Church. In accordance with it, we have been taught to celebrate the radiant Resurrection of the Lord on the first Sunday after the full moon of the spring equinox, or on the Sunday following; and we are not allowed to make innovations in this. And it is mindless and pointless for those who are lying in wait to ambush our immovable Julian calendar by jumping only 13 days, so that our menologia and those of the followers of the other calendar should coincide. On the one hand, there is no compelling reason to omit all these days; such an act has no ecclesiastical or scientific justification. And on the other hand, the coincidence of the menologia will be only temporary, viz., until the year 2100, when there will again begin to be a difference of one day...”³⁹

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That should have been the end of the matter as far as the Orthodox Church was concerned. However, the tide of western pressure continued to rise. This came particularly from the Anglicans. The “High Church” wing of their Church took particular interest in the Russian Church, whose highly traditional ethos and status as a local national Church seemed to them to be a model of what the Anglican Church should be.

Unfortunately, the sincere interest of some Anglicans in Russian Orthodoxy did not go so far as to see in Orthodoxy the One True Church; and the rapprochement between the two Churches turned out to be more of a danger to the Russians than an opportunity to the Anglicans. In 1908 the Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar reported that a recent synod of the Anglican Church had decided that the Anglican Churches could baptize the children of Orthodox coming to Anglican priests in places where there were no Orthodox priests, but only on condition that this baptism was not repeated by Orthodox clergy. Then, in 1910, the first “World Missionary Conference” was convened in Edinburgh. This is considered by some to mark the historical beginning of the ecumenical movement. Its president, John Mott, was the first to introduce the terms “Ecumenism” and “ecumenical” into common currency.⁴⁰ In 1914 the “World

³⁹ *Agios Agathangelos Esphigmenites* (St. Agathangelos of Esphigmenou), № 124, March-April, 1990, pp. 17-19.

⁴⁰ Monk Pavlos, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

Congress for International Friendship through the Churches” was founded. This led to the creation of the “Life and Work” Movement, which later combined with the “Faith and Order” Movement to form the World Council of Churches in 1948.

However, the outbreak of the First World War put a temporary halt to these developments...

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It was not only the Greeks who were being influenced by Ecumenism. Thus during the First World War the famous Serbian theologian Fr. Nikolai Velimirovich served with Anglicans in London (he later turned away from ecumenism, and became a great confessor).⁴¹ Again, Archbishop Tikhon, the future patriarch and hieromartyr, served with Anglicans in America.⁴²

The official service-books of the Russian Church reveal an unclear, ambiguous attitude towards the sacraments of the heretics and schismatics. Thus in the *Trebnik*, or *Book of Needs*, we read: “Know this also, that a schismatic baptism, and a heretical one, by those who believe in the Holy Indivisible Trinity, in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Church determines to be ultimately acceptable in every way.”

Again, Bulgakov’s *Nastol’naia Kniga*, or *Handbook for Clergy*, explains that Roman Catholics, if they have been baptised and confirmed, should be received by the “Third Rite”, that is, renunciation of heresies and repentance. If they have not been confirmed, they must be chrismated. They must *never* be baptised.

“Recognising Baptism as a requirement for becoming a member of her, [the Russian Orthodox Church] accepts Jews, Muslims, pagans and those sectarians who distort the fundamental dogmas of the Orthodox Church through Baptism; Protestants are accepted through Chrismation; and those Catholics, Armenians and members of the Anglican Church who have not received Chrismation or Confirmation, and also those who have fallen away from Orthodoxy, she accepts through the Third Rite, through Repentance, repudiation of errors and Communion of the Holy Mysteries.”⁴³

⁴¹ See Muriel Heppell, *George Bell and Nikolai Velimirovich*, Birmingham: Lazarica Press, 2001.

⁴² See “Tserkovnie korni Febral'skogo Grekha. Chast' I», *Sila i Slava*, July 14, 2018. http://www.virtus-et-gloria.com/Menu.aspx?book=texts/150119doc.html#_ftnref10

⁴³ S.V. Bulgakov, *Nastol’naia Kniga sviaschenno-tserkovno-sluzhitelej* (Handbook for Church Servers), Kharkov, 1900, p. 928. In a footnote Bulgakov writes: “Accepting confirmed Anglicans [and Catholics] by the ‘Third Rite’ could be permitted only under the condition of recognition that the Anglican Church has a completely legitimate hierarchy, truly having preserved the grace of the priesthood in unbroken succession from the Apostles.” In line with this acceptance of Anglican order, Bishop Tikhon of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, the future Martyr-Patriarch, attended the consecration of Reginald Weller as Episcopalian Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin in 1900” (*The Living Church*, November 17, 1900). In his diary under December 16/29, 1900, Archbishop Nicholas (Kasatkin) of Japan mentions this fact with some annoyance: “Why did Tikhon worm himself in there in a hierarchical mantia?”

As Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) explained, the refusal to rebaptise or reordain a heretic, and reception of him by the “Third Rite”, did not entail the belief that the heretic was inside the Church. It was rather an acceptance that the *form* of these rites was correct and did not have to be repeated; so that this form became as it were a cup receiving the grace that is imparted only in the Orthodox Church. Unfortunately, however, this widespread practice of “economy” in the reception of heretics led to frequent misunderstandings in the ecumenical era that began after the First World War...

The 1903 Epistle of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church to Patriarch Joachim of Constantinople expressed firm opposition to union with the heretics. The hierarchs were “unchangeably convinced... that our Eastern Orthodox Church, which has inviolably preserved the complete deposit of Christ, is alone at the present time the Oecumenical Church”. “As regards our relations with the two great ramifications of Christianity, the Latins and the Protestants, the Russian Church, together with all the autocephalous Churches, ever prays, awaits, and fervently desires that those who in times of old were children of Mother Church and sheep of the one flock of Christ, but who now have been torn away by the envy of the foe and are wandering astray, ‘should repent and come to the knowledge of the truth’, that they should once more return to the bosom of the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, to their one Shepherd. We believe in the sincerity of their faith in the All-Holy and Life-Originating Trinity, and on that account we accept the baptism of both the one and the other. We respect the Apostolic Succession of the Latin hierarchy, and those of their clergy who join our Church we accept in the Orders which they then possess, just as we do in the case of Armenians, Copts, Nestorians and other bodies that have not lost Apostolic Succession. ‘Our heart is enlarged’ (II Corinthians 6.11), and we are ready to do all that is possible in order to promote the establishment upon earth of the unity which we so much desire. But, to our great regret and to the common grief of all true children of the Church, at the present time we are obliged to think, not so much of softening our relations towards Western Christians, and of a love-abounding drawing of their communities into union with us, as of the unwearying and ever-watchful defence of the rational sheep committed to our charge from unceasing attacks and multiform seducements on the part of the Latins and the Protestants.”

The “proto-ecumenism” of the Russian Church in this period came primarily from the tsars. Thus in 1847 Emperor Nicholas I concluded a concordat with Pope Gregory XVI which envisaged that the Russian Orthodox Church would carry out all the sacraments and needs for those who turned to her with such requests from the Catholics exiled for their participation in the Polish rebellions against Russia, if they were living in places where there were no Catholic churches or Catholic clergy. In accordance with the meaning of this concordat and the order of the Emperor, the

With regard to the Syro-Chaldean Nestorians, the position of the Church of Russia was expressed in a Synodal ukaz dated March 17-21, 1898, N 1017, which stated that in accordance with the 95th Canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council they were to be received according to the Third Rite, and that their clergy had be received in full ecclesiastical rank, with no re-ordination.

Synod then issued the command, which was obligatory for the Russian Orthodox clergy, to satisfy the requests of exiled Catholics, if such requests came from them.

Again, as the Russian empire had expanded over the centuries, so had the number of subjects of other, non-Orthodox faiths, to the extent that by the late imperial period, as Igor Smolich says, it was no longer a “confessionally united kingdom”, but an “interconfessional empire”. Thus, as Archimandrite Macarius (Veretennikov) writes, commenting on Smolich’s work, “Tsar Alexander III, for example, visited Buddhist temples and attended their services; [and] Tsar Nicholas II also (for example, during the world war) visited Catholic churches, Jewish synagogues and Muslim mosques, attended their services, and kissed the Catholic cross. From a purely ecclesiastical-formal point of view the Orthodox tsar should not have done that, but as the head of a super-confessional empire, as emperor, he was forced to it.”⁴⁴

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An important field of ecumenical activity was the United States, where until a few years before the revolution the Orthodox of various ethnic jurisdictions were united under the Russian Church in the person of Archbishop Tikhon of Alaska. The Episcopalian Anglicans made many efforts to draw the Orthodox into communion with them. But they were well rebuked by His Grace, the Right Reverend [Saint] Raphael Hawaweeny, Bishop of Brooklyn and head of the Syrian Greek Orthodox Catholic Mission of the Russian Church in North America, who was subject to Archbishop Tikhon.

As the Orthodox Christian Information Center writes: “Called from Russia to New York in 1895, to assume charge of the growing Syrian parishes under the Russian jurisdiction over American Orthodoxy, he was elevated to the episcopate by order of the Holy Synod of Russia and was consecrated Bishop of Brooklyn and head of the Syrian Mission by Archbishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent of Alaska on March 12, 1904. This was the first consecration of an Orthodox Catholic Bishop in the New World and Bishop Raphael was the first Orthodox prelate to spend his entire episcopate, from consecration to burial, in America. [Ed. note—In August 1988 the remains of Bishop Raphael along with those of Bishops Emmanuel and Sophronios and Fathers Moses Abouhider, Agapios Golam and Makarios Moore were transferred to the Antiochian Village in southwestern Pennsylvania for re-burial. Bishop Raphael's remains were found to be essentially incorrupt. As a result a commission under the direction of Bishop Basil (Essey) of the Antiochian Archdiocese was appointed to gather materials concerning the possible glorification of Bishop Raphael.]

“With his broad culture and international training and experience Bishop Raphael naturally had a keen interest in the universal Orthodox aspiration for Christian unity. His work in America, where his Syrian communities were widely scattered and sometimes very small and without the services of the Orthodox Church, gave him a special interest in any movement which promised to provide a way by which

⁴⁴ Veretennikov, “K Voprosu Periodizatsii Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi” (Towards the Question of the Periodicisation of the History of the Russian Church), <http://ao.orthodoxy.ru/arch/017/017-smol.htm>, pp. 6, 11 (footnote 17).

acceptable and valid sacramental ministrations might be brought within the reach of isolated Orthodox people. It was, therefore, with real pleasure and gratitude that Bishop Raphael received the habitual approaches of "High Church" prelates and clergy of the Episcopal Church. Assured by "catholic-minded" Protestants, seeking the recognition of real Catholic Bishops, that the Anglican Communion and Episcopal Church were really Catholic and almost the same as Orthodox, Bishop Raphael was filled with great happiness. A group of these "High Episcopalian" Protestants had formed the American branch of "The Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union" (since revised and now existing as "The Anglican and Eastern Churches Association," chiefly active in England, where it publishes a quarterly organ called *The Christian East*). This organization, being well pleased with the impression its members had made upon Bishop Raphael, elected him Vice-President of the Union. Bishop Raphael accepted, believing that he was associating himself with truly Catholic but unfortunately separated [from the Church] fellow priests and bishops in a movement that would promote Orthodoxy and true catholic unity at the same time.

"As is their usual custom with all prelates and clergy of other bodies, the Episcopal bishop urged Bishop Raphael to recognize their Orders and accept for his people the sacramental ministrations of their Protestant clergy on a basis of equality with the Sacraments [better, Mysteries—*webmaster*] of the Orthodox Church administered by Orthodox priests. It was pointed out that the isolated and widely-scattered Orthodox who had no access to Orthodox priests or Sacraments could be easily reached by clergy of the Episcopal Church, who, they persuaded Bishop Raphael to believe, were priests and Orthodox in their doctrine and belief though separated in organization. In this pleasant delusion, but under carefully specified restrictions, Bishop Raphael issued in 1910 permission for his faithful, in emergencies and under necessity when an Orthodox priest and Sacraments were inaccessible, to ask the ministrations of Episcopal clergy and make comforting use of what these clergy could provide in the absence of Orthodox priests and Sacraments.

"Being Vice-President of the Eastern Orthodox side of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches Union and having issued on Episcopal solicitation such a permission to his people, Bishop Raphael set himself to observe closely the reaction following his permissory letter and to study more carefully the Episcopal Church and Anglican teaching in the hope that the Anglicans might really be capable of becoming actually Orthodox. But, the more closely he observed the general practice and the more deeply he studied the teaching and faith of the Episcopal Church, the more painfully shocked, disappointed, and disillusioned Bishop Raphael became. Furthermore, the very fact of his own position in the Anglican and Orthodox Union made the confusion and deception of Orthodox people the more certain and serious. The existence and cultivation of even friendship and mutual courtesy was pointed out as supporting the Episcopal claim to Orthodox sacramental recognition and intercommunion. Bishop Raphael found that his association with Episcopalians became the basis for a most insidious, injurious, and unwarranted propaganda in favor of the Episcopal Church among his parishes and faithful. Finally, after more than a year of constant and careful study and observation, Bishop Raphael felt that it was his duty to resign from the association of which he was Vice-President. In doing this he hoped that the end of his connection with the Union would end also the Episcopal interferences and uncalled-for intrusions in the affairs and religious harmony of his people. His letter of

resignation from the Anglican and Orthodox Churches Union, published in the *Russian Orthodox Messenger*, February 18, 1912, stated his convictions in the following way:

“I have a personal opinion about the usefulness of the Union. Study has taught me that there is a vast difference between the doctrine, discipline, and even worship of the Holy Orthodox Church and those of the Anglican Communion; while, on the other hand, experience has forced upon me the conviction that to promote courtesy and friendship, which seems to be the only aim of the Union at present, not only amounts to killing precious time, at best, but also is somewhat hurtful to the religious and ecclesiastical welfare of the Holy Orthodox Church in these United States.

“Very many of the bishops of the Holy Orthodox Church at the present time – and especially myself have observed that the Anglican Communion is associated with numerous Protestant bodies, many of whose doctrines and teachings, as well as practices, are condemned by the Holy Orthodox Church. I view union as only a pleasing dream. Indeed, it is impossible for the Holy Orthodox Church to receive – as She has a thousand times proclaimed, and as even the Papal See of Rome has declaimed to the Holy Orthodox Church's credit – anyone into Her Fold or into union with Her who does not accept Her Faith in full without any qualifications – the Faith which She claims is most surely Apostolic. I cannot see how She can unite, or the latter expect in the near future to unite with Her while the Anglican Communion holds so many Protestant tenets and doctrines, and also is so closely associated with the non-Catholic religions about her.

“Finally, I am in perfect accord with the views expressed by His Grace, Archbishop Platon, in his address delivered this year before the Philadelphia Episcopalian Brotherhood, as to the impossibility of union under present circumstances.

“One would suppose that the publication of such a letter in the official organ of the Russian Archdiocese would have ended the misleading and subversive propaganda of the Episcopalians among the Orthodox faithful. But the Episcopal members simply addressed a reply to Bishop Raphael in which they attempted to make him believe that the Episcopal Church was not Protestant and had adopted none of the errors held by Protestant bodies. For nearly another year Bishop Raphael watched and studied while the subversive Episcopal propaganda went on among his people on the basis of the letter of permission he had issued under a misapprehension of the nature and teaching of the Episcopal Church and its clergy. Seeing that there was no other means of protecting Orthodox faithful from being misled and deceived, Bishop Raphael finally issued, late in 1912, the following pastoral letter which has remained in force among the Orthodox of this jurisdiction in America ever since and has been confirmed and reinforced by the pronouncement of his successor, the present Archbishop Aftimios.

“Two years ago, while I was Vice-President and member of the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union, being moved with compassion for my children in the Holy Orthodox Faith *once delivered to the saints* (Jude 1:3), scattered throughout the whole of North America and deprived of the ministrations of the Church; and especially in places far removed from Orthodox centers; and being equally moved with a feeling that the Episcopalian (Anglican) Church possessed largely the

Orthodox Faith, as many of the prominent clergy professed the same to me before I studied deeply their doctrinal authorities and their liturgy—the *Book of Common Prayer*—I wrote a letter as Bishop and Head of the Syrian-Orthodox Mission in North America, giving permission, in which I said that in extreme cases, where no Orthodox priest could be called upon at short notice, the ministrations of the Episcopal (Anglican) clergy might be kindly requested. However, I was most explicit in defining when and how the ministrations should be accepted, and also what exceptions should be made. In writing that letter I hoped, on the one hand, to help my people spiritually, and, on the other hand, to open the way toward bringing the Anglicans into the communion of the Holy Orthodox Faith.

“On hearing and in reading that my letter, perhaps unintentionally, was misconstrued by some of the Episcopalian (Anglican) clergy, I wrote a second letter in which I pointed out that my instructions and exceptions had been either overlooked or ignored by many, to wit:

“a) They (the Episcopalians) informed the Orthodox people that I recognized the Anglican Communion (Episcopal Church) as being united with the Holy Orthodox Church and their ministry, that is holy orders, as valid.

“b) The Episcopal (Anglican) clergy offered their ministrations even when my Orthodox clergy were residing in the same towns and parishes, as pastors.

“c) Episcopal clergy said that there was no need of the Orthodox people seeking the ministrations of their own Orthodox priests, for their (the Anglican) ministrations were all that were necessary.

“I, therefore, felt bound by all the circumstances to make a thorough study of the Anglican Church's faith and orders, as well as of her discipline and ritual. After serious consideration I realized that it was my honest duty, as a member of the College of the Holy Orthodox Greek Apostolic Church, and head of the Syrian Mission in North America, to resign from the vice-presidency of and membership in the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox Churches Union. At the same time, I set forth, in my letter of resignation, my reason for so doing.

“I am convinced that the doctrinal teaching and practices, as well as the discipline, of the whole Anglican Church are unacceptable to the Holy Orthodox Church. I make this apology for the Anglicans whom as Christian gentlemen I greatly revere, that the loose teaching of a great many of the prominent Anglican theologians are so hazy in their definitions of truths, and so inclined toward pet heresies that it is hard to tell what they believe. The Anglican Church as a whole has not spoken authoritatively on her doctrine. Her Catholic-minded members can call out her doctrines from many views, but so nebulous is her pathway in the doctrinal world that those who would extend a hand of both Christian and ecclesiastical fellowship dare not, without distrust, grasp the hand of her theologians, for while many are orthodox on some points, they are quite heterodox on others. I speak, of course, from the Holy Orthodox Eastern Catholic point of view. The Holy Orthodox Church has never perceptibly changed from Apostolic times, and, therefore, no one can go astray in finding out what She teaches. Like Her Lord and Master, though at times surrounded with human malaria—which He in His mercy pardons—She is *the same yesterday, and today, and*

forever (Heb. 13:8) the mother and safe deposit of the truth as it is in Jesus (cf. Eph. 4:21).

“The Orthodox Church differs absolutely with the Anglican Communion in reference to the number of Sacraments and in reference to the doctrinal explanation of the same. The Anglicans say in their Catechism concerning the Sacraments that there are "two only as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord." I am well aware that, in their two books of homilies (which are not of a binding authority, for the books were prepared only in the reign of Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth for priests who were not permitted to preach their own sermons in England during times both politically and ecclesiastically perilous), it says that there are "five others commonly called Sacraments" (see homily in each book on the Sacraments), but long since they have repudiated in different portions of their Communion this very teaching and absolutely disavow such definitions in their "Articles of Religion" which are bound up in their *Book of Common Prayer* or Liturgy as one of their authorities.

“The Orthodox Church has ever taught that there are seven Sacraments. She plainly points out the fact that each of the seven has an outward and visible sign and an inward and spiritual Grace, and that they are of gospel and apostolic origin.

“Again, the Orthodox Church has certain rites and practices associated and necessary in the administration of the Sacraments which neither time nor circumstances must set aside where churches are organized. Yet the Anglicans entirely neglect these, though they once taught and practiced the same in more catholic days.

“In the case of the administration of Holy Baptism it is the absolute rule of the Orthodox Church that the candidate must be immersed three times (once in the name of each Person of the Holy Trinity). Immersion is only permissory in the Anglican Communion, and pouring or sprinkling is the general custom. The Anglicans do not use holy oil in the administration, etc., and even in doctrinal teaching in reference to this Sacrament they differ.

“As to the doctrine concerning Holy Communion the Anglican Communion has no settled view. The Orthodox Church teaches the doctrine of transubstantiation without going into any scientific or Roman Catholic explanation. The technical word which She uses for the sublime act of the priest by Christ's authority to consecrate is "transmuting" (Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom). She, as I have said, offers no explanation, but She believes and confesses that Christ, the Son of the living God Who came into the world to save sinners, is of a truth in His "all-pure Body" and "precious Blood" (Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom) objectively present, and to be worshiped in that Sacrament as He was on earth and is now in risen and glorified majesty in Heaven; and that "the precious and holy and life-giving Body and Blood of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ are imparted" (to each soul that comes to that blessed Sacrament) "Unto the remission of sins, and unto life everlasting" (Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom).

“Confirmation or the laying on of hands, which the Orthodox Church calls a Sacrament – "Chrismation" – in the Anglican Church is merely the laying on of hands

of the Bishop accompanied by a set form of prayers, without the use of Holy Chrism, which has come down from Apostolic days as necessary.

"Holy Matrimony is regarded by the Anglican Communion as only a sacred rite which, even if performed by a Justice of the Peace, is regarded as sufficient in the sight of God and man.

"Penance is practiced but rarely in the Anglican Communion, and Confession before the reception of Holy Communion is not compulsory. They have altogether set aside the Sacrament of Holy Unction, that is anointing the sick as commanded by Saint James (see James 5:14). In their priesthood they do not teach the true doctrine of the Grace of the Holy Orders. Indeed they have two forms of words for ordination, namely, one which gives the power of absolution to the priest, and the alternative form without the words of Our Lord, *whosoever sins ye remit*, etc. (John 20: 23). Thus they leave every bishop to choose intention or non-intention in the act of ordination as to the power and Grace of their priesthood ("Ordination of Priests," *Book of Common Prayer*).

"But, besides all of this, the Anglican Communion ignores the Orthodox Church's dogmas and teachings, such as the invocation of saints, prayers for the dead, special honor to the blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of God, and reverence for sacred relics, holy pictures and icons. They say of such teaching that it is "a foul thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God" (Article of Religion, XXII).

"There is a striking variance between their wording of the Nicene Creed and that of the Holy Orthodox Church; but sadder still, it contains the heresy of the "filioque."

"I do not deem it necessary to mention all the striking differences between the Holy Orthodox Church and the Anglican Communion in reference to the authority of holy tradition, the number of Ecumenical Councils, etc. Enough has already been said and pointed out to show that the Anglican Communion differs but little from all other Protestant bodies, and therefore, there cannot be any intercommunion until they return to the ancient Holy Orthodox Faith and practices, and reject Protestant omissions and commissions.

"Therefore, as the official head of the Syrian Holy Orthodox Catholic Apostolic Church in North America and as one who must *give account* (Heb. 13:17) before the judgment seat of *the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls* (I Pet. 2:25), that I have fed the *flock of God* (I Pet. 5:2), as I have been commissioned by the Holy Orthodox Church, and inasmuch as the Anglican Communion (Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA) does not differ in things vital to the well-being of the Holy Orthodox Church from some of the most errant Protestant sects, I direct all Orthodox people residing in any community not to seek or to accept the ministrations of the Sacraments and rites from any clergy excepting those of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church, for the Apostolic command that the Orthodox should not commune in ecclesiastical matters with those who are not of *the same household of faith* (Gal. 6:10), is clear: "Any bishop, or presbyter or deacon who will pray with heretics, let him be anathematized; and if he allows them as clergymen to perform any service, let him be deposed." (Apostolic Canon 45) "Any bishop, or presbyter who accepts Baptism or the Holy

Sacrifice from heretics, we order such to be deposed, for *what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*" (Apostolic Canon 46)

"As to members of the Holy Orthodox Church living in areas beyond the reach of Orthodox clergy, I direct that the ancient custom of our Holy Church be observed, namely, in cases of extreme necessity, that is, danger of death, children may be baptized by some pious Orthodox layman, or even by the parent of the child, by immersion three times in the names of the (Persons of the) Holy Trinity, and in case of death such baptism is valid; but, if the child should live, he must be brought to an Orthodox priest for the Sacrament of Chrismation.

"In the case of the death of an Orthodox person where no priest of the Holy Orthodox Church can be had, a pious layman may read over the corpse, for the comfort of the relatives and the instruction of the persons present, Psalm 90 and Psalm 118, and add thereto the Trisagion ("Holy God, Holy Mighty," etc.). But let it be noted that as soon as possible the relative must notify some Orthodox bishop or priest and request him to serve the Liturgy and Funeral for the repose of the soul of the departed in his cathedral or parish Church.

"As to Holy Matrimony, if there be any parties united in wedlock outside the pale of the holy Orthodox Church because of the remoteness of Orthodox centers from their home, I direct that as soon as possible they either invite an Orthodox priest or go to where he resides and receive from his hands the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony; otherwise they will be considered excommunicated until they submit to the Orthodox Church's rule.

"I further direct that Orthodox Christians should not make it a practice to attend the services of other religious bodies, so that there be no confusion concerning the teaching or doctrines. Instead, I order that the head of each household, or a member, may read the special prayers which can be found in the Hours in the Holy Orthodox Service Book, and such other devotional books as have been set forth by the authority of the Holy Orthodox Church."⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "Bishop Raphael Hawaweeny on the Anglicans and Orthodox Baptism", *Orthodox Christian Information Center*, <http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/hawaweeny.aspx>. Bishop Raphael has recently been canonized.

6. THE SAROV DAYS

Dark clouds were gathering over the Orthodox world: assassinations of ministers in Russia, violence between Russians and Jews in Kishinev, the murder of the King and Queen of Serbia in Belgrade... But before the storm God granted a last great feast of light to strengthen the faithful: the canonization of St. Seraphim of Sarov. "It was a long time ago, July 19, 1903. Then Great Russia – Holy Orthodox Rus' – was still alive, powerful and glorious. Then there sat on the Russian throne the Tsar, the Anointed of God; then the great Russian people was free and was peacefully carrying out its difficult historical task. It was an unforgettable time. A time of great and radiant hopes. It seemed to all that the 20th century would be a time of peace, of fruitful work and the flourishing of all peoples. Then there was a common dream that stirred everybody, both old and young. It was at this time of great expectations and radiant hopes that it was pleasing to the Lord to send to Russia great joy, to allow the great Russian people to experience the radiant days of the Sarov Festivities."⁴⁶

The glorification of the most revered of Russia's saints, Seraphim of Sarov, was undertaken at the insistence of the Tsar himself.⁴⁷ As Archpriest Lev Lebedev writes: "From 1895 to 1901 four daughter were born to the Tsar and Tsarina: Great Princesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia. But an Heir was needed! Because of the absence of an Heir complications arose in the official definition of the order of succession to the Throne. From the end of the 19th century and in the first years of the 20th, there was a sharp increase in students' and workers' disturbances. Under the influence of revolutionaries the workers' strikes and demonstrations acquired not only an economic, but also a political character. Terrorist parties appeared again, and the murders of state functionaries began. In such a situation, clarity in the matter of the succession of tsarist power was more necessary than ever – an Heir was needed! It seemed that for a pair who had had four daughters this could happen only by a miracle, since medical means did not help. Various people renowned for the gift of healing were invited, beginning with natives ones (certain 'blessed' ones) and ending with foreigners such as the Frenchman Philippe. But nobody was able to help. The thought arose that a miracle could take place through the intercession of St. Seraphim of Sarov, whose glorification, on the initiative of the Tsar, was already being prepared.

"The Royal Family had known about the great Wonderworker of the Russian Land for a long time. But a particular impression was made on the Tsar and Tsarina by the book *A Chronicle of the Seraphimo-Diveyevo Women's Monastery*, written and given

⁴⁶ Protopriest Basil Boschansky, "Sarovskie Torzhestva" (Sarov Festivities), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodoxy Way), 2003, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷ The original initiative for the canonization came from Blessed Pasha of Sarov, who said to Archimandrite Seraphim: "Send a request to the Tsar that they open the relics for us. "Chichagov began to collect materials", wrote the *Diveyevo Chronicle*, "and brought it to the Tsar. When the Tsar read it, he became inflamed with the desire to uncover the relics... The Emperor insisted on the glorification, but almost the entire Synod was against it. It was supported only by the future Metropolitan Cyril and the Ober-Procurator Vladimir Carlovich Sabler. The others protested, 'Why should we go off to the woods? They only found bones.'" (Nun Seraphima (Bulgakova), "The Diveyevo Tradition", in Helen Kontzevitch, *Saint Seraphim, Wonderworker of Sarov*, Wildwood, Ca.: St. Xenia Skete, 2004, p. 237).

personally to Nicholas II by Archimandrite Seraphim (Chichagov) – a scion of a noble family, one of the most educated and talented representatives of the nobility, who wanted to exchange a military career for monastic asceticism... In the *Chronicle* there were so many teachings, words of the holy elder of Sarov, prophecies, information about his miracles that the Royal Family was inspired with great faith in him! The triumphant glorification of Seraphim of Sarov, who had already been widely venerated in the people for a long time, was appointed from July 17-20, 1903. The Tsar came to Sarov with his whole family, his mother, the widowed Empress Maria Fyodorovna, his brothers, the Great Princes, other members of the Imperial House, and his suite. The Royal Family had never undertaken such a pilgrimage before. It was unlike any of the other journeys undertaken by the Tsar and Tsaritsa to holy places. Up to 300,000 worshippers from every corner of Russia assembled in Sarov for those days. Nicholas II tried to be present at all the long, almost unending services. The peak of the festivities was the transfer of the relics of St. Seraphim from the monastery's hospital church of SS. Zosimas and Sabbatius, where he had been buried, into the Dormition cathedral of the Sarov community on July 18. The coffin with the relics was borne on their shoulders by the Tsar, the Great Princes and the hierarchs, tightly surrounded by a sea of people."⁴⁸

The festivities were truly an icon of Holy Russia: the Royal Family and the Great Princes mixed with thousands of peasants in the true, unforced union that only the true worship of God and the veneration of His saints can produce. Many miracles of healing took place, and those who were present witnessed to the extraordinary spiritual peace and joy that was granted the worshippers. "Something unseen and unheard took place. Russian Tsar and his Family were for several days in immediate prayerful union with hundreds of thousands (!) of Russian people, praying together with them, in their very heart. The secret police were as it were dissolved in this mass; in fact, there was essentially no need for its presence! It was truly 'with one heart and one mouth' that the Orthodox people glorified God, the God-pleaser Seraphim and God's Anointed, Tsar Nicholas II!... *Such* a meeting with Holy Russia, represented by *such a multitude of the people* and with the breathing of *the special grace of God*, bound up with the glorification of St. Seraphim of Sarov, turned out to be *the first* for the Royal Couple and... *the last*...

"The Sarov days of 1903 became a *key event in the whole reign*. During the festivities the Tsar received from the widow of P.A. Motovilov a letter of St. Seraphim of Sarov addressed *precisely to him*, Nicholas II ['to the Tsar in whose reign I shall be glorified'], 'sealed (but never opened!) with the soft part of a piece of bread. The Tsar read the letter and his face changed, and after reading it... he wept (neither before nor after this did anyone see him in tears). To this day nobody knows what was in the letter. We can guess that it contained some kind of prophecy about his destiny, or the destiny of Russia.⁴⁹ In the same period Nicholas II visited the fool-for-Christ Pasha of Sarov...

⁴⁸ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.

⁴⁹ Already early in the nineteenth century the Prophet Abel had prophesied to Tsar Paul I: 'Nicholas II will be a holy tsar, like Job the much-suffering. He will have the mind of Christ, patience and dove-like purity. The Scriptures speak about him: Psalms 90, 10 and 20 have revealed to me the whole of his destiny. He will exchange a royal crown for a crown of thorns, will be betrayed by his people as was once the Son of God. He will be a redeemer, he will redeem his people, like the bloodless

She symbolically (by means of a doll) foretold to the Tsar *the birth of a son*, and spoke much with him in figurative language. The Tsar left amazed and joyful: 'I have travelled across the whole of Russia and have not met such a saint. Everyone has received me as Tsar, but she as a simple person,' he said. Pasha placed the portrait of Nicholas II in her prayer corner and made many prostrations to the earth in front of it, which greatly exhausted her cell-attendants who used to lift and lower Pasha since she could not make prostrations herself because of illness. 'Matushka, why are you praying to the Tsar?!' they asked. 'You know nothing,' replied the blessed one. 'He will be higher than all the Tsars.' When war began in 1914 Pasha, covered in tears, began to kiss the feet of the Tsar on the portrait, saying: 'Dear one, it is already near the end,' and sent him the message: '*Your Majesty, come down from the Throne yourself*' ...

"The visit to Sarov quickly produced results: On July 30 / August 12, 1904 the Heir to the Throne Alexis Nikolayevich was born! We can imagine the joy of the Crown-Bearing Parents! In the first months of the life of the new-born it was still not known what a terrible disease nestled in him He looked completely health, he was simply a beautiful child...

"Now we can understand how the thought of the Tsar about the return of Russia to the pre-Petrine foundations of life were linked into one with the impressions and feeling that arose in the Royal Couple in the Sarov days..."⁵⁰

One of the foundations of pre-Petrine Russia had been the institution of the patriarchate, which Peter the Great had abolished. According to the witness of Sergius Nilus, it was some months later, when still under the joyful impressions of the Sarov days, and shortly after the birth of the Tsarevich, that the Tsar suggested to the Holy Synod that the patriarchate be restored with himself as patriarch, while his wife and brother ruled the country until his son came of age. His offer was declined.⁵¹

sacrifice. There will be a war, a great war, a world war. People will fly through the air like birds, and swim under the water like fish, they will begin to exterminate each other with evil-smelling sulphur. On the eve of victory the Russian throne will collapse. But the betrayal will grow and multiply. And your great-grandson will be betrayed, many of your descendants will also whiten their garments in the blood of the Lamb, the peasant will seize power with his axe in madness, but he himself will later weep. A truly Egyptian punishment will begin... Blood and tears will soak the wet earth. Rivers of blood will flow. Brother will rise up against brother. And again: fire, the sword, invasions of aliens and the inner enemy of the godless authority. The Jew will beat the Russian land with a scorpion, he will take hold of her holy things, close the churches of God and execute the best Russian people. This will be allowed by God, it will be the wrath of the Lord against Russia for her rejection of the Anointed of God..." (Monk Abel, in Gubanov, *op. cit.*, p. 30).

⁵⁰ Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 390.

⁵¹ Nilus, *Na beregu Bozh'ej Reki. Zapiski Pravoslavnago* (On God's River. Notes of an Orthodox), Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1969, vol. II, pp. 181-183). For somewhat different accounts of the meeting of the Tsar and the Synod, see Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod, "Ob uderzhanii i symphonii", <http://www.monarhist-spb.narod.ru/D-ST/dionisy-1.htm>, p. 15; E.E. Alferev, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-93; M.V. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Church), 1917-1970, Saint Petersburg, 1997, pp. 67-69.

7. LIBERAL REFORMS AND THE CHURCH

In November, 1904 a report sponsored by the Minister of the Interior, Prince P.D. Sviatopolk-Mirsky, suggested important changes in a liberal direction in both Church and State. "Among the changes suggested in it," writes Sergius Firsov, "was the re-establishment of the Orthodox parish as a special church-social institution, which had been undermined 'by the Time of Troubles in the Church and the growing development of serfdom'. Mirsky also intended to bring the activity of the church-parish trusts closer to the public administration, 'turning the parish communities into a powerful force in defining the direction of activity of the zemstvos and cities, using their huge numbers and their rights as juridical persons, and consequently the possibility of [their] possessing property'. Unfortunately, these suggestions remained only on paper, [for] after all the reform of the parish in the interests of the State required first of all the reform of Church-State relations and changes in the whole structure of Orthodox administration.

"But in the given instance it is important to not something else: the parish problem was viewed in the general context of the reforms, the chief of which was the introduction of popular representation in one or another form in combination with an autocratic form of government. In accordance with custom, to the report of the minister was attached the project of an ukaz that he wanted discussed. With this aim he obtained permission from the sovereign for the convening of a conference at which all the ministers, including C.P. Pobedonostsev, were present, the presidents of the departments of the State Council the chiefs of the imperial chancelleries and several influential courtiers. Later during the work of the conference, which opened on December 2, there also took part the great princes – the Tsar's uncles Vladimir, Alexis, Michael and Sergius Alexandrovich. Finally the president of the Committee of Ministers, S.Yu. Witte, was able to seize the initiative from Mirsky and attain the signing of the ukaz in a form acceptable to the Tsar – without the point about elections. On December 12 the ukaz 'On Plans for the Perfecting of State Order' was signed, and two days later it appeared in the press.

"It should have fallen to the Committee of Ministers to work out a suggestion for putting the ukaz into practice. Its president, S.Yu. Witte, was trying to broaden the role of the Committee as far as possible, making it a kind of 'headquarters' for the transformations. Witte included among his rights the formation of special extra-departmental conferences, the presidents of which, it is true, should have been appointed by the sovereign. In order to work out the recommendations for carrying out the sixth point in the ukaz, which spoke of the autocrat's unbending desire to maintain tolerance in matters of the faith, a Conference of Ministers and Presidents of the Departments of the State Council was organized. The task placed before this organ was to review 'the laws on the rights of the schismatics, as well as of persons belonging to heterodox and non-Christian confessions.'

"It was as if there had been no talk about the Orthodox Church. However, it was clear that the review of the rights of the Old Ritualists and representatives of non-Orthodox confessions would inevitably touch the interests of the first and ruling confession in the empire. It was normal that the question of the situation of the

Orthodox Church should be raised as a result of the review of the general state apparatus: the 'symphony of powers' in its imperial variant signified the primacy of the secular power over the spiritual power. This was well understood by contemporaries. Thus Metropolitan Evlogy (Georgievsky), in remembering the past, noted that it was precisely 'the reform of the state apparatus that drew in its wake the project for the reform of the Church'. The metropolitan went on to point out that S.Yu. Witte's note became a significant event. He evidently had in mind the note that saw the light in February, 1905 and signed by the president of the Committee of Ministers. It was called 'On the Contemporary Situation of the Orthodox Church' and was composed for S.Yu. Witte by professors of the theological academies in the capital.

"The note said that while externally free and protected by the State, the Orthodox Church was weighed down by heavy chains. The expulsion of the principle of sobornost' from Church life had led to a change in her spirit. The main cause of the disorders was recognized to be Peter's Church reform, as a result of which the Church's administration had turned into one of the 'numerous wheels of the complex machine of State'. The secular bureaucratic element was called a constant barrier between the Church and the people, as also between the Church and the State, while the only way to excite life from the dead was to return to the former, canonical norms of administration.

"Witte also subjected the contemporary situation of the Orthodox parish to sharp criticism; 'only the name remained' from it. The reasons for the fall of the parish were attributed by the authors of the note to the development of State centralization and the intensification of serfdom in Russia in the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries; the imposition of police duties on the clergy, as a consequence of which it was separated from its flock; the caste alienation of the clergy, and the payments it demanded for the carrying out of needs. But the autonomous re-establishment of small ecclesiastical units, which is what the parishes were, would not attain its aim if a general reform of the Church administration were not carried out: the parishes had to be linked by spiritual communion and pour into the community of the diocese, while 'diocesan assemblies' having Local Councils as their model should be convened periodically in parallel with the parish meetings.

"Later the note touched on the problem of the alienation from the Church of a significant part of the intelligentsia. Only the Church herself could resolve this problem and overcome the 'spiritual schism'. The problem of the theological school was also raised; it was declared to be a task of the whole State, 'for the degree of the influence of religion on the people depends completely on its organization'. The union of Church and State was wholeheartedly approved, while the 'self-governing activity' of the ecclesiastical and state organism, in the opinion of the authors, had to achieve the equilibrium destroyed by Peter the Great. With this aim it was necessary to convene a Local Council in which both white clergy and laity would participate. 'In view of the present undeniable signs of a certain inner shaking both of society and of the masses of the people,' pointed out Witte, 'it would be dangerous to wait. Religion constitutes the main foundation of the popular spirit, and through it the Russian land had stood and been strong up to now.'

“And so in S.Yu. Witte’s not the question was posed not about particular changes, but about a general ecclesiastical reform, which would lead to a strengthening of the independence of the Orthodox Church and would sharply reduce the privileges of the over-procurator’s authority. After all, it was a secret to nobody that in speaking about ‘dry bureaucratic principles’, the president of the Committee of Ministers had in mind the rules that found their completed expression in the activity of the department of the Orthodox confession.

“It was at about the same time, in February, that another note appeared expressing the opinion of the capital’s Metropolitan Anthony: ‘Questions relating to desirable transformations in the position of our Orthodox Church’. Vladyka reviewed concrete questions of the reform of the ecclesiastical administration that demanded a very speedy resolution. Referring to the discussions on religious toleration that had taken place in the Committee of Ministers, he noted: the authorities are opening to those who have separated from the Orthodox Church (the Old Ritualists, sectarians and others) ‘a definite position in the State’ without touching their inner church life, at the same time that the ‘ruling’ Church is deprived of such freedom. Citing the Popovtsi Old Ritualists who had accepted ‘the Austrian hierarchs’ as an example, Metropolitan Anthony warned: ‘The danger may occur that this community will be turned into the people’s Church while the Orthodox Church will remain only the State Church’.

“In pointing to the Church’s position within the State, Vladyka placed before the authorities a question of principle: had not the moment come to weaken the control of the secular authorities over the life of the Church? Other questions followed logically from that: should not the Church be given a greater freedom in the administration of her internal affairs? Should Orthodox priests also have the right to be permanent members of social-state institutions having their place in the parishes? After this it was natural to pose the further question on the desirability of providing the Church hierarchy with the right to participate in the sessions of the State Council, the Committee of Ministers and other higher state institutions with the right to vote in them.

“The note undoubtedly touched on the privileges of the over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod. After all, if the desires expressed by the metropolitan were to be satisfied, the Orthodox episcopate would receive the possibility of independently, with the mediation of the State, influencing legislative proposals touching the Church, that is, it would have the right of a political voice in the empire. It is understandable that C.P. Pobedonostsev could not welcome such self-will, the more so in that, besides questions on the position of the Orthodox Church in Russia, the metropolitan gave reasons for the need to review the structure of the Church and some aspects of the Church’s administration, and spoke about the particular importance of recognizing the parish as a legal person and on the desirability of reviewing the laws that regulated the right of the Church to own, acquire and use property... ”⁵²

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⁵² Firsov, op. cit., pp. 149-153.

Pobedonostsev suspected that Witte and Metropolitan Anthony were in league against him, and mounted a vigorous campaign to stop the projected reforms, defending the Petrine system. On March 13 he succeeded in persuading the emperor to remove the question of Church reforms from the competence of the Conferences of Ministers and Heads of State Departments and place it before the Holy Synod. However, this was only a seeming victory: the Holy Synod was no less in favour of the reforms than was Witte and the State. On March 17 the Synod recognized the necessity of reviewing the present situation of the Church vis-à-vis the State "in view of the changed situation of the heterodox confessions, the so-called Old Ritualists and sectarians, and transform the Church's administration". The restoration of the patriarchate was deemed desirable "for the sake of the honour of the Russian State", and it was suggested that a Local Council be convened in Moscow composed of the diocesan bishops and their representatives. On March 18 the Synod resolved to present a report to the Tsar with an icon. On March 22 the seven members of the Synod signed an appeal to the Tsar to convene a Council "at the appropriate time" in Moscow, at which a patriarch would be elected and a series of major questions of Church life would be discussed.⁵³

Once again, on March 31, Pobedonostsev succeeded in persuading the Tsar to put off the Synod's project and avoid giving Metropolitan Anthony an audience. The Tsar wrote on the Synod's appeal: "I admit the impossibility of accomplishing, in the anxious times we are living through, such a great work requiring both calm and careful thought as the convening of a Local Council. I reserve for myself, when the fitting time for this will come, in accordance with the ancient examples of the Orthodox Emperors, the task of giving this work momentum and convening a Council of the All-Russian Church for the canonical discussion of matters of faith and Church administration."

However, Pobedonostsev's victory could only be temporary: society's interest in the reforms was increasing, and even V.M. Skvortsov in the conservative journal *Missionerskoe Obozrenie*, after pointing out that the martyred Great Prince Sergius Alexandrovich (who had been killed by a terrorist bomb in February, 1905) had been in favour of the reforms, expressed the opinion that "the reform of the administration of the dominant Church has appeared as *the logical end and natural consequence of the confessional reform* which was so quickly and decisively pushed through by S.Yu. Witte and a special Conference of the Committee of Ministers".⁵⁴

On May 5, the Tsar consented to see the metropolitan, who explained that to delay the reform was neither possible nor desirable. "But as long as Pobedonostsev is alive, we cannot expect much." On May 18 the Tsar officially thanked the Synod for the icon and the report that had been composed two months before. In this way he indicated that Pobedonostsev's bid to keep the Petrine system untouched had failed. A few months later the venerable over-procurator went into retirement – a man who had done much for the Russian Church and State, but whose usefulness had passed...

⁵³ Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

⁵⁴ Skvortsov, in Firsov, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

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The confessional reform referred to by Skvortsov reached its legal enactment in the Tsar's ukaz of April 17, 1905, the Sunday of Pascha, "On the Strengthening of the Principles of Religious Toleration".

St. John of Kronstadt, among others, was critical of the decree, seeing it as one product of the revolutionary unrest: "Look what is happening in this kingdom at the present time: everywhere students and workers are on strike; everywhere there is the noise of parties who have as their goal the overthrowing of the true monarchical order established by God, everywhere the dissemination of insolent, senseless proclamations, disrespect for the authority of the ruling powers established by God, for 'there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God': children and young people imagine that they are the master and commanders of their own fates; marriage has lost all meaning for many and divorces at will have multiplied to endlessness; many children are left to the whims of fate by unfaithful spouses; some kind of senselessness and arbitrariness rule... Finally, an unpunished conversion from Orthodoxy into any faith whatever is allowed [the Decree of April 17, 1905]; even though the same Lord we confess designated death in the Old Testament for those denying the law of Moses.

"If matters continue like this in Russia and the atheists and the anarchist-crazies are not subjected to the righteous retribution of the law, and if Russia is not cleansed of its many tares, then it will become desolate like the ancient kingdoms and cities wiped out by God's righteous judgement from the face of the earth for their godlessness and their wickedness: Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Greece-Macedonia.

"Hold fast, then, Russia, to your faith, and your Church, and to the Orthodox Tsar if you do not wish to be shaken by people of unbelief and lawlessness and if you do not wish to be deprived of your Kingdom and the Orthodox Tsar. But if you fall away from your faith, as many intelligenty have fallen away, then you will no longer be Russia or Holy Rus', but a rabble of all kinds of other faiths that wish to destroy one another."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ St. John of Kronstadt, in Kizenko, op. cit., pp. 247-248.

8. THE CHURCH AND THE BLACK HUNDREDS

The revolution against the Tsar had been gathering pace throughout 1905. An important role in turning the tide against the revolutionaries was played by the Church, and in particular by Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow. Already at his ordination, he had said: "A priest who is not a monarchist is unworthy to stand at the Holy Altar. A priest who is republican is always of little faith. A monarch is consecrated to his power by God, a president receives power from the pride of the people; a monarch is powerful through his carrying out of the commandments of God, a president holds on to power by pleasing the mob; a monarch leads his faithful subjects to God, a president leads them away from God."⁵⁶ Now he said: "The heart bleeds when you see what is happening around us... It is no longer the Poles, or external enemies, but our own Russian people, who, having lost the fear of God, have trusted the rebels and are holding our first capital as it were in a siege. Even without this we have been having a hard time because of our sins: first harvest failures [in 1891, 1897, 1898 and 1901], then illnesses, then an unsuccessful war [the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05], and now something unheard of is taking place in Rus': it is as if God has deprived Russian people of their minds. By order of underground revolutionaries, strikes have begun everywhere, in the factories, in the schools, on the railways... Oh if only our unfortunate workers knew who is ruling them, who is sending them trouble-maker-agitators, then they would have turned from them in horror as from poisonous snakes! You know these are the so-called social-democrats, these are the revolutionaries, who have long ago renounced God in their works. They have renounced Him, and yet it may be that they have never known the Christian faith. They denounce her servants, her rites, they mock her holy things. Their main nest is abroad: they are dreaming of subduing the whole world to themselves; in their secret protocols they call us, the Christians, animals, to whom God, they say, have given a human face only in order that it should not be repulsive to them, His chosen ones, to use our services... With satanic cunning they catch light-minded people in their nets, promising them paradise on earth, but they carefully hide from them their secret aims, their criminal dreams. Having deceived the unfortunate, they drag him to the most terrible crimes, as if for the sake of the common good, and, in fact they make him into an obedient slave. They try in every way to cast out of his soul, or at any rate to distort, the teaching of Christ. Thus the commandments of Christ say: do not steal, do not covet what belongs to another, but they say: everything is common, take from the rich man everything you like. The commandments of Christ say: share your last morsel, your last kopeck with your neighbour, but they teach: take from others everything that you need. The commandments of Christ say: give to Caesar what is Caesar's, fear God, venerate the Tsar, but they say: we don't need any Tsar, the Tsar is a tyrant... The commandments of God say: in patience possess your souls, but they say: in struggle acquire your rights. The commandment of Christ orders us to lay down our souls for our friends, but they teach to destroy people who are completely innocent, to kill them only for the fact they do not agree with them, and do not embark on robbery, but just want to work honourably and are ready to stand for the law, for the Tsar, for the Church of God..."

⁵⁶ In Valentina Sologub, *Kto Gospoden - Ko Mne!* (He who is the Lord's - Come to me!), Moscow, 2007, p. 45.

“The sermon of Metropolitan Vladimir elicited the annoyance of the liberal-democratic press, and also of the liberal clergy. The latter either read the sermon in a shortened version, or did not read it at all. In the leftist newspaper *Russkoe Slovo* 76 priests published a declaration regarding their ‘complete non-solidarity’ with ‘the “Word” of Metropolitan Vladimir...’

“As a result of the actions of the priests quarrels also arose amidst their flock. The Synod, in response to this, unfortunately saw in the epistle of Metropolitan Vladimir, not a call to defend the Faith and the Fatherland, but ‘a call to the local population to defend themselves in the sphere of political convictions’, and in their ‘Resolution of October 22, 1905 N 150’ instructed the diocesan bishops and the clergy subject to them to make efforts ‘to remove quarrels in the population’, which, to a large extent, were continuing because of the opposition of the liberal priests to their metropolitan.

“But nothing could devalue or undermine the influence of the epistle of Metropolitan Vladimir on the Muscovites, and the true Russian people responded to it. The day after the publication of the ‘Word’, the workers began to serve molebens and return to work; the city water-supply began to work, the trams began to run, etc. Metropolitan Vladimir himself went to the factories and, after prayer, conducted archpastoral discussions with the workers.

“Later, in evaluating the labours of the holy hierarch Vladimir in overcoming the disturbances of 1905, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) said the following notable words about him: ‘Meek and humble, never seeking anything for himself, honourable and a lover of righteousness, Vladyka Vladimir gradually and quietly ascended the hierarchical ladder and was immediately exalted by his authority, drawing the hearts of ecclesiastical and patriotic Russia to himself during the days of general instability and treachery, when there were few who remained faithful to their duty and their oath, firm in the defence of the Orthodox Church, the Tsar-Autocrat and the Homeland... when everything began to shake in our Rus’, and many pillars began to waver...’ (speech of Archbishop Anthony of Zhitomir and Volhynia at the triumphal dinner given by Metropolitan Vladimir in honour of Patriarch Gregory of Antioch who was visiting Russia, 22 February, 1913).

“By ‘pillars’ Vladyka Anthony probably had in mind the liberal members of the Most Holy Synod, who did not support their brother, Metropolitan Vladimir...”⁵⁷

One of these was undoubtedly Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Finland, the future first Soviet patriarch. Thus “when in 1905 the revolutionary professors began to demand reforms in the spiritual schools, then, in the words of Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), ‘his Grace Sergius... wavered in faith.’”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Riasophor-Monk Anempodist, “Sviashchennomuchenik mitropolit Vladimir (Bogoiavlenskij) i bor’ba s revoliutsii” (Hieromartyr Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoiavlensky) and the struggle against the revolution), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’ (Orthodox Life)*, 53, N 1 (636), January, 2003, pp. 2-10.

⁵⁸ “Preemstvennost’ Grekha” (The Heritage of Sin), publication of the parish of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, Tsaritsyn, p. 7.

Again, when the revolutionary Peter Schmidt was shot in 1906, Archbishop Sergius, who was at that time rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, served a pannikhida at his grave. He also gave refuge in his hierarchical house in Vyborg to the revolutionaries Michael Novorussky and Nicholas Morozov (a participant in the attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander II). Having such sympathies, it is not surprising that he was not liked by the Royal Family.⁵⁹

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The disorders in the southern cities which have been called Jewish pogroms began immediately after the proclamation of the Manifesto of October, 1905, in which the Tsar bestowed very considerable civil liberties on the population. The general pattern of the disorders was as follows. First the revolutionaries, usually led by young Jews, would call on the population to strike and free prisoners from the prisons, and would themselves tear down the symbols of tsarist authority, although “undoubtedly both Russians and Jews took part in the destruction of portraits and monograms”.⁶⁰ Then, a day or two later, when it was clear that the authorities were unwilling or unable to restore order, the anti-Jewish pogrom would begin.

The wrath of the people was directed not only against the Jews but against leftists generally. Thus in Tver a crowd set fire to the theatre in which the leftists were sitting – two hundred perished. Another crowd threatened to do the same thing in Balashov, but thanks to the courageous actions of the governor, Peter Arkadyevich Stolypin, there were no victims. And yet, considering the scale of the disturbances, there were fewer victims than might have been expected – one thousand dead and several thousand wounded, according to one Jewish source. Again, the Jew G. Sliozberg, a contemporary witness who was in possession of all the information, wrote: “Fortunately, all these hundreds of pogroms did not bring in their wake significant violence against the persons of Jews, and in the vast majority of places the pogroms were not accompanied by murders.”⁶¹ For in 1905 faith and morality still held the great majority of the Orthodox people back from taking revenge against their persecutors.

On October 27 the Tsar wrote to his mother “that the pogromshchiki represented ‘a whole mass of loyal people’, reacting angrily to ‘the impertinence of the Socialists and revolutionaries... and, because nine-tenths of the trouble-makers are Jews, the People’s whole anger turned against them.’ This analysis was accepted by many foreign observers, notably British diplomats like the ambassador at St. Petersburg, Sir Charles Hardinge, his councillor, Cecil Spring Rice, and the Consul-General in Moscow, Alexander Murray.”⁶² This analysis is also supported by Senator Kuzminsky, who concluded that “the October disturbances and disorders [in Odessa] were caused by factors of an undeniably revolutionary character and were crowned by a pogrom of Jews exclusively as a result of

⁵⁹ In 1915 the Empress wrote to the Emperor that Sergius “must leave the Synod” (A. Paryaeu, “Mitropolit Sergij Stragorodskij: Neizvestnaia Biographia” (Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky: The Unknown Biography), *Suzdal’skie Eparkhial’nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), N 1, September, 1997, pp. 12-15.

⁶⁰ Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together) (1795-1995), part 1, Moscow: “Russkij Put’”, 2001, p. 375.

⁶¹ Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., p. 401.

⁶² Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World*, London: Penguin Books, 2006, p. 68.

the fact that it was the representatives of this nationality who took the dominant part in the revolutionary movement.”⁶³⁶⁴

Alexander Solzhenitsyn has shown by extensive quotations from Jewish sources that the Jews were well aware of the true state of affairs. Even the more honest Jews had to admit that 1905 was in essence “a Jewish revolution”. “Thus in November, 1905 a certain Jacob de Haas in an article entitled ‘The Jewish Revolution’ in the London Zionist journal *Maccabee* wrote directly: “The revolution in Russia is a Jewish revolution, for it is the turning point in Jewish history. This situation stems from the fact that *Russia is the fatherland of about half of the overall number of Jews inhabiting the world...*”⁶⁵

Many representatives of the Church played an important and laudable role in the disturbances, protecting the Jews against the wrath of the people. Thus in Kiev Metropolitan Flavian tried to restrain the patriotic crowds. And Protopriest Michael Yedlinsky, the future catacomb hieromartyr, in full vestments, together with his clerics, choir and banners, headed a procession in the direction of the Kontactovi Square and Gostini Place, where some Jewish shops were located. The procession moved along the boulevard, cutting off the rioters from Gostini Place. People in the crowd removed their hats out of respect. When Batyushka turned to the rioters admonishing them, many of them calmed down and began to disperse, even more so because a squadron of cavalymen began to move onto the square from Alexander Street.⁶⁶

Another hero was Archbishop Plato, the future Metropolitan of North America. Charles Johnston writes: “On October 22, 1905... a huge throng of wildly excited townsmen assembled, inflamed by stories and rumors of misdoings, determined to raid the Jewish quarter [of Kiev]. Their pretext was that a Jew had cursed the Emperor and spat upon his portrait.

“When the multitude assembled Archbishop Platon was in his own church in full canonicals, with his miter upon his head. He heard the angry storming of the crowd without and realized its meaning and purpose. Instantly he came to a decision, and in robes and miter went forth to meet the multitude. Of the church attendants only two accompanied him. So the tumultuous throng came on, crying for vengeance upon the Jews, and Archbishop Platon went to meet them. It had rained heavily all night and was raining still. Paying no heed to the pools of water and mud that covered the street, the Archbishop, seeing that there was but one way to check the hysterically excited mob, knelt down in the street immediately in the pathway of the turbulently advancing throng and began to pray.

“The profound love and veneration for the Church which is at the center of every Russian heart was touched, and the multitude wavered, halted, grew suddenly silent. Those who were in front checked those who were behind, and a whisper ran through the

⁶³ Solzhenitsyn, op. cit., pp. 398-399.

⁶⁴ “Mitropolit Sergij Stragorodskij: Neizvestnaia Biographia” (Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky: The Unknown Biography), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), N 1, September, 1997, pp. 12-15.

⁶⁵ Lebedev, *Velikorossi* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 421.

⁶⁶ “New Martyr Archpriest Michael Edlinsky”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 39, N 2, March-April, 1989.

crowd carrying word that the Archbishop was kneeling in the street praying, in spite of the mud and rain.

“After he had prayed Archbishop Platon rose and confronted the huge throng.

“He spoke, and his fiery words so dominated the multitude that he led the turbulent thousands to the church and made them promise, calling God to witness, that they would leave the Jews unharmed and return quietly to their homes. Thus the multitude was checked and the work of destruction was prevented by the great churchman’s fearless devotion.

“The impression which this exhibition of devoted valor made on the public of Kieff was immediate and profound. The Jews especially were full of gratitude...”⁶⁷

In spite of the courage displayed by these churchmen in defending the Jews, many liberals accused the Church of “anti-semitism” on the grounds of her principled rejection of the religion of the Talmud and the membership of many churchmen in the monarchist popular movement called “the Black Hundreds”. This movement has been the subject of much vilification in Soviet and Western sources as the mainstay of “anti-semitism” in the Russian people. In fact, it played little part in the revolution of 1905, becoming more important in 1906-07, and was not so much anti-semitic as anti-Talmudist, anti-revolutionary and pro-monarchical.

Famous churchmen who supported the Union included Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow, Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Volhynia, St. John of Kronstadt, the future Hieromartyr John Vostorgov and the future confessor of the Catacomb Church Elder Theodosius of Minvody. However, not all the Church establishment supported it. In particular, Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg was opposed, and was suspected by many of being a closet liberal (or worse).⁶⁸

Both Archbishop Anthony and St. John of Kronstadt rejected the accusation of anti-semitism and condemned the pogroms. Thus Archbishop Anthony wrote: “... It is unpleasant to talk about oneself, but if you ask anyone who is close to me or knows me well: what is he most interested in? they would tell you: monasticism, communion with the Eastern Churches, the struggle with Latinism, the transformation of the theological schools, the creation of a new direction of Orthodox theology [in opposition to scholasticism], the Yedinoverie [Old Ritualists in union with the Orthodox Church], the typicon of Divine services, Slavophilism, Orthodoxy in Galicia... etc. But no one would name Judophobia as one of my most important interests...

“... Concerning the Jews I delivered and published a sermon in 1903 (against pogroms), thanks to which the pogroms that enveloped the whole of the south-western region did not take place in Volhynia in that year. In 1905 in the sixth week of the Great Fast the Jews in Zhitomir shot at portraits of his Majesty and were beaten for that by the inhabitants of the suburb. The day before Palm Sunday I arrived from Petersburg and in

⁶⁷ ⁶⁷ Johnston, “Archbishop Platon Discourses”, *Harper’s Weekly*, July 27, 1912, p. 10; quoted by Andrew Komendarov, in “[paradosis] Re: More Anti-semitism couched as ‘True Orthodoxy’”, orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com, February 8, 2006.

⁶⁸ See Danilushkin, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 78-80, 771-783; Kizenko, *op. cit.*, chapter 7.

Holy Week again delivered a speech against the pogrom that was being prepared for the first day of Pascha. This pogrom did not take place, and only after the murder by a Jewish hireling of the popular police-officer Kuyarov on the evening of Thomas Sunday, when I was leaving Zhitomir for Petersburg, did fights begin with the Jews, who later said that 'the government deliberately summoned our hierarch to Petersburg because while he was in the city they did not beat us'. In 1907 I published in a newspaper, and then a brochure with the article: 'The Jewish question and the Holy Bible', which has now been reissued in Yiddish. All this, however, did not stop the liberals from printing about me that I was going in cross processions to incite pogroms. Meanwhile, all pogroms have ceased in Volhynia since the Pochaev Union of the Russian People was formed in 1906...

"... If they are talking about the limitation of rights [of the Jews], not for the highest motives of defending the poor Little Russians from Jewish exploiters, but out of hatred for the latter, then this is truly disgusting, but if the patriots do not hate the Jews, but love and pity them, but do not want to give horns to a cow that butts, then this is reasonable, just and humane..."⁶⁹

Archbishop Anthony laid the blame for the pogroms not only on the Jews, but more widely on the liberal-atheist spiritual climate that had been building up in Russia over generations, and which affected all nationalities. Already in 1899 he had rebuked the liberal, "unchurched" part of the Russian population as follows: "It is no longer a people, but a rotting corpse, which takes its rotting as a sign of life, while on it, or in it, live only moles, worms and foul insects... for in a living body they would find no satisfaction for their greed, and there would be nothing for them to live on".⁷⁰¹⁴⁹

One of the problems of the Black Hundredist movement was its poor leadership, which gave it a bad name and doomed it to ineffectiveness. Thus "The Union of the Russian People" was led by A. Dubronin, who was only superficially Orthodox. When interviewed by the Cheka, Dubronin called himself a "communist monarchist", and declared: "By conviction I am a communist monarchist, that is, [I want] there to be monarchist government under which those forms of government [will flourish] which could bring the people an increase in prosperity. For me all kinds of cooperatives, associations, etc. are sacred." He was for the tsar, but against hierarchy. And he wanted to rid the empire of "the Germans", that is, that highly efficient top layer of the administration which proved itself as loyal to the empire as any other section of the population. The future Protomartyr John Vostorgov, one of the founders of the Union, considered Dubronin an enemy of the truth...

Another problem for the monarchists was the paradoxicality of the idea of a monarchical party in a monarchical State. A major advantage of a monarchical system is its avoidance of the divisiveness of party politics; the tsar stands above the various interests and lobbies and classes and reconciles them in obedience to his own person.

⁶⁹ *Pis'ma Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskago)* (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)), Jordanville, 1988, pp. 37, 39.

⁷⁰ Quoted in N. Talberg, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi (History of the Russian Church)*, Jordanville, 1959, p. 831. Nor was he silent about other instigators of violence behind the scenes, such as the Old Ritualists. As he wrote in his 1912 encyclical to the Old Ritualists: "The spirit of this world... winks at real revolutionaries and sent the money of your rich men to create the Moscow rebellion of 1905." (in "Otnoshenia s Staroobriadchestvom (Relations with Old Ritualism)", *Vozdvizhenie, (Exaltation)*, Winter, 2000, p. 76).

But the October manifesto appeared to divide ultimate power between the Tsar and the Duma. And this made party politics inevitable. For there could never be a real unity between those who ascribed ultimate power to the Tsar and those who ascribed it to the Duma.

Moreover, the struggle between the “reds” and the “blacks” was not simply a struggle between different interpretations of the October manifesto, or between monarchists and constitutionalists, but between two fundamentally incompatible world-views - the Orthodox Christian and the Masonic-Liberal-Ecumenist. It was a struggle between two fundamentally opposed views of where true authority comes from – God, or the people. As such it was a struggle for the very heart of Russia.

9. THE PRE-CONCILIAR CONVENTION

In 1889 the heretical but highly influential philosopher Vladimir Soloviev had written that “the Eastern Church had renounced its own power” in order to put it into the hands of the State. “He especially accused the Orthodox Church herself of having become a ‘national Church’ and of having thereby lost the right to represent Christ, to Whom had been confided all power in heaven and on earth. ‘In every country reduced to a national Church,’ he wrote, ‘the secular government (be it autocratic or constitutional) enjoys the absolute plenitude of all authority, and the ecclesiastical institution figures only as a special minister dependent on the general administration of the State.’”⁷¹

This statement was an exaggeration. Nevertheless, there was enough truth in it to elicit a movement for “the liberation of the Church from the State” among the Church’s intelligentsia. Paradoxically, it was Tsar Nicholas himself, who, in 1901, started the process by removing the phrase about recognising the tsar as “the supreme judge” from the oath that all hierarchs had to swear at their consecration. We have seen how this process then progressed, from the religio-philosophical meetings of 1901 to the decree of toleration in 1905. However, while the aim was laudable, and indeed of primary importance, the management of the process presented many problems; and in March, 1905 the Tsar postponed the convening of a Council to reform the administration of the Church and Church-State relations.

However, as the political situation began to stabilize, “already at the end of the same year,” as E.E. Alferev writes, “on December 27, he addressed a rescript to Metropolitan Anthony of St. Petersburg in which he wrote: ‘I now recognize that the time is quite right to carry out certain transformations in the structure of our native Church... I suggest that you determine the time for the convening of this Council.’

“On the basis of this rescript a Pre-Conciliar Convention was formed for the preparation of the convening of a Council, which soon set about its work. The convention carried out exceptionally important and valuable work demanding much time and labour, but the world war that broke out hindered the convening of the Council during the reign of Emperor Nicholas II. Instead of the peaceful situation which the Sovereign considered necessary for the introduction of such important reforms, it was convened in very unfavourable circumstances, during a terrible war, after the overthrow of the historical state structure of Russia, when the country was seized by revolutionary madness, and its most important decisions were taken to the sound of cannons during the beginning of the civil war.”⁷²

The Pre-Conciliar Convention gathered detailed responses from the bishops and leading theologians on the main issues which were to dominate the history of the Orthodox Church in the coming century. The debates during the Convention brought to the fore several of those churchmen who would play such important roles, both for

⁷¹ Soloviev, *La Russie et l’Eglise universelle* (Russia and the Universal Church), Paris, 1937, p. 25.

⁷² Alferev, *Imperator Nikolaj II kak Chelovek Sil’noj Voli* (Emperor Nicholas II as a Man of Strong Will), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, pp. 92-92.

good and for ill, in the coming struggle with the revolution: on the one side, men such as Metropolitan Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky), Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov) of Poltava, Archbishop Tikhon (Bellavin) and Bishop Arsenius (Stadnitsky) of Pskov, and on the other, Bishop Antoninus (Granovsky), Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Bishop Eulogius (Georgievsky). Thus among the suggestions made to the Convention we find the following one from Archbishop Sergius on January 18, which clearly looks forward to the renovationist movement of the 1920s:

- On the reform of the liturgical language: the future Council must debate the question of the simplification of the language of the Church, Slavonic, and the right accorded to the parish that wants it to serve the Divine offices in that language.
- It must think of abbreviating and simplifying the Typicon, and suppressing certain ritual actions, such as the breathing and spitting during the sacrament of baptism.
- It must think of abolishing the multiple repetitions of the same litanies during the same service, and replacing them by reading aloud the secret prayers during the Liturgy.
- It must think of giving priests [who have been widowed before the age of 45] the right to remarry.⁷³

The first section of the Convention studied the questions of the composition of the future Council and the transformation of the central administration of the Church. The second section studied the question of the division of Russia into metropolitan districts and the transformation of the local Church administration. In June, the question of Georgian autocephaly also began to be discussed by this section. The third section studied Church courts and reviewed the laws of marriage, divorce and mixed marriages. The fourth section studied the questions of the parish, church schools, church property, diocesan congresses and the participation of clergy in public institutions. The fifth section studied the question of the transformation of spiritual-academic institutions. The sixth section studied the questions of the yedinoverie, the Old Ritualists and some other issues. The seventh section analyzed measures necessary “for the protection of the Orthodox Faith and Christian piety from wrong teachings and interpretations in view of the strengthening of the principles of religious toleration in the empire”.⁷⁴

In May, 1906 a general assembly of the Convention decided that the future Council should be composed of clergy and laity, with a bishop, a priest and a layman being elected from each diocese. But while the clergy and laity were given the right to discuss all questions discussed in Council, the right to compose and confirm conciliar decisions was reserved for the bishops alone. This became the basis of the composition of the Council in 1917-18. However, few other recommendations of the sections were put into practice, and the Convention itself came to an end in December amidst a general waning of interest in it. In fact, according to F.D. Samarin, the results of the

⁷³ *Suggestions of the Diocesan Hierarchs on the Reform of the Church*, St. Petersburg, 1906, vol. 3, p. 443.

⁷⁴ Firsov, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223.

colossal amount of work put into the Convention amounted to nothing. There followed a decade in which the wounds of the Church continued to fester, and the authority of both Church and State continued to decline. In the end the much needed Local Council was convened, in accordance with Divine Providence, only when the Tsar himself had been swept away...

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Another problem addressed at the Preconciliar Convention was the status of the Georgian Church... Now the Georgian Church is much older than the Russian - it was granted autocephaly in the fourth century in accordance with a decision of the Council of Antioch. Her golden age took place from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, until the arrival of the Mongols in the 1220s. Thereafter Georgian history consisted of a long succession of invasions by Mongols, Turks and Persians in which the country was repeatedly devastated and many thousands martyred for the Orthodox faith.

In the sixteenth century Georgia found herself in a terrible plight. For, as Ioseliani writes, "oppressed by internal discord, and by the dissensions of ambitious and unsettled princes, Georgia was again exposed to a severe persecution on the part of the Persians. These enemies of the Christian name ceased not to lay their sacrilegious hands on the riches of Iberia. The messengers of King Alexander to Moscow lamented the fearful misfortunes of their country, and represented how the great Shah-Abbas, having endeavoured to leave to himself the protection of the kingdom of Georgia, made in reality the Georgians enemies of the Russian Tzar.

"In the year 1587 King Alexander II, having declared himself a vassal of Russia, sent to Moscow the priests Joachim, Cyril, and others; and, pressed on all sides as he was by the Persians and the Turks, entreated with tears the Russian Tzar Theodore Iohannovitch to take Iberia under his protection, and thus to rescue her from the grasp of infidels. 'The present disastrous times,' wrote he, 'for the Christian faith were foreseen by many men inspired by God. We, brethren of the same faith with the Russians, groan under the hand of wicked men. Thou, crowned head of the Orthodox faith, canst alone save both our lives and our souls. I bow to thee with my face to the earth, with all my people, and we shall be thine forever.' The Tzar Theodore Iohannovitch having taken Iberia under his protection, busied himself earnestly in rendering her assistance and in works of faith. He sent into Georgia teachers in holy orders for the regulation of Church ceremonies, and painters to decorate the temples with images of saints; and Job, patriarch of all the Russias, addressed to the Georgian king a letter touching the faith. King Alexander humbly replied that the favourable answer of the Tzar had fallen upon him from Heaven, and brought him out of darkness into light; that the clergy of the Russian Church were angels for the clergy of Iberia, buried in ignorance. The Prince Zvenigorod, ambassador to Georgia, promised in the name of Russia the freedom of all Georgia, and the restoration of all her churches and monasteries."⁷⁵

⁷⁵ P. Ioseliani, *A Short History of the Georgian Church*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, pp. 146-148.

However, because of her internal and external troubles, Russia was not able to offer significant military aid to Georgia for some time. And so “in 1617,” writes A.P. Dobroklonsky, “Georgia was again subjected to destruction from the Persians: the churches were devastated, the land was ravaged. Therefore in 1619 Teimuraz, king of Kakhetia, Imeretia and Kartalinia, accepted Russian citizenship, and Persia was restrained from war by peaceful negotiations. But the peace was not stable. In 1634 the Persian Shah placed the Crown Prince Rostom on the throne of Kartalinia. He accepted Islam, and began to drive the Orthodox out of Kartalinia. The renewal of raids on Georgia had a disturbing effect on ecclesiastical affairs there, so that in 1637 an archimandrite, two priests and two icon-painters with a craftsman and materials for the construction of churches were sent from Moscow ‘to review and correct the peasants’ faith’. And in 1650 Prince Alexander of Imeretia and in 1658 Teimuraz of Kakhetia renewed their oath of allegiance to the Russian Tsar. Nevertheless, even after this the woes continued. Many Georgians, restricted by the Muslims in their homeland, fled to Russia and there found refuge. But Georgia did not receive any real help from Russia throughout this period.

“As regards the Orthodox Greeks who were suffering under the Turkish yoke, Russia gave them generous material assistance, and sometimes tried to ease the yoke of the Turkish government that was weighing on them...”⁷⁶

All this demonstrated that the Russian tsar and patriarch were now in essentially the same relationship with the Eastern Orthodox Christians as the Constantinopolitan emperors and patriarchs had been centuries before, and that Russia had taken the place of Constantinople in God’s Providential Plan for His Church, a fact which the Eastern Patriarchs were now ready to accept.

“The Russian army,” writes Lado Mirianashvili, “finally freed Georgia from the unremitting incursions at the end of the 18th century. In 1783 the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti (central and eastern Georgia) concluded the Georgievsk treaty with Russia. According to the treaty Russia was to assume responsibility for protecting Georgia’s borders in return for the free movement of Russian troops within the country. But by 1801 Russia had abrogated the treaty and annexed Kartli-Kakheti. This was followed by the annexation of Samegrelo and Imereti (western Georgia) in 1803 and 1804, respectively. Within ten years the Russian authorities had abolished the Georgian monarchy, the Church’s autocephaly, and the patriarchal throne – all of which had withstood the Turks, the Mongols, and the Persians. During the subsequent 106 years, nineteen exarches of the Russian Synod ruled the Georgian Church. Church services in Georgian were terminated, frescoes were whitewashed, and ancient Georgian icons and manuscripts were either sold or destroyed.”⁷⁷

In spite of these abuses, there is little doubt that on the whole Georgia benefited from being part of the Russian empire. And Georgian saints of the nineteenth century, such as Elder Ilarion of Mount Athos, could be sincerely, even fiercely pro-Russian.

⁷⁶ Dobroklonsky, *Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi* (Guide to the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, pp. 278-279.

⁷⁷ Archpriest Zakaria Michitadze, *Lives of the Georgian Saints*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2006, pp. 25-27.

Nevertheless, the trampling underfoot of an ancient Christian nation's traditions could not go unopposed for long, and a movement to preserve the nation's heritage and promote the cause of Georgian state independence and ecclesiastical autocephaly came into being under the leadership of the poet, historian and philosopher Ilya Chavchavadze, who was assassinated by revolutionaries in 1907.

Georgian *State* independence could not be considered then, since at a time of increasing nationalist and revolutionary tensions, it would only undermine the foundations of the whole Orthodox empire. However, *Church* autocephaly was a different matter in view of the undisputed fact that the Georgian Church had once been autocephalous. And on June 2, 1906 this question was reviewed in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in St. Petersburg during the sessions of the second section of the Preconciliar Convention.

Eugene Pavlenko writes: "The majority of those who spoke supported the state principle of Church division [that is, in one state there should be only one Church administration], but the minority insisted on a national or ethnic point of view. In winding up the second section of the Preconciliar Convention, participants accepted one of the two projects of Protopriest I. Vostorgov on giving the Georgian Church greater independence in the sphere of the use of the Georgian liturgical language, of the appointment of national Georgian clergy, etc., but the project for Georgian autocephaly was rejected."

The argument between the two sides is important and its conclusions applicable in other cases, so we shall follow it in Pavlenko's exposition: "The most completely phyletistic [nationalistic] argumentation of the supporters of the idea of Georgian autocephaly at the Preconciliar Consistory was sounded in the report of Bishop Kirion [Sadzagelov, of Sukhumi], 'The National Principle in the Church'.⁷⁸

This report began by proclaiming the principle of nationality in the Church and by affirming its antiquity. In the opinion of the Bishop, Georgia 'has the right to the independent existence of her national Church on the basis of the principle of nationality in the Church proclaimed at the beginning of the Christian faith.' What does principle consist of, and when was it proclaimed? 'It is sufficient to remember,' writes Bishop Kirion, 'the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, who immediately began to glorify God in various languages and then preached the Gospel to the pagans, each in their native language.' But in our [Pavlenko's] view, references to the preaching of the apostles in connection with the affirmation of the national principle in the Church have no firm foundation. The preaching of the apostles in various languages was necessary in order to unite the peoples in the Truth of Christ, and not in order to disunite them in accordance with the national principle. That is, the principle of nationality is precisely that which Christianity has to overcome, and not that on which the Church must be founded. Since the Bulgarian schism phyletistic argumentation has characteristically sought support in references to the 34th Apostolic canon. 'The basic canonical rule,' writes Bishop Kirion, 'by which the significance of

⁷⁸ *Journals and Protocols of the sessions of the Preconciliar Convention Established by His Majesty*, volume 3. On the second section on Georgia. St. Petersburg, 1907, pp. 55-58.

nationality in relation to Church administration is recognised, is the 34th Apostolic canon which is so well known to canonists... According to the direct meaning of this canon in the Orthodox Church, every nationality must have its first hierarch.' But the 34th Apostolic canon... has in view 'bishops of every territory' and not 'bishops of every people'. The word *ethnos*, which is employed in this canon in the ancient language and in the language of Christian antiquity, is translated in the dictionary of Liddell and Scott first of all as 'a number of people accustomed to live together', and only then as 'a nation'. It is precisely the first sense indicated here that points to the territorial meaning of the Apostolic canon. So references to its national meaning are groundless.

"An incorrect understanding and use of the principle of conciliarity - which phyletism has in common with ecumenism - sometimes brings them closer, as we shall see later, to the point of being completely indistinguishable. For the supporters of the division of the Church along tribal lines the principle of conciliarity is only a convenient federal form for the development by each people of its nationality idiosyncrasy. '... The federal system,' in the opinion of Bishop Kirion, 'gave our Eastern Church significant advantages from a national point of view.' And the preservation of this idiosyncrasy - in his opinion - is prescribed by conciliar decisions (cf. the 39th canon of the Council in Trullo), and acquires a very important significance from the point of view of Church freedom.' But in the 39th canon of the Council in Trullo not a word is said about 'national religious-everyday and individual particularities' and the like, but there is mention of the rights of first-hierarchs over bishops and their appointment. 'Let the customs of each [autocephalous] Church be observed,' it says in this canon, 'so that the bishop of each district should be subject to his president, and that he, in his turn, should be appointed from his bishops, according to the ancient custom.' The émigré Church of Cyprus, of which mention is made in this canon, did not become the national Church of the Cypriots, but took into herself all the peoples of the Hellespont district where they emigrated. Where is mention made here of a conciliar sanction for the preservation of 'local ecclesiastical traditions' with the aid of administrative isolation?

"'Ecclesiastically speaking,' thinks Bishop Kirion, 'each people must make use of the freedom of self-determination' and 'possesses the right to develop according to the laws of its own national spirit.' The extent to which the Bishop sees the development of each Church possible 'according to the laws of its own national spirit' becomes clear from the following quotation cited by him: 'The Bulgarian Church, after a period of difficult trials and struggle, is near to the realisation of its age-old strivings without disrupting Christian peace and love. The enslaved Syro-Arabic Church is declaring its rights to national idiosyncrasy more and more persistently. The Armenian, Syro-Jacobite and Perso-Chaldean Churches, which have, because of regrettable circumstances, been separated from ecumenical unity for a long time, are also seeking reunion, but without the disruption of their national rights which have come into being historically.'⁷⁹ By 'regrettable circumstances' Professor Kavalnitsky and Bishop Kirion who quotes him apparently have in mind the Council of

⁷⁹ Professor M.G. Kovalnitsky. *On the Significance of the National Element in the Historical Development of Christianity*, Kiev, 1880, pp. 3-4.

Chalcedon, which condemned the monophysite heretics. While by 'reunion' they have in mind, as becomes clear from the following sentence, the following: 'Unity between the Churches must take place on the principle of equality, and not of absorption.'⁸⁰ Thus both in the schism of the Bulgarians, and in the heresy of monophysitism, there is nothing to prevent union with them, but only, in the opinion of Bishop Kirion, 'the religious variety of the Christian peoples'! Before our eyes, Bishop Kirion, a defender of Georgian autocephaly at the beginning of the century, is making a path from phyletism to ecumenism, the union of which we have already distinctly observed at the end of the century. This is the classical 'branch theory' in action. 'The peoples who accepted Christianity did not all assimilate its lofty teaching in the same way; each took from it only those elements of Christian life which it was able to in accordance with its intellectual and moral character. The Latin nations (the Catholics) developed a strict ecclesiastical organisation and created architecture of high artistic value. The Greeks, who were experienced in dialectical subtleties, worked out a complex and firmly based dogmatic system. The Russians, on accepting Christianity, mainly developed discipline and church rubrics, bringing external beauty to a high level of development. But the Georgians, having christianised their age-old national beliefs [giving their paganism a Christian form? – the author] and being completely penetrated with the spirit of Christianity, attached to it the sympathetic traits of their own character: meekness, simplicity, warmth, self-sacrifice, freedom from malice and persistence. Although all the nations did not receive Christianity, in the sense of assimilate the height and fullness of its heavenly teaching, in the same way, nevertheless, enlightened by Christianity, as members of the one Body of Christ [one must suppose that Latins and Monophysites are included in this number – the author], strive for the one aim that is common to Christian humanity – the realisation of the kingdom of God on earth (!)'. The idea of chiliasm – 'the kingdom of God on earth' – is a worthy crown of this union of phyletism and ecumenism. Fitting for a report at the assembly of the World Council of Churches, whose members are expecting the coming of 'the new era of the Holy Spirit'?

"From Bishop Kirion's report it is clearly evident that the idea of the national Church, beginning with the division of the Church on national lines, leads to her 'union', not on the basis of the patristic faith, but on the basis of the idea of abstract 'equality' of separate, including heretical, churches, and through this to the idea of the coming earthly kingdom of the antichrist..."⁸¹

There are stronger arguments to be made for Georgian autocephaly than those put forward by Bishop Kirion. However, Pavlenko is right to reject his essentially phyletistic argument: one (ethnic) nation – one Church. From the earliest times, the Orthodox Church has been organized on a *territorial* basis, following the demarcation of *states* rather than ethnic groups. In more recent centuries state boundaries have tended to correspond more and more closely to ethnic boundaries, so that we now talk of the Greek Church, the Russian Church, the Serbian Church, etc., as if we are talking about the Churches of the ethnic Greeks, Russians and Serbs exclusively. But

⁸⁰ *Journals and Protocols*, p. 56.

⁸¹ Eugene Pavlenko, "The Heresy of Phyletism: History and the Present", *Vertograd-Inform*, September, 1999.

this is a misleading way of speaking, and does not alter the essential principle, confirmed both in Holy Scripture and in Canon Law, that a local Church is the Church of all the people, *of all nationalities*, gathered together on one territory.

The attempt to substitute the ethnic principle for the territorial principle led, as we have seen, to a schism between the Greek and the Bulgarian Churches in 1872. It would lead to a schism between the Russian and the Georgian Churches in 1917, when Bishop Kirion and a Council of the Georgian Church re-established Georgian Church autocephaly on the basis of the ethnic principle. It would thereby divide the two Churches at precisely the moment when unity between Orthodox Christians of all races was vital in the face of the international communist revolution...

Not even all the Georgian bishops were in favour of autocephaly. In March, 1917 Archbishop Demetrius of Tauris (formerly Prince David Abashidze), who later became organiser of the Georgian Catacomb Church until his death in Kiev in 1943, protested against the election and enthronement of Bishop Kirion as Georgian Catholicos. Vladyka Demetrius was "more Russian than the Russians" and did not sympathize with the nationalist designs of the leaders of the Georgian Church. During the Moscow Council of 1917-18, he was appointed president of the section on the Orthodox Church in Transcaucasia, and in connection with the Georgians' declaration of the autocephaly of their Church was elected a deputy member of the Holy Synod.

10. CATHOLICISM IN THE WESTERN BORDERLANDS

One reason for the ineffectiveness of the Pre-Conciliar Convention was that many of the problems that the Church faced could not be solved by decisions of the Church alone, but only – in the present state of Church-State relations – by the State. A particularly burning issue in this respect was the resurgence of the activity of heretics in various regions, but particularly in the western borderlands, in the wake of the April Decree on religious toleration. Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Volhynia addressed this problem in his report to the Convention entitled “On Freedom of Confession”:

“Freedom of confession (not ‘freedom of conscience’: that is a senseless expression),” he said, “must of course be preserved in the State: there is no point in keeping anybody by force in the ruling Church; it is also necessary to excommunicate from the Church those who declare themselves to be outside her confession after exhorting them twice. But this is quite another matter than freedom of religious *propaganda*...”

“Orthodoxy has very little to fear from the preaching of foreign religious dogmas, and hardly any religion would decide to address Orthodox listeners with such preaching; this would mean hoping to draw people from the light of the sun to a dim kerosene lamp. The propaganda of heterodoxy is possible only through cunning, deception and violence. Who does not know by what means the Latins drew to themselves 200,000 Orthodox Christians last year? They persistently spread the rumour that the Royal Family and even St. John of Kronstadt was joining their heresy, assuring the people that supposedly all Catholics would be re-ascribed to the Polish gentry and be given lands, while the Orthodox would be returned to the status of serfs. But that was still only half the sorrow. Representing in themselves almost the whole of the landowning class in the western and south-western region, the Polish gentry and counts are oppressing the Orthodox in their factories... The peasants there are completely in the hands of these contemporary feudal lords, and when they meet them they kiss their feet.

“And so even now, when there is not yet equality of religious confessions, they are bestowing on the renegades from Orthodoxy both money and forests and lands, while the faithful sons of the Church are being insulted, deprived of employment and expelled together with their earnings from the factories. What will the situation be when there is equality of confessions?”

“The Protestants are acting by the same means in the north-western region, as are various sects in the Crimea and New Russia. Orthodoxy and the Orthodox, by contrast, despise such ways of acting. The Muslim or Jew, on accepting holy baptism, is often immediately lynched, that is, killed by his former co-religionists... Can the government leave them defenceless? Thousands of Christians have fallen into Mohammedanism in the last year; even several purely Russian families in Orenburg diocese have done so, having been subjected to threats, bribes and absurd rumours about the imminent re-establishment of the Kirghiz kingdom with its hereditary dynasty, together with expulsion and even the beating up of all Christians.

“If the governments of all cultured countries punish falsification in trade, as well as the spreading of sensational false rumours and deliberate slander, etc., then our government, too, if it is to remain consistent, must protect the Orthodox people from the deceit, blackmail and economic and physical violence of the heterodox. They are able to act only by these means, as did the Catholics during the time of the Polish kingdom, when they seduced the Orthodox into the unia.

“Let us remember one more important circumstance that is completely ignored when talking about religious toleration.

“If our flock were catechized both in the truths of the faith and in how they should look on various faiths, peoples and estates, it would be possible to present them to themselves and to the spiritual influence of their pastors in the struggle for faith and nationality.

“But our government – more precisely, our State – has been attracted since the time of Peter and after by the aims of purely cultural and state centralization, constricting, distorting and even half eclipsing the religious consciousness and religious life of the Orthodox people. In the 17th century the latter had nothing to fear from any propaganda (except that of the Old Ritualists, of course), because, if not each peasant family, at any rate every village had its own teachers of dogmas, who lived the same peasant life as all the other village dwellers. Moreover, discipline in Church and everyday life was as strong as among the Jewish hassidim or, to take a closer example, our contemporary edinovertsy, to whom also, thanks to their conditions of life, no propaganda presented any danger.

“But the government of the 18th century tore away the clergy from the people, driving the former into the ranks of a separate caste, and educating it, not in the concepts and everyday discipline of popular Orthodoxy, but in the traditions of the Latin school and scholastic theological theory. The people was further and further estranged from Church literature and Church services, and which is still more sad, remained alone in its religious way of life, in its fasts, its prayers, its pilgrimages. The clergy became more and more learned and cultured, while the people became more and more ignorant and less steeped in Orthodox discipline. That is what happened with the Great Russian people, which was Orthodox from ages past. But what are we to say about the down-trodden, enslaved Western Little Russians and Belorussians, or about the descendants of the formerly baptized non-Russian peoples beyond the Volga and in Siberia?

“All these people, abandoned as regards spiritual development, chained to the land, had, willingly or unwillingly, to be reconciled to the thought that the Tsar, the lords, the bishops and the priests were reading sacred books and studying the holy faith for them, while they themselves would listen to them – learned people who could find the leisure and the means to read.

“The grey village hardly distinguishes between spiritual bosses and secular ones, spiritual books and science from secular ones. Everything that comes from the

legislative authorities comes from God; everything that is published in the newspapers comes from the Tsar and the bishops. Look at what views on life our poor people has come up against: the mountains of proclamations, the blasphemous brochures, the caricatures of August Personages and Fr. John of Kronstadt and all the rest with which yester-year's enlighteners have blessed their homeland.

"This is the clue how the people can believe the Catholic proclamations about his Majesty accepting this religion, and the revolutionary proclamations to the effect that the Tsar has supposedly ordered the landowners to be robbed, etc. And so, having taken into its hand the people's conscience, can the Russian government renounce Orthodoxy before the people has been catechized in it consciously? If it would like to take an extra-confessional stance, then let it first return to the people the confessional conscience it leased from it, let it give out millions over several years for the establishment of catechists – at least one for every 300 people (now there is one priest for every 2000 Orthodox Christians). But until then it is obliged to protect the Orthodox people from violent deception, from economic compulsion to apostasy.

"We said that an elective authority will not dare to violate the people's will, but it must get to know it and obey it. Government authority has, of course, lofty privileges, but it too is obliged to go in agreement, if not with everything that is contemporary, but in any case with the historically unchanged will of the people. It is in it that Russia, as a growing collective organism, as a nation, as an idea pouring out in history, is recognized. And what is this people in its history and its present? Is it an ethnographical group or a group, first of all, of self-defence at the level of the state? No, the Russians define themselves as a *religious* group, as a confessional group, including in this concept both the Georgians and the Greeks who cannot even speak Russian. According to the completely just definition of K. Aksakov and other Slavophiles, the Russian people thinks of itself as the flock of God, the Church, a society of people that accomplished their salvation with the guidance of its faith and through *prayer and labour*. The people looks on its life as a cross given it by God, and the whole of its earthly state prosperity it has entrusted to the Tsar. Let the Tsar with his boyars and warriors repel the enemies of his Orthodox country, let him take taxes and recruits for this end, let the Tsar judge his servants and punish thieves, robbers and other evil-doers; all this is of little interest to the Russian man, his work is to struggle in labour and prayer, and to learn virtue from the people of God. And let the Tsar and his warriors take care that nobody hinders him in this.

"True, in this country there are many people who are foreign to the aim of life that is embraced by the whole people, that is, salvation. But they do not hinder Russian people in this, let them without hindrance live in accordance with their 'pagan habits' and pray to their gods, until they recognize the true faith. But, of course, not only the personal life of each man, but also the mission of the whole Orthodox country is seen by each Russian as consisting in exalting the light of Orthodoxy both among his own 'heathen', and beyond the frontiers of his native land, as is proved for us by the constant missionary colonization by Russians of the East and the North, beginning from the 9th century, and their constant consciousness of their historical duty to liberate their co-religionists from under the Turk and bring down his 'God-hated

kingdom', for which a litany is raised at the New Year moleben since the days of Ivan III to the days of Nicholas II.

"To renounce this task, which the people has considered for nine centuries to be its most important work, and to establish equality of rights for all faiths in the Russian state – this means to annihilate Russia as an historical fact, as an historical force; it means carrying out a great violation on the thousand-year-old people than the Tatar khans or the usurpers of the Time of Troubles carried out..."⁸²

This speech was clearly critical of the government. And yet Archbishop Anthony was no liberal, and in February, 1907 he wrote as follows about the monarchy: "Perhaps there are countries which are best ruled not by tsars, but by many leaders. But our kingdom, which consists of a multitude of races, various faiths and customs that are hostile to each other, can stand only when at its head there stands one Anointed of God, who gives account to nobody except God and His commandments. Otherwise all the races that inhabit the Russian land would go against each other with knives, and would not be pacified until they had themselves destroyed each other, or had submitted to the power of the enemies of Russia. Only the White Tsar is venerated by all the peoples of Russia; for his sake they obey the civil laws, go into the army and pay their taxes. Our tsars are the friends of the people and preservers of the holy faith, and the present Sovereign Nicholas Alexandrovich is the meekest and quietest of all the kings of the whole world. He is the crown of our devotion to our native land and you must stand for him to your last drop of blood, not allowing anybody to diminish his sacred power, for with the fall of this power, Russia also will fall..."

"Russian man, lend your ear to your native land: what does it tell you? 'From the righteous Princess Olga, from the equal-to-the-apostles Vladimir until the days of Seraphim of Sarov and to the present day and to future ages all the wise leaders of my people think and say the same,' that is what the land will reply to you... 'They taught their contemporaries and their descendants one and the same thing: both the princes, and the tsars, and the hierarchs who sat on the Church sees, and the hermits who hid amidst the forest and on the islands of the sea, and the military commanders, and the warriors, and the boyars, and the simple people: they all taught to look on this life as the entrance courtyard into the future life, they all taught to use it in such a way as not to console the flesh, but to raise the soul to evangelical virtue, to preserve the apostolic faith unharmed, to keep the purity of morals and truthfulness of speech, to honour the tsars and those placed in authority by them, to listen to and venerate the sacred monastic order, not to envy the rich, but to compete with the righteous ones, to love to work the land as indicated by God to our race through Adam and Noah, and to turn to other crafts only out of necessity or because of a special talent; not to borrow the corrupt habits of foreigners, their proud, lying and adulterous morals, but to preserve the order of the fatherland, which is fulfilled through chastity, simplicity and evangelical love; to stand fearlessly for your native land on the field of battle and to study the law of God in the sacred books.' That is what our land teaches us, that is what the wise men and righteous ones of all epochs of our history entrusted to us, in which there was no disagreement between them, but complete unanimity. The whole

⁸² Archbishop Anthony, in Rklitsky, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 277, 278-281.

of Rus' thinks in the same way. But she knows that only the Anointed of God must preserve this spirit and defend it from enemies visible and invisible by his mighty right hand. And look he hardly stepped back from life when his popular privileges were snatched from him by deception and violence by his enemies and the enemies of the people. Yes, the Russian people thinks and feels one thing: in its eyes public life is a general exploit of virtue, and not the realm of secular pleasures, it is the laborious increase of the Kingdom of God amongst us ourselves and its implanting in the unenlightened tribes, and not the equalisation of all faiths and superstitions. The Orthodox people knows and feels this. It feels that without one ruling royal right hand it is impossible for our land of many tribes to exist. In it are 102 different faiths, 102 tribes that will now nourish malicious enmity against each other immediately they cease to feel the ruling right hand of the White Tsar above them. Let him hear out the reports of the people's delegates, let him allow them to express their opinions on various matters of the kingdom. But the final decision will be made by him himself, and he will give an account for this only through his conscience before the Lord God. One only submission, one only limitation of his power is necessary to the people: that openly on the day of his crowning he should confess his Orthodox faith to God and the people in accordance with the Symbol of the Fatherland – so that he should not have human arbitrariness, but the evangelical law of God as his unfailing guide in his sovereign decisions and undertakings. That is the kingdom we need, and this is understood not only by Russian people, but also by people other faiths who live in our land with a healthy people's reasoning, and not through lies and deceit: both Tatars and Kirgiz and the old Jews who believe in their own way, and the distant Tunguz. All of them know that shaking the Tsar's Autocracy means beginning the destruction of the whole of Russia, which has been confirmed in the last three years..."⁸³

So the problem, according to Archbishop Anthony, was not in the institution of the monarchy, to which he was passionately attached, but in the Petrine system of Church-State relations, whereby "the government of the 18th century tore away the clergy from the people, driving the former into the ranks of a separate caste," so that "the people was further and further estranged from Church literature and Church services" and heretical propaganda was able to gain a stronger and stronger influence among them. And yet how was the Petrine system to be reformed in order to give the Church more independence and influence among the people without further undermining the monarchy itself in those revolutionary times? This was the conundrum that faced all would-be reformers from the right end of the political spectrum, and the real reason why no truly effective reform was possible before the revolution...

In the meantime, Archbishop Anthony waged a noble battle against the heretics within his own diocese and also in defence of the Orthodox population further west, within the bounds of Austria-Hungary. For there the Hungarian government and the uniates tried by all means to prevent the return of the Carpatho-Russians to their

⁸³ Rklitsky, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 173, 175-177.

ancestral Orthodox faith. This led to martyrdoms, such as that of the priest Maximus Sandovich, who had been ordained by Vladyka Anthony.⁸⁴

“Vladyka Anthony struggled with the unia and both by the printed word and in his sermons he often addressed this theme. He tried by all means to destroy the incorrect attitude towards the unia which had been established in Russia, according to which it was the same Orthodoxy, only commemorating the Pope of Rome. With profound sorrow and irritation he said: ‘They can in no way accept this simple truth, that the unia is a complete entry into the Roman Catholic church with the recognition of the Orthodox Church as a schism., with the recognition of all the Latin saints and with a condemnation of the Orthodox saints as having been schismatics outside the true Church...’

“... Vladyka Anthony also laboured much to establish in Russian society an Orthodox attitude towards Catholicism. In educated Russian society and in ecclesiastical circles in the Synodal period of the Russian Church the opinion was widespread that Catholicism was one of the branches of Christianity which, as V.S. Soloviev taught, was bound at the end of time to unite into one Christianity with the other supposed branches – Orthodoxy and Protestantism, about which the holy Church supposedly prayed in her litanies: ‘For the prosperity of the Holy Churches of God and for the union of all’.

“The correct attitude towards Catholicism as an apostate heresy was so shaken that the Holy Synod under the influence of the Emperor Peter I and with the blessing of his favourite, the protestantizing Metropolitan Theophan Prokopovich, allowed Swedish prisoners-of-war in Siberia to marry Russian girls with the obligatory conversion to Orthodoxy. Soon this uncanonical practice of mixed marriages became law and spread, especially in the western regions. In his diocese Vladyka Anthony strictly forbade the clergy to celebrate mixed marriages.

“Vladyka Anthony well knew that Catholic influence in the midst of the Russian clergy was introduced through the theological schools: ‘We have lost (an Orthodox attitude towards Catholicism) because those guides by which we studied in school and which constitute the substance of our theological, dogmatic and moral science, is borrowed from the Catholics and Protestants; we are left only with straight heterodox errors which are known to all and have been condemned by ecclesiastical authorities...’

“Seeing the abnormal situation of church life in subjugated Carpathian Rus’, Vladyka Anthony turned to the Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III with a request to accept the Orthodox Galicians and Carpatho-Russians under his omophorion, since the Russian Synod for political reasons was unable to spread its influence there. The patriarch willingly agreed and appointed Vladyka Anthony as his exarch for Galicia and Carpathian Rus’. The Galicians, after finishing work in the fields and in spite of the great obstacles involved in crossing the border, sometimes with a direct danger to

⁸⁴ *Holy New Hieromartyr Maximus Sandovich*, Liberty, Tenn.: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1998.

their lives, made pilgrimages in large groups to the Pochaev Lavra. Many Carpatho-Russians and Galicians entered the Volhynia theological seminary.

“Under the influence of all these undertakings, the Orthodox movement in these areas began to grow in an elemental manner with each year that passed. This elicited repressions on the part of the Austro-Hungarian government, which tried to suppress the movement. The persecution grew and soon Vladyka was forced to speak out in defence of the persecuted Christians. In August, 1913 he published an encyclical letter in which he eloquently portrayed all the woes and persecutions of the Orthodox population of the western regions. In going through the various instances of Catholics humiliating Orthodox, he cited the following example of the firmness of the persecuted and the cruelty of the persecutors: ‘Virgins who had gathered together to save their souls in fasting and prayer were stripped in winter and driven out onto a frozen lake, like the 40 martyrs of Sebaste, after which some of them soon died. Thus do they torture our Russians in Hungary and Austria in broad daylight in our civilized age...’

“But when massive arrests and tortures of the Orthodox began, and there was a trial of 94 Orthodox in Sihet, Vladyka Anthony composed a special prayer and petitions in the litanies, which were read in all the churches of the Volhynia diocese in the course of the whole period of the trial, which lasted for two months.

“This was the only voice raised in defence of the persecuted, not only in Russia but also throughout Europe.

“The Austro-Hungarian political circles, in agreement with the Vatican, undertook decisive measures to suppress the incipient mass return to Orthodoxy of the Carpatho-Russians and Galicians. It seems that they undertook diplomatic negotiations in St. Petersburg in order to remove the main cause of the movement that had arisen, Vladyka Anthony, from his Volhynia see.”⁸⁵

On May 20, 1914 Archbishop Anthony was duly transferred from the see of Volhynia to that of Kharkov... However, where human leaders fail, the King of kings intervenes. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914, and the success of the Russian offensive in Galicia in 1915, removed – temporarily, at any rate – many of the dangers which had arisen in the pre-war period and against which Archbishop Anthony had struggled. Patriotic emotion and reverence for the Tsar revived, and concern for the fate of the Orthodox Christians in Serbia and the south-west regions made the struggle, in the minds of many, into a holy war in defence of Orthodoxy against militant Catholicism and Protestantism.

⁸⁵ *Holy New Hieromartyr Maximus Sandovich*, op. cit., pp. 48-50.

11. THE SALT LOSES ITS SAVOUR

Long before the Jews began to join terrorist organizations, or the Masonic intelligentsia to weave their plots against the tsar, the Russian Orthodox people began to fall away from the faith. This was mentioned by Saints Seraphim of Sarov and Tikhon of Zadonsk; and St. Ignatius Brianchaninov spoke about “hypocrisy”, “scribes and Pharisees” and “the salt losing its savour”. By the eve of the revolution this decline was still more noticeable.

The Church hierarchy was corrupted by renovationists such as Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) and Bishop Antoninus (Granovsky). There were few bishops who spoke out openly against the revolutionary madness. One of the few exceptions was Bishop Hermogen of Saratov, the future hieromartyr, who for his opposition to Rasputin was exiled to his monastery.

In the monasteries it was the same story. There were still holy monks and nuns, and the rich crop of monastic martyrs after the revolution showed that the pre-revolutionary sowing was by no means all bad. Nevertheless, the future Elder Gabriel of Seven Lakes was warned by St. Ambrose of Optina “to go wherever he please, so as only not to live in Moscow”, where monasticism was at such a low level.⁸⁶ A generation later, in 1909, St. Barsanuphius of Optina said: “Contemporary monasticism strives in all things to fulfil its own will. Abba Dorotheus says: ‘I know of no other fall for a monk than as a consequence of his own will.’”⁸⁷ The ignorance and superstition of the name-worshipping monks did not grow on an empty place; and pseudo-elders such as Rasputin and Iliodor could not have flourished in a more truly pious society.

A particular characteristic of the pre-revolutionary period – and a propaganda gift for the revolutionaries – was the excessive expenditure of the rich and their flagrant immorality. The Romanovs – with the shining exception of the Tsar and Tsarina, Great Princess Elizabeth and some others – were among the worst sinners. The increasing hard-heartedness of wealthy Russian Christians to the poor was bewailed by many leading churchmen, such as St. John of Kronstadt. Both rich and poor tended to forget the Christian teaching on social inequality, namely, that it is an opportunity for the rich to show compassion and for the poor to display patience.⁸⁸

But the rich in every age have been corrupt. What of the poor? In the villages and factories, as we have seen, revolutionary propaganda made deep inroads. Although only a minority of peasants took part in the burning of landowners’ estates in the 1905 revolution, by 1917 the experience of the war and the lying propaganda directed against the Tsar and his family had increased the numbers of deserters, thieves and

⁸⁶ Fr. Simeon Kholmogorov, *One of the Ancients*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1988, p. 67.

⁸⁷ St. Barsanuphius, in Fomin & Fomina, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

⁸⁸ For, as Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich wrote, “it is God’s desire that men be unequal in externals: riches, power, status, learning, position and so forth. But he does not recommend any sort of competitiveness in this. God desires that men compete in the multiplying of the inner virtues.” (*Homilies*, volume 2).

arsonists. In the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1918 80% of the population voted for socialist deputies.⁸⁹ Moreover, support for the Bolsheviks in the elections, as Richard Pipes writes, “came not from the region of Jewish concentration, the old Pale of Settlement, but from the armed forces and the cities of Great Russia, which had hardly any Jews”.⁹⁰ So blame for the Russian revolution must fall on Russians as well as Jews, and not only the aristocratic or Masonic Russians, but on large swathes of the Christian working population.

F. Vinberg writes: “Everyone was guilty! Both the higher circles of the nobility, and the major and minor merchants, and the representatives of science, and the servant classes, and in particular the adulterers of the word, the corrupters of thought, many Russian writers of the last decades, lawyers and professors: for all these categories of Russian citizens there can be no forgiveness for the great crime they committed.”⁹¹ And so Ivan Solonevich’s words applied to all sections of the population: “With the substitution of faith in absolute Good with faith in relative sausages, everything else also begins to take on a relative character, including man. With the loss of faith in God, loss of faith in man is also lost. The Christian principle, ‘love your neighbour as yourself’, for your neighbour is *also* a part of absolute Good, is exchanged for another principle: ‘man is a means for the production of sausages’. The feeling of absolute morality is lost... Consequently faith ceases to exist not only in man generally, but also in one’s ‘neighbour’ and even in the neighbour himself. And then begins mutual extermination...”⁹²

Contrary to popular conceptions, the roots of the Russian revolution are not to be sought in economic or political circumstances. Looking deeper, we may see them in “the mystery of iniquity” foretold by the prophets to reach the acme of its power in the last times. This is the mystery of satanic rebellion that arises from within the People of God and leads them to reject the God-established order in Church and State. As Joseph de Maistre wrote: “There have always been some forms of religion in the world and wicked men who opposed them. Impiety was always a crime, too... But only in the bosom of the true religion can there be real impiety... Impiety has never produced in times past the evils which it has brought forth in our day, for its guilt is always directly proportional to the enlightenment which surrounds it... Although impious men have always existed, there never was before the eighteenth century, and in the heart of Christendom, an insurrection against God.”⁹³

De Maistre was speaking, of course, about the French revolution, and for him the true religion that was the object of the wrath of the French revolutionaries was – Catholicism. However, we know that Catholicism is only a heresy and schism from the true religion – Orthodox Christianity. It is therefore to the insurrection against God within the heart of Orthodox Christianity – that is, to the Russian revolution –

⁸⁹ Edward Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 15.

⁹⁰ Pipes, *op.cit.*, p. 113.

⁹¹ Vinberg, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

⁹² I.L. Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia (The People’s Monarchy)*, Minsk, 1998, pp. 384, 385.

⁹³ De Maistre, *On God and Society*; in Fr. Seraphim Rose, *Nihilism*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 1994, p. 69.

that we must look for the summit of evil that the world has yet seen – always excepting, of course, the killing of God Himself by the Jews. The crime was the worse in that the Tsar whom the revolutionaries killed as being the representative of Christianity was probably the most genuine Christian that has ever sat upon a Christian throne. Not only did he not exploit his people in any way: he brought them immeasurable benefits, both spiritual and material, building churches, canonizing saints, spreading the truth faith, strengthening the economy, helping the poor, introducing just legislation and finally laying down his crown and life in order to save his people from civil war.

When the revolution finally came, and people saw the demonic horror they had voted for, many repented. They realized that they were reaping the fruits of what their own indifference had sown. As Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov, wrote: “The absence of zeal in Christians and of a firm confession of their faith makes many of our enemies (who do not, of course, consciously arise up against the Holy Spirit) to see in Christianity – hypocrisy, and in the Church – an organization of exploiters. In the same way, the absence in us of Christian zeal can be seen as an indirect reason why those who are perishing in the darkness of atheism and the spite of anti-theism leave the Church. It goes without saying that real, especially spiteful ‘rising up against the Lord and against His Christ’ has other, deeper, age-old reasons. Still, if such a significant quenching of the spirit of faith and love amidst believers in the preceding age had not taken place, the faithful servants of the prince of darkness would not have found among us so many voluntary and involuntary helpers. It was said at one Masonic congress: ‘Russia has preserved the most ardent love for our eternal Enemy, and He Whose name I do not want to name will send a horde of His invisible powers to the defence of the Russian people’ ... And it was decided in counter-action to this to implant lack of faith in Russia...”⁹⁴

The Lord would indeed have sent “a horde of His invisible powers to the defence of the Russian people” – if they had been worthy of it. But they were not. And so instead of “the mystery of piety”, there triumphed “the mystery of iniquity”. For, as St. John Maximovich explained: “The sin against him [the Tsar] and against Russia was perpetrated by all who in one way or another acted against him, who did not oppose, or who merely by sympathizing participated in those events which took place forty years ago. That sin lies upon everyone until it is washed away by sincere repentance...”⁹⁵ Again, Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Syracuse wrote: “It is small consolation for us that the Royal Family was killed directly by non-Russian hands, non-Orthodox hands and non-Russian people. Although that is so, *the whole Russian people* is guilty of this terrible, unprecedented evil deed, insofar as it did not resist or stand against it, but behaved in such a way that the evil deed appeared as the natural expression of that mood which by that time had matured in the minds and hearts of

⁹⁴ E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovednik (Bishop Confessors)*, San Francisco, 1971.

⁹⁵ St. John, “Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr”, in *Man of God: Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco*, Richfield Springs, N.Y, 1994, p. 133.

the undoubted majority of the unfortunate misguided Russian people, beginning with the 'lowers' and ending with the very 'tops', the upper aristocracy."⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Taushev, "Religiozno-misticheskij smysl ubienia Tsarkoj Sem'i" (The Religious-Mystical Meaning of the Killing of the Royal Family), http://www.ispovednik.org/fullest.php?nid=59&binn_rubrik_pl_news=132.

11. THE NAME-WORSHIPPING HERESY

At the beginning of the 20th century the Greek and Russian monks on Mount Athos were not on friendly terms. "The Greeks cannot speak with equanimity about the Russians," wrote I.I. Sokolov, "while the Russians do not speak with approval about the Greeks. The former complain about the unlawful seizure by the Russians of Greek monasteries, cells and lands, while the Russians speak about violence and oppression on the part of the Greeks. And as time passes, mutual dissatisfaction grows, and spitefulness flames up more strongly. We can say that now [at the beginning of the 20th century] we are witnessing a repetition, to some degree, of what happened in the 1870s, during the infamous Greek-Russian law-suit to do with the St. Panteleimon monastery. There can be no doubt that leaven from this suit has not died out, and now in the quarrel between the Greek and Russian monks on Athos we must see a reflection of the earlier turmoil. Ten years ago one could see a certain calm in the mutual dissatisfaction of the Athonite population, but it turns out that this was the calm before a storm that has now broken out 'in the great wilderness of Athos' to quite a significant degree. What is it about?

"In the gradual increase in the numbers of Russian monks on Athos the Greeks see a blow to Hellenism. There was a time, and not so long ago, not more than 30-40 years ago, when there were very few Russian monks on Athos; they had no constant, well-organised refuge, they were poor, and deprived of influence on Athonite affairs. Now their position has changed unrecognisably by comparison with the past. There are now more Russian monks than the Greeks themselves. They have well constructed monasteries and cells, and the main thing – they are rich and do not spare money on acquiring new possessions. They are gradually increasing in numbers and are ready to take over the whole of the Holy Mountain, and squeeze the Greeks completely out. This Russian advance on Athos is based, according to the opinion of the Greeks, on national-political motives: it is the march of Pan Slavism against Hellenism. It is well-known how attached the Greeks are to their nation, how they preserve all the centres of Hellenism, how they defend every pound of their native soil. And here we are talking about one of the most prominent refuges of Hellenism, the acropolis of the Greek nation, where the Hellenist standard was unfurled already in Byzantine times, and did not disappear in the Turkish era as a consequence of the special international-political position of Athos. Hence arises the enmity which appears in the fact that the Greek monasteries try not to sell to the Russian monks a single clump of land, surround the use of the cells with various obstacles, deprive the elders in the cells of the right of bequeathing them to their disciples, charge inordinate prices for cells and kalyvas, etc. Is such an attitude of the Greeks to the Russians just?

"We think that the enmity of the Greeks towards the Russians is unjustly motivated by considerations of a political nature. The political slant given to Russian monasticism on Athos is an artificial, false thing, which does not correspond to the real strivings of the Russians on Athos. Pan Slavism, which the Greeks talk about in relation to the Russian Athonites, is a myth, an empty word, having no definite content. It was created by the immoderately passionate fantasy of the Athonites – or more accurately, of the Athenian intriguers from the Greeks, who see enemies of Hellenism in its most recent formation everywhere: this is a common phenomenon

among peoples that are feverish with political tendencies after their birth or rebirth to new public life. The Greeks saw the advance of Panslavism into the East already in the 1870s, when the notorious case of St. Panteleimon's flared up, but even they did not have a clear idea about it, which is why Panslavism was for them some kind of scarecrow. In this respect the matter has not changed even at the present time. Moreover, it would be strange to impute political tendencies to people coming from our remote villages and settlements, who have set off for Athos with exclusively religious aims. After all, Russian Athos can without exaggeration be called 'the peasants' kingdom'. There are very few intelligentsy here – perhaps 50 out of 4000 monks in all. There are also few from the ranks of the upper and lower middle classes, who differ very little from the peasants, so that on Athos the peasantry is the dominant and even the all-engulfing element. The inhabitants of our villages and settlements set off for Athos exclusively for religious motives – to pray and save themselves: what have they to do with politics? And then politicising requires a corresponding intellectual preparation, which the Greek monks possess, but the Russians do not. Justice requires us to say that among the Russian monks of Athos there are very few educated people, the majority are semi-literate: what have they to do with politics? While the leaders of the monks, penetrated with the same ideas of prayer and salvation, are so burdened with the administration of the brotherhood and the complex monastic economy that politics is impossible for them..."⁹⁷

However, while this semi-literacy of the Russian monks made involvement in politics difficult for them, it presented another danger that was soon to reveal itself – a weakness in theological debate and vulnerability to heresy...

This danger became a reality with the publication, in 1907, by Schema-monk Hilarion, of a book on the Jesus prayer entitled *On the Mountains of the Caucasus*. This book was at first well-received and passed the spiritual censor; but later its claim that the name of God is God- more precisely, that the Name of God as uttered in the Jesus prayer is not only holy and filled with the grace of God, but is holy *in and of itself*, being *God Himself* - elicited criticism. Soon monastic opinion in Russia was polarised between those who, like the monks of the Kiev Caves Lavra, approved of the book and its name-worshipping thesis (imiabozhie in Russian), and those, like the monks of the Pochaev Lavra and the Optina Desert, who rejected it. The heresy was condemned by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1912 (Charter No. 8522 of Patriarch Joachim III to Mount Athos, dated September 12) and 1913 (Charter No. 758 of Patriarch German V to Mount Athos, dated February 15), and by the Russian Holy Synod in 1913 (Epistle of May 18, and Decree of August 27, No. 7644)⁹⁸.

However, as Gubanov writes, "the illiterate G.E. Rasputin interceded for the heretical name-worshippers and even tried to incite the empress to attack the fighters

⁹⁷ Sokolov, "Afonskoe monashestvo v ego proshlom i sovremennom sostoianii", in *Svt. Grigorij Palama* (Hierarch Gregory Palamas), St. Petersburg, 2004, pp. 237-239.

⁹⁸ See *Ekklesiastiki Alitheia*, N 16, April 20, 1913, pp. 123-125, N 19, May 11, 1913, pp. 145-146, N 11, N 24, June 15, 1913, pp. 187-191, March 15, 1914, p. 119; "O lzhe-uchenii imiabozhnikov", *Tserkovnie Vedomosti*, N 20, 1913.

against the heresy of name-worshipping.”⁹⁹ In 1914 the leading name-worshippers, including Hieroschemamonk Anthony (Bulatovich), author of *An Apology of Faith in the Name of God and the Name of Jesus* (1913), were justified by the Moscow Diocesan Court, which declared: “... The Synodal Office has found that in *the confessions of faith in God and in the Name of God* coming from the named monks, in the words, ‘I repeat that in naming the Name of God and the Name of Jesus as God and God Himself, I reject both the veneration of the Name of God as His Essence, and the veneration of the Name of God separately from God Himself as some kind of special Divinity, as well as any deification of the very letters and sounds and any chance thoughts about God’ – there is contained information allowing us to conclude that in them there is no basis for leaving the Orthodox Church for the sake of the teaching on the Names of God.’ (decree N 1443 of May 8, 1914)”.

Of course, this decree did not constitute a “justification” of the name-worshippers’ teaching, especially in view of the fact that *on the same day* the Office, led by Metropolitan Macarius, affirmed that name-worshipping – “*the new false-teachings on the names of God proclaimed by Schema-Monk Hilarion and Anthony Bulatovich*” – was a heresy (decree N 1442 of May 8, 1914). Moreover, in rejecting “any deification of the very letters and sounds and any chance thoughts about God”, Bulatovich was obliged also to renounce his words in the *Apology*: “Every mental representation of a named property of God is the Name of God [and therefore, according to the name-worshippers, God Himself]”, “the contemplation of the His name is God Himself”, “the conscious naming of God is God Himself”, “Every idea about God is God Himself”, “we call the very idea of God – God”. But did he in fact repent?

Unfortunately, the repentance of the name-worshippers turned out to be fictional. Bulatovich did not repent, but concealed his heresy behind ambiguous words and phrases. Thus on May 18, 1914, in a letter to Metropolitan Macarius, Bulatovich thanked him for his “justification”, and nobly deigned to declare that he was now ready to return into communion with the Orthodox Church (!). And he added: “Concerning the Name of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, we, in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Fathers, confessed and confess the Divinity and the Divine Power of the Name of the Lord, but we do not raise this teaching to the level of a dogma, for it has not yet been formulated and dogmatised in council, but we expect that at the forthcoming Council it will be formulated and dogmatised. Therefore we, in accordance with the teaching of the Holy Fathers, in the words of the ever-memorable Father John of Kronstadt said and say that the Name of God is God Himself, and the Name of the Lord Jesus is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, understanding this not in the sense of a deification of the created name, but understanding it spiritually, in the sense of the inseparability of the God-revealed Truth, Which is the Action of the Divinity.”

These words of Bulatovich show that he was not sincere in his signature below the *Confession of faith in God and in the Name of God*, but deceived Metropolitan Macarius (who was probably under pressure from the Over-Procurator Sabler, who was in turn

⁹⁹ Gubanov, *op. cit.*, p. 770. For more on Rasputin’s influence on the controversy, see Douglas Smith, *Rasputin*, London: Pan, 2017, chapter 34.

under pressure from the fervent name-worshippers Gregory Rasputin). “Mixing truth with unrighteousness” (Rom. 1.18), Bulatovich mixed Orthodoxy with heresy. Thus Orthodoxy recognises that there is a “Divine Power” in the name of Jesus, but does *not* recognise that it *is* “Divinity”. Again, Orthodoxy recognises that in prayer the name of God is indeed inseparable from God, but it does not *confuse* the two, as does Bulatovich. For while a shadow is inseparable from the body that casts it, this is not to say that the shadow *is* the body. Finally, Bulatovich’s “dogma” is still not “formulated and dogmatised in council” – because it is *not* a dogma, but heresy!

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church accepted that Bulatovich and his fellows had not really repented, so they set aside the decree of the Moscow Synodal Office, and confirmed the sentences against the name-worshippers (decree N 4136 of May 10-24, 1914), which confirmation was again confirmed by decree N 2670 of March 10, 1916. “In this decree of the Most Holy Synod,” wrote the future Hieromartyr Bishop Basil (Zelentsov), “we find a confirmation of the basic rule that the name-worshippers must be received into ecclesiastical communion and admitted to the sacraments of the Church only on the unfailing condition that they reject the false teaching of name-worshipping and witness to their faithfulness to the dogmas and teaching of the Church and to their obedience to Church authority.”

Although name-worshipping was on the agenda of the 1917-18 Council and a subcommission to study it under the leadership of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Fr. Sergius Bulgakov was formed, the subcommission did not have time to complete its work before the Council was terminated by the Bolsheviks. However, on October 8/21, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon and the Most Holy Synod declared: “The Most Holy Synod does not change its former judgement on the error itself [of name-worshipping]... and has in no way changed its general rule, according to which the name-worshippers, as having been condemned by the Church authorities, can be received into Church communion... only after they have renounced name-worshipping and have declared their submission to the Holy Church... The petition of Hieroschemamonk Anthony to allow him to serve is to be recognised as not worthy of being satisfied so long as he continues to disobey Church authority and spread his musings which have been condemned by the Church hierarchy to the harm of the Church”.

After this decision, the leading name-worshipper, Anthony Bulatovich, broke communion for the second time with the Russian Church and was shortly afterwards killed by robbers.

The name-worshipping movement survived in the Caucasus and South Russian region (where the Tsar had transported the rebellious monks); and the sophianist heretics Florensky and Bulgakov also confessed name-worshipping in the inter-war period. In modern times the heresy has enjoyed a revival in intellectualist circles in Russia, especially in the works of Hieromonk Gregory (Lourié), who supports the heretical views of Bulatovich, considers him to be a saint, and those who oppose his ideas, including several hieromartyrs of the Russian Church to be “enemies of the Name”!

Reasons for the failure to stamp out the heresy included the comparatively weak defence of the truth produced by the Greek and Russian theologians¹⁰⁰, the aura of martyrdom which was attached to the name-worshippers as a result of their forcible expulsion from Mount Athos to Russia on a Russian cruiser, and the fact that the heresy coincided with the end of the Balkan wars and the transfer of Mount Athos from Turkish to Greek dominion after the Treaty of Bucharest, which meant that mutual suspicions between the Greeks and the Russians concerning the status of Athos hindered a united and thorough approach to the problem. Many took up the cause of the name-worshippers as part of their general attack on the “paralytical” Russian Holy Synod, and the whole debate soon acquired political overtones, with the democratic and socialist left generally taking the side of the name-worshippers and the monarchists taking the side of the Orthodox.¹⁰¹

In 1918 Patriarch Tikhon indicated that the controversy needed further study “in essence” at a future Pan-Russian (or Ecumenical) Council. But this did not mean, as some have claimed, that the Church had not delivered its verdict on the question. She has delivered her verdict: but the reasons for that verdict need to be more extensively elaborated, and the “positive” teaching of the Church on the relationship between the uncreated and the created in prayer needs to be expounded still more clearly and thoroughly.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ The best effort was by S. Troitsky in one of the three reports attached by the Russian Holy Synod to their decision of 1913: “Afonskaia Smuta”, *Tserkovnie Vedomosti*, N 20, 1913, pp. 882-909.

¹⁰¹ See Constantine Papoulides, *Oi Rossoi onomolatroi tou Agiou Orous (The Russian Name-Worshippers of the Holy Mountain)*, Thessaloniki, 1977.

¹⁰² See V. Moss, “The Name of God and the Name-Worshipping Heresy”, <http://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com> (also in Russian at the same site); E.S. Polischuk (ed.), *Imiaslavia. Antologia (Name-Worshipping. An Anthology)*, Moscow, 2002.

12. RASPUTIN

Kerensky said that “without Rasputin, there could have been no Lenin” ... But no, Rasputin was not the cause of the Russian revolution: God would not have allowed the greatest Christian empire in history to fall because of the sinfulness of one man! Nevertheless, slanderous stories about the “elder’s” supposed sexual relationship with the Empress, and of his control of the Russian government through her, undoubtedly had a corrosive influence on the reputation of the monarchy during the war and hastened its demise.

Since the early 1990s there have been attempts to rehabilitate the reputation of Rasputin, notably by the historians Oleg Platonov and Alexander Bakhanov.¹⁰³ We can sympathize with these attempts insofar as they are motivated by a desire to protect the reputation of the Tsar and Tsarina, which suffered so much because of their credulity in relation to Rasputin. Moreover, it is right to point out that many of those who attacked Rasputin in the dying days of the empire were motivated not so much by a desire to “save” the empire as by mercenary, egoistic and unpatriotic considerations that make their testimony highly dubious.

However, even after discounting these evilly-motivated testimonies, and taking into account the anti-monarchical bias of such “champions of the truth” about Rasputin as Guchkov and Rodzyanko, the evidence against Rasputin is too great and too varied to dismiss wholesale. In 1995 the historian and dramatist Edvard Radzinsky came into possession of the long-lost file of testimonies to the Extraordinary Commission set up by the Provisional Government in March, 1917 to investigate the truth or otherwise of accusations against the Royal Couple and those close to them.¹⁰⁴ These testimonies, which include some by close friends of Rasputin, such as his publisher Filippov, as well as by others whose integrity and devotion to the Royal Couple cannot be doubted, and by several of his female victims, force us to the conclusion that, barring some of the wildest accusations, Rasputin was “guilty as charged”. Also impossible to reject wholesale are the very extensive police reports on Rasputin’s immoral behaviour. While Bakhanov among others has tried to dismiss even this evidence, Alexander Khitrov is right in pointing out that the police were, after the Tsar himself, the very first victims of the February revolution, and so cannot be accused of simply making up the whole story.¹⁰⁵

As the revolutionary threat receded (temporarily) after 1905, a new, more subtle and sinister threat appeared: theosophy, occultism, spiritism and pornography flooded into Russia.¹⁰⁶ Also sharply on the rise, especially among the peasantry, were Protestant sects, as well as sectarian movements that hid among the Orthodox

¹⁰³ Bakmatov, *Pravda o Grigorii Rasputine* (The Truth about Gregory Rasputin), Moscow, 2010.

¹⁰⁴ Radzinsky, *Rasputin: The Last Word*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000.

¹⁰⁵ Khitrov, “Rasputin-Novykh Grigory Efimovich i kratkaia istoria spornogo voprosa o priznanii v RPTsZ ego oschetserkovnogo pochitania, kak pravoslavnogo startsa” (Gregory Efimovich Rasputin-Novykh and a short history of the controversial question of his recognition in ROCOR of his veneration throughout the Church as an Orthodox elder).

¹⁰⁶ Maria Carlson, *“No Religion Higher than Truth”: A History of the Theosophical Movement in Russia, 1875-1922*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

peasantry like the *khlysty*. The Siberian peasant Gregory Rasputin was symbolic of this trend, which undermined the foundations of Holy Rus' just as surely as the anti-monarchism of the revolutionaries.

After a debauched youth, Rasputin repented and spent some years on pilgrimage, going from monastery to monastery. He then married and had children, but was recommended by a churchman to his colleagues in St. Petersburg. "Rasputin first appeared in St. Petersburg most probably in 1902, having by that time 'won the heart' of the Kazan bishop Chrisanthus, who recommended him to the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy, Bishop Sergius [Stragorodsky, the future patriarch]. The latter, in his turn, presented Rasputin to the professor, celibate priest Veniamin, and to the inspector of the Academy, Archimandrite Theophan."¹⁰⁷

In November, 1905, Rasputin met the Tsar for the first time (probably through the mediation of the Montenegrin Grand Duchesses Militsa and Anastasia). The Royal Couple, and especially the Tsarina, had already shown their vulnerability to religious quacks in the affair of the French charlatan, "Monsieur Philippe" of Lyons. At that time Grand Duchess Elizabeth, the Tsarina's sister had tried to open her eyes to the deception, but without success – she attributed her failure to her sister's inability to distinguish between the true faith and the condition of religious exaltation.¹⁰⁸ St. Elizabeth would also become a strong opponent of her sister's "second Friend", Rasputin. But the second Friend had a powerful weapon that the first Friend did not have – his extraordinary ability to heal the symptoms of the Tsarevich Alexei's haemophilia, a closely guarded secret in the Royal Family and a cause of great anguish to his parents. As Pierre Gilliard, the Tsarevich's tutor, said: "The illness of the Tsarevich cast a shadow over the whole of the concluding period of Tsar Nicholas II's reign, and... was one of the main causes of his fall, for it made possible the phenomenon of Rasputin and resulted in the fatal seduction of the sovereigns who lived in a world apart, wholly absorbed in a tragic anxiety which to be concealed from the eyes of all."

General V.N. Voeikov, commandant of the palace at Tsarskoye Selo and a close friend of the Royal Couple until the end, was sceptical about Rasputin from the beginning. But he witnessed to his healing power: "From the first time Rasputin appeared at the bed of the sick heir, alleviation followed immediately. All those close to the Royal Family were well acquainted with the case in Spala, when the doctors found no means of helping Alexis Nikolayevich, who was suffering terribly and groaning from pain. As soon as a telegram was sent to Rasputin on the advice of Vyubova, and the reply was received, the pains began to decrease, his temperature began to fall, and soon the heir got better."

¹⁰⁷ Alexander Bokhanov, Manfred Knodt, Vladimir Oustimenko, Zinaida Peregudova, Lyubov Tyutyunnik, *The Romanovs*, London: Leppi, 1993, p. 233.

¹⁰⁸ *Velikaia Kniaginia Elizaveta Fyodorovna i Imperator Nikolai I* (Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna and Emperor Nicholas I), St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2009, p. 34.

“If we take the point of view of the Empress-mother, who saw in Rasputin a God-fearing elder who had helped her sick son by his prayers – much should be understood and forgiven by every Russian devoted to the throne and the Homeland.

“The help he gave to the heir strengthened the position of Rasputin to such a degree at court that he no longer had need of the support of the [Montenegrin] Great Princesses and clergy. As a completely uneducated man, he was not able or did not want to hide this, and simply turned his back on his benefactors. Then there began denunciations against him; in the Synod they began a case to investigate the life and activity of Rasputin with the aim of demonstrating that he was a sectarian preaching principles harmful to Orthodoxy; while in society they began to speak about him as about a debauchee who cast a shadow on the empress by his appearances at court. The excuse for these conversations was disillusionment in Rasputin, who did not justify the hopes laid upon him.

“The stronger the campaign of denunciation against the Rasputin coming from the Duma, the more there developed in her Majesty the feeling that it was necessary to protect the man who was irreplaceable for the health of the heir: the influence of the empress on certain appointments can be explained by her desire to distance people who were dangerous to Rasputin from power.

“Taking full account of all this, Rasputin put on the mask of a righteous man at court, but outside it did not disdain to use the privileges of his position and to satisfy his sometimes wild instincts...”¹⁰⁹

Of particular significance was the relationship between Rasputin and Archimandrite, later Bishop Theophan.¹¹⁰

Vladyka was at first impressed by the peasant, but became disillusioned with him after becoming convinced, from his own observations and from the confessions of his spiritual daughters, that the man was untrustworthy and sexually rapacious.

“After a while,” he testified to the Extraordinary Commission, “rumours reached me that Rasputin had resumed his former way of life and was undertaking something against us... I decided to resort to a final measure – to denounce him openly and to communicate everything to the former emperor. It was not, however, the emperor who received me but his wife in the presence of the maid of honour Vyubova.

“I spoke for about an hour and demonstrated that Rasputin was in a state of spiritual deception... The former empress grew agitated and objected, citing

¹⁰⁹ Voeikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

¹¹⁰ On this important, but unsung hero of the faith, see Monk Anthony (Chernov), *Vie de Monseigneur Théophane, Archevêque de Poltava et de Pereiaslav* (*The Life of his Eminence Theophan, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereiaslav*), Lavardac: Monastère Orthodoxe St. Michel, 1988; Richard Bettes, Vyacheslav Marchenko, *Dukhovnik Tsarskoj Sem'i* (*Spiritual Father of the Royal Family*), Moscow: Valaam Society of America, 1994, pp. 60-61; Archbishop Averky (Taushev), *Vysokopreosviaschennij Feofan, Arkhiepiskop Poltavskij i Pereiaslavskij* (*His Eminence Theophan, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereiaslav*), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1974; Radzinsky, *Rasputin*, *op. cit.*

theological works... I destroyed all her arguments, but she... reiterated them: 'It is all falsehood and slander'... I concluded the conversation by saying that I could no longer have anything to do with Rasputin... I think Rasputin, as a cunning person, explained to the royal family that my speaking against him was because I envied his closeness to the Family... that I wanted to push him out of the way.

"After my conversation with the empress, Rasputin came to see me as if nothing had happened, having apparently decided that the empress's displeasure had intimidated me... However, I told him in no uncertain terms, 'Go away, you are a fraud.' Rasputin fell on his knees before me and asked my forgiveness... But again I told him, 'Go away, you have violated a promise given before God.' Rasputin left, and I did not see him again."

At this point Vladyka received a "Confession" from a former devotee of Rasputin's. On reading this, he understood that Rasputin was "a wolf in sheep's clothing" and "a sectarian of the khlyst type" who "taught his followers not to reveal his secrets even to their confessors. For if there is allegedly no sin in what these sectarians do, then their confessors need not be made aware of it."

"Availing myself of that written confession, I wrote the former emperor a second letter... in which I declared that Rasputin not only was in a state of spiritual deception but was also a criminal in the religious and moral sense... In the moral sense because, as it followed from the 'confession', Father Gregory had seduced his victims."

There was no reply to this letter. "I sensed that they did not want to hear me out and understand... It all depressed me so much that I became quite ill." But in fact, Vladyka's letter had reached the Tsar, and the scandal surrounding the rape of the children's nurse, Vishnyakova, whose confessor was Vladyka, could no longer be concealed. Vishnyakova herself testified to the Extraordinary Commission that she had been raped by Rasputin during a visit to Verkhoturye Monastery in Tobolsk province, a journey undertaken at the empress's suggestion. "Upon our return to Petrograd, I reported everything to the empress, and I also told Bishop Theophan in a private meeting with him. The empress did not give any heed to my words and said that everything Rasputin does is holy. From that time forth I did not see Rasputin, and in 1913 I was dismissed from my duties as nurse. I was also reprimanded for frequenting the Right Reverend Theophan."

Another person in on the secret was the maid of honour Sophia Tyutcheva, granddaughter of the famous poet. As she witnessed to the Commission, she was summoned to the Tsar.

"You have guessed why I summoned you. What is going on in the nursery?"

She told him.

"So you too do not believe in Rasputin's holiness?"

She replied that she did not.

“But what will you say if I tell you that I have lived all these years only thanks to his prayers?”

Then he “began saying that he did not believe any of the stories, that the impure always sticks to the pure, and that he did not understand what had suddenly happened to Theophan, who had always been so fond of Rasputin. During this time he pointed to a letter from Theophan on his desk.”

“‘You, your majesty, are too pure of heart and do not see what filth surrounds you.’ I said that it filled me with fear that such a person could be near the grand duchesses.

“‘Am I then the enemy of my own children?’ the sovereign objected.

“He asked me never to mention Rasputin’s name in conversation. In order for that to take place, I asked the sovereign to arrange things so that Rasputin would never appear in the children’s wing.”

But her wish was not granted, and both Vishnyakova and Tyutcheva would not long remain in the tsar’s service...

It was at about this time that the newspapers began to write against Rasputin. And a member of the circle of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, Michael Alexandrovich Novoselov, the future bishop-martyr of the Catacomb Church, published a series of articles condemning Rasputin. “Why do the bishops,” he wrote, “who are well acquainted with the activities of this blatant deceiver and corrupter, keep silent?... Where is their grace, if through laziness or lack of courage they do not keep watch over the purity of the faith of the Church of God and allow the lascivious khlyst to do the works of darkness under the mask of light?” The brochure was forbidden and confiscated while it was still at the printer’s, and the newspaper *The Voice of Moscow* was heavily fined for publishing excerpts from it.

Also disturbed by the rumours about Rasputin was the Prime Minister Peter Arkadievich Stolypin. But he had to confess, as his daughter Maria relates: “Nothing can be done. Every time the opportunity presents itself I warn his Majesty. But this is what he replied to me recently: ‘I agree with you, Peter Arkadievich, but better ten Rasputins than one hysterical empress.’ Of course, the whole matter is in that. The empress is ill, seriously ill; she believes that Rasputin is the only person in the whole world who can help the heir, and it is beyond human strength to persuade her otherwise. You know how difficult in general it is to talk to her. If she is taken with some idea, then she no longer takes account of whether it is realisable or not... Her intentions are the very best, but she is really ill...”

In November, 1910, Bishop Theophan went to the Crimea to recover from his illness. But he did not give up, and inundated his friend Bishop Hermogen of Saratov, the future hieromartyr, with letters. It was his aim to enlist this courageous fighter against freethinking in his fight against Rasputin. But this was difficult because it had been none other than Vladyka Theophan who had at some time introduced Rasputin

to Bishop Hermogen, speaking of him, as Bishop Hermogen himself said, “in the most laudatory terms.” Indeed, for a time Bishop Hermogen and Rasputin had become allies in the struggle against freethinking and modernism.

Unfortunately, a far less reliable person then joined himself to Rasputin’s circle – Sergius Trophanov, in monasticism Iliodor, one of Bishop Theophan’s students at the academy, who later became a co-worker of Dzerzhinsky, a Baptist, married and had seven children. In an interview with the newspaper *Rech’* (January 9, 1913) Fr. Iliodor said: “I used to be a magician and fooled the people. I was a Deist.” He built a large church in Tsaritsyn on the Volga, and began to draw thousands to it with his fiery sermons against the Jews and the intellectuals and the capitalists. He invited Rasputin to join him in Tsaritsyn and become the elder of a convent there. Rasputin agreed.

However, Iliodor’s inflammatory sermons were not pleasing to the authorities, and in January, 1911 he was transferred to a monastery in Tula diocese. But he refused to go, locked himself in his church in Tsaritsyn and declared a hunger-strike. Bishop Hermogen supported him, but the tsar did not, and ordered him to be removed from Tsaritsyn.

When Rasputin’s bad actions began to come to light, Hermogen vacillated for a long time. However, having made up his mind that Vladyka Theophan was right, and having Iliodor on his side now too, he decided to bring the matter up before the Holy Synod, of which he was a member, at its next session. Before that, however, he determined to denounce Rasputin to his face.

This took place on December 16, 1911. According to Iliodor’s account, Hermogen, clothed in hierarchical vestments and holding a cross in his hand, “took hold of the head of the ‘elder’ with his left hand, and with his right started beating him on the head with the cross and shouting in a terrifying voice, ‘Devil! I forbid you in God’s name to touch the female sex. Brigand! I forbid you to enter the royal household and to have anything to do with the tsarina! As a mother brings forth the child in the cradle, so the holy Church through its prayers, blessings, and heroic feats has nursed that great and sacred thing of the people, the autocratic rule of the tsars. And now you, scum, are destroying it, you are smashing our holy vessels, the bearers of autocratic power... Fear God, fear His life-giving cross!’”

Then they forced Rasputin to swear that he would leave the palace. According to one version of events, Rasputin swore, but immediately told the empress what had happened. According to another, he refused, after which Vladyka Hermogen cursed him. In any case, on the same day, December 16, five years later, he was killed...

Then Bishop Hermogen went to the Holy Synod. First he gave a speech against the khlysty. Then he charged Rasputin with khlyst tendencies. Unfortunately, only a minority of the bishops supported the courageous bishop. The majority followed the over-procurator in expressing dissatisfaction with his interference “in things that were not of his concern”.

Vladyka Hermogen was then ordered to return to his diocese. As the director of the chancery of the over-procurator witnessed, "he did not obey the order and, as I heard, asked by telegram for an audience with the tsar, indicating that he had an important matter to discuss, but was turned down."

On receiving this rejection, Bishop Hermogen began to weep. Then he said: "They will kill the tsar, they will kill the tsar, they will surely kill him."

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The opponents of Rasputin now felt the fury of the Tsar. Bishop Hermogen and Iliodor were exiled to remote monasteries (Iliodor took his revenge by leaking forged letters of the Empress to Rasputin). And Vladyka Theophan was transferred to the see of Astrakhan. The Tsar ordered the secular press to stop printing stories about Rasputin. Before leaving the Crimea, Vladyka called on Rasputin's friend, the deputy over-procurator Damansky. He told him: "Rasputin is a vessel of the devil, and the time will come when the Lord will chastise him and those who protect him."

Later, in October, 1913, Rasputin tried to take his revenge on Bishop Theophan by bribing the widow of a Yalta priest who knew him to say that Vladyka had said that he had had relations with the empress. The righteous widow rejected his money and even spat in his face...

During the war, the influence of Rasputin became more dangerous. For, with the Tsar at the front, control of home appointments *de facto* came under the control of the Tsarina, who always turned to Rasputin and to those who were approved by him... Voeikov points out that from 1914 Vyrubova and Rasputin "began to take a greater and greater interest in questions of internal politics", but at the same time argues that the number of appointments actually made by the Tsarina were few.¹¹¹ But they included Prime Ministers, Interior Ministers and church metropolitans. It is hardly surprising, in those circumstances, that the reputation of the Royal Couple suffered...

Who, in the end, was Rasputin? Bishop Theophan's opinion was that Rasputin had originally been a sincerely religious man with real gifts, but that he had been corrupted by his contacts with aristocratic society. Archbishop Anthony (Khraptovitsky) of Voronezh had a similar opinion. After having tea with him twice, Rasputin "revealed himself as a deceiver and intriguer". But the Royal Couple, "surrounded as they were from all sides by flattery and slanders, decided that love for truth and honourableness remained only in the simple people, and therefore turned to 'the people's reason'...

"However, they forgot about the most important point in such a choice.

"I myself was raised in the countryside amidst middle-ranking landowners and close to the people, and I share all the positive declarations about the people's reason and the people's honourableness. But I insist on my conviction that a peasant is

¹¹¹ Voeikov, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 143.

worthy of every respect as long as he remains a peasant. But if he enters the milieu of the masters, he will unfailingly be corrupted..."¹¹²

Rasputin was killed on December 16, 1916 at the hands of Great Prince Dmitri Pavlovich Romanov, Prince Felix Yusupov and a right-wing member of the Duma, Purishkevich. Yusupov lured him to his flat on the pretext of introducing him to his wife, the beautiful Irina, the Tsar's niece. He was given madeira mixed with poison (although this is disputed), but this did not kill him. He was shot twice, but neither did this kill him. Finally he was shot a third time and pushed under the ice of the River Neva.¹¹³

The Tsar refused to condone the killing, which he called murder. But Yusupov was justified by his close friend, Great Princess Elizabeth Fyodorovna, who said that he only done his patriotic duty - "you killed a demon," she said. Then, as Yusopov himself writes in his *Memoirs*, "she informed me that several days after the death of Rasputin the abbesses of monasteries came to her to tell her about what had happened with them on the night of the 30th. During the all-night vigil priests had been seized by an attack of madness, had blasphemed and shouted out in a voice that was not their own. Nuns had run down the corridors crying like hysterics and tearing their dresses with indecent movements of the body..."¹¹⁴

Rasputin was a symbol of the majority, peasant stratum of the Russian population in the last days of the empire. Though basically Orthodox and monarchist, it was infected with spiritual diseases that manifested themselves in the wild behaviour of so many peasants and workers after the revolution. The support of the peasants kept the monarchy alive just as Rasputin kept the tsarevich alive, stopping the flow of blood that represented the ebbing spiritual strength of the dynasty. "Rasputin," writes Radzinsky, "is a key to understanding both the soul and the brutality of the Russia that came after him. He was a precursor of the millions of peasants who, with religious consciousness in their souls, would nevertheless tear down churches, and who, with a dream of the reign of Love and Justice, would murder, rape, and flood the country with blood, in the end destroying themselves..."¹¹⁵

But while Rasputin and the majority of Russians descended into madness, it was a different story for the royal family that had put their trust in them. For they became holy martyrs... Thus "the child, "who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron... was caught up to God and His throne" (Revelation 12.5)...

¹¹² Khrapovitsky, "Moi Vospominania" (My Reminiscences), *Tserkovnie Vedomosti*, N 450, in Bishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia* (Biography of his Beatitude Anthony), vol. 3, New York, 1957, pp. 8-11.

¹¹³ A joint investigation by British and Russian police has now come to the conclusion that the third and fatal shot that killed Rasputin was actually fired by a British secret service agent. See Michael Smith, *A History of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service*, London: Dialogue; Annabel Venning, "How Britain's First Spy Chief Ordered Rasputin's Murder", *Daily Mail*, July 22, 2010, pp. 32-33.

¹¹⁴ Yusupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 230.

¹¹⁵ Radzinsky, *Rasputin*, p. 501.

13. THE ABDICATION OF THE TSAR

On February 21, a 14-year-old Kievan novice, Olga Zosimovna Boiko, fell into a deep trance which lasted for exactly forty days and during which many mysteries were revealed to her. One of these was the coming abdication of the Tsar. And she saw the following: "In blinding light on an indescribably wonderful throne sat the Saviour, and next to Him on His right hand - our sovereign, surrounded by angels. His Majesty was in full royal regalia: a radiant white robe, a crown, with a sceptre in his hand. And I heard the martyrs talking amongst themselves, rejoicing that the last times had come and that their number would be increased.

"They said that they would be tormented for the name of Christ and for refusing to accept the seal [of the Antichrist], and that the churches and monasteries would soon be destroyed, and those living in the monasteries would be driven out, and that not only the clergy and monastics would be tortured, but also all those who did not want to receive 'the seal' and would stand for the name of Christ, for the Faith and the Church."¹¹⁶

Undermined by the complaints of the people caused by a terrible world war that was now well into its third year, by malicious rumours about the Empress' supposed relations with the Germans (and with Rasputin), and above all by the intrigues of a group of about 300 Freemasons among the nation's political, social and military elites, Tsar Nicholas abdicated on March 2/15, 1917. "For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work," says St. Paul; "only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way" (II Thessalonians 2.7). Since "he who restrains", according to the interpretation of St. John Chrysostom and the Holy Fathers, is lawful monarchical power, the removal of that power must usher in "the mystery of lawlessness", the revolution.

"Terrible and mysterious," wrote Metropolitan Anastasy, second leader of the Russian Church Abroad, "is the dark visage of the revolution. Viewed from the vantage point of its inner essence, it is not contained within the framework of history and cannot be studied on the same level as other historical facts. In its deepest roots it transcends the boundaries of space and time, as was determined by Gustave le Bon, who considered it an irrational phenomenon in which certain mystical, supernatural powers were at work. But what before may have been considered dubious became completely obvious after the Russian Revolution. In it everyone sensed, as one contemporary writer expressed himself, the critical incarnation of absolute evil in the temper of man; in other words, the participation of the devil - that father of lies and ancient enemy of God, who tries to make man his obedient weapon against God - was clearly revealed."¹¹⁷

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¹¹⁶ Letter of Sergius Nilus to Hierodeacon Zosimas, 6 August, 1917; in Gubanov, op. cit., p. 121.

¹¹⁷ Metropolitan Anastasius, *Besedy so svoim sobstvennym serdtsem* (Conversations with my own Heart), Jordanville, 1948, p. 123.

The abdication of Tsar Nicholas was the single most important event in modern history; its consequences are still reverberating to the present day. And yet it remains in many ways shrouded in mystery. For there is no consensus on several critical questions raised by it, such as: Did the Tsar in fact abdicate? Did he have the right to abdicate? Was he right to abdicate?

In the months leading up to the abdication, the Tsar had been put under increasing pressure by the political and military leaders of Russia. They were convinced that his abdication in favour of a government "responsible to the people", i.e. a constitutional monarchy or parliamentary democracy dominated by themselves, would bring peace and prosperity to the country. But Nicholas, with his deeper knowledge of God's ways and his country's needs, was doubtful, repeatedly asking: "Are you confident that my abdication will save Russia from bloodshed?"

They reassured him that it would. But the Tsar knew the quality of the men who were advising him. As he sadly wrote in his diary on the day of his abdication: "All around me I see cowardice, baseness and treason."¹¹⁸ And again, on the same day, while holding a bundle of telegrams from the Corps of Generals and even from his own uncle, he said: "What is left for me to do when everyone has betrayed me?"

And indeed, there was very little he could do. He could probably continue to defy the will of the social and political élite, as he had done more than once in the past. But could he defy the will of his generals?¹¹⁹ Perhaps he could count on the support of some military units. But the result would undoubtedly be a civil war, whose outcome was doubtful, but whose effect on the war with Germany could not be doubted: it would undoubtedly give the Germans a decisive advantage at a critical moment when Russia was just preparing for a spring offensive.

This last factor was decisive: the Tsar would not contemplate undermining the war effort for any reason. For the first duty of an Orthodox Tsar after the defence of the Orthodox faith is the defence of the country against external enemies. And so, after an entire night spent in prayer, he laid aside the crown for his country's sake.

¹¹⁸ "My abdication is necessary. Ruzsky transmitted this conversation [with Rodzianko] to the Staff HQ, and Alexeev to all the commanders-in-chief of the fronts. The replies from all arrived at 2:05. The essence is that for the sake of the salvation of Russia and keeping the army at the front quiet, I must resolve on this step. I agreed. From the Staff HQ they sent the draft of a manifesto. In the evening from Petrograd Guchkov and Shulgin arrived, with whom I discussed and transmitted to them the signed and edited manifesto. At one in the morning I left Pskov greatly affected by all that had come to pass. All around me I see treason, cowardice, and deceit." (*Dnevnik Imperatora Nikolaia II* (The Diaries of Emperor Nicholas II), Moscow, 1992, p. 625)

¹¹⁹ E.E. Alferev writes: "Factually speaking, in view of the position taken by [Generals] Ruzsky and Alexeev, the possibility of resistance was excluded. Being cut off from the external world, the Sovereign was as it were in captivity. His orders were not carried out, the telegrams of those who remained faithful to their oath of allegiance were not communicated to him. The Empress, who had never trusted Ruzsky, on learning that the Tsar's train had been help up at Pskov, immediately understood the danger. On March 2 she wrote to his Majesty: 'But you are alone, you don't have the army with you, you are caught like a mouse in a trap. What can you do?' (*Imperator Nikolaj II kak chelovek sil'noj voli* (Emperor Nicholas II as a Man of Strong Will), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, 2004, p. 121).

For, as he wrote: "I am ready to give up both throne and life if I should become a hindrance to the happiness of the homeland." And again he said: "There is no sacrifice that I would not make for the real benefit of Russia and for her salvation."

He informed the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Alexeev by telegram: "During the days of the great struggle against the external foe which, in the space of almost three years, has been striving to enslave our Native Land, it has pleased the Lord God to send down upon Russia a new and difficult trial. The national disturbances that have begun within the country threaten to reflect disastrously upon the further conduct of the stubborn war. The fate of Russia, the honour of our heroic army, the well-being of the people, the entire future of our precious Fatherland demand that the war be carried out to a victorious conclusion, come what may. The cruel foe is exerting what remains of his strength, and not far distant is the hour when our valiant army with our glorious allies will be able to break the foe completely. In these decisive days in the life of Russia, We have considered it a duty of conscience to make it easy for Our people to bring about a tight-knit union and cohesion of all our national strength, in order that victory might be the more quickly attained, and, in agreement with the State Duma We have concluded that it would be a good thing to abdicate the Throne of the Russian State and to remove Supreme Power from Ourselves. Not desiring to be separated from Our beloved Son, We transfer Our legacy to Our Brother Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovich, and bless Him to ascend the Throne of the Russian State. We command Our Brother to conduct State affairs fully and in inviolable unity with the representatives of those men who hold legislative office, upon those principles which they shall establish, swearing an inviolable oath to that effect. In the name of our ardently beloved Native Land We call upon all faithful sons of the Fatherland to fulfil their sacred duty before it, by submitting to the Tsar during the difficult moment of universal trials, and, aiding Him, together with the representatives of the people, to lead the Russian State out upon the path of victory, well-being and glory. May the Lord God help Russia. Pskov. 2 March, 15.00 hours. 1917. Nicholas."¹²⁰

It has been argued that the telegram was not an abdication, but a final coded appeal to the army to support him. But such a supposition cannot be reconciled with the plain meaning of the text. And since all agree on the crystal-clear sincerity of Nicholas' character, there is no reason not to believe it.

It has also been argued that the "abdication" had no legal force because there was no provision for abdication in the Fundamental Laws. Thus, as Michael Nazarov points out, the Basic Laws of the Russian Empire, which had been drawn up by Tsar Paul I and which all members of the Royal Family swore to uphold, "do not foresee the abdication of a reigning Emperor ('from a religious... point of view the abdication of the Monarch, the Anointed of God, is contrary to the act of His Sacred Coronation and Anointing; it would be possible only by means of monastic tonsure' [N. Korevo]).

¹²⁰ All dates are given according to the Old, Julian calendar then in use in Russia. Dates will be given in the new, Gregorian calendar after the introduction of that calendar by the Bolsheviks in January, 1918.

Still less did his Majesty have the right to abdicate for his son in favour of his brother; while his brother Michael Alexandrovich had the right neither to ascend the Throne during the lifetime of the adolescent Tsarevich Alexis, nor to be crowned, since he was married to a divorced woman, nor to transfer power to the Provisional government, or refer the resolution of the question of the fate of the monarchy to the future Constituent Assembly.

“Even if the monarch had been installed by the will of such an Assembly, ‘this would have been the abolition of the Orthodox legitimating principle of the Basic Laws’, so that these acts would have been ‘juridically non-existent’, says Zyzykin (in this Korevo agrees with him). ‘Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich... performed only an act in which he expressed his personal opinions and abdication, which had an obligatory force for nobody. Thereby he estranged himself from the succession in accordance with the Basic Laws, which juridically in his eyes did not exist, in spite of the fact that he had earlier, in his capacity as Great Prince on the day of his coming of age, sworn allegiance to the decrees of the Basic Laws on the inheritance of the Throne and the order of the Family Institution’.

“It goes without saying that his Majesty did not expect such a step from his brother, a step which placed the very monarchical order under question...”¹²¹

On the other hand, Archpriest John Vostorgov considered the transfer of power lawful: “Our former Emperor, who has abdicated from the throne, transferred power in a lawful manner to his brother. In his turn the brother of the Emperor, having abdicated from power until the final decision of the Constituent Assembly, in the same lawful manner transferred power to the Provisional Government, and to that permanent government that which be given to Russia by the Constituent Assembly. And so we now have a completely lawful Provisional Government which is the powers that be, as the Word of God calls it. To this power, which is now the One Supreme and All-Russian power, we are obliged to submit in accordance with the duty of religious conscience; we are obliged to pray for it; we are obliged also to obey the local authorities established by it. In this obedience, after the abdication of the former Emperor and his brother, and after their indications that the Provisional Government is lawful, there can be no betrayal of the former oath, but in it consists our direct duty.”¹²²

And yet confusion and searching of consciences continued. Thus on July 24, some Orthodox Christians wrote to the Holy Synod “ardently beseeching” them “to explain to us in the newspaper *Russkoe Slovo* what... the oath given to us to be faithful to the Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich, means. People are saying in our area that if this oath is

¹²¹ Nazarov, *Kto naslednik rossijskogo prestola?* (Who is the Heir of the Russian Throne?), Moscow: “Russkaia Idea”, 1996, p. 68). In defence of Great Prince Michael, it should be pointed out that he, too, acted under duress. As Nazarov points out, “Great Prince Mikhail Alexandrovich also acted under duress, under the pressure of the plotters who came to his house. Kerensky admitted that this had been their aim: ‘We decided to surround the act of abdication of Mikhail Alexandrovich with every guarantee, but in such a way as to give the abdication a voluntary character’” (p. 69).

¹²² Quoted in Tamara Groyan, Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow, *Tsariu Nebesnomu i Zemnomu Vernij* (Faithful to the Heavenly and Earthly Tsar), Moscow: Palomnik, 1996, p. 128.

worth nothing, then the new oath to the new Tsar [the Provisional Government?] will be worth nothing. Which oath must be more pleasing to God. The first or the second? Because the Tsar is not dead, but is alive and in prison..."¹²³

M.A. Babkin points out that Great Prince Michael's statement contained the sentences: "I made the firm decision to accept supreme power only if that would be the will of our great people, to whom it belongs in the Constituent Assembly to establish the form of government and the new basic laws of the Russian State. Therefore I ask all citizens of the Russian Realm to submit to the Provisional Government until the Constituent Assembly by its decision on the form of government shall express the will of the people".

"We can see," continues Babkin, "that the talk was not about the Great Prince's abdication from the throne, but about the impossibility of his occupying the royal throne without the clearly expressed acceptance of this by the whole people of Russia. Michael Alexandrovich presented the choice of the form of State government (in the first place - between people power and the monarchy) to the Constituent Assembly. Until the convening of the Constituent Assembly he entrusted the administration of the country to the Provisional Government 'which arose on the initiative of the State Duma'."¹²⁴

Since Great Prince Michael had presented the choice of the form of State government to the Constituent Assembly, many firm opponents of the revolution - for example, Hieromartyr Andronicus, Archbishop of Perm - were prepared to accept the Provisional Government on the grounds that it was just that - provisional. They were not to know that the Constituent Assembly would hardly be convened before it would be dissolved by the Bolsheviki, and therefore that the monarchical order had come to an end. So the results of the Tsar's abdication for Russia were different from what he had hoped and believed. Instead of an orderly transfer of power from one member of the royal family to another, Great-Prince Michael also abdicated, the Constituent Assembly was not convened, and the whole dynasty and autocratic order collapsed. And instead of preventing civil war for the sake of victory in the world war, the abdication was followed by defeat in the world war and the bloodiest civil war in history, followed by unprecedented sufferings and persecutions of the faith for generations.

Indeed, in retrospect we can see that this act brought to an end to the 1600-year period of the Orthodox Christian Empire that began with St. Constantine the Great. "He who restrains" the coming of the Antichrist, the Orthodox Christian Emperor, "was removed from the midst" (II Thessalonians 2.7) - and very soon "the collective Antichrist", Soviet power, began its savage torture of the Body of Holy Russia. St. John of Kronstadt had said that Russia without the Tsar would no longer even bear the name of Russia, and would be "a stinking corpse". And so it proved to be...

¹²³ In Groyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 122, 123.

¹²⁴ Babkin, "Sviatejsnij Sinod Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi i Revoliutsionnie Sobytia Fevralia-Marta 1917 g." ("The Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Revolutionary Events of February-March, 1917"), <http://www.monarhist-spb.narod.ru/D-ST/Babkin-1>, p. 3.

So was the Tsar right to abdicate, if there was no provision for such an act in law and if the results of his decision were so catastrophic for Russia?

The saints were ambiguous in their utterances. Thus Blessed Pasha of Sarov, who had foretold his destiny at the glorification of St. Seraphim, said: "Your Majesty, descend from the throne yourself".¹²⁵ But Blessed Duniushka of Ussuruisk said: "The Tsar will leave the nation, which shouldn't be, but this has been foretold to him from Above. This is his destiny. There is no way that he can evade it."¹²⁶ And another great eldress, Blessed Matrona of Moscow (+1952), said: "In vain did Emperor Nicholas renounce the throne, he shouldn't have done that. They forced him to do it. He was sorry for the people, and paid the price himself, knowing his path beforehand."¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Gubanov, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹²⁶ <http://www.geocities.com/kitezgrad/prophets/duniushka.html>.

¹²⁷ In Gubanov, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

13. THE CHURCH AND THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

Why did the Church not intervene in this great crisis, as she had intervened on many similar occasions in Russian history? After all, on the eve of the revolution, she had canonized St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow in the Time of Troubles, as if to emphasize that, just as St. Hermogen had refused to recognize the false Demetrius as a legitimate political authority, so the time was coming when it would again be necessary to distinguish between true and false political authorities. So surely the Church would stand up against Bolshevism and in defence of the Lord's Anointed as St. Hermogen did then?

However, the Synod showed itself to be at a loss at this critical moment. At its session of February 26, it refused the request of the assistant over-procurator, Prince N.D. Zhevakhov, to threaten the creators of disturbances with ecclesiastical punishments.¹²⁸ Then, on February 27, it refused the request of the over-procurator himself, N.P. Rayev, that it publicly support the monarchy. Ironically, therefore, that much-criticised creation of Peter the Great, the office of Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, proved more faithful to the Anointed of God at this critical moment than the Holy Synod itself...

"On March 2," writes Babkin, "the Synodal hierarchs gathered in the residence of the Metropolitan of Moscow. They listened to a report given by Metropolitan Pitirim of St. Petersburg asking that he be retired (this request was agreed to on March 6 – M.B.). The administration of the capital's diocese was temporarily laid upon Bishop Benjamin of Gdov. But then the members of the Synod recognized that it was necessary immediately to enter into relations with the Executive committee of the State Duma. On the basis of which we can assert that the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church recognized the Provisional Government even before the abdication of Nicholas II from the throne. (The next meeting of the members of the Synod took place on March 3 in the residence of the Metropolitan of Kiev. On that same day the new government was told of the resolutions of the Synod.)

"The first triumphantly official session of the Holy Synod after the coup d'état took place on March 4. Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev presided and the new Synodal over-procurator, V.N. Lvov, who had been appointed by the Provisional government the previous day, was present. Metropolitan Vladimir and the members of the Synod (with the exception of Metropolitan Pitirim, who was absent – M.B.) expressed their sincere joy at the coming of a new era in the life of the Orthodox Church. And then at the initiative of the over-procurator the royal chair... was removed into the archives... One of the Church hierarchs helped him. It was decided to put the chair into a museum.

"The next day, March 5, the Synod ordered that in all the churches of the Petrograd diocese the Many Years to the Royal House 'should no longer be proclaimed'. In our opinion, these actions of the Synod had a symbolical character and witnessed to the

¹²⁸ A.D. Stepanov, "Mezhdu mirom i monastyrem" ("Between the World and the Monastery"), in *Tajna Bezzakonia* (The Mystery of Iniquity), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 491.

desire of its members 'to put into a museum' not only the chair of the Tsar, but also 'to despatch to the archives' of history royal power itself.

"The Synod reacted neutrally to the 'Act on the abdication of Nicholas II from the Throne of the State of Russia for himself and his son in favour of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich' of March 2, 1917 and to the 'Act on the refusal of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich to accept supreme power' of March 3. On March 6 it decreed that the words 'by order of His Imperial Majesty' should be removed from all synodal documents, and that in all the churches of the empire molebens should be served with a Many Years 'to the God-preserved Russian Realm and the Right-believing Provisional Government'."¹²⁹

But was the new government, whose leading members were Masons¹³⁰, really "right-believing"? Even leaving aside the fact of their membership of Masonic lodges, which is strictly forbidden by the Church, the answer to this question has to be: no. When the Tsar opened the First State Duma in 1906 with a moleben, the Masonic deputies sniggered and turned away, openly showing their disrespect both for him and for the Church. And now the new government, while still pretending to be Christian, openly declared that it derived its legitimacy, not from God, but from the revolution. But the revolution cannot be lawful, being the incarnation of lawlessness.

On March 7, with the support of Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Finland, the newly appointed Over-Procurator, Prince V.E. Lvov¹³¹, transferred the Synod's official organ, *Tserkovno-Obschestvennij Vestnik (Church and Society Messenger)*, into the hands of the "All-Russian Union of Democratic Orthodox Clergy and Laity", a left-wing grouping founded in Petrograd on the same day and led by Titlinov, a professor at the Petrograd Academy of which Sergius was the rector.¹³² Archbishop (later Patriarch) Tikhon protested against this transfer, and the small number of signatures for the transfer made it illegal. However, in his zeal to hand this important Church organ into the hands of the liberals, Lvov completely ignored the illegality of the act

¹²⁹ Babkin, "Sviatejsnij Sinod Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi i Revoliutsionnie Sobytia Fevralia-Marta 1917 g." ("The Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Revolutionary Events of February-March, 1917"), <http://www.monarhist-spb.narod.ru/D-ST/Babkin-1>, pp. 2, 3. Archbishop Nathanael of Vienna (+1985), the son of over-procurator Vladimir Lvov, said that his family used to laugh at the incongruity of wishing "Many Years" to a merely "Provisional" Government ("Neobychnij Ierarkh" (An Unusual Hierarch), *Nasha Strana*, N 2909, February 5, 2011, p. 3).

¹³⁰ This is also now generally accepted even by western historians. Thus Tsuyoshi Hasegawa writes: "Five members, Kerensky, N.V. Nekrasov, A.I. Kononov, M.I. Tereshchenko and I.N. Efremov are known to have belonged to the secret political Masonic organization" ("The February Revolution", in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 59).

¹³¹ Lvov was, in the words of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), "a not completely normal fantasist" (*Russkaia Tserkov' pered litsom gospodstvuiushchego zla (The Russian Church in the Face of Dominant Evil)*, Jordanville, 1991, p. 4). Grabbe's estimate of Lvov is supported by Oliver Figes, who writes: "a nobleman of no particular talent or profession, he was convinced of his calling to greatness, yet ended up in the 1920s as a pauper and a madman living on the streets of Paris" (*A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 449).

¹³² As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) testified, "already in 1917 he [Sergius] was dreaming of combining Orthodox Church life with the subjection of the Russian land to Soviet power..." ("Preemstvennost' Grekha" (The Heritage of Sin), Tsaritsyn, p. 7).

and handed the press over to Titlinov, who promptly began to use it to preach his Gospel of "Socialist Christianity", declaring that "Christianity is on the side of labour, not on the side of violence and exploitation".¹³³

Also on March 7, the Synod passed a resolution "On the Correction of Service Ranks in view of the Change in State Administration". In accordance with this, a commission headed by Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) was formed that removed all references to the Tsar in the Divine services. This involved changes to, for example, the troparion for the Church New Year, where the word "Emperor" was replaced by "people", and a similar change to the troparion for the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Again, on March 7-8 the Synod passed a resolution, "On Changes in Divine Services in Connection with the Cessation of the Commemoration of the Former Ruling House". The phrase "*formerly* ruling" (*tsarstvovavshego*) implied that there was no hope of a restoration of any Romanov to the throne.

Then, on March 9, the Synod addressed all the children of the Church: "The will of God has been accomplished. Russia has entered on the path of a new State life. May God bless our great Homeland with happiness and glory on its new path... For the sake of the many sacrifices offered to win civil freedom, for the sake of the salvation of your own families, for the sake of the happiness of the Homeland, abandon at this great historical moment all quarrels and disagreements. Unite in brotherly love for the good of Russia. Trust the Provisional Government. All together and everyone individually, apply all your efforts to this end that by your labours, exploits, prayer and obedience you may help it in its great work of introducing new principles of State life..."

But was it true that "the will of God has been accomplished"? Was it not rather that God had allowed the will of *Satan* to be accomplished, as a punishment for the sins of the Russian people? And if so, how could the path be called a "great work"? As for the "new principles of State life", everyone knew that these were revolutionary in essence...

Indeed, it could be argued that, instead of blessing the Masonic Provisional Government in its epistle of March 9, the Synod should have applied to it the curse pronounced in 1613 against those who would not obey the Romanov dynasty: "It is hereby decreed and commanded that God's Chosen One, Tsar Michael Feodorovich Romanov, be the progenitor of the Rulers of Rus' from generation to generation, being answerable in his actions before the Tsar of Heaven alone; and should any dare to go against this decree of the Sobor - whether it be Tsar, or Patriarch, or any other man, - may he be damned in this age and in the age to come, having been sundered from the Holy Trinity..."

¹³³ See Mikhail V. Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", in Acton, Cherniaev and Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 417; "K 80-letiu Izbrania Sv. Patriarkha Tikhona na Sviashchennom Sobore Rossijskoj Tserkvi 1917-18gg." (Towards the Election of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon at the Sacred Council of the Russian Church, 1917-18), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), N 2, November, 1997, p. 19.

Babkin writes that the epistle of March 9 “was characterised by B.V. Titlinov, professor of the Petrograd Theological Academy, as ‘an epistle blessing a new and free Russia’, and by General A.I. Denikin as ‘sanctioning the coup d’état that has taken place’. To the epistle were affixed the signatures of the bishops of the ‘tsarist’ composition of the Synod, even those who had the reputation of being monarchists and ‘black hundredists’, for example, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow. This witnessed to the ‘loyal’ feelings of the Synodal hierarchs...”¹³⁴

Why did the hierarchs sanction the coup so quickly? Probably in the hope of receiving internal freedom for the Church. This is hinted at in a declaration of six archbishops to the Holy Synod and Lvov on March 8: “The Provisional Government in the person of its over-procurator V.N. Lvov, on March 4 in the triumphant opening session of the Holy Synod, told us that it was offering to the Holy Orthodox Russian Church full freedom in Her administration, while preserving for itself only the right to halt any decisions of the Holy Synod that did not agree with the law and were undesirable from a political point of view. The Holy Synod did everything to meet these promises, issued a pacific epistle to the Orthodox people and carried out other acts that were necessary, in the opinion of the Government, to calm people’s minds...”¹³⁵

Lvov broke his promises and proceeded to act like a tyrant, which included expelling Metropolitan Macarius from his see. It was then that Metropolitan repented of having signed the March 9 epistle. And later, after the fall of the Provisional Government, he said: “They [the Provisional Government] corrupted the army with their speeches. They opened the prisons. They released onto the peaceful population convicts, thieves and robbers. They abolished the police and administration, placing the life and property of citizens at the disposal of every armed rogue... They destroyed trade and industry, imposing taxes that swallowed up the profits of enterprises... They squandered the resources of the exchequer in a crazy manner. They radically undermined all the sources of life in the country. They established elections to the Constituent Assembly on bases that were incomprehensible to Russia. They defiled the Russian language, distorting it for the amusement of half-illiterates and sluggards. They did not even guard their own honour, violating the promise they had given to the abdicated Tsar to allow him and his family free departure, by which they prepared for him inevitable death...”

“Who started the persecution of the Orthodox Church and handed her head over to crucifixion? Who demanded the execution of the Patriarch? Was it those whom the Duma decried as ‘servants of the dark forces’, labelled as enemies of the freedom of the Church?... No, it was not those, but he whom the Duma opposed to them as a true defender of the Church, whom it intended for, and promoted to the rank of, over-procurator of the Most Holy Synod – the member of the Provisional Government, now servant of the Sovnarkom – Vladimir Lvov.”¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Babkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

¹³⁵ Babkin, *Dukhovenstvo*, pp. 195-198.

¹³⁶ Metropolitan Macarius, in Groyan, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.

Lvov was indeed thoroughly unsuited for the post of over-procurator – he ended up as a renovationist and enemy of Orthodoxy. In appointing him the Provisional Government showed its true, hostile attitude towards the Church. It also showed its inconsistency: having overthrown the Autocracy and proclaimed freedom for all people and all religions, it should have abolished the office of over-procurator as being an outdated relic of the State’s dominion over the Church. But it wanted to make the Church tow the new State’s line, and Lvov was to be its instrument in doing this. Hence his removal of all the older, more traditional hierarchs, his introduction of three protopriests of a Lutheran orientation into the Synod and his proclamation of the convening of an All-Russian Church Council – a measure which he hoped would seal the Church’s descent into Protestant-style renovationism, but which in fact, through God’s Providence, turned out to be the beginning of the Church’s true regeneration and fight back against the revolution...

Meanwhile, the Council of the Petrograd Religio-Philosophical Society went still further, denying the very concept of Sacred Monarchy. Thus on March 11 and 12, it resolved that the Synod’s acceptance of the Tsar’s abdication “does not correspond to the enormous religious importance of the act, by which the Church recognized the Tsar in the rite of the coronation of the anointed of God. It is necessary, for the liberation of the people’s conscience and to avoid the possibility of a restoration, that a corresponding act be issued in the name of the Church hierarchy *abolishing the power of the Sacrament of Royal Anointing, by analogy with the church acts abolishing the power of the Sacraments of Marriage and the Priesthood.*”¹³⁷

Fortunately, the Church hierarchy rejected this demand. For not only can the Sacrament of Anointing not be abolished, since it is of God: even the last Tsar still remained the anointed Tsar after his abdication. As Shakespeare put it in *Richard II*, whose plot is amazingly reminiscent of the tragedy of the Tsar’s abdication:

*Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm off from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.*

For since the power of the anointed autocrat comes from God, not the people, it cannot be removed by the people. The converse of this fact is that if the people attempt to remove the autocrat for any other reason than his renunciation of Orthodoxy, then they themselves sin against God and deprive themselves of His Grace. That is why St. John of Kronstadt had said that if Russia were to be deprived of her tsar, she would become a “stinking corpse”. And so it turned out: as a strictly logical and moral consequence, “from the day of his abdication,” as St. John Maximovich wrote, “everything began to collapse. It could not have been otherwise. The one who united everything, who stood guard for the truth, was overthrown...”¹³⁸ For, as St. John said

¹³⁷ Groyan, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Italics mine (V.M.).

¹³⁸ St. John Maximovich, “Homily before a Memorial Service for the Tsar-Martyr”, in *Man of God*, p. 133. Cf. Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev): “There is no need to say how terrible a ‘touching’ of the

in another place: "The Tsar was the embodiment of the Russian people's... readiness to submit the life of the state to the righteousness of God: therefore do the people submit themselves to the Tsar, because he submits to God. Vladyka Anthony [Khrapovitsky] loved to recall the Tsar's prostration before God and the Church which he makes during the coronation, while the entire Church, all its members, stand. And then, in response to his submission to Christ, all in the Church make a full prostration to him."¹³⁹

In agreement with this, the philosopher Ivan Alexandrovich Ilyin wrote: "Faithfulness to the monarchy is a condition of soul and form of action in which a man unites his will with the will of his Sovereign, his dignity with his dignity, his destiny with his destiny... The fall of the monarchy was the fall of Russia herself. A thousand-year state form fell, but no 'Russian republic' was put in its place, as the revolutionary semi-intelligentsia of the leftist parties dreamed, but the pan-Russian disgrace foretold by Dostoyevsky was unfurled, and a failure of spirit. And on this failure of spirit, on this dishonour and disintegration there grew the state Anchar of Bolshevism, prophetically foreseen by Pushkin - a sick and unnatural tree of evil that spread its poison on the wind to the destruction of the whole world. In 1917 the Russian people fell into the condition of *the mob*, while the history of mankind shows that the mob is always muzzled by *despots* and *tyrants*...

"The Russian people unwound, dissolved and ceased to serve the great national work - and woke up under the dominion of internationalists. History has as it were proclaimed a certain law: *Either one-man rule or chaos* is possible in Russia; Russia is not capable of a republican order. Or more exactly: the existence of Russia demands *one-man rule* - either a religiously and nationally strengthened one-man rule of honour, fidelity and service, that is, a *monarchy*, or one-man rule that is atheist, conscienceless and dishonourable, and moreover *anti-national and international*, that is, a *tyranny*."¹⁴⁰

However, the democratic wave continued, and the Church was carried along by it. The hierarchy made some protests, but these did not amount to a real "counter-revolution". Thus on April 14, a stormy meeting took place between Lvov and the Synod during which Lvov's actions were recognised to be "uncanonical and illegal". At this session Archbishop Sergius apparently changed course and agreed with the other bishops in condemning the unlawful transfer of *Tserkovno-Obshchestvennij Vestnik*. However, Lvov understood that this was only a tactical protest. So he did not

Anointed of God is the overthrow of the tsar by his subjects. Here the transgression of the given command of God reaches the highest degree of criminality, which is why it drags after it the destruction of the state itself" (*Russkaia Ideologia* (The Russian Ideology), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 50-51). And so, insofar as it was the disobedience of the people that compelled the Tsar to abdicate, leading inexorably to his death, "we all," in the words of Archbishop Averky, "Orthodox Russian people, in one way or another, to a greater or lesser degree, are guilty of allowing this terrible evil to be committed on our Russian land" (*Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sovremennij Mir* (True Orthodoxy and the Contemporary World), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, p. 166).

¹³⁹ St. John Maximovich, "The Nineteenth Anniversary of the Repose of His Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony", *Pravoslavnai Rus'*, N 19, 1955, pp. 3-4.

¹⁴⁰ Ilyin, *Sobranie Sochinenij* (Collected Works), Moscow, 1994, volume 4, p. 7; in Valentina D. Sologub, *Kto Gospoden' - Ko Mne!* (He who is the Lord's - to me!), Moscow, 2007, p. 53.

include Sergius among the bishops whom he planned to purge from the Synod; he thought – rightly – that Sergius would continue to be his tool in the revolution that he was introducing in the Church. The next day Lvov marched into the Synod at the head of a detachment of soldiers and read an order for the cessation of the winter session of the Synod and the retirement of all its members *with the single exception of Archbishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Finland*.¹⁴¹ Thus in little more than a month since the coup, the Church was in the hands of a lay dictator, who had single-handedly dismissed her most senior bishops in the name of the “freedom of the Church”... Here we see a striking difference in the way in which the Provisional Government treated secular or political society, on the one hand, and the Church, on the other. While Prince G.E. Lvov, the head of the government, refused to impose his authority on anyone, whether rioting peasants or rampaging soldiers, granting “freedom” – that is, more or less complete licence – to any self-called political or social “authority”, Prince V.E. Lvov, the over-procurator, granted quite another kind of “freedom” to the Church – complete subjection to lay control...

*

Meanwhile, the turmoil in both Church and State in Russia gave the opportunity to the Georgian Church to reassert its autocephalous status, which it had voluntarily given up in 1801. On March 12, without the agreement of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church, and in spite of the protests of the exarch of Georgia, Archbishop Platon, a group of Georgian bishops proclaimed the autocephaly of their Church and appointed Bishop Leonid (Okropiridze) of Mingrelia as *locum tenens* of the Catholicosate with a Temporary Administration composed of clergy and laity.¹⁴² The Russian Synod sent Bishop Theophylact to look after the non-Georgian parishes in Georgia. But he was removed from Georgia, and the new exarch, Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov), was not allowed into the capital. The result was a break in communion between the two Churches.¹⁴³

In the same month of March the Russian government ceased subsidising the American diocese. The ruling Archbishop Eudocimus (Mescheriakov) went to the All-Russian Council in August, leaving his vicar, Bishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) of Canada, as his deputy. But then Protopriest John Kedrovsky with a group of

¹⁴¹ According to I.M. Andreyev, “the whole of the Synod had decided to go into retirement. Archbishop Sergius had taken part in this resolution. But when all the members of the Synod, together with Archbishop Sergius, actually came to give in their retirement, the Over-Procurator, who had set about organizing a new Synod, drew Archbishop Sergius to this. And he took an active part in the new Synod” (*Kratkij Obzor Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi ot revoliutsii do nashikh dnei* (A Short Review of the History of the Russian Church from the Revolution to our Days), Jordanville, 1952, p. 74. Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) wrote: “I can remember the opinions of those who knew him and who considered him to be a careerist and the complaints of hierarchs that he promised to retire with other members of the Synod in protest against Lvov, then he changed his mind and became head of the Synod” (Letter of April 23 / May 6, 1992 to Nicholas Churilov, *Church News*, April, 2003, p. 9).

¹⁴² V. Egorov, *K istorii provozglashenia gruzinami avtokefalii svoej Tserkvi v 1917 godu* (Towards a History of the Proclamation by the Georgians of the Autocephaly of their Church in 1917), Moscow, 1917, p. 9; in Monk Benjamin (Gomareteli), *Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, p. 6.

¹⁴³ Monk Benjamin, *op cit.*, pp. 8-9.

renovationist priests tried to remove Bishop Alexander and take power into their own hands “without submitting to imperial power or hierarchical decrees”.¹⁴⁴

On April 29, the new Synod headed by Archbishop Sergius proclaimed the principle of the election of the episcopate, the preparation for a Council and the establishment of a Preconciliar Council. This Address triggered a revolution in the Church. The revolution consisted in the fact that all over the country the elective principle with the participation of laymen replaced the system of “episcopal autocracy” which had prevailed thereto. In almost all dioceses Diocesan Congresses elected special “diocesan councils” or committees composed of clergy and laity that restricted the power of the bishops. The application of the elective principle to almost all ecclesiastical posts, from parish offices to episcopal sees, resulted in the removal of several bishops from their sees and the election of new ones in their stead. Thus Archbishops Basil (Bogoyavlensky) of Chernigov, Tikhon (Nikanorov) of Kaluga and Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov were removed. Archbishop Joachim (Levitsky) of Nizhni-Novgorod was even arrested and imprisoned for a time before being shot. The retirement of Archbishop Alexis (Dorodnitsyn) of Vladimir was justified by his earlier closeness to Rasputin. The others were accused of being devoted to the Autocracy.¹⁴⁵

Deacon Andrei Psarev writes: “In a diary entry from May 30, 1917, Fr. Nikolai Liubimov, Protopresbyter of the Holy Dormition Cathedral in Moscow, gave a characterization of Metropolitan Sergius that is worthy of our attention. At this time, the question had arisen as to whether the current Synod could be dissolved and a new one established in its place. “Only Archbishop Sergius alone, wanting, as ever, both to acquire capital and preserve his innocence at the same time, started talking some nonsense, saying that he completely understood and appreciated the Oberprokuror's wishes, that it was indecent of us to argue in favor of the current make-up of the Synod, since we belong to it ourselves and this would mean protecting our own rights. 'Ah!' I thought upon hearing the Archbishop's words, 'what a clever fellow you are! You alone, out of everybody, managed to stay in the Synod after it was broken up the last time, and when it is broken up this time, you will again remain a member of the next one. Now that's how you adapt to changing circumstances! Honor and praise be to you, you cunning archpastor!’”

“Under the Bolsheviks, Metropolitan Sergius was released from prison thanks to Vladimir Putyata, former Archbishop of Penza, who had developed a rapport with the Bolsheviks. The latter was deposed and excommunicated for his monstrous deeds by the Council of 1917-18. Shortly thereafter, Metropolitan Sergius wrote a lengthy report defending the depraved Putyata and emerged as Putyata's advocate with the Patriarch, the Holy Synod, and the Church Council concerning his restoration to the episcopate.”¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁵ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ Psarev, “Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhny Novgorod as Deputy Patriarchal Locum Tenens to Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa”, 1999, academia.edu, p. 3.

Although the spirit behind this revolutionary wave was undoubtedly anti-ecclesiastical in essence, by the Providence of God it resulted in some changes that were beneficial for the Church. Thus the staunchly monarchist Archbishop Anthony, after being forced to retire, was later reinstated at the demand of the people. Again, Archbishop Tikhon (Bellavin) of Lithuania was elected metropolitan of Moscow (the lawful occupant of that see, Metropolitan Macarius, was later reconciled with him), and Archbishop Benjamin (Kazansky) was made metropolitan of Petrograd. However, there were also harmful changes, such as the election of Sergius Stragorodsky as Archbishop of Vladimir.

In the countryside, meanwhile, “there was a strong anti-clerical movement: village communities took away the church lands, removed priests from the parishes and refused to pay for religious services. Many of the local priests managed to escape this fate by throwing in their lot with the revolution.”¹⁴⁷ However, several priests were savagely killed – the martyrdom of the Church began, not with the Bolshevik coup, but with the liberal democratic revolution.

However, in the Local Council of the Russian Church that began in August, decrees were passed reversing to some extent the decrees on the election of bishops and on the role of the laity in the parishes that had proved to be harmful.¹⁴⁸

From June 1 to 10 the All-Russian Congress of clergy and laity took place in Moscow with 800 delegates from all the dioceses. As Shkarovskii writes, it “welcomed the revolution, but expressed the wish that the Church continue to receive the legal and material support of the state, that divinity continue to be an obligatory subject in school, and that the Orthodox Church retain its schools. Consequently, a conflict soon broke out with the government. The Synod protested against the law of 20 June which transferred the [37,000] parish church schools to the Ministry of Education. A similar clash occurred over the intention to exclude divinity from the list of compulsory subjects.”¹⁴⁹

The transfer of the church schools to the state system was disastrous for the Church because the state’s schools were infected with atheism. It would be one of the first decrees that the coming Council of the Russian Orthodox Church would seek (unsuccessfully) to have repealed...

In general, the June Congress carried forward the renovationist wave; and although the June 14 decree “On Freedom of Conscience” was welcome, the government still retained de jure control over the Church. Even when the government allowed the Church to convene its own All-Russian Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in August, it retained the right of veto over any new form of self-administration that Council might come up with. Moreover, the Preconciliar Council

¹⁴⁷ Figes, op. cit., p. 350.

¹⁴⁸ Igumen Innokenty (Pavlov), “Proval Rossijskoj Tserkovnoj Reformy v 1917-18 godakh. Vybornost episkopov prikhodskogo klira v Rossijskoj Tserkvi prosushchestvovala men’she god” (The Fall of Russian Church Reform in 1917-18. The elections of bishops and parish clergy in the Russian Church lasted for less than a year), *Portal-Credo.Ru*, March 30, 2018.

¹⁴⁹ Shkarovskii, op. cit., p. 418.

convened to prepare for the forthcoming Council was to be chaired by the Church's leading liberal, Archbishop Sergius...

With the Tsar gone, and the Church led by liberals and treated with contempt by the State, it is not surprising that the conservative peasant masses were confused. Thus a telegram sent to the Holy Synod on July 24, 1917 concerned the oath of loyalty that the Provisional Government was trying to impose on them: "We Orthodox Christians ardently beseech you to explain to us in the newspaper *Russkoye Slovo* what constitutes before the Lord God the oath given by us to be faithful to the Tsar, Nicholas Alexandrovich. People are saying amongst us that if this oath is worth nothing, then the new oath to the new Tsar is also worth nothing.

"Is that so, and how are we to understand all this? Following the advice of someone we know, we want this question decided, not by ourselves, but by the Governing Synod, so that everyone should understand this in the necessary way, without differences of opinion. The zhids [Jews] say that the oath is nonsense and a deception, and that one can do without an oath. The popes [priests] are silent. Each layman expresses his own opinion. But this is no good. Again they have begun to say that God does not exist at all, and that the churches will soon be closed because they are not necessary. But we on our part think: why close them? – it's better to live by the church. Now that the Tsar has been overthrown things have got bad, and if they close the churches it'll get worse, but we need things to get better. You, our most holy Fathers, must try to explain to all of us simultaneously: what should we do about the old oath, and with the one they are trying to force us to take now? Which oath must be dearer to God. The first or the second? Because the Tsar is not dead, but is alive in prison. And is it right that all the churches should be closed? Where then can we pray to the Lord God? Surely we should not go in one band to the zhids and pray with them? Because now all power is with them, and they're bragging about it..."¹⁵⁰

The hierarchy had no answers to these questions... What could it have done? It could and should have rallied round the sacred principle of the Orthodox Autocracy and used its still considerable influence among the people to restore monarchical rule. As Bishop Diomedes writes: "It was necessary in the name of the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church to persuade the Ruling House not to leave the Russian State to be destroyed by rebels, and to call all the rebels to repentance by anathematizing them with the 11th anathema of the Sunday of Orthodoxy."¹⁵¹

A clear precedent existed: in the recently canonized Patriarch Hermogen's call to liberate Russia from foreign Catholic rule and restore a lawful monarchy in 1612. Like Hermogen, the Holy Synod in 1917 could have called the Russian people to arms against those who had in effect *forced* the abdication of both the Tsar and Great Prince Michael, and who were therefore, in effect, rebels against lawful authority and subject to anathema. It could have approached any member of the Romanov dynasty – with

¹⁵⁰ Groyan, *op. cit.*, pp. CXXII-CXXIII.

¹⁵¹ Bishop Diomedes, Address of November 21 / December 4, 2008, <http://www.russia-talk.com/otkliki/ot-601.htm>.

the exception of Grand Duke Kyril Vladimirovich, who had already declared his allegiance to the revolution - with an invitation that he ascend the throne.

But the opportunity was lost. The years of anti-monarchist propaganda had done their work: some hierarchs supported the revolution, others rejected it, but the Synod as a whole sided with its supporters. It was simply not prepared to lead the people in such a way as to oppose the rebels and protect the monarchical principle. Of course, following the example of St. Hermogen in this way would have been very difficult, requiring great courage; and blessing a civil war in the midst of a world war would of course have been extremely bold... But it was not impossible...

There was another alternative, less radical than the one just mentioned, but honourable and more in accordance with the manifestos of the two last Tsars. As Babkin writes, this alternative "was laid out in the actions and sermons of Bishop Andronicus (Nikolsky) of Perm and Kungur. On March 4 he addressed an archpastoral epistle 'to all Russian Orthodox Christians' in which, having expounded the essence of the 'Acts' of March 2 and 3, he characterized the situation in Russia as an 'interregnum'. Calling on everyone to obey the Provisional Government in every way, he said: "We shall beseech the all-Merciful One [God - M.B.] to establish authority and peace on the earth, that He not leave us long without a Tsar, like children without a mother... May He help us, as three hundred years ago He helped our forefathers, to receive a native Tsar from Him, the All-Good Provider, in a unanimous and inspired manner. Analogous theses were contained in the sermon that the Perm archpastor gave in his cathedral church on March 5.

"On March 19 Bishop Andronicus and the Perm clergy in his cathedral church and in all the city churches swore an oath of allegiance and service to the Russian state themselves and brought the people to swear it in accordance with the order established by the Provisional Government. But while swearing allegiance to the Provisional Government as a law-abiding citizen, Vladyka Andronicus actively conducted monarchical agitation, pinning his hopes of a 'regeneration' of the only temporarily 'removed' from power tsarist administration on the Constituent Assembly.

"The 'dangerous activity' of the Perm archpastor (this is precisely how it was evaluated by the local secular authorities and in the office of the Synod) drew the attention of the Committee of social security and the Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies of the city of Perm, from whom on March 21 a telegram was sent to the over-procurator of the Holy Synod complaining that 'Bishop Andronicus in a sermon compared Nicholas II to Christ in His Passion, and called on the flock to have pity on him.' In reply, on March 23, the over-procurator demanded of the rebellious bishop that he give an explanation and account of his activity, which was directed to the defence of the old order and 'to re-establishing the clergy against the new order'.

"The correspondence elicited between the Bishop of Perm and the over-procurator by his 'counter-revolutionary' activity was completed on April 16 when Bishop Andronicus said in a detailed letter of explanation: 'Michael Alexandrovich's act of abdication that legalized the Provisional Government declared that after the

Constituent Assembly we can have a tsarist administration, like any other, depending on what the Constituent Assembly says about it... I have submitted to the Constituent Assembly, and I will submit to a republic, if that is what the Constituent Assembly declares. But until then not one citizen is deprived of the freedom to express himself on any form of government for Russia; otherwise even the Constituent Assembly would be superfluous if someone has already irreversibly decided the question on Russia's form of government. As I have already said many times, I have submitted to the Provisional Government, I submit now and I call on everyone to submit... I am perplexed on what basis you find it necessary... to accuse me 'of stirring up the people not only against the Provisional Government, but also against the spiritual authorities in general'."

Babkin cites many examples of priests and parishes praying simultaneously for the Tsar and the Provision Government until the end of April. All these instances were based on the theoretical possibility, pointed out by Bishop Andronicus, that the Constituent Assembly could vote for a restoration of the monarchy. And so, he concludes, since, in March, 1917 "the monarchy in Russia, in accordance with the act of Great Prince Michael Alexandrovich, continued to exist as an institution", the Synod should have acted as if there was an "interregnum" in the country.¹⁵²

The weakness of the Church at this critical moment was the result of a long historical process. Having been deprived of its administrative independence by Peter the Great, the Church hierarchy was not ready to stand alone against the new regime and in defence of the monarchical principle in March, 1917. Instead, in the early days of March, it hoped that, in exchange for recognizing it and calling on the people to recognize it, it would receive full administrative freedom... But it was deceived: when Lvov came to power, he began to act like a tyrant worse than the old tsarist over-procurators. And then a wave of democratization began at the diocesan and parish levels... Thus was the prophecy of St. Ignaty (Brianchaninov) fulfilled: "Judging from the spirit of the times and the intellectual ferment, we must suppose that the building of the Church, which has already been wavering for a long time, will collapse quickly and terribly. There will be nobody to stop this and withstand it. The measures undertaken to support [the Church] are borrowed from the elements of the world hostile to the Church, and will rather hasten her fall than stop it..."¹⁵³

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If the Church hierarchy, traditionally the main support of the Autocracy, faltered, it is not surprising that the people as a whole faltered, too.

I.L. Solonevich writes: "I remember the February days of our great and bloodless [revolution] – how great a mindlessness descended on our country! A 100,000-strong flock of completely free citizens knocked about the prospects of Peter's capital. They were in complete ecstasy, this flock: the accursed bloody autocracy had come to an end! Over the world there was rising a dawn deprived of 'annexations and

¹⁵² Babkin, *Dukhoventstvo*, p. 210.

¹⁵³ Sokolov, L.A. *Episkop Ignatij Brianchaninov* (Bishop Ignaty Brianchaninov), Kiev, 1915, vol. 2, p. 250.

contributions', capitalism, imperialism, autocracy and even Orthodoxy: now we can begin to live! According to my professional duty as a journalist, overcoming every kind of disgust, I also knocked about among these flocks that sometimes circulated along the Nevsky Prospect, sometimes sat in the Tauris palace, and sometimes went to watering holes in the broken-into wine cellars. They were happy, this flock. If someone had then begun to tell them that in the coming third of a century after the drunken days of 1917 they would pay for this in tens of millions of lives, decades of famine and terror, new wars both civil and world, and the complete devastation of half of Russia, - the drunken people would have taken the voice of the sober man for regular madness. But they themselves considered themselves to be completely rational beings..."¹⁵⁴

And so we must conclude that in March, 1917 the Church - de facto, if not de jure - renounced Tsarism, one of the pillars of Russian identity for nearly 1000 years. With the exception of a very few bishops, such as Macarius of Moscow and Andronicus of Perm, the hierarchy hastened to support the new democratic order. As Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) writes: "There were few who understood at that moment that, in accepting this coup, the Russian people had committed the sin of oath-breaking, had rejected the Tsar, the Anointed of God, and had gone along the path of the prodigal son of the Gospel parable, subjecting themselves to the same destructive consequences as he experienced on abandoning his father."¹⁵⁵

However, the fact that Tsarism was renounced only de facto and not de jure means that Bishop Diomedes' thesis that the whole Church lost grace in 1917 is false. The pusillanimity of individual hierarchs, however senior or numerous, does not amount to heresy. Nevertheless, that a very serious sin - the sin of treason, of oath-breaking - had been committed in the name of the Church cannot be denied...

The only question remaining was: could the Church cleanse herself of this sin at the Council which, thanks to the Provisional Government, it convened in August, and, thus cleansed and strengthened by the Grace of God, lead the people out of the abyss of the revolution?

¹⁵⁴ Solonevich, in "Ot Ipatyevskogo Monastyria do Doma Ipatyevskogo" (From the Ipatiev Monastery to the Ipatiev House), *Pravoslavnie Monastyri* (Orthodox Monasteries), 29, 2009, p. 10.

¹⁵⁵ Grabbe, op. cit., p. 4.

II. SIGNS OF RECOVERY (1917-1927)

14. THE MOSCOW COUNCIL OF 1917-18

One of the few good acts of the Provisional Government was its giving permission for the convening of the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. "Preparations began on 29 April, 1917, "when the pre-Conciliar Assembly of the Holy Synod was constituted, consisting of sixty-two members. This assembly was comprised of ten working groups, each headed by a bishop. The pre-Conciliar Assembly in its turn based its work on the proceedings of the 1905-06 pre-Conciliar Committee, and on those of the 1912-14 pre-Conciliar Conference."¹⁵⁶ The Council held three sessions; the first from August 15 to December 9, 1917, the second from January 20 to April 7, 1918 and the third from June 19 to September 7, 1918 (old style).

The Council, assembled in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. On August 19 Metropolitan Tikhon (Bellavin) of Moscow was elected as chairman. 564 delegates attended the first session, including eighty bishops and 299 laymen. On the one hand, it included among the delegates such open Freemasons as Lvov, and on the other, it excluded such pious hierarchs as Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow because of his monarchist views. However, in spite of this and other flaws, it was the first Council in the history of the Russian Church since 1666, and was to prove to be a critical point of repose, refreshment and regrouping for the Church before the terrible trials that awaited her.

At the beginning there was little sign that more than a minority of the delegates understood the full apocalyptic significance of the events they were living through. On August 24, and again on October 20, the Council issued statements condemning the increasing violence, theft and sacrilege against churches, monasteries and priests that had been increasing ever since February.¹⁵⁷ In general, however, revolutionary sentiment was dominant. According to Princess Urusova, the Council even decreed that there should be no discussion of "politics" – that is, no condemnation of the revolution. Instead property questions were discussed. But then a professor from Belorussia said: "We should not be discussing these questions now! Russia is perishing, the throne is mocked. Without an Anointed of God, an Orthodox Tsar, she will soon fall under the power of darkness." But he could not continue his speech since he had touched "politics" ...¹⁵⁸

At first the Council, while condemning the moral degeneration taking place in the country, did not indicate the act that had opened the path to this: the nation's – and

¹⁵⁶ Professor Alexei Svetozarsky, "The 1917-18 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church", Oxford: St. Stephen's Press, 2003, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ Metropolitan Tikhon said: "Look! Her unfortunate, maddened children are tormenting our dear mother, your native Rus', they are trying to tear her to pieces, they wish to take away her hallowed treasure – the Orthodox Faith. They defame your Father-Tsar, they destroy His portraits, they disparage his Imperial decrees, and mock him. Can your heart be calm before this, O Russian man? Again ask of your conscience. It will remind you of your truly loyal oath. It will say to you – be a loving son of your native land" (in Archimandrite Luke, "Nationalism, Russia, and the Restoration of the Patriarchate", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 51, № 6, November-December, 2001, pp. 30-31).

¹⁵⁸ N.V. Urusova, *Materinskij Plach Sviatoj Rusi* (The Maternal Lament of Holy Russia), Moscow, 2006, p. 109.

the Synod's – betrayal of the Tsar and Tsarism. As N. Kusakov writes, "I have long asked myself: why did the Council not demand of the Provisional Government the immediate release of the Royal Family from under guard? Why did Metropolitan Pitirim of Petrograd and Metropolitan Macarius of Moscow remain in prison under the Provisional Government during the days of the Council? The cold breath of February blew in the corridors of the Council."¹⁵⁹

On October 21, during Vespers in the Dormition cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, two people dressed in soldiers' uniforms went up to the shrine and relics of St. Hermogen, Patriarch of Moscow, threw off the covers and began to remove the vestments. When taken to the commissariat, they told the police that "now there is freedom and everyone can do anything he wants". Three days later a penitential moleben was carried out in front of the shrine with the holy relics. The next day, the October revolution took place. St. Hermogen, who been canonized by the Church only a few years before, was notable for his refusal to recognize the government of the False Demetrius, and for his call to the nation to rise up in arms against it. For those with eyes to see, the incident at his shrine just before the coming to power of the Bolsheviks was a sign that the time had come to act in his spirit, against another false or anti-government.

The Council seemed to understand this, for after the Bolsheviks came to power on October 25, a new spirit of defiance began to prevail in it, a spirit that became still stronger after the Bolsheviks dispersed the Constituent Assembly in January. One of the delegates, Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris and Western Europe, described the change thus: "Russian life in those days was like a sea tossed by the storm of revolution. Church life had fallen into a state of disorganization. The external appearance of the Council, because of the diversity of its composition, its irreconcilability and the mutual hostility of its different tendencies and states of mind, was at first matter for anxiety and sadness and even seemed to constitute a cause for apprehension... Some members of the Council had already been carried away by the wave of revolution. The intelligentsia, peasants, workers and professors all tended irresistibly to the left. Among the clergy there were also different elements. Some of them proved to be 'leftist' participants of the previous revolutionary Moscow Diocesan Congress, who stood for a thorough and many-sided reform of church life. Disunion, disorder, dissatisfaction, even mutual distrust... – such was the state of the Council at first. But – O miracle of God! – everything began gradually to change... The disorderly assembly, moved by the revolution and in contact with its sombre elements, began to change into something like a harmonious whole, showing external order and internal solidarity. People became peaceable and serious in their tasks and began to feel differently and to look on things in a different way. This process of prayerful regeneration was evident to every observant eye and perceptible to every participant in the Council. A spirit of peace, renewal and unanimity inspired us all..."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Kusakov, in *Pravoslavniĭ Tsar-Muchenik* (The Orthodox Tsar-Martyr), Moscow: The Orthodox Pilgrim, 1997, pp. 727-728.

¹⁶⁰ Translated in Nicholas Zernov, "The 1917 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 6, № 1, 1978, p. 21.

The Council coincided with the most momentous events in Russian history: the war with Germany, the fall of the Provisional Government and the Bolshevik coup, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and the beginning of the Civil War. On all these events it was able to make declarations that expressed the opinion of Believing Russia. In a real sense, in the absence of any other representative assembly, it was the voice of Russia – or, at any rate, of that large proportion of the population which had not been engulfed by the revolutionary frenzy. As for the Bolsheviks, whose decrees with regard to the Church were either ignored or outrightly defied by the Council, they made no serious attempt to impede its work...

1. The Restoration of the Patriarchate

The pre-conciliar council in June had expressed itself strongly against the restoration of the patriarchate. And on September 1, the government, not waiting for the verdict of the Constituent Assembly, had declared that Russia was a republic. And so when the proposal to restore the patriarchate was introduced on October 11 by the future Hieromartyr Bishop Metrophanes of Astrakhan, it met with considerable opposition on the grounds that it was a reactionary measure. However, the Bolshevik revolution in October coincided, paradoxically, with a rise in support for the idea, largely owing to the energetic support by Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) and Archimandrite Hilarion (Troitsky). On October 28 the motion was carried, and on October 30 the first ballot to elect a Patriarch produced the following result: for Archbishop Anthony – 101 votes; for Archbishop Cyril of Tambov (the future hieromartyr and first-hierarch of the Catacomb Church) – 27; for the new Metropolitan of Moscow Tikhon – 23; for Metropolitan Platon – 22; for Archbishop Arseny of Novgorod – 14; for Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev, Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev and Protopresbyter George Shavel'sky – 13; for Archbishop Sergius of Vladimir – 5; for Archbishop James of Kazan, Archimandrite Hilarion and A.D. Samarina, a former over-procurator – 3. The other fifteen candidates received one or two votes. At the second ballot on November 1 three candidates were elected: Archbishop Anthony (159), Metropolitan Arsenius of Novgorod (199) and Metropolitan Tikhon of Moscow (162).

On November 5, lots were drawn. Metropolitan Eulogius writes: "Everybody shivered in expectation of whom the Lord would call... At the end of the moleben Metropolitan Vladimir went up to the analoj, took the casket, blessed the people with it, broke the cord with which the casket was bound and removed the seal. The venerable elder, Hieroschemamonk Alexis, the hermit of Zosima desert (not far from the Trinity-St. Sergius monastery), came out of the altar; he had been taking part in the Council for the sake of ecclesiastical obedience. He crossed himself three times and, without looking, took the piece of paper from the casket. Metropolitan Vladimir read it carefully: 'Tikhon, Metropolitan of Moscow'. It was as if an electric spark had run through the worshippers... The refrain of the metropolitan rang out: 'Axios!', which was drowned in the unanimous 'Axios!!... Axios!...' of the clergy and people. The choir together with the worshippers began to chant: 'We praise Thee, O

Lord...''¹⁶¹

Thus was the wish of one of the peasant delegates fulfilled: "We have a tsar no more; no father whom we love. It is impossible to love a synod; and therefore we, the peasants, want a Patriarch." Archbishop Hilarion said in triumph: "The eagle of Petrine autocracy, shaped in imitation of the West, tore asunder the Patriarchate, that sacred heart of Russian Orthodoxy. The sacrilegious hand of the impious Peter pulled down the senior hierarch of the Russian Church from his traditional seat in the Dormition Cathedral. The Council, by the authority given it by God, has once more placed the patriarch of Moscow in the chair, which belongs to him by inalienable right."¹⁶²

Metropolitan Tikhon was duly enthroned on November 21 in the Kremlin cathedral of the Dormition to the sound of rifle fire from the battle for Moscow outside. With the enthronement of the patriarch, as Sergius Firsov writes, "an historical event took place – the Orthodox Church received its canonical head, whose voice had not been heard for a whole 217 years. Not only formally, but effectively this was the closing of the last page in the history of the Synodal period."¹⁶³

According to the new constitution of the Russian Church agreed at the Council, the Church's supreme organ was the Sacred All-Russian Council, composed of bishops, clergy and laity, which was to be periodically convoked by the Patriarch but to which the Patriarch himself was responsible. Between Councils, the Patriarch administered the Church with the aid of two permanent bodies: the Synod of Bishops, and the Higher Church Council, on which parish clergy and laity could sit. Questions relating to theology, religious discipline and ecclesiastical administration were to be the prerogative of the Synod of Bishops, while secular-judicial, charity and other church-related social questions were to be the prerogative of the Higher Church Council. On December 7 the Holy Synod was elected, and on December 8 – the Higher Church Council.

On January 25, the Council heard that Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev had been murdered by the Bolsheviks. These events concentrated minds on the danger the Patriarch was in; and on the same day the Council immediately passed a resolution entrusting him with the drawing up of the names of three men who could serve as

¹⁶¹ L. Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1945* (The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945), Moscow: Krutitskoe Patriarshee Podvorie, 1996, p. 217.

¹⁶² Hilarion, quoted in John Shelton, *Church and State in Russia: The Last Years of the Empire 1900-1917*, New York: Octagon Books, 1965, p. 260. Archimandrite Luke writes: "The idea that a Patriarch would replace the Tsar (especially after his execution) was not absent from the delegates' understanding. The proponents for the scheme to re-establish the Patriarchate emphasized the fact that "the state desired to be non-confessional, openly severing its alliance with the church", and consequently the Church "must become militant and have its own spiritual leader". "Somehow the thought of Patriarch became associated with that of Tsar, while those opposed to the reestablishment of the Patriarchate brought forward democratic and republican principles." ("Nationalism, Russia and the Restoration of the Patriarchate", *Orthodox Life*, November-December, 2001, p. 32)

¹⁶³ Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' nakanune Peremen (konets 1890-x – 1918 gg.)* (The Russian Church on the eve of the Changes (end of the 1890s to 1918), Moscow, 2002, p. 542.

locum tenentes of the Patriarch in the event of his death and before the election of a new Patriarch. This measure was not strictly canonical but was felt to be necessary in the circumstances of incipient civil war. These names were to be kept secret - on February 3/16 Prince Trubestkoj said that there had been "a closed session of the Council" to discuss this question, and that "it was decreed that the whole fullness of the rights of the Patriarch should pass to the locum tenens", and that "it is not fitting to speak about all the motivation behind the decision taken in an open session".¹⁶⁴

The Patriarch's will was revised by him towards the end of 1924, and was published only after his death in 1925. It was read out in the presence of sixty hierarchs and declared: "In the event of our death our patriarchal rights and obligations, until the canonical election of a new Patriarch, we grant temporarily to his Eminence Metropolitan Cyril (Smirnov). In the event of the impossibility, by reason of whatever circumstances, of his entering upon the exercise of the indicated rights and obligations, they will pass to his Eminence Metropolitan Agathangel (Preobrazhensky). If this metropolitan, too, does not succeed in accomplishing this, then our patriarchal rights and obligations will pass to his Eminence Peter (Polyansky), Metropolitan of Krutitsa."

Since both Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangel were in exile at the time of the Patriarch's death on the feast of Annunciation, 1925, Metropolitan Peter became the patriarchal locum tenens.

Patriarch Tikhon's choice turned out to be inspired, although Metropolitan Peter was not well known at the time of the Council. As Regelson comments: "That the first-hierarchical authority in the Russian Church after the death of Patriarch Tikhon was able to be preserved was thanks only to the fact that one of the patriarchal locum tenentes Patriarch Tikhon chose in 1918 was Metropolitan Peter, who at the moment of the choice was only a servant of the Synod! Many hierarchs were amazed and disturbed by his subsequent swift 'career', which changed him in the course of six years into the metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna... But it was precisely thanks to the extraordinary nature of his destiny that he turned out to be the only one chosen by the Patriarch (in actual fact, *chosen by the Council, as entrusted to the Patriarch*) who was left in freedom at the moment of the death of Patriarch Tikhon. It is difficult even to conjecture how complicated and, besides, tragic would have been the destiny of the Russian Church if the wise thought of the Council and the Patriarch had not been realized in life."¹⁶⁵

2. The Attitude towards Soviet power

The Council refused to recognize the legitimacy of Soviet power. Thus when, on the day after the coup, October 26, Lenin nationalized all land, making the Church's and parish priests' property illegal, the Council addressed a letter to the faithful on November 11, calling the revolution "descended from the Antichrist and possessed by atheism": "Open combat is fought against the Christian Faith, in opposition to all

¹⁶⁴ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁶⁵ Regelson, op. cit., p. 67.

that is sacred, arrogantly abasing all that bears the name of God (II Thessalonians 2.4)... But no earthly kingdom founded on ungodliness can ever survive: it will perish from internal strife and party dissension. Thus, because of its frenzy of atheism, the State of Russia will fall... For those who use the sole foundation of their power in the coercion of the whole people by one class, no motherland or holy place exists. They have become traitors to the motherland and instigated an appalling betrayal of Russia and her true allies. But, to our grief, as yet no government has arisen which is sufficiently one with the people to deserve the blessing of the Orthodox Church. And such will not appear on Russian soil until we turn with agonizing prayer and tears of repentance to Him, without Whom we labour in vain to lay foundations..."¹⁶⁶

This recognition of the real nature of the revolution came none too early. On November 15, a peasant, Michael Efimovich Nikonov, wrote to the Council: "We think that the Most Holy Synod made an irreparable mistake when the bishops went to meet the revolution. We do not know the reasons for this. Was it for fear of the Jews? In accordance with the prompting of their heart, or for some laudable reasons? Whatever the reason, their act produced a great temptation in the believers, and not only in the Orthodox, but even among the Old Ritualists. Forgive me for touching on this question - it is not our business to judge that: this is a matter for the Council, I am only placing on view the judgement of the people.

"People are saying that by this act of the Synod many right-thinking people were led into error, and also many among the clergy. We could hardly believe our ears at what we heard at parish and deanery meetings. Spiritual fathers, tempted by the deception of freedom and equality, demanded that hierarchs they dislike be removed together with their sees, and that they should elect those whom they wanted. Readers demanded the same equality, so as not to be subject to their superiors. That is the absurdity we arrived at when we emphasized the satanic idea of the revolution. The Orthodox Russian people is convinced that the Most Holy Council in the interests of our holy mother, the Church, the Fatherland and Batyushka Tsar, should give over to anathema and curse all self-called persons and all traitors who trampled on their oath together with the satanic idea of the revolution. And the Most Holy Council will show to its flock who will take over the helm of administration in the great State. We suppose it must be he who is in prison [the Tsar], but if he does not want to rule over us traitors,... then let it indicate who is to accept the government of the State; that is only common sense. The act of Sacred Coronation and Anointing with holy oil of our tsars in the Dormition Cathedral [of the Moscow Kremlin] was no simple comedy. It was they received from God the authority to rule the people, giving account to Him alone, and by no means a constitution or some kind of parliament of not quite decent people capable only of revolutionary arts and possessed by the love of power...

"Everything that I have written here is not my personal composition alone, but the voice of the Russian Orthodox people, the 100-million-strong village Russia in which I live."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Nicholas Zernov, "The 1917 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 6, N 1, 1978.

¹⁶⁷ GARF.F.3431.Op.1.D.318.L.36-3706;

Many people were indeed disturbed by such questions as: had the Church betrayed the Tsar in March 1917? Were Christians guilty of breaking their oath to the Tsar by accepting the Provisional Government? Should the Church formally absolve the people of their oath to the Tsar?

The leadership of the Council passed consideration of these questions, together with Nikonov's letter, to a subsection entitled "On Church Discipline". This subsection had several meetings in the course of the next nine months, but came to no definite decisions...¹⁶⁸

The Council's decree of December 2, "On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church", ruled, on the one hand, that the State could issue no law relating to the Church without prior consultation with and approval by her, and on the other hand, that any decree and by-laws issued by the Orthodox Church that did not directly contradict state laws were to be systematically recognized by the State as legally binding. Church holidays were to remain state holidays, blasphemy and attempts to lure members of the Church away from her were to remain illegal, and schools of all levels organized and run by the Church were to be recognised by the State on a par with the secular schools. It is clear from this decree that the Church was determined to go Her own way in complete defiance of the so-called "authorities".

On December 17 (n.s.), there was a new decree on the land committees, according to which land, "including all monastery lands, were removed into the hands of the state." On December 24 there was issued a decree closing all theological academies, seminaries and schools and transferring them and all their property to the Commissariat of Education. On December 31, ecclesiastical marriage was deprived of its legal status and civil marriage introduced in its place.¹⁶⁹

As if to test the decree "On the Legal Status of the Russian Orthodox Church", on January 13, Alexandra Kollontai, the People's Commissar of Social Welfare (and Lenin's mistress), sent a detachment of sailors to occupy the Alexander Nevsky monastery and turn it into a sanctuary for war invalids. They were met by an angry crowd of worshippers and in the struggle which followed one priest, Fr. Peter Skipetrov, was shot dead.¹⁷⁰

According to Orlando Figes, Lenin was not yet ready for a confrontation with the Church, but Kollontai's actions forced his hand.¹⁷¹ On January 20 a law on freedom

http://www.ispovednik.org/fullst.php?nid=31&binn_rubrik_pl_news=136.

¹⁶⁸ M. Babkin, "Pomestnij Sobor 1917-1918 gg.: 'O Prisyage pravitel'stvu voobsche i byvshemu imperatoru Nikolaiu II v chastnosti'" (The Local Council of 1917-1918: 'On the Oath to the Government in general and to the former Emperor Nicholas II in particular),

<http://www.portalcredo.ru/site/print.php?act=lib&id=2704>.

¹⁶⁹ Sergius Shumilo, *V Katakombakh* (In the Catacombs), Lutsk, 2011, p. 10.

¹⁷⁰ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana, 1995, p. 343. According to Regelson (*op. cit.*, p. 226), this took place on January 19.

¹⁷¹ Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 528; Archpriest Michael Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia*, new edition, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, pp. 91-92.

of conscience, later named the “Decree on the Separation of the Church from the State and of the School from the Church”, was passed (it was published three days later in *Izvestia*). This was the Bolsheviks’ fiercest attack yet on the Church. It forbade religious bodies from owning property (all property of religious organizations was declared to be the heritage of the people), from levying dues, from organizing into hierarchical organizations, and from teaching religion to persons under 18 years of age. Ecclesiastical and religious societies did not have the rights of a juridical person. The registering of marriages was to be done exclusively by the civil authorities.

Thus, far from being a blow struck *for* freedom of conscience, it was, as the Council put it, a decree on freedom *from* conscience, and an excuse for large-scale pillaging of churches and murders, often in the most bestial manner.¹⁷²

Fr. Alexander Mazyrin points out that this decree in effect deprived the Church of its rights as a legal person. “This meant that *de jure* the Church ceased to exist as a single organization. Only local religious communities could exist in legal terms, the authorities signing with them agreements on the use of Church property. The Eighth Department of the People’s Commissariat of Justice, which was due to put into practice Lenin’s decree, was officially dubbed the ‘Liquidation’ Department. It was the elimination of the Church, not its legalization as a social institution, that was the aim pursued by the ‘people’s commissars’ government.”¹⁷³

On January 19 / February 1, Patriarch Tikhon, anticipating the decree, and even before the Council had reconvened¹⁷⁴, issued his famous anathema against the Bolsheviks: “By the power given to Us by God, we forbid you to approach the Mysteries of Christ, we **anathematise** you, if only you bear Christian names and although by birth you belong to the Orthodox Church. We also adjure all of you, faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ, not to enter into any communion with such outcasts of the human race: ‘Remove the evil one from among you’ (I Corinthians 5.13).” The decree ended with an appeal to defend the Church, if necessary, to the death. For “the gates of hell shall not prevail against Her” (Matthew 16.18).¹⁷⁵

The significance of this anathema lies not so much in the casting out of the Bolsheviks themselves, as in the command to the faithful to have no communion with them. In other words, the government were to be regarded, not only as apostates from

¹⁷² Professor Ivan Andreyev, “The Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union”, *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 1951. For details of the destruction wrought against the Church in these years, see Vladimir Rusak, *Pir Satany* (Satan’s Feast), London, Canada: Zarya, 1991.

¹⁷³ Mazyrin, “Legalizing the Moscow Patriarchate in 1927: The Secret Aims of the Authorities”, *Social Sciences: A Quarterly Journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, No 1, 2009, p. 28. This article was first published in Russian in *Otechestvennaia Istorija*, no. 4, 2008.

¹⁷⁴ “When they asked the holy Patriarch why he had issued his epistle on the eve of the Council’s Sitting, Vladyka replied that he did not want to put the Council under the hammer and preferred to take it on himself alone” (Andreyev, *op. cit.*, p. 9).

¹⁷⁵ Russian text in M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatishogo Patriarkha Tikhona* (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 1994, pp. 82-85; *Deiania Sviashennogo Sobora Pravoslavnoj Rossijskoj Tserkvi, 1917-1918 gg.* (The Acts of the Sacred Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, 1917-1918), Moscow, 1918, 1996, vol. 6, pp. 4-5 (Act 66.6).

Christ (that was obvious), but also as having no moral authority, *no claim to obedience whatsoever* – an attitude taken by the Church to no other government in the whole of Her history.¹⁷⁶ Coming so soon after the Bolsheviks' dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, it indicated that now that constitutionalism had proved its uselessness in the face of demonic barbarism, it was time for the Church to enter the struggle in earnest...¹⁷⁷

It has been argued that the Patriarch's decree did not anathematise Soviet power as such, but only those who were committing acts of violence and sacrilege against the Church. However, this argument fails to take into account several facts. First, the patriarch himself, in his declarations of June 16 and July 1, 1923, repented precisely of his "anathematisation of Soviet power".¹⁷⁸ Secondly, even if the decree did not formally anathematise Soviet power as such, since Soviet power sanctioned and initiated the acts of violence, the faithful were in effect being exhorted to having nothing to do with it. And thirdly, in his Epistle to the Council of People's Commissars on the first anniversary of the revolution, November 7, 1918, the Patriarch obliquely but clearly confirmed his non-recognition of Soviet power, saying: "It is not our business to make judgments about earthly authorities. Every power allowed by God would attract to itself Our blessing *if it were truly 'the servant of God', for the good of those subject to it, and were 'terrible not for good works, but for evil' (Romans 13.3,4). But now to you, who have used authority for the persecution of the innocent, We extend this Our word of exhortation...*"¹⁷⁹

It was important that the true significance of the anathema for the Church's relationship with the State be pointed out. This was done immediately after the proclamation of the anathema, when Count D.A. Olsufyev pointed out that at the moleben they had just sung 'many years' to the powers that be – that is, to the Bolsheviks whom they had just anathematized! "I understand that the Apostle called for obedience to all authorities – but hardly that 'many years' should be sung to *them*. I know that his 'most pious and most autocratic' [majesty] was replaced by 'the right-believing Provisional Government' of Kerensky and company... And I think that the time for unworthy compromises has passed."¹⁸⁰

On January 22 / February 4 the Patriarch's anathema was discussed in a session of the Council presided over by Metropolitan Arsenius of Novgorod, and the following resolution put forward by a special commission attached to the Conciliar Council was

¹⁷⁶ In a letter to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) that was captured by the Bolsheviks, the Patriarch called the Bolsheviks "oprichniki" – that is, he compared them to the murderous henchmen of Ivan the Terrible (*Za Khrista Postradavshie*, Moscow, 1997, vol. 1, p. 426).

¹⁷⁷ On January 1, 1970 the Russian Church Abroad under Metropolitan Philaret of New York confirmed this anathema and added one of its own against "Vladimir Lenin and the other persecutors of the Church of Christ, dishonourable apostates who have raised their hands against the Anointed of God, killing clergymen, trampling on holy things, destroying the churches of God, tormenting our brothers and defiling our Fatherland" (http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1775)

¹⁷⁸ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 280, 296.

¹⁷⁹ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

¹⁸⁰ *Deiania*, vol. 6, p. 7; quoted in A.G. Yakovitsky, "Sergianstvo: mif ili real'nost? (Sergianism: myth or reality?)," *Vernost'*, 100, January, 2008.

officially accepted by the Council: "The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church welcomes with love the epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, which punishes the evil-doers and rebukes the enemies of the Church of Christ. From the height of the patriarchal throne there has thundered the word of excommunication [preschenia] and a spiritual sword has been raised against those who continually mock the faith and conscience of the people. The Sacred Council witnesses that it remains in the fullest union with the father and intercessor of the Russian Church, pays heed to his appeal and is ready in a sacrificial spirit to confess the Faith of Christ against her blasphemers. The Sacred Council calls on the whole of the Russian Church headed by her archpastors and pastors to unite now around the Patriarch, so as not to allow the mocking of our holy faith."¹⁸¹

At this session A.A. Vasiliev said: "We thank the Lord for giving us what we have been waiting for – that is, finally to hear the true Church voice of our Most Holy Father and Patriarch. For the first time in this year of disorder, a truly ecclesiastical word, a word spoken with regard to the events about which nothing has been said up to now. And a pastoral judgement delivered on all those who are guilty of these events... Our Christian conscience must suggest to each of us what concessions he can and cannot make, and when he must lay down his life for the truth. People are puzzled about precisely who is subject to this ban which his Holiness the Patriarch speaks about in his epistle. After all, it is not just since yesterday, and not since the coming of the Bolsheviks, that we have been experiencing a real satanic attack on the Church of Christ, these fratricides, fights and mutual hatred. At the very beginning of the revolution the authorities carried out an act of apostasy from God (voices: "Right!"). Prayer was banned in the armies, banners with the cross of Christ were

¹⁸¹ *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 36. Another source quotes the following response of the Council to the patriarch's anathema: "The Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia in his epistle to the beloved in the Lord archpastors, pastors and all faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ has drawn the spiritual sword against the outcasts of the human race – the Bolsheviks, and anathematized them. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church adjures all her faithful children not to enter into any communion with these outcasts. For their satanic deeds they are cursed in this life and in the life to come. Orthodox! His Holiness the Patriarch has been given the right to bind and to loose according to the word of the Saviour... Do not destroy your souls, cease communion with the servants of Satan – the Bolsheviks. Parents, if your children are Bolsheviks, demand authoritatively that they renounce their errors, that they bring forth repentance for their eternal sin, and if they do not obey you, renounce them. Wives, if your husbands are Bolsheviks and stubbornly continue to serve Satan, leave your husbands, save yourselves and your children from the soul-destroying infection. An Orthodox Christian cannot have communion with the servants of the devil... Repent, and with burning prayer call for help from the Lord of Hosts and thrust away from yourselves 'the hand of strangers' – the age-old enemies of the Christian faith, who have declared themselves in self-appointed fashion 'the people's power'... If you do not obey the Church, you will not be her sons, but participants in the cruel and satanic deeds wrought by the open and secret enemies of Christian truth... Dare! Do not delay! Do not destroy your soul and hand it over to the devil and his stooges." ("Iz sobrania Tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Oktiabr'skoj revoliutsii: listovka bez vykhodnykh dannyx, pod N 1011" (From the collection of the Central State Archive of the October Revolution: pamphlet without dates, under N 1011), *Nauka i Religia* (Science and Religion), 1989, N 4; partly translated in Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960, p. 9). One member of the Council said: "If the father, mother, brothers and sisters did not receive the returning evil-doer, but expelled him, saying: 'You are a scoundrel, your hands are covered in blood, you are not our son, nor our brother,' the disorders would cease." (*Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 40).

replaced by red rags. It is not only the present powers that be that are guilty of this, but also those who have already departed from the scene. We shall continue to hope that the present rulers also, who are now shedding blood, will depart from the scene.”¹⁸²

Then Fr. Vladimir Vostokov spoke: “In this hall too much has been said about the terrible things that have been suffered, and if we were to list and describe them all, it this huge hall would be filled with books. So I am not going to speak about the horrors. I want to point to the root from which these horrors have been created. I understand this present assembly of ours as a spiritual council of doctors consulting over our dangerously ill mother, our homeland. When doctors come up to treat a sick person, they do not stop at the latest manifestations of the illness, but they look deeper, they investigate the root cause of the illness. So in the given case it is necessary to reveal the root of the illness that the homeland is suffering. From this platform, before the enlightener of Russia, the holy Prince Vladimir, I witness to my priestly conscience that the Russian people is being deceived, and that up to this time no-one has told them the whole truth. The moment has come when the Council, as the only gathering that is lawful and truly elected by the people must tell the people the holy truth, fearing nobody except God Himself...

“The derailing of the train of history took place at the end of February, 1917; it was aided first of all by the Jewish-Masonic global organization, which cast into the masses the slogans of socialism, the slogans of a mythical freedom... So much has been said here about the terrors brought upon the country by Bolshevism. But what is Bolshevism? – the natural and logical development of Socialism. And Socialism is – that antichristian movement which in the final analysis produces Bolshevism as its highest development and which engenders those phenomena completely contrary to the principles of Christian asceticism that we are living through now.

“Unfortunately, many of our professors and writers have arrayed Socialism in beautiful clothes, calling it similar to Christianity, and thereby they together with the agitators of revolution have led the uneducated people into error. Fathers and brothers! What fruits did we expect of Socialism, when we not only did not fight against it, but also defended it at times, or almost always were shyly silent before its contagion? We must serve the Church by faith, and save the country from destructive tendencies, and for that it is necessary to speak the truth to the people without delay, telling them what Socialism consists of and what it leads to.

“The Council must say that in February-March a violent coup took place which for the Orthodox Christian is oath-breaking that requires purification through repentance. We all, beginning with Your Holiness and ending with myself, the last member of the Council, must bow the knee before God, and beseech Him to forgive us for allowing the growth in the country of evil teachings and violence. Only after sincere repentance by the whole people will the country be pacified and regenerated. And God will bestow upon us His mercy and grace. But if we continue only to anathematize without repenting, without declaring the truth to the people, then they

¹⁸² *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 40; Yakovitsky, op. cit.

will with just cause say to us: You, too, are guilty that the country has been reduced to this crime, for which the anathema now sounds out; you by your pusillanimity have allowed the development of evil and have been slow to call the facts and phenomena of state life by their real names!

“Pastors of the Church, search out the soul of the people! If we do not tell the people the whole truth, if we do not call on them now to offer nationwide repentance for definite sins, we will leave this conciliar chamber as turncoats and traitors of the Church and the Homeland. I am so unshakably convinced of what I say now that I would not hesitate to repeat it even if I were on the verge of death. It is necessary to regenerate in the minds of people the idea of a pure central authority – the idea that has been darkened by the pan-Russian deception. We overthrew the Tsar and subjected ourselves to the Jews! [Voices of members of the Council: ‘True, true...’] The only salvation for the Russian people is a wise Russian Orthodox Tsar. Only through the election of a wise, Orthodox, Russian Tsar can Russia be placed on the good, historical path and re-establish good order. As long as we will not have a wise Orthodox tsar, there will be no order among us, and the people’s blood will continue to be shed, and the centrifugal forces will divide the one people into hostile pieces, until the train of history is completely destroyed or until foreign peoples enslave us as a crowd incapable of independent State life...

“We all must unite into one Christian family under the banner of the Holy and Life-Creating Cross and under the leadership of his Holiness the Patriarch, to say that Socialism, which calls people as if to brotherhood, is an openly antichristian and evil phenomenon, that the Russian people has become the plaything of the Jewish-Masonic organizations behind which the Antichrist is already visible in the form of an internationalist tsar, that by playing on false freedom, the people is forging for itself slavery to the Judaeo-Masons. If we say this openly and honestly, then I do not know what will happen to us, but I know that Russian will be alive!”¹⁸³

On March 12, 1918 the Council reaffirmed the patriarch’s anathema, proclaiming: “To those who utter blasphemies and lies against our holy faith and Church, who rise up against the holy churches and monasteries, encroaching on the inheritance of the Church, while abusing and killing the priests of the Lord and zealots of the patristic faith: *Anathema*” (Act 94).

The Bolshevik decree on the separation of Church and State elicited strong reactions from individual members of the Council. Thus one exclaimed: “We overthrew the tsar and subjected ourselves to the Jews!” And another said: “The sole means of salvation for the Russian nation is a wise Orthodox Russian tsar!” In reply to this remark, Protopriest Elijah Gromoglasov said: “Our only hope is not that we may have an earthly tsar or president... but that there should be a heavenly Tsar, Christ”.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ *Deiania*, op. cit., vol. 6, pp. 41-43.

¹⁸⁴ *Deiania*, op. cit., p. 159.

The section of the Council appointed to report on the decree made the following recommendations: “The individuals wielding the governmental authority audaciously attempt to destroy the very existence of the Orthodox Church. In order to realize this satanic design, the Soviet of People’s Commissars published the decree concerning the separation of the Church from the State, which legalized an open persecution not only of the Orthodox Church, but of all other religious communions, Christian or non-Christian. Not despising deceit, the enemies of Christ fraudulently put on the appearance of granting by it religious liberty.

“Welcoming all real extension of liberty of conscience, the Council at the same time points out that by the provisions of the said decree, the freedom of the Orthodox Church, as well as of all other religious organizations and communions in general, is rendered void. Under the pretence of ‘the separation of the Church from the State’, the Soviet of People’s Commissars attempts to render impossible the very existence of the churches, the ecclesiastical institutions, and the clergy.

“Under the guise of taking over the ecclesiastical property, the said decree aims to destroy the very possibility of Divine worship and ministration. It declares that ‘no ecclesiastical or religious association has the right to possess property’, and ‘all property of the existing ecclesiastical and religious associations in Russia is declared to be national wealth.’ Thereby the Orthodox churches and monasteries, those resting-places of the relics of the saints revered by all Orthodox people, become the common property of all citizens irrespective of their credal differences – of Christians, Jews, Muslims and pagans, and the holy objects designated for the Divine service, i.e. the holy Cross, the holy Gospel, the sacred vessels, the holy miracle-working icons are at the disposal of the governmental authorities, which may either permit or not (as they wish) their use by the parishes.

“Let the Russian people understand that they (the authorities) wish to deprive them of God’s churches with their sacred objects! As soon as all property of the Church is taken away, it is not possible to offer any aid to it, for in accordance with the intention of the decree everything donated shall be taken away. The support of monasteries, churches and the clergy alike becomes impossible.

“But that is not all: in consequence of the confiscation of the printing establishments, it is impossible for the Church independently to publish the holy Gospel as well as other sacred and liturgical books in their wonted purity and authenticity.

“In the same manner, the decree affects the pastors of the Church. Declaring that ‘no one may refuse to perform his civil duties on account of his religious views’, it thereby constrains them to fulfil military obligations forbidden them by the 83rd canon of the holy Apostles. At the same time, ministers of the altar are removed from educating the people. The very teaching of the law of God, not only in governmental, but even in private schools, is not permitted; likewise all theological institutions are doomed to be closed. The Church is thus excluded from the possibility of educating her own pastors.

“Declaring that ‘the governmental functions or those of other public-juridical institutions shall not be accompanied by any religious rites or ceremonies,’ the decree thereby sacrilegiously sunders all connections of the government with the sanctities of the faith.

“On the basis of all these considerations, the holy Council decrees:

“1. The decree published by the Soviet of People’s Commissars regarding the separation of the Church from the State represents in itself, under the guise of a law declaring liberty of conscience, an inimical attempt upon the life of the Orthodox Church, and is an act of open persecution.

“2. All participation, either in the publication of the law so injurious to the Church, or in attempts to put it into practice, is not reconcilable with membership of the Orthodox Church, and subjects all transgressors belonging to the Orthodox communion to the heaviest penalties, to the extent of excommunicating them from the Church (in accordance with the 73rd canon of the holy Apostles, and the 13th canon of the Seventh Ecumenical Council).”¹⁸⁵

These recommendations were then adopted by the Council as its official reply to the decree (February 7). In the same spirit, on April 15 the Council decreed: “Clergymen serving in anti-ecclesiastical institutions, as well as those who put into effect the decrees on freedom of conscience which are inimical to the Church and similar acts, are subject to being banned from serving and, in the case of impenitence, are deprived of their rank.”¹⁸⁶

Although, as we have said, it was unprecedented for a Local Church to anathematize a government, there have been occasions in the history of the Church when individual hierarchs have not only refused to obey or pray for a political leader, but have actually prayed *against* him. Thus in the fourth century St. Basil the Great prayed for the defeat of Julian the Apostate, and it was through his prayers that the apostate was killed, as was revealed by God to the holy hermit Julian of Mesopotamia. Neither St. Basil nor his friend, St. Gregory the Theologian, recognised the rule of Julian the Apostate to be legitimate.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, they considered that Gregory’s brother, St. Caesarius, should not remain at the court of Julian, although he thought that, being a doctor, he could help his relatives and friends through his position there.¹⁸⁸ These and other examples show that, while the *principle* of authority *as such* is from God (Romans 13.1), individual authorities or rulers are sometimes not from God, but are only *allowed to exist* by Him, in which case the Church must offer resistance to them out of loyalty to God Himself.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Gustavson, *op. cit.*; John Sheldon Curtiss, *The Russian Church and the Soviet State, 1917-1950*, Boston, 1953, pp. 125-127. Curtiss refers to pages 177 to 179 of the *Acts* of the Local Council.

¹⁸⁶ *Bogoslovskij Vestnik* (The Theological Herald), N 1, 1993, p. 217.

¹⁸⁷ V.A. Konovalov, *Otnoshenie khristianstva k sovietskoj vlasti* (The Relationship of Christianity to Soviet Power), Montreal, 1936, p. 35.

¹⁸⁸ Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 17.

¹⁸⁹ Konovalov, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

As Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), the foremost canonist of the Russian Church Abroad, wrote: "With regard to the question of the commemoration of authorities, we must bear in mind that now we are having dealings not simply with a pagan government like Nero's, but with the apostasy of the last times. Not with a so far unenlightened authority, but with apostasy. The Holy Fathers did not relate to Julian the Apostate in the same way as they did to the other pagan Emperors. And we cannot relate to the antichristian authorities in the same way as to any other, for its nature is purely satanic."¹⁹⁰

There were some who took the anathema very seriously and fulfilled it to the letter. Thus in 1918, the clairvoyant Elder Nicholas (Parthenov), later Hieromartyr Bishop of Aktar, "following the anathema contained in the Epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, and not wishing to enter into relations with 'the outcasts of the human race', went into reclusion..."¹⁹¹ In general, however, the Church and the People paid no attention to it – which must be counted as perhaps the major reason why the revolution gained strength and survived for generations to come...

The Council had exhorted the faithful to protect church property, and soon there were reports of people mobbing the officials and soldiers detailed to carry out the decree. Several hundred thousand people marched through Petrograd in protest. As Michael Shkarovskii writes: "Numerous religious processions, some of which were fired upon, took place in the towns; services in defence of the patriarchate were held in public places and petitions were sent to the government. There followed a mass religious upsurge in Russia. From 1918, thousands of new converts, including some prominent intellectuals, joined the now persecuted Orthodox Church. And an 'All-Russian Union of United Orthodox Parishes' was also formed.

"The Sovnarkom had expected its decree to be implemented quickly and relatively painlessly, but this was prevented first and foremost by the opposition of millions of peasants, who supported the expropriation of church and monastic property but were against making births, marriages and deaths a purely civil affair, depriving parishes of their property rights, and dropping divinity from the school curriculum. Peasants thus resisted Bolshevik efforts to break the 'unshakable traditions' of 'a life of faith' in the Russian countryside. The implementation of the law was also hindered by the lack of suitable officials to carry it out, and by the inconsistency of the local authorities' understanding of the law."¹⁹²

A Barmenkov wrote: "Some school workers began to interpret [the principle of Church-School separation] as a transition to secular education, in which both religious and anti-religious propaganda in school would be excluded. They supposed that the school had to remain neutral in relation to religion and the Church. A.V. Lunacharsky

¹⁹⁰ Grabbe, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Moscow, 1998, p. 85.

¹⁹¹ Alexis Rufimsky, "Biografia sviaschennomuchenika Nikolaia (Parfenova), episkopa Atkarskago, radi Khrista yurodivago 'malenkago batiushki'" (A Biography of Hieromartyr Nicholas (Parthenov), Bishop of Aktar, fool for Christ, 'the little batyushka'), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 17 (1782), September 1/14, 2005, p. 5.

¹⁹² Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", *op. cit.*, pp. 420-421.

and N.K. Krupskaja spoke against this incorrect interpretation..., emphasising that in the Soviet state the concept of the people's enlightenment had unfailingly to include 'a striving to cast out of the people's head religious trash and replace it with the light of science.'"193

"On March 14/27," writes Peter Sokolov, "still hoping that the existence of the Church could be preserved under the communist regime and with the aim of establishing direct relations with the higher state authorities, a Church deputation set out in the name of the Council to the Council of People's Commissars in Moscow. They wanted to meet Lenin personally, and personally present him with their ideas about the conditions acceptable to the Church for her existence in the state of the new type." This initiative hardly accorded with the anathema against the Bolsheviks, which forbade the faithful from having any relations with them. It was therefore unsuccessful. "The deputation was not received by Lenin. The commissars (of insurance and justice) that conversed with it did not satisfy its requests. A second address to the authorities in the name of the Council that followed soon after the first unsuccessful audience was also unsuccessful..."194

The Council made two other decisions relating to Soviet power and its institutions. On April 15 it decreed: "Clergymen serving in anti-ecclesiastical institutions... are subject to being banned from serving and, in the case of impenitence, are deprived of their rank". On the assumption that "anti-ecclesiastical institutions" included all Soviet institutions, this would seem to have been a clearly anti-Soviet measure.

However, on August 15, 1918, the Council took a step in the opposite direction, declaring invalid all defrockings based on political considerations, applying this particularly to Metropolitan Arsenius (Matsevich) of Rostov and Priest Gregory Petrov. Metropolitan Arsenius had indeed been unjustly defrocked in the reign of Catherine II for his righteous opposition to her anti-Church measures. However, Petrov had been one of the leaders of the Cadet party in the Duma in 1905 and was an enemy of the monarchical order. How could his defrocking be said to have been unjust in view of the fact that the Church had officially prayed for the Orthodox Autocracy, and Petrov had worked directly against the fulfilment of the Church's prayers? The problem was: too many people, including several hierarchs, had welcomed the fall of the Tsarist regime. If the Church was not to divide along political lines, a general amnesty was considered necessary. But if true recovery can only begin with repentance, and repentance must begin with the leaders of the Church, this decree amounted to covering the wound without allowing it to heal.

As Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod writes, the Council could be criticized for its "weakening of Church discipline, its legitimization of complete freedom of political orientation and activity, and, besides, its rehabilitation of the Church revolutionaries like Gregory Petrov. By all this it doomed the Russian Church to

¹⁹³ Barmenkov, in Alexander Mikhalechikov, "Tserkov' v ogne" (The Church in the Fire), *Pravoslavnij Vestnik* (The Orthodox Herald) (Canada), June-July, 1989, p. 9.

¹⁹⁴ Sokolov, "Put' Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v Rossii-SSSR (1916-1961)" (The Path of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and the USSR (1916-1961), in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v SSSR: Sbornik* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR: a Collection), Munich, 1962, p. 15.

collapse, presenting to her enemies the best conditions for her cutting up and annihilation piece by piece.

“That this Council... did not express the voice of the complete fullness of the Russian Church is proved by the decisions of two other Councils of the time: that of Karlovtsy in 1921, and that of Vladivostok in 1922.

“At the Karlovtsy Council remembrance was finally made of the St. Sergius’ blessing of the Christian Sovereign Demetrius Donskoj for his battle with the enemies of the Church and the fatherland, and of the struggle for the Orthodox Kingdom of the holy Hierarch Hermogenes of Moscow. The question was raised of the ‘sin of February’, but because some of the prominent activists of the Council had participated in this, the question was left without detailed review. The decisions of this Council did not receive further official development in Church life because of the schisms that began both in the Church Abroad and in the monarchist movement. But the question of the re-establishment of the Orthodox Kingdom in Russia had been raised, and thinkers abroad worked out this thought in detail in the works, first of Prince N.D. Zhevakhov and Protopriest V. Vostokov, and then, more profoundly, in the works of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), Professor M.V. Zyzykin, Archimandrite Constantine Zaitsev, V.N. Voejkov and N.P. Kusakov.

“The Church-land Council in Vladivostok, which is now almost forgotten, expressed itself more definitely, recognizing the Orthodox autocracy to be the only lawful authority in Russia.”¹⁹⁵

3. The Commemoration of the Holy New Martyrs

On April 18 / May 1, in a decree entitled “On Measures Elicited by the Ongoing Persecution of the Orthodox Church”, the Council resolved:

“1. To establish the raising in church during Divine services of special petitions for those who are now being persecuted for the Orthodox Faith and Church and those who have completed their lives as confessors and martyrs...

“3. To establish throughout Russia a yearly prayerful commemoration on January 25 [the day of the martyrdom of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev], or on the Sunday following (in the evening), of all the confessors and martyrs who have fallen asleep in the present year’s savage persecutions.

“4. To organize on the Monday of the second week of Pascha, in all parishes where confessors and martyrs for the Faith and the Church finished their lives, cross

¹⁹⁵ Alferov, op. cit., pp. 16-17. For more on the Vladivostok Congress of the Land, see Demetrius Anakshin, “Poslednij zemskij sobor” (The Last Land Council), *Pravoslavnaja Rus’*, № 21 (1594), November 1/14, 1997, pp. 10-11, 15, and M.B. Danilushkin, *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church)*, vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, chapter 6). The first decree of this Congress stated: “The Congress recognizes that the only path to the regeneration of a great, powerful and free Russia is the restoration in it of the monarchy, headed by a lawful Autocrat from the House of the Romanovs, in accordance with the Basic laws of the Russian Empire”.

processions to the places of their burial, where triumphant pannikhidas are to be celebrated with the specific verbal glorification of their sacred memory..."¹⁹⁶

Points 3 and 4 of this decree remained a dead letter for most of the Soviet period. However, in November, 1981 the Russian Church Abroad canonized the new martyrs, and since then devotion to the new martyrs and observance of their feasts steadily increased inside Russia, leading, as some have thought, to the fall of communism in 1991.

Thus the glorification of the new martyrs, which began in April, 1918, may be said to have been the earnest of, and first step towards, the resurrection of Russia. It implicitly condemns the attitude of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate, which for most of the twentieth century declared that the new martyrs and confessors were "political criminals" worthy of derision rather than praise.

4. The New Calendar and Ecumenism

On January 19, 1918 (o.s.), the Soviet State introduced the new calendar into Russia. Thinking "to change times and laws" (Daniel 7.25), a Decree of the Council of People's Commissars dated January 24, 1918 ordered that the day after January 31, 1918 would be February 14, not February 1.

By a remarkable coincidence, on the same day, January 19, the Patriarch anathematised the Bolshevik State, calling on the faithful Orthodox to have no communion with "these outcasts of humanity" in any way whatsoever. A few days later the Patriarch's anathema was confirmed by the Church Council then in session in Moscow. In view of this rejection of the legitimacy of the State, it is not surprising that the Church also rejected the State's change of calendar.

Protopriest Alexander Lebedev writes: "The Sobor [Council] addressed the issue three days after the Decree was signed, at its 71st Session on January 27, 1918. The need for a prompt decision by the Church on how to relate to the civil calendar change was clear - the change was to take place four days later.

"It was decided to send the issue to a Joint Session of two separate Sections of the Sobor - the Section on Divine Services and the Section on the Relationship of the Church to the State.

"This Joint Session of the two Sections met two days later, on January 29, 1918 and heard two major reports, one by Professor S.S. Glagolev, entitled 'A Comparative Evaluation of the Julian and Gregorian Styles', and one by Prof. I.I. Sokolov, entitled, 'The Attitude of the Orthodox East to the Question of the Reform of the Calendar'.

"Neither of these presentations in any way supported the introduction into Church life of the Gregorian Calendar - quite the contrary. Prof. Glagolev concluded, 'The Gregorian Calendar, in addition to being historically harmful, is astronomically

¹⁹⁶ Regelson, op. cit., pp. 236-237.

useless'... Professor Sokolov concluded: 'Therefore, the controlling voice of the Orthodox East, both Greek and Slavic, is expressed as being not only against the Gregorian calendar, as a creature of the inimical to it [the Orthodox East] Catholic West, but also against a neutral or corrected calendar, because such a reform would deleteriously affect the ecclesiastical life of the Orthodox peoples.'

"Finally, the Joint Session of the two Sections prepared a Resolution on the issue of calendar reform.

"It decreed that the Church must stay with the Julian calendar, basing its decision on the following:

"1) There is no reason for the Church not to have a separate ecclesiastical calendar different from the civil calendar.

"2) The Church not only is able to preserve the Old Calendar, - at the present time it would be impossible for it to move to the new calendar.

"3) The introduction of the new calendar by the Russian Church would cause it to break unity with all of the other Orthodox Churches. Any change in the calendar can only be done by mutual agreement of all the Orthodox Churches.

"4) It is impossible to correlate the Orthodox Paschalion with the Gregorian Calendar without causing grave disruption to the Typicon.

"5) It is recognized that the Julian Calendar is astronomically inaccurate. This was noted already at the Council of Constantinople in 1583. However, it is incorrect to believe that the Gregorian Calendar is better suited for ecclesiastical use.

"In conclusion, the Joint Session resolved to maintain the Julian Calendar.

"The Council, in full session, approved this Resolution of the Joint Session."¹⁹⁷

This was an important decree in view of the patriarch's later temporary acceptance of the new calendar, and its acceptance by several Local Churches.

On August 16, it was announced that a department for the reunification of the Christian Churches was being opened: "The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church, which has been gathered and is working in conditions that are so exceptionally difficult for the whole Christian Church, when the waves of unbelief and atheism threaten the very existence of the Christian Church, would take upon itself a great responsibility before history if it did not raise the question of the unification of the Christian Churches and did not give this question a fitting direction at the moment when not only one Christian confession, but the whole of Christianity is threatened by huge dangers on the part of unbelief and atheism.

¹⁹⁷ Lebedev, "St. Patriarch Tikhon and the Calendar Question Part 1", orthodox@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU, 10 July, 2002.

“The task of the department is to prepare material for a decision of the present Council on this question and on the further development of the matter in the inter-Council period...”¹⁹⁸

On September 20, the last, 170th session of the Council, the project for a commission on the reunification of the Churches was reviewed and confirmed by the Council. The president of the department on the unification of the Churches, Archbishop Eudocimus (Meschersky) of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, said: “I am very sad that the report has come at such a difficult time, when the hours of our sacred union in this chamber are coming to an end, and when at the end of work my thoughts are becoming confused and I cannot report to you everything that I could tell you. From our point of view, the Council should have directed its attention at this question long ago. If the Church is alive, then we cannot remain in the narrow limits she has existed in up to now. If we have no courage to preach beyond the bounds of our fatherland, then we must hear the voice coming from there to us. I have in mind the voice of the Anglo-American Episcopalian Churches, who sincerely and insistently seek union or rapprochement, and do not find any insurmountable obstacles on the path to the indicated end. Considering the union of the Christian Churches to be especially desirable in the period of intense struggle with unbelief, crude materialism and moral barbarism that we are experiencing now, the department suggests to the Sacred Council that it adopt the following resolution:

“1. The Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church, joyfully beholding the sincere strivings of the Old Catholics and Anglicans for union with the Orthodox Church on the basis of the teaching and traditions of the Ancient-Catholic Church, blesses the labours and endeavours of the people who work to find paths towards union with the named friendly Churches.

“2. The Council directs the Holy Synod to organize a permanent Commission attached to the Holy Synod with branches in Russia and abroad for the further study of the Old Catholic and Anglican questions, to explicate by means of relations with the Old Catholics and Anglicans the difficulties that lie on the path to union, and possible aids to the speedy attainment of the final end.”

The decisions of the Council of a theological or dogmatic significance were subject to confirmation by a special assembly of bishops. At the last such assembly, on September 22, 1918, this decision was not reviewed. It is possible that for that reason the “Resolution regarding the unification of the Churches” did not enter the official “Collection of the Decrees and Resolutions of the Sacred Council of the Orthodox Russian Church of 1917-1918”.¹⁹⁹

In September, 1918 the Bolsheviki shut down the Local Council and initiate the “Red Terror”, probably the most intense and large-scale persecution of the Orthodox Church since the time of Diocletian. This was probably the reason why the Resolution

¹⁹⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 21

¹⁹⁹ *Sviataia Rus'* (Holy Rus'), 2003; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

was not reviewed and not put into practice. There may also have been a deeper, providential reason: that this Resolution was not pleasing to God, in that it threatened to open the doors of the Russian Church to the heresy of ecumenism, of which the Anglicans were the leaders, at precisely the moment of her greatest weakness...

This conclusion is supported by the fact that in the inter-war years, and right up to General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, the Russian Church – with the exception of the Paris Russian Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the American Metropolia – took no direct part in the ecumenical movement. The other Churches, on the other hand, and especially the Greek Churches, were deeply involved from the early 1920s, and recognized Anglican Orders at an early stage.²⁰⁰

Paradoxically, therefore, the Red Terror saved Russia from ecumenism until the 1960s, when the communists decided to order the official Russian Church into the ecumenical movement for entirely political reasons.

²⁰⁰ See Archimandrite Kallistos Ware and Rev. Colin Davey (eds.), *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue: The Moscow Agreed Statement, 1977*, chapter 2.

15. THE CHURCH IN GEORGIA

The fall of the Russian Autocracy, and the sufferings of the Russian Church, as well as the general political turmoil created by the world war, gave the opportunity to several ecclesiastical movements in the Russian borderlands to break free from the authority of the Russian Church. Thus on March 12, 1917, an Assembly of the bishops, clergy and laity of Georgia proclaimed the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, which, as the Georgians claimed, had never been lawfully abolished. This led to a break in communion with the Russian Church. In the summer, however, "the Georgian Church sent a special deputation to the Most Holy Russian Synod to inform the Most Holy Synod about the re-establishment of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and greet it. The Russian Synod through the mouth of Archbishop Sergius of Finland confirmed 'that Russian Church consciousness has never been foreign to the thought of the necessity of returning to the Georgian Church her former constitution... If this thought has not been realised up to now, for this there were special reasons' not depending on Church actors, but 'now, in the days of the general liberating spring, Russian Church consciousness is ready to welcome the fulfilment ... of the long-time dream' of the Orthodox Georgians, and the Russian hierarchs hope 'that God will order all for the good, and that certain roughnesses in this matter will be smoothed over' and that at the forthcoming Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church a fraternal meeting of representatives of the two Churches is bound to take place in order to find a path to mutual understanding'."²⁰¹

In September, while the Local Council of the Russian Church was just getting under way, a General Council of the Georgian Church confirmed the Acts of the March Council, and on October 1 Bishop Kirion Sadzaguelachvili was enthroned as Catholicos-Patriarch in Tbilisi by three vicar bishops over the protests of three Georgian hierarchs: Demetrius (Abashidze) of Simferopol, Antony of Gori and Nazarius (Lezhavy). The Provisional Government confirmed this election, and soon the Georgians proclaimed an independent socialist republic.²⁰² Kirion immediately seized the exarchal house (the exarch was away) and ordered the portraits of the Tsar and the previous exarchs to be removed. After his first and last liturgy as Catholicos, he fell ill – he had been poisoned (according to one source, he poisoned himself). He recovered, but not completely, and went for complete recovery to the monastery of St. Anthony, near Martkopi, in the foothills of the Caucasus mountains. There, on June 28 (or June 13/26), 1918, he was either murdered²⁰³ or shot himself.²⁰⁴

However, this fact was covered up, and on July 7 he was given a triumphant burial in the Zion cathedral.

201 Catholicos Leonid to Patriarch Tikhon, August 5, 1919; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 9.

202 K.D. Kafafov, "Vospominania o vnutrennykh delakh Rossijskoj imperii" (Reminiscences of the Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire), *Voprosy Istorii* (Historical Questions), № 7, 2005, p. 93.

203 Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze, "Holy Hieromartyr Kirion, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia (†1918)", [Pravoslavie.ru](http://www.pravoslavie.ru), 26 July, 2007 г., <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/7290.htm>;

Archimandrite Seraphim, "Russkie sviaschennomucheniki i mucheniki v Gruzii", *Pravoslavnij Put'*, 1965, pp. 23-32..

Meanwhile, on December 29 / January 11, 1918, Patriarch Tikhon protested against the re-establishment of Georgian autocephaly, pointedly addressing Kirion as only a bishop. Georgia, he wrote, had united with Russia more than a century before, and from that time the highest ecclesiastical authority in Georgia had belonged to the Holy Synod. However, when, in 1905, an attempt was made to restore the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, the Holy Synod in 1906 decreed that this question should be handed over for discussion at the All-Russian Council, the decisions of which the Georgian hierarchs were obliged to wait for. "According to canon law, the agreement and permission of the Mother [*kiriarkhal'noj*] Church to the autocephaly of the other Local Church which before was subject to her jurisdiction is required. Usually the Church which is seeking independence addresses the Mother Church with her request, and, on the basis of data of a political and ecclesiastical character, seeks her agreement to the reception of autocephaly. The request is directed in the name of both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities of the country, and also of the people; it must be a clearly expressed declaration concerning the general and unanimous desire to receive ecclesiastical independence. That is how it was in Greece, in Serbia and in Romania, but it was not like that in Bulgaria, where the well-known schism arose. And it was also not like that, unfortunately, in the Transcaucasus in 1917... In pointing out your errors and mistakes, we suggest to you, Most Reverend Bishops, that you submit to the demands of the ecclesiastical canons and, following the canonical order, appear at the All-Russian Sacred Council, and, recognising your errors, convey your desire concerning the autocephaly of the Georgian Church to the court of the whole All-Russian Council, so that you may not be subjected to the judgement of the canons and not fall into the great and terrible sin of alienation from the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church..."²⁰⁵

When the Civil War began, the Georgians refused to help the Whites. For a few months the British occupied the country. They were succeeded by the Mensheviks with whom the Church was able to live in peace. On August 5, 1919 Catholicos Leonid again wrote to Patriarch Tikhon, pointing out that while Georgia had voluntarily joined Russia politically in 1800, there had never been a desire for such a union ecclesiastically. "The abolition of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was an act of force carried out by the secular powers contrary to ecclesiastical laws. But the Russian Church, instead of protesting against these abuses of the secular rulers, accepted the lordship over the Autocephalous Georgian Church that had been handed to it by the secular authorities. After that every protest on the part either of hierarchs or of laymen against the arbitrary abolition of the independence of the Georgian Church and the russification of the Georgians was suppressed by the secular authorities. Since recently the Russian Synod did not support the hierarchs of Georgia when, in 1905, they submitted a request in relation the re-establishment of the autocephaly of their Church, they decided on their own initiative to proclaim the independence of their Church. But even after this act they were filled with the desire to be in unity of faith and love, which is why they consider the exarch of Georgia, Archbishop Plato, to be the hierarch-locum tenens of the Russian Church in the Caucasus in those dioceses that are beyond the boundaries of the Georgian Church...

²⁰⁵ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-75; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

And we now hope, Most Holy Vladyko, 'that God will order all for the good, and that certain roughnesses in this matter will be smoothed over', and it is not our fault that we did not meet fraternally at the Local Council of the Russian Church – in spite of the promise of the over-procurator A.V. Kartashev, nobody 'fraternally' invited us to the Council, as the representatives of the Churches of Constantinople, Greece, Serbia, and others were invited... Your Holiness' invitation to us to appear before the All-Russian Sacred Council and admit our supposed errors is inappropriate and pointless - there is no error in our actions. And if beyond all expectation there would turn out to be such, then for their extirpation every Church has a means that is well-known to Your Holiness: the unfailing 'grace of the Holy Spirit, through which righteousness is rationally contemplated by the priests of Christ and firmly upheld....' As regards those 'roughnesses' about which his Reverence Sergius, the first in rank in the Holy Synod spoke, and which truly took place between you and us, they have been elicited by the interference of worldly bosses into the affairs of the Church one hundred years ago... But, Your Beatitude, you know that all this 'has taken place not according to Church rules, but according to other human motivations', and for that reason, having restored canonical order in the Churches of Georgia and Russia, we shall take diligent care 'that from now on nothing of the sort should take place' (First Ecumenical Council, canon 21). And this is the more possible and necessary in that by the mercy of God the past has gone, and now everything is new (II Corinthians 5.17)."²⁰⁶

This last remark somewhat spoiled the otherwise strong canonical case presented by the Georgians. At that time, the Russians were undergoing the most terrible persecution in history, so they naturally looked on their present sufferings as the wrath of God rather than His mercy. The Georgians' viewing the revolution as "the mercy of God" that made "everything new" betrayed that they, too, were caught up, at least to some extent, in the revolutionary frenzy of those days...

But the Georgians were soon to share in the sufferings of their brothers in the faith. In February, 1921 the Bolsheviks, at the initiative of the Georgians Stalin and Ordzhonikidze, invaded, and after a short war of three weeks took control of the country. Soon the Church was deprived of juridical status, and churches and monasteries began to be closed...

"On February 7, 1922," writes Fr. Elijah Melia, "Catholicos Ambrose sent to the Interallied Conference at Genoa (the highest degree of international jurisdiction at that time) a letter of protest in which, recalling the moral obligations towards the nation of his charge, he protested in the name of the people of Georgia, deprived of their rights, against the foreign occupation and demanded the intervention of civilized humanity to oppose the iniquity committed against Georgia. He was arrested in February 1923 with Archbishop Nasaire and all the members of his Council. Their trial, which took place under conditions of semi-liberty, greatly stirred up the country.

²⁰⁶ K.E. Skurat, *Istoria Pomestnykh Pravoslavnykh Tserkvej* (A History of the Local Orthodox Churches), chapter 1; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

“There were three accusations: 1) the 1922 letter to the Genoa Conference, 2) the concealment of the historic treasures of the Church in order to preserve them from passing into the hands of the State and 3) the prohibition imposed [by the] Governmental Commission for Religion against the redemption of precious objects in favour of the starving. Archbishop Nasaire was assassinated during the trial [on September 1, 1924], most probably in order to impress the others accused. All the members of his Council showed their solidarity with the Catholicos Ambrose, who conducted himself heroically, assuming the entire responsibility for his acts, which he declared to have been in conformity with his obligations and with the tradition of the Church of Georgia in similar cases. He was condemned to eight years imprisonment. Two members of his Council were given five and two years respectively. The Catholicos was liberated before the term of his imprisonment was over. He died on March 29, 1927.

“In August 1924, a general insurrection broke out, organized by all the active forces of the nation – the higher ranks of the army, the political parties, the university, the ecclesiastics, the population as a whole. But the uprising was doomed to fail, for the plot had been betrayed. The repression created thousands of victims. Groups of partisans still operated for some time...”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Melia, "The Orthodox Church of Georgia", *A Sign of God: Orthodoxy 1964*, Athens: Zoe, 1964, pp. 112-113. According to Slava Katamidze, the number of victims was “enormous”, but “the real figure has never been published” (*Loyal Comrades, Ruthless Killers*, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, p. 39).

16. THE CHURCH IN BESSARABIA

One of the consequences of the Russian revolution was that Russian Moldavia (Bessarabia), 60% of whose population was Romanian, was united to the Romanian State. Before the revolution, writes Barbara Jelavich, "Romanians as such did not face prejudice, and there were Romanian as well as Russian large landowners. The widespread discontent was economic and social more than national. The position of the peasants was regulated by the Russian emancipation laws of the 1860s and subsequent reform measures, but, as in other parts of Russia, these had not solved the basic agrarian problems. Since conditions were roughly the same in the Regat, independent Romania did not hold a great attraction for the peasant majority. The main demand of all peasants was a breakup of the large estates and a distribution of their lands..."

"Because of these conditions, the Russian revolutions in March and November 1917 were bound to have a great effect. They influenced not only the disaffected peasants, but also the many soldiers in the province who had deserted the rapidly disintegrating Russian army... As early as July 1917 the peasants began to seize the land; by the end of the year they had appropriated about two-thirds.

"In October 1917 a provisional government for Bessarabia was organized, with its center at Kishinev... This government remained in control of the province from November 1917 to November 1918. In December 1917 it declared itself the Democratic Moldavian Republic and expressed the desire to join a Soviet federative republic..."²⁰⁸

However, in view of the discussions that had begun between the Soviet and German governments, this decision disturbed the Allied Powers, and with the approval of France the Romanian army invaded the province. On March 27, the Moldavian parliament, surrounded by Romanian soldiers, voted for the union of Bessarabia with Romania. It was suggested to Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of Kishinev that he join the Romanian Church; but he refused.

In May he left the province, and the Kishinev archiepiscopate fell under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Church.²⁰⁹ On June 14, the Romanian Synod appointed Bishop Nicodemus (Muntianu) of Khush as deputy *locum tenens* of the see of Kishinev (he later became Patriarch of Romania). He began to "Romanize" the Bessarabian Church, introduced the Romanian language into the Kishinev seminary and in some monasteries replaced Russian and Ukrainian superiors with Romanian ones.

In October, 1918 Patriarch Tikhon wrote to Metropolitan Pimen of Moldavia and Suceava, the president of the Synod of the Romanian Church, protesting strongly at the anticanonical seizure of the Kishinev diocese by the Romanian Church, "which

²⁰⁸ Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, volume 2, pp. 158-159.

²⁰⁹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 18.

by her unilateral decision taken without the agreement of the Russian Church did not have the right to determine the destiny of the Kishinev diocese by submitting it to her power after Orthodox Bessarabia had constituted an indivisible part of the Russian ecclesiastical body for the last one hundred years. This way of acting on the part of the Romanian Holy Synod contradicts at the same time the spirit of Christian love, the age-old canonical decrees and the sacred customs of the Orthodox Church. Pointing to the supposed fact that political union always brings with it a union of the Churches cannot in the given case serve as a justification for the Romanian ecclesiastical authority, first, because it is not itself justified by history, and secondly, because such a point of view rests on a confusion of the nature of ecclesiastical and political life, which are different by their very essence... Moreover, the act of joining Bessarabia to the Romanian kingdom, as we said before, is far from generally recognised from the international point of view and can be subject to review at the final tally of the results of the world war."

The Patriarch's Epistle ended with a warning: "If the Romanian Church, in spite of the objections we have raised, tries by force to strengthen the position in its favour, we will be forced to break all fraternal and canonical communion with the Romanian Synod and bring the present matter before the judgement of the other Orthodox Churches."²¹⁰

The Romanians paid no attention to this admonition, and in 1919 placed in the see of Kishinev Archimandrite Gurias (Grossu), a Russian priest of Moldavian extraction, and a graduate of the Kiev Academy.²¹¹

Thus, as K.V. Glazkov writes, "while with one hand the Romanian authorities mercilessly destroying the communist opposition (for example, mass punitive operation were undertaken against Bolsheviks in the army, and Romanian units took part in the suppression of the red revolution in 1918 in Hungary), with the other hand they suppressed every kind of dissidence. A number of deputies of the Popular Assembly who were opponents of the union of Bessarabia and Romania were shot, after which the National Assembly itself was dissolved, while on the same day the pro-Romanian deputies triumphantly overthrew the monuments to Tsars Alexander I and Alexander II in the capital. In January, 1920, the White armies of General Bredov..., in whose carts were fugitives, women and children, were shot from Romanian machine-guns as they approached the Dniester. In this way the new authorities in Bessarabia spoiled for good their relations with the Russians.

"We should note that from the very beginning the Russian hierarchy and clergy, as if foreseeing the possibility of church-political disturbances, adopted quite a cold attitude to the inclusion of Bessarabia into Romania. This act was even condemned by Archbishop Anastasy (Gribanovsky) of Kishinev and Khotyn (latter first-hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad). Hoping for the speedy victory of the White movement, the representatives of the Bessarabian Church together with the zemstvo took part in the creation of a Committee for the liberation of Bessarabia. Therefore the

²¹⁰ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 155; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

²¹¹ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 41.

Romanian Synod began the canonical submission of the Bessarabian diocese by demanding that Vladykas Anastasy, Gabriel and Dionysius separate from the Russian Orthodox Church in spite of the protests of Patriarch Tikhon. When the hierarchs refused to do this, the Romanian military units arrested them and exiled them from the country. But the believers were told that the hierarchs had left their diocese voluntarily. In the place of Metropolitan Anastasy there arrived from Bucharest the Romanian Archbishop Nicodemus; he was met by the clergy and laity by no means in a friendly manner. The ecclesiastical authorities [of the Russian Church] Abroad did not recognise the lawfulness of the union of the Kishinev diocese to the Romanian Church. It was violence, deceit and transgression of the Church canons, and not at all the commandments of God, that were laid at the foundation of their actions on the territory of Bessarabia by the Romanian civil and ecclesiastical authorities. How could the coming events unfold except in conditions of further imposition of terror?

“In the Kishinev spiritual seminary and spiritual schools the Romanian authorities removed the teaching of Russian and Church Slavonic languages, clearly intending to create a situation in which in Bessarabia as a whole there would remain no priests able to serve in Church Slavonic. Also, Church Slavonic service books were removed from the churches, and the priests were banned from delivering sermons in Russian. Direct physical persecution began against the zealots for the language of Saints Cyril and Methodius. In the village of Rechul the nuns of the local monastery were beaten with birch-rods by Romanian gendarmes for taking part in services in Church Slavonic, while an old priest of the village of Goreshte who was suspected of sympathizing with the opposition was tortured with wet lashes until he lost consciousness, after which he went mad. It may be that the whole guilt of the priest consisted in the fact that he, like many true patriots, did not want to commemorate the Romanian king, his family and the Synod at the liturgy.

“The majority of the zealots for Church Slavonic as the liturgical language were Russians, but many Moldavian priests and laypeople fought steadfastly against forcible Romanianization. ‘The Moldavians,’ reported the Romanian counter-intelligence of Beltsky uyezdz, ‘are hostile to the Romanian administration, they avoid the Romanian clergy..., they threaten the priests when they commemorate the name of the king in church.’ ...

“In July, 1922 there was formed in Kishinev a multi-national ‘Union of Orthodox Christians’. Soon Bessarabian patriots came to lead the Union. They were closely linked with the Russian communion in Kishinev. According to certain information, Russian monarchists led by General E. Leontovich took part in the organization of the Union. In 1924 the re-registration of another organisation took place – the Orthodox Brotherhood of Alexander Nevsky, which was led by activists of Moldavian, Gagauz and Russian nationalities – Protopriest Michael Chakir, Priest Nicholas Lashku and K.K. Malanetsky, etc. All these were branded by the secret police as ‘ardent pan-Russists’, while the brotherhood was called the centre for the preservation and propaganda of Russian monarchist ideas...”²¹²

²¹² Glazkov, “Istoricheskie prichiny niekotorykh sobitij v istorii Rumynskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi do

17. THE CHURCH IN UKRAINE

After leading the rite of the enthronement of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev returned to his flock, his heart heavy with forebodings about the future. Already in March, on his first return to Kiev after the February revolution, he had had to hold back the waves of incipient revolution. For an "Executive Committee of clergy and laymen" was organized in Kiev at this time, and a "Commissar for ecclesiastical affairs" was appointed. The long-suffering Orthodox city of Kiev, which had witnessed in the many centuries of its history all manner of hideous events and changes, was shocked at the spectacle of an Orthodox parish priest in the role of a revolutionary commissar, "a policeman in a riasa" as he was called.²¹³

In a dialogue with representatives of the executive committee, Metropolitan Vladimir stated candidly that "the Executive Committee of clergy and laymen is an illegitimate institution which is trying gradually to expand its power and to usurp prerogatives which do not belong to it." However, in spite of this his opinion of the new organ of the Kievan Church which had been formed as a result of the revolution, Metropolitan Vladimir did not refuse in principle to work with its members to lead the Church in a new direction. He gave his blessing for "the Executive Committee of clergy and laymen" to convene, in Kiev on April 12, 1917, a "Congress of the clergy and laymen of the Kievan diocese", which was for reasons that remain unclear transformed into "the Ukrainian congress of the clergy and laymen of the Kievan diocese".

Metropolitan Vladimir had a negative opinion of this congress. During it bishops were publicly insulted in a manner unheard of in the Orthodox Christian world; clerics in attendance branded them as "parasites". Metropolitan Vladimir likewise had a negative opinion of the resolutions which this congress passed, among which was the declaration that "the autonomous Ukraine must have a Ukrainian church which is independent of the Synod." He also opposed the formation by this congress of a so-called advisory committee to the Metropolitan of Kiev.

This is how the members of this committee characterized the metropolitan's attitude towards them in their account of a meeting which took place on July 1, 1917: "At this meeting, in the presence of three vicar bishops, the metropolitan expressed what can only be called a hostile attitude toward the Church Committee in such clear and candid terms that all of its members wished to leave the metropolitan's inhospitable chambers. One of the committee members (Archpriest E.A. Kapralov) suggested that they do so and that it be recorded in the minutes that the metropolitan's attitude precluded any possibility of cooperative and fruitful labour."

II Mirovoj vojny" (The Historical Reasons for some Events in the History of the Romanian Orthodox Church before the Second World War), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), May-August, 2000, 46-48.

²¹³ According to the brochure *A True Account of the Church Advisory Council to the Metropolitan of Kiev* (Kiev, 1917), he is described as "at all times of the day and even sometimes at night, always with his briefcase in his hand or under his arm, racing about in an automobile with representatives of the executive committee, either to oversee the searching of monasteries in order to discover counter-revolutionary or pogromist literature, or seizing confidential documents at the Church Consistory..." (p. 30).

The metropolitan's feelings were best expressed in an "archpastoral address" which he published in early August, 1917, on the eve of the convocation of an extraordinary congress of the Kievan diocese: "The great misfortune of our times is that people consider it to be a virtue to have a liberal attitude toward matters of faith and morality. Many consider it their duty to implant such a liberal attitude toward faith and morality in the souls of the Russian people... To justify themselves, they present arguments that seem to merit our attention. They say: every man can judge religious matters from his own point of view and freely express his convictions, whatever they may be, according to his conscience, and he must respect the religious convictions of others. No one will object to freedom of religion and of the conscience. One must not, however, forget that Christian faith is not a human invention, but rather the word of God, and it cannot be changed to suit people's concepts. If people's convictions stand in opposition to the Divine truth, is it reasonable to recognize these convictions, to consider them correct and to guide one's life by them? We must, of course, be tolerant of those who do not agree with us, and bear with even those who have clearly gone astray, but we must turn away from their errors, and prove that they are unfounded. The pastors of the Christian Church and all sincere followers of Christ's teachings should consider this their duty..."

"Our local and rapidly growing sorrows add to the misfortune experienced by the whole of the Russian land. I am speaking about a tendency which has surfaced in southern Russia and which threatens to destroy the peace and unity of the Church. It is terrible for us even to hear people talk about separating the churches of southern Russia from the one Orthodox Church of Russia. After their long cooperation, can there be any grounds for such aims? What is their origin? Did not the preachers who spread Orthodoxy throughout Russia come from Kiev? Among the God-pleasing brethren of the Kiev-Caves Lavra do we not see men who came from all corners of Holy Russia? Is it not true that the Orthodox of southern Russia have laboured in all parts of Russia, serving the Church and as scholars in various fields? And conversely, is it not true that the Orthodox of northern Russia have laboured for salvation in various professions in southern Russia? Did they not erect the one great Russian Orthodox Church together? Could the Orthodox of southern Russia possibly reproach the Orthodox of northern Russia for falling away from the faith in some way or for distorting the teachings of faith and morality? Certainly not. Based on my personal experience I can testify that in all the dioceses where God has allowed me to serve, the Orthodox teachings of faith and morality are kept pure and unchanged, and there is everywhere unity in the Church's teachings and liturgical practices. Why should there be any separation? Where will it lead? Indeed, only the enemies both without and within will have cause to rejoice. Our love for our native soil should not suppress and stifle our love for the whole of Russia and for the one Russian Orthodox Church."

The metropolitan concluded by appealing to the clergy and laymen to "take every possible measure to promote unity among themselves and with the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church," and to "devote serious thought and proper preparation to the upcoming congress, thoroughly to discuss the issues presented there, and pass resolutions which are correct, legal, beneficial and which merit implementation."

However, the congress, which took place on August 8 and 9, 1917, took an entirely different direction. On August 9, the metropolitan was so offended by the proceedings of the congress that he fell seriously ill and had to leave the meeting immediately. In a defiant public statement, the delegates interpreted the metropolitan's departure as escapism and an expression of his lack of respect for the meeting.

In October, 1917, the Provisional Government fell. The Ukrainian government wished to use the change to turn their autonomous status into one of full independence. And the same tendencies were strongly present in the Church. A special committee in charge of convening a Council of the Orthodox clergy and lay people of the Ukraine was organized in Kiev in mid-November of 1917 according to a resolution passed at the third Cossack military assembly. Archbishop Alexis Dorodnitsyn (formerly of Vladimir), who was in retirement in the Kiev Caves Lavra, stood at the head of this committee, which was joined by representatives from among the clergy of Kiev (Fathers Lipkovsky, Tarnavsky, Filipenko and others). They played active roles in the above-mentioned organizations, such as the Executive Committee, Church Advisory Council to the Metropolitan of Kiev, etc.

At a meeting on November 23, the committee "discussed the present position of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine now that the Ukrainian government is being separated from the government of Russia, and took into account the pronouncement of the Russian Patriarch, who might extend his authority to include the Ukrainian Church as well". They passed a whole series of resolutions, which amounted to sweeping changes in the status and administration of the Church in the Ukraine. The organizational committee was renamed "the provisional Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council", and an executive committee established to convene a provisional Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council was proclaimed "the provisional government of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church". It was also decided that this new ecclesiastical government should appoint commissars to all the dioceses of the Ukraine. The priest Fr. Pashchevsky was appointed commissar of the Kievan diocese. And the chairman of the Council, Archbishop Alexis, was forbidden to go to Moscow, where he had been summoned to become the abbot of a monastery by Patriarch Tikhon.

On November 24, a general meeting of the Orthodox parish councils of Kiev was convened at which these moves towards Ukrainian ecclesiastical autocephaly were condemned and the fear was expressed that an autocephalous Church might join the uniates and come under the Pope.

A few days later the metropolitan arrived in Kiev. On December 4 a meeting convened by the Union of Orthodox Parish Councils was held under the presidency of the metropolitan and attended by Metropolitan Platon of Georgia. In the days that followed several attempts were made by the autocephalists to remove Metropolitan Vladimir and his vicar bishops from Kiev. At one point, sharply reversing course, a member of the Church Rada called Fomenko, accompanied by a soldier, offered him the post of Patriarch of the Ukrainian Church, while at the same time demanding one hundred thousand rubles from the coffers of the metropolia. It was only with

difficulty that the unwanted night visitors were removed.

At the end of the month another delegation came to the metropolitan and demanded that he leave Kiev. He replied with emotion: "I am not afraid of anyone or anything. I am at all times prepared to give my life for Christ's Church and for the Orthodox faith, to prevent its enemies from mocking it. I will suffer to the very end in order to preserve Orthodoxy in the very place where it first took root in Russia."

And then, going up to one member of the delegation and pointing at his heart, he said: "Do you know that the first revolutionary was the devil, and you are making a revolution in the Church of Christ?"

Then he wept bitterly.

The metropolitan considered the convening of an All-Ukrainian Council untimely in view of the Bolshevik seizure of power. Nevertheless, he was forced to prepare for the opening of a new Council, and opened its first session on January 7, 1918 with a moleben on Sophia square and a welcoming speech to the delegates. The metropolitan was unanimously elected to the chairmanship of the Council, and attended every single meeting until the civil war broke out in Kiev.

Artillery shells began to fall on the Kiev Caves Lavra on January 15 and continued for several days. However, the metropolitan continued with his religious duties, displaying great calm. On January 23, he celebrated his last Divine Liturgy with the brotherhood of the Lavra. That evening, after occupying Kiev, the Bolsheviks took control of the Lavra, and violence began. Armed people burst into the churches with hats on their heads and cigarettes between their teeth. With shouting and swearing they conducted searches even during Divine services, and mocked the holy things. They stripped old monks and took off their shoes outside. Then they mocked them and cut them with whips. Officers who were found in the Lavra were killed. In spite of all the commotion, the metropolitan served an akathist to the Dormition of the Mother of God in the great church of the Lavra, which proved to be his last service on earth. Then he and Bishop Theodore of Priluki moved to the altar of the lower church, which was dedicated to St. Michael, first metropolitan of Kiev. On January 25 / February 7 he was martyred by the Bolsheviks, the first bishop-martyr of the revolution...

In March, 1918, after the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Kiev was surrendered to the Germans. But after the defeat of Germany in the world war Petlyura captured Kiev, after which Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, Archbishop Eulogius of Volhynia, Bishop Nicodemus of Chigirinsk, Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko) and others were arrested and handed over to the Poles. In August, 1919, Kiev was liberated by the Whites, and with the help of pressure from the Western powers, the prisoners were released by the Poles. As the Red Army regained the upper hand, Metropolitan Anthony set off for the Kuban, where he became honorary president of the Higher Church Authority that had been formed there. Later he emigrated and became first-hierarchy of the Russian Church in Exile.

In 1920 an “Independent Union of Ukrainian Orthodox Parishes” was formed, which convoked the first council of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Church in October, 1921. Metropolitan Michael (Ermakov) appeared at the Sophia cathedral and called on those present not to introduce a scandal into Church life, and pointed out that Patriarch Tikhon had “blessed Divine services in the Ukrainian language when that was desired by a majority of parishioners, including women, whom the Patriarch blessed to take part in Church work with full rights”. The metropolitan hoped that the delegates “will not transgress the Church canons or the will of his Holiness the Patriarch”. He did not give his blessing to the assembly, pointing out its anticanonicity, and suggested the participants to disperse to their homes.

When the metropolitan had departed, on October 23 the participants proceeded to a so-called “conciliar consecration”. That is, since no bishops had joined them, they were forced to create bishops for themselves in a manner that no other Orthodox Church recognized as canonical, earning for themselves the title of the “Lypkovsky *samosvyaty*” after the first “bishop” to be thus consecrated, Basil Lypkovsky. As Lypkovsky himself wrote: “30 priests and all the laymen – as many as could fit into the walls of the Sophia cathedral - took part in the consecration. At the moment of consecration a wave of enthusiasm ran through the crowd. The members of the council and all those present put their hands on each other’s shoulders until a chain of hands went up to the priests who surrounded me.” Then they took Lypkovsky to the relics of Great Martyr Mercurius and placed on his head the dead head of the saint. That is how Lypkovsky became a “bishop”. On October 24 and 30 several other bishops were consecrated. The Council also introduced a married episcopate and second marriages for priests.²¹⁴

Later in the 1920s a second autocephalist movement was initiated by Bishop Theophilus (Buldovsky) of Lubensk, who received consecration in the Patriarchal Church at a time when the Lypkovsky schism was declining, but who later separated from the Church on the same basis of Ukrainian nationalism and united the remnants of the Lypkovsky schism to his own.

One of the most popular patriarchal priests in Ukraine at this time was Fr. Basil (Zelentsov), a disciple of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava. It was largely through his influence that Buldovsky’s schism was rejected by the mass of the people.

In 1922 Fr. Basil was put on trial on a political charge. In his speech at the end of the trial he said that he was loyal to Soviet power insofar as “it, like everything else, is sent to us from above... But where the matter touches the Faith of Christ, the churches of God and human souls, there I have fought, do now fight, and will continue to fight to my last breath with the representatives of this power. It would be

²¹⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 58. According to another version, Lypkovsky was “consecrated” by placing his hand on the head of St. Clement, Pope of Rome. See M.V. Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, p. 175, footnote 2; Archbishop Leontius (Filippovich), “Tserkovnij shovinizm i samosviatstvo na Ukraine. K Istorii vozniknovenia UAPTs v 20-e gody XX st.” (Church Chauvinism and self-consecration in Ukraine. Towards a history of the appearance of the UAOC in the 20s of the 20th century”, http://catacomb.org.ua/php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=821.

shamefully sinful for me, as a warrior of Christ, who bear this cross on my breast, to defend myself personally at a time when the enemies have taken up arms and declared war against Christ Himself."

After his consecration to the episcopate in 1925, Bishop Basil continued to wage a spiritual war against the Bolsheviks, publicly calling them "apostates from God, violators, blasphemers of the Faith of Christ, murderers, a satanic power, blood-suckers, destroyers of freedom and justice, fiends from hell". He constantly called on the people "to make them no allowances, to make no compromises with them, to fight and fight with the enemies of Christ, and not to fear tortures and death, for sufferings from Him are the highest happiness and joy". In 1930 he suffered martyrdom in Moscow for his rejection of sergianist neo-renovationism.²¹⁵

Although the Ukrainian autocephalists were a clearly schismatic movement, they did not share the modernist ideology of the Muscovite renovationists, and entered into union with them only in the autumn of 1924, evidently with the aim of securing the recognition of their own autocephaly from Constantinople, with whom the renovationists were in communion. That is why it was not until January 5, 1924 that the patriarch extended his anti-renovationist anathema of 1923 to the autocephalists. Even then, the autocephalists showed little animosity towards the patriarch, and in the Second All-Ukrainian Council of 1925 the Synod issued an epistle calling for the review of Patriarch Tikhon's defrocking by the renovationists.²¹⁶

Although the Ukrainian autocephalists were now largely controlled by Soviet agents, in January, 1930 the authorities convoked a council which dissolved the whole of their Church organization.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Protopresbyter Michael Polsky, *Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Martyrs of Russia), Jordanville, 1957, part 2, chapter IV; "Hieromartyr Basil, Bishop of Priluky", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 48, № 6, November-December, 1998, pp. 39-50.

²¹⁶ "Spravka o Priniatii v Obschenie Episkopa Seraphima (Lyade)" (Document on the Reception of Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) into Communion), *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), N 12, 1937.

²¹⁷ See Archbishop Leontius (Philippovich), "Ukrainskie shovinsity i samosvyaty" (Ukrainian Chauvinists and Self-Consecrators), *Russkij Pastyr* (Russian Pastor), II-III, 1995, pp. 154-187; J.-F. Meyer, *Réligions et sécurité internationale* (Religions and International Security), Berne: Office Centrale de la Defense, 1995, p. 29.

18. THE CHURCH IN THE CIVIL WAR

The Patriarch continued to manifest the defiant spirit of the Moscow Council in relation to Bolshevism. Thus on October 26, 1918 he wrote to the Sovnarkom: “‘All those who take up the sword will perish by the sword’ (Matthew 26.52). This prophecy of the Saviour we apply to you, the present determiners of the destinies of our fatherland, who call yourselves ‘people’s commissars’. For a whole year you have held State power in your hands and you are already preparing to celebrate the anniversary of the October revolution, but the blood poured out in torrents of our brothers pitilessly slaughtered in accordance with your appeals, cries out to heaven and forces us to speak to you this bitter word of righteousness.

“In truth you gave it a stone instead of bread and a serpent instead of a fish (Matthew 7.9, 10). You promised to give the people, worn out by bloody war, peace ‘without annexations and requisitions’. In seizing power and calling on the people to trust you, what promises did you give it and how did you carry out these promises? What conquests could you renounce when you had brought Russia to a shameful peace whose humiliating conditions you yourselves did not even decide to publish fully? Instead of annexations and requisitions our great homeland has been conquered, reduced and divided, and in payment of the tribute imposed on it you will secretly export to Germany the gold which was accumulated by others than you... You have divided the whole people into warring camps, and plunged them into a fratricide of unprecedented ferocity. You have openly exchanged the love of Christ for hatred, and instead of peace you have artificially inflamed class enmity. And there is no end in sight to the war you have started, since you are trying to use the workers and peasants to bring victory to the spectre of world revolution... It is not enough that you have drenched the hands of the Russian people in the blood of brothers, covering yourselves with contributions, requisitions and nationalisations under various names: you have incited the people to the most blatant and shameless looting. At your instigation there has been the looting or confiscation of lands, estates, factories, houses and cattle; money, objects, furniture and clothing are looted. At first you robbed the more wealthy and industrious peasants under the name of ‘bourgeois’, thereby multiplying the numbers of the poor, although you could not fail to realise that by devastating a great number of individual citizens the people’s wealth is being destroyed and the country itself ravaged.

“Having seduced the dark and ignorant people with the opportunity of easy and unpunished profit, you darkened their consciences and drowned out in them the consciousness of sin. But with whatever names you cover your evil deeds – murder, violence and looting will always remain heavy sins and crimes that cry out to heaven for revenge.

“You promised freedom. Rightly understood, as freedom from evil, that does not restrict others, and does not pass over into licence and self-will, freedom is a great good. But you have not given that kind of freedom: the freedom given by you consists in indulging in every way the base passions of the mob, and in not punishing murder and robbery. Every manifestation both of true civil and the higher spiritual freedom of mankind is mercilessly suppressed by you. Is it freedom when nobody can get food

for himself, or rent a flat, or move from city to city without special permission? Is it freedom when families, and sometimes the populations of whole houses are resettled and their property thrown out into the street, and when citizens are artificially divided into categories, some of which are given over to hunger and pillaging? Is it freedom when nobody can openly express his opinion for fear of being accused of counter-revolution?

“Where is freedom of the word and the press, where is the freedom of Church preaching? Many bold Church preachers have already paid with the blood of their martyrdom; the voice of social and state discussion and reproach is suppressed; the press, except for the narrowly Bolshevik press, has been completely smothered. The violation of freedom in matters of the faith is especially painful and cruel. There does not pass a day in which the most monstrous slanders against the Church of Christ and her servers, and malicious blasphemies and sacrilege, are not published in the organs of your press. You mock the servers of the altar, you force a bishop to dig ditches (Bishop Hermogen of Tobolsk), and you send priests to do dirty work. You have placed your hands on the heritage of the Church, which has been gathered by generations of believing people, and you have not hesitated to violate their last will. You have closed a series of monasteries and house churches without any reason or cause. You have cut off access to the Moscow Kremlin, that sacred heritage of the whole believing people... It is not our task to judge earthly powers; every power allowed by God would attract to itself Our blessing if it were in truth a servant of God subject to the good, and was ‘terrible not for good deeds, but for evil’ (Romans 13.3,4). Now we extend to you, who are using your power for the persecution of your neighbours and the destruction of the innocent, Our word of exhortation: celebrate the anniversary of your coming to power by liberating the imprisoned, by stopping the blood-letting, violence, destruction and restriction of the faith. Turn not to destruction, but to the establishment of order and legality. Give the people the rest from civil war that they desire and deserve. Otherwise ‘from you will be required all the righteous blood that you have shed’ (Luke 11.51), ‘and you who have taken up the sword will perish by the sword’.”²¹⁸

It was at about this time that the Russian Civil War broke out. The Bolsheviks defeated the Whites attacking them from all directions. It was the bloodiest conflict in human history to that date, causing the deaths of up to twenty million people according to some estimates, eight or nine million according to others.

The defeat of the Whites has been attributed to many factors – the Reds’ occupation of the centre, the Whites’ difficulties of communication, the fitful intervention of the western powers, the betrayal of the Whites by the Poles...

Certainly the Reds did *not* represent a formidable opponent at first. Having destroyed the old Imperial army, it was extremely difficult for them to build up an effective new army. By the spring of 1920 80% of the officer corps was staffed by

²¹⁸ *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), 1968, №№ 89-90, pp. 19-23; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

former tsarist officers, whose services were retained only by the threat that their families would be massacred if they did not comply. Even so, there were very many desertions to the Whites – 1.76 million in 1919 alone, the Whites' most successful year.²¹⁹

But the sad and most fundamental fact was that, as Elder Aristocles of Moscow (+1918) said, "The spirit [among the Whites] is not right." For many of them were aiming, not at the restoration of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox tsardom, but at the reconvening of the Constituent Assembly or the restoration of the landowners' lands. Although this conclusion is disputed by some,²²⁰ the evidence is in its favour. Not that there was not a hard core of truly believing, monarchist Orthodox Christians in the White armies. But they failed because Russia as a whole was not worthy of the restoration of the Orthodox autocracy.

Of course, as noted above, if the White armies approaching Yekaterinburg from the East in July, 1918 had managed to rescue the Tsar and his family alive, the task of the Whites would have been easier – which is precisely why the Reds killed them. But even a living Tsar would probably have availed little in view of the fact that in their majority neither the White soldiers nor the populations whose interests they sought to represent were monarchists. Thus in 1919, when the Romanov Great Princes who were in the Crimea approached General Denikin with a request to enter the ranks of the White Army, they were refused. "The reasons," writes Prince Felix Yusupov, "were political: the presence of relatives of the imperial family in the ranks of the White Army was not desirable. The refusal greatly upset us..."²²¹

Again, as Michael Nazarov points out, "there sat in the White governments at that time activists like, for example, the head of the Archangel government Tchaikovsky, who gave to the West as an explanation of the Bolshevik savageries the idea that 'we put up with the destructive autocratic regime for too long,... our people were less educated politically than the other allied peoples'?"²²²

Again, the leading White General A.I. Denikin said: "It is not given us to know what state structure Russia would have accepted in the event of the victory of the White armies in 1919-20. I am sure, however, that after an inevitable, but short-lived struggle of various political tendencies, a normal structure would have been established in Russia based on the principles of law, freedom and private property. And in any case – no less democratic than that which the reposed Marshal [Pisludsky] introduced in Poland..."²²³

²¹⁹ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²²⁰ For example, by Protodeacon German Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, who writes: "Even if the White Army officially supported the principle of 'non-pre-determination' in relation to the future political order of Russia, according to the witness of General P.N. Wrangel, 90% of his Russian Army was composed of monarchists, and set itself only one task – the overthrow of the Bolshevik yoke" ("90 let Velikogo Rossijskogo Iskhoda" (90 Years of the Great Russian Exodus), *Nasha Strana*, N 2905, December 4, 2010, p. 2).

²²¹ Yusupov, *Memuary* (Memoirs), Moscow, 1998, p. 250.

²²² Nazarov, *Tajna Rossii* (The Mystery of Russia), Moscow: "Russkaia Idea", 1999, pp. 85-86.

²²³ Denikin, *Kto spas Sovetskuiu vlast' ot gibeli?* (Who Saved Soviet Power from Destruction?), Paris, 1937, in A.I. Denikin and A.A. von Lampe, *Tragedia Beloj Armii* (The Tragedy of the White Army),

Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) commented: “Unfortunately, the most noble and pious leader of this [the White] army listened to those unfitting counsellors who were foreign to Russia and sat in his Special council and destroyed the undertaking. The Russian people, the real people, the believing and struggling people, did not need the bare formula: ‘a united and undivided Russia’. They needed neither ‘Christian Russia’, nor ‘Faithless Russia’, nor ‘Tsarist Russia’, nor ‘the Landowners’ Russia’ (by which they will always understand a republic). They needed the combination of the three dear words – ‘for the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland’. Most of all, they needed the first word, since faith rules the whole of the state’s life; the second word was necessary since the tsar guards and protects the first; and the third was needed since the people is the bearer of the first words.”²²⁴

Not having firmly Orthodox and monarchical convictions, but rather, as V. Shambarov writes, “a complete absence of a political programme”²²⁵, the Whites were bound to be disunited amongst themselves and weak in opposing Red propaganda in their rear. This was especially evident on the northern front, where Red propaganda was effective amongst both the White Russians and the British.²²⁶ But it was hardly less true on the other fronts.

In this failure, the Whites lost their own major weapon in the propaganda war. For as Trotsky said: “If the White Guardists had thought of unfurling the slogan of the kulaks’ Tsar, we would not have lasted for two weeks...” So anti-monarchism not only destroyed the monarchy: it destroyed any chance of delivering Russia from the Bolshevik nightmare.

St. John Maximovich summed up the situation: “If the higher military leaders, instead of beseeching his Majesty ‘on their knees’ to abdicate, had carried out what they were bound to do in accordance with their oath, the artificially incited rebellion would have been suppressed and Russia would have been saved... A terrible sin before God and a state crime was carried out. God only knows the extent to which any of them expiated their sin. But there was hardly any open repentance. After the fall of the Provisional Government, and the loss of the power it had seized, there was a call to struggle for Russia. But although it elicited noble feelings among many and a corresponding movement, there was no expression of repentance on the part of the main criminals, who continued to think of themselves as heroes and saviours of Russia. Meanwhile, Trotsky in his *Memoirs* admitted that they (the Soviets) feared above all the proclamation of a Tsar, since then the fall of Soviet power would have been inevitable. However, this did not happen, the ‘leaders’ were also afraid. They inspired many to struggle, but their call was belated and their courage did not save Russia. Some of them laid down their lives and shed their blood in this struggle, but

Moscow, 1991, p. 8. Denikin said during the war: “You think that I’m going to Moscow to restore the throne of the Romanovs? Never!”

²²⁴ Khrapovitsky, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²²⁵ Shambarov, *Belogvardeischina* (Whiteguardism), Moscow, 2002.

²²⁶ Anthony Lockley, “Propaganda and the First Cold War in North Russia, 1918-1919”, *History Today*, vol. 53 (9), September, 2003, pp. 46-53.

far more innocent blood was shed. It continues to be poured out throughout Russia, crying out to heaven."²²⁷

Another weakness of the Whites was their failure to curb anti-semitic excesses in their ranks, especially among the Cossacks. However, as Pipes writes, "while the Cossack detachments of the Southern Army committed numerous atrocities (none can be attributed to the Volunteer army), a careful reckoning of the pogroms by Jewish organizations indicates that the worst crimes were the work of independent gangs of Ukrainians."²²⁸

Hatred of Jews was common to all classes of society, of all ideological persuasions. Historians have paid more attention to atrocities committed by the Whites than to those committed by the Reds. Nevertheless, the fact remains that shameful acts of plunder, torture and rape were committed by the Whites. And while, as Pipes goes on to say, "it is incorrect to lay wholesale blame for the massacres of the Jews on the White Army, it is true that Denikin [commander of the Volunteer Army] remained passive in the face of these atrocities, which not only stained the reputation of his army but also demoralized it...

"Personally, Denikin was not a typical anti-Semite of the time: at any rate, in his five-volume chronicle of the Civil War he does not blame the Jews either for Communism or for his defeat. On the contrary, he expresses shame at their treatment in his army as well as the pogroms and shows awareness of the debilitating effect these had on the army's morale. But he was a weak, politically inexperienced man who had little control over the behaviour of his troops. He yielded to the pressures of anti-Semites in his officer corps from fear of appearing pro-Jewish and from a sense of the futility of fighting against prevailing passions. In June 1919 he told a Jewish delegation that urged him to issue a declaration condemning the pogroms, that 'words here were powerless, that any unnecessary clamor in regard to this question will only make the situation of Jews harder, irritating the masses and bringing out the customary accusations of "selling out to the Yids".' Whatever the justice of such excuses for passivity in the face of civilian massacres, they must have impressed the army as well as the population at large that the White Army command viewed Jews with suspicion and if it did not actively encourage pogroms, neither was it exercised about them...

"The only prominent public figure to condemn the pogroms openly and unequivocally was the head of the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Tikhon. In an Epistle issued on July 21, 1919, he called violence against Jews 'dishonor for the perpetrators, dishonour for the Holy Church'."²²⁹

Paradoxically, the population was probably more anti-Bolshevik in the Red-occupied areas than elsewhere – because they had had direct experience of Bolshevik cruelty.

²²⁷ St. John Maximovich, in Fomin, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

²²⁸ Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110.

²²⁹ Pipes, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 111.

As General A.A. von Lampe writes, “the border regions, which naturally attracted to themselves the attention of those Russians who did not want to submit to the dictatorship established in the centre, *did not know Bolshevism*, that is, they probably did not know the results of its practical application on the skin of the natives. They had not experienced the delights of the Soviet paradise and were not able to exert themselves fully to avoid the trials and torments that were coming upon them.

“The population of these provinces, of course, knew the war that was exhausting the whole of Russia. The population also knew the revolution, which gave them the so-called ‘freedoms’!... The population, with the complicity of the soldiers, who had known on the front only the declaration of *rights*, but not the *obligations* of the soldier, knew only about their rights and did not at all represent to themselves that all these rights were bound up with certain obligations.

“On the territory of this population a real war was being waged, a civil war with its gunfights that did not always hit only those who were fighting in the direct line of fire; with its repressions, not only in relation to people and their property, but also to the settlements themselves, which sometimes, in the course of a battle, were mercilessly and inexorably razed to the ground... The population had to sacrifice their rights and their comforts. The White army was not that equipped and organized army that we are accustomed to imagine when we pronounce that word; immediately on coming into contact with the population it was forced to take from it fodder, horses, reserves of food and, finally, the people themselves!

“War on a given territory always brings with it many deprivations and sufferings. War, and in particular civil war, *feeds itself and supplements itself!* And, of course, the population could not welcome this; it, as I have already said, thought not about its responsibilities, but only about its rights, and it expected from the Whites only the immediate restoration of order and normal conditions of life, not thinking on its side to offer it any help at all.

“The whole sum of *unpleasantnesses* brought by the drawn-out war was very sharply experienced by the population; and at the same time it was being forcibly corrupted by the Red and socialist propaganda promising them deliverance from all these woes, promises of complete prosperity and complete dominion, promises which, as we know, have seduced not only Russia, but are disturbing no small part of the population of the whole world to this day...

“All this came down to the fact that the inconveniences caused by the Whites *ranged the population against them...*

“The Reds threatened and threatened very unambiguously to take *everything* and in fact took *a part* – the population was deceived and... relieved. The Whites promised legality, and took only a little – and the population was embittered...

“The Reds promised *everything*, the Whites only that which was fitting *according to the law...*

“The Reds had terror and machine-guns as arguments and measures of persuasion; the Whites threatened – *with the law...*

“The Reds decisively rejected everything and raised arbitrariness into a law; the Whites, in rejecting the Reds, of course could not also reject the methods of arbitrariness and violence employed by the Reds...

“The population demanded nothing from the Reds since the only thing they could wish for once they had fallen into their hands was peace, and they did not, of course, demand that! But from the Whites the population demanded... a miracle, they demanded that the Whites, with one wave of their white hands, should remove all the blood from Russia...”²³⁰

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The civil war presented Patriarch Tikhon with a cruel dilemma. On the one hand, he obviously wanted the Whites to win. On the other hand, if he blessed the White armies this would have been seen as equivalent to a call to the population in the Red-occupied areas to rise up against their oppressors, which would have led to further massive bloodshed.

It is probably for the latter reason that in mid-1918, in spite of the pleas of his close advisor, Prince G.I. Trubetskoy, the Patriarch refused to bless a White general in the south, saying that he was not engaging in politics. But he did bless the one Orthodox general who had not betrayed his oath to the Tsar, General Theodore Keller. Moreover, in Siberia, the White armies under Admiral A.V. Kolchak, the most monarchist of the White leaders and their formal head, were close to the Church, and received a secret blessing...

In November, 1918, in view of the lack of communication with the Patriarch, an autonomous Temporary Higher Church Authority (THCA) was formed under the leadership of Archbishop Sylvester of Omsk. At the request of Admiral Kolchak, it moved to Omsk, and sent 2000 out of the 3500 clergy living on the territories occupied by Kolchak’s armies to serve in the armies as military chaplains. In April, 1919 a Council of the THCA took place in Omsk which anathematised the leaders of the Bolshevik party and ordered the commemoration of Kolchak during Divine services as the Supreme Ruler of Russia. In an address to the clergy the Council declared: “The pastors of the Church have the moral right to struggle against Bolshevism, and nobody must look on this struggle as unfitting to the Church, as the Church’s interference into political and social affairs of the State.”²³¹

Kolchak believed that the Orthodox Church combined with an authoritarian system of power based on theocratic principles would help him stabilize the situation

²³⁰ Von Lampe, “Prichiny neudachi vooruzhennogo vystuplenia belykh” (The Reasons for the Failure of the Whites’ Armed Intervention), Berlin, 1929, in Denikin and von Lampe, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.

²³¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

in Siberia. "The spiritual power of the soldiers has weakened," he said. "Political slogans and the ideas of the Constituent Assembly and of an undivided Russia no longer have any effect. Much more comprehensible is the struggle for the faith, and this only religion can do."²³²

Perhaps for this reason, in January, 1919 the Patriarch appeared to reverse his apolitical stance, at any rate in relation to the Siberian armies. For to Admiral Kolchak he sent a disguised priest with a tiny photograph of an icon of St. Nicholas and the following message: "As is well known to all Russians and, of course, to your Excellency, before this Icon, revered by the whole of Russia, every day on December 6, the day of the Winter Nicholas feast, there was a prayer service, which ended with the whole people chanting: 'Save, O Lord, Thy people...' with all the worshippers on their knees. And then on December 6, 1917, after the October revolution, the people of Moscow, faithful to the faith and tradition, at the end of the prayer service, chanted on their knees: 'Save, O Lord...' Soldiers and police came up and drove away the worshippers, and fired at the Icon from rifles and weapons. The holy hierarch on this icon on the wall of the Kremlin was depicted with a cross in his left hand and a sword in his right. The bullets of the fanatics flew around the holy hierarch without touching the God-pleaser anywhere. However, fragments of shells from the explosions tore off the plaster on the left side of the Wonderworker, which destroyed almost the whole of the left side of the holy hierarch on the Icon with the hand in which was the cross. On the same day, on the orders of the powers of the antichrist this Holy Icon was draped with a big red flag with a satanic emblem. It was firmly attached to the lower and side edges. On the wall of the Kremlin the inscription was made: 'Death to the Faith - the Opium of the People'. On December 6 in the next year, many people gathered for the prayer service, which was coming to its end undisturbed by anyone! But when the people fell on their knees and began to chant: 'Save, O Lord...' the flag fell from the Icon of the Wonderworker. The atmosphere of prayerful ecstasy cannot be described! One had to see it, and he who saw it remembers it and feels it to this day. There was chanting, sobbing, cries and hands raised on high, rifle fire, many were wounded, many were killed... and... the place was cleared. The next day, early in the morning, with My Blessing, it was declared in front of the whole people what the Lord had shown through His God-pleaser to the Russian people in Moscow on December 6, 1918.

"I am sending you a photographic copy of the Wonderworking Icon as my blessing to you, Your Excellency, in your struggle with the temporary atheist power over the suffering people of Russia... I ask you, honoured Alexander Vasilyevich, look how the Bolsheviks succeeded in striking out the left hand of the God-pleaser with the cross, which demonstrates as it were the temporary trampling of the Orthodox faith... But the punishing sword of the God-pleaser has remained as a help and blessing to your Excellency in your Christian struggle for the salvation of the Orthodox Church in Russia."²³³

²³² Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

²³³ Kniazev, V.V. *Zhizn' za vsekh i smert' za vsekh* (Life for all and death for all), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1971, pp. 20-23; S. Volkov, *Admiral Aleksandr Vasilievich Kolchak*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 70-81; Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky, "Otvét apologetu kommunisticheskoy ideologii" (Reply to an Apologist of the Communist Ideology), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 1553, February 15/28, 1996, p.

However, this anti-Soviet stance was not maintained. On October 8, 1919, much to the sorrow of the Whites, the Patriarch issued a decree entitled "On the non-interference of the clergy in the civil war", in which he called on the clergy to "refrain from participation in political parties and demonstrations", and to submit to the "orders" of the Soviet authorities. "People point out that with a change in authority the Church servers sometimes welcome this change with the ringing of bells and the organization of triumphant services and various ecclesiastical festivities. But if this happens in some places, it takes place either at the demand of the new authorities themselves, or in accordance with the desire of the masses of the people, but not at all at the initiative of the Church servers, who in accordance with their rank must stand higher and beyond all political interests. They must remember the canonical rules of the Holy Church, by which She forbids Her servers from interfering in the political life of the country, and from belonging to any parties, and still more from making service rites and sacred actions into an instrument of political demonstrations."²³⁴

This statement marks the beginning of a significant shift in the Church's attitude from one of open enmity towards the Bolsheviks to qualified neutrality and civil obedience. *Izvestia* commented on it as follows: "The Patriarch and the circles around him have evidently become convinced of the solidity of Soviet power and become more cautious. [Soviet power], of course, is not expecting that the Patriarch should invite the clergy subject to him to express sympathy for Soviet power. The most that these circles are capable of is neutrality. Such tactics are recommended by the Patriarch's appeal... In any case, the epistle of the Patriarch is characteristic in this respect, that it involuntarily confirms the strength of Soviet power, and that the Orthodox clergy are now too frightened to quarrel with it openly."²³⁵

This shift in attitude took place when Denikin's Volunteer Army looked on the point of breaking through to Moscow. So we cannot excuse it on the grounds that the Patriarch thought that the Reds were going to win the war. More probably, the Patriarch realised that the Whites were motivated, not so much by the positive ideal of Orthodoxy as by the negative ideal of anti-Bolshevism - and only that which is truly positive and spiritual can merit the blessing of God and His Church.

It may well have been right for the Patriarch not to follow the example of St. Hermogen and call the people to rise up against Bolshevism. Nevertheless, the failure of the Church to issue an unequivocal condemnation of Bolshevism was a weakness that her enemies were quick to exploit. The Patriarch's anti-Soviet statements were construed as dabbling in politics; while his refusal to bless the White armies was construed as the equivalent of a blessing on the Soviet State...

15. According to another source, the Patriarch sent Bishop Nestor with the icon of St. Nicholas to Kolchak in Omsk with the instruction: "Tell the people that if they do not unite and take Moscow again by armed force, then we will perish and Holy Rus' will perish with us" (Gubanov, *op. cit.*, p. 131).

²³⁴ Regelson, *op. cit.*, p. 237; Sokolov, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", *op. cit.*, p. 423; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39; Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

²³⁵ *Izvestia*, October 22, 1919; in Zhukov, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-93, footnote 50.

However, even if the Church did not expose the evil of Bolshevism with complete clarity, the Bolsheviks were providing their own proofs of their antichristianity by their behaviour. Thus Shkarovskii writes: "The spread of civil war was accompanied by a hardening of Bolshevik anti-religious policies. The RKP(b) anticipated that religious faith and the Church would soon die away completely, and that with a 'purposeful education system' and 'revolutionary action', including the use of force, they could be overcome fairly quickly. At a later stage Soviet atheist literature referred to this period as 'Sturm und Drang'. In the programme adopted at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress in March 1919, the party proposed a total assault on religion, and talked of the coming 'complete disappearance of religious prejudice'.

"In order to attain this goal the authorities brought in ever-increasing restrictions. On 3 April 1919 the Commissariat of Justice decreed that voluntary monetary collections among the faithful were permissible 'only for the needs of a particular church building'. At the beginning of 1919 a complete ban was introduced on religious instruction for anybody under the age of 18. Existing monasteries were only permitted to function if they turned themselves into labour communes or workshops. The closure of cloisters began at the end of 1918. By 1921, 722 monasteries had been nationalized, over half of those existing in Russia. From the summer of 1918 the authorities waged a campaign to destroy 'holy relics'. This offended the faithful and was a crude intervention in the affairs of the Church, an attempt to regulate its way of life and worship. In the spring of 1919 these actions became widespread, and became a means of conducting anti-religious propaganda by deeds. On 14 March the Commissariat of Justice decreed that they should be welcomed. The authorities also looked upon the Church as a ready source of additional state funds. In 1919 they began a speculative trade in valuable artefacts, including items which they had seized from churches....

"... Despite all the obstacles placed in its way, the Orthodox Church was able to conserve its structure during the civil war. Thousands of small churches which were supposed to have been closed down, even in the capitals, continued to function, as did religious schools. Charitable works continued, and religious processions took place, until the autumn of 1921 in Petrograd.

"A very small number of priests served in the Red Army. The right-wing section of the clergy was active in its support of the White cause... Military chaplains served with the White armies - Kolchak had around 2,000, Denikin had more than 1,000, and Wrangel had over 500. All this provided further ammunition for the Bolsheviks' anti-clerical campaign. During 1920 state bodies continued the tactic of excluding religion from all aspects of life. A circular issued by the People's Commissariat of Justice on 18 May resulted in almost all the diocesan councils being liquidated in Russia. A further 58 holy relics were uncovered by the summer.²³⁶ On 29 July the Sovnarkom

²³⁶ The campaign was counter-productive from the Bolsheviks' point of view because the relics of the saints were often found to be incorrupt. Thus "St. Sergius of Radonezh was said to have been found perfectly preserved, to the rapturous joy of the onlookers and the consternation of the monastery's communist custodian, who was subsequently beaten up by the crowd." (Richard Overy, *The Dictators*, London: Penguin, 2005, p. 274). The relics of St. Theodosius of Chernigov were also found

approved a proposal from the justice commissariat 'On the Countrywide Liquidation of Relics'. However, the authority of the Church prevented this proposal from being carried out in full. Eight months later, on 1 April 1921, a secret circular issued by the commissariat admitted defeat on this score. By the autumn of 1920 the nationalization of church property had been completed. A report produced by the Eighth Department of the Commissariat of Justice stated that 7,150 million roubles, 828,000 desiatiny of church lands, and 1,112 buildings for rent had been expropriated by the state."²³⁷

Still more staggering than the material losses in this period were the losses in lives. Thus in 1918-19, according to Ermhardt, 28 bishops and 1,414 priests were killed²³⁸; according to Edward E. Roslof, estimates of numbers of clergy killed between 1918 and 1921 range from 1434 to 9000²³⁹; while by the end of 1922, according to Shumilin, 2233 clergy of all ranks and two million laymen had been executed.²⁴⁰ These figures prove the truth of Vladimir Rusak's assertion: "The Bolsheviks' relationship to the Church was realized independently of legislation. Violence, bayonets and bullets – these were the instruments of the Bolsheviks' 'ideological' struggle against the Church."²⁴¹

However, as Shkarovskii writes, "the first wave of attacks on religion had not brought the results which had been expected by such Bolshevik theorists as N.I. Bukharin. The majority of the population of Russia remained religious, for all the barbaric methods which had been tried to tear people away from the Church. The patriarchate also emerged from the civil war undefeated."²⁴²

Moreover, with the suppression of all military and political opposition to the Bolsheviks, the Church remained the only significant anti-communist force in the country.²⁴³ So the Bolsheviks were compelled to resort to a kind of warfare that had a far more sophisticated ideological content...

to be incorrupt (see photograph opposite page 182 in I.M. Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982. (V.M.)

²³⁷ Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", *op. cit.*, pp. 422, 423.

²³⁸ *Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' i kommunisticheskoe gosudarstvo, 1917-1941* (The Russian Orthodox Church and the Communist State, 1917-1941), Moscow: Terra, 1996, p. 69.

²³⁹ Roslof, *Red Priests*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 27.

²⁴⁰ Gustavson, *op. cit.*, p. 34. In Petrograd alone 550 clergy and monks of all ranks were shot in the period 1917-1922 (Anatoly Latyshev, "Provesti besposhadnij Massovij Terror Protiv Popov" (The Conducting of Ruthless Mass Terror against the Priests), *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts), No 26, 1996).

²⁴¹ Rusak, *Pir Satany*, *op. cit.*

²⁴² Shkarovskii, *op. cit.*, pp. 423-424.

²⁴³ It should be remembered that this was exclusively an anti-Orthodox rather than an anti-religious struggle; for Lenin viewed Islam as an ally in spreading world revolution to the countries of the East, and he did not persecute the Catholics or Protestants.

19. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN EXILE

The Russian Church in Exile grew out of the chaos of the civil war... By 1920, the White armies, only fitfully supported by the western powers, were in full retreat on all fronts. "The final evacuation of the Crimea," writes Douglas Smith, "took place in mid-November 1920 under General Wrangel. As they prepared to leave, Wrangel invited to join them all those who would be in danger were they fall into the enemy's hands. In the span of a few days, 146,000 people – twice the expected number – were placed on boats and sent out over the waters of the Black Sea to Constantinople. Wrangel embarked from Sevastopol on the cruiser *General Kornilov* on the fourteenth. 'We cannot foretell our future fate,' he told his fellow exiles. 'May God grant us strength and wisdom to endure this period of Russian misery, and to survive it.'

"The Russians who fled the approaching Red Army were not exaggerating the danger. Although Mikhail Frunze, the Red commander, had issued generous surrender terms, approximately fifty thousand people – most members of the former privileged classes – were shot or hanged during the final weeks of 1920. As the Red Army moved into the Crimea, the Cheka began registering the cities' inhabitants and dividing them into three categories: those to be shot; those to be sent to concentration camps; those to be spared. All former White officers were ordered to appear for registration and promised safety. The several thousand who complied were arrested and then taken out over the course of several nights and murdered. No one was safe...

"The killing of former White officers across Russia continued until 1922, despite an amnesty of June 1920 extended to all White officers and soldiers. In Yekaterinodar, about three thousand officers were shot; in Odessa as many as two thousand; in Yekaterinburg, twenty-eight hundred. The worst, however, was in the Crimea, where as many as fifty thousand officers and officials were executed. Justification, after a fashion, for the executions was made with a November 1921 modification to the June 1920 amnesty, according to which all those who had voluntarily fought with the White armies for 'the goal of defending their class interests and the bourgeois order' were no longer covered by the amnesty and were henceforth to be deemed 'outcasts'.

"Around the time the White Army under Wrangel was abandoning the fight, the White forces collapsed in Siberia. Ataman Semenov was run out of his capital in Chita on October 22, 1920, and what remained of his forces fled to Manchuria. In one of the most bizarre chapters of the civil war, Baron Ungern-Sternberg, a Baltic nobleman and former lieutenant of Semenov's, set up a murderous, occultic base in Outer Mongolia for attacking Soviet Russia. He was overthrown in 1921, captured, and executed. The last White outpost was in Vladivostok, ruled by one of Kolchak's generals [General Diterichs] until his defeat by the Red Army in later October 1922. With that, the White forces had been crushed, and the civil war was truly over."²⁴⁴

A.F. Traskovsky writes: "The part of the Russian Orthodox Church which was abroad already had quite a long history before the formation of ROCOR. In Western Europe Russian Orthodox churches had been built beginning from the eighteenth

²⁴⁴ Smith, *Former People: The Last Days of the Russian Aristocracy*, London: Macmillan, 2012, pp. 207-208.

century at Russian embassies and holy places that were often visited by Russians on trips abroad. In the East, thanks to the missionary activities of the Russian Orthodox Church missions were founded in China and Japan that later became dioceses, as well as a mission in Jerusalem. The spread of Orthodoxy in Alaska and North America also led to the creation of a diocese. In the "Statute concerning the convening of an Emigration Assembly of the Russian Churches", mention was made that in 1921 there were 15 emigration regions which had Russian bishops and 14 districts where there were Russian Orthodox parishes but no bishops. The regions included: North America, Japan, China, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, France, Italy, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey and the Far East. The districts included: Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, England, Switzerland, Czechia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Palestine, Greece and the city of Bizert in Tunisia. All the emigration missions, parishes and dioceses were in canonical submission to the higher ecclesiastical authorities in Russia – the Holy Ruling Synod until the restoration of the patriarchate in 1917, and his Holiness the Patriarch after 1917. But then after the revolution there began the Civil War and anarchy. The Bolsheviks began to persecute the Church. The majority of emigration missions and dioceses found themselves either deprived of the possibility of normal relations with the higher ecclesiastical authorities of Russia, or such relations were exceptionally difficult. Moreover, in Russia itself many dioceses were cut off by the front from his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin)'s leadership. After the defeat of the White army, a huge flood of émigrés flooded abroad, amongst whom were not a few representatives of the clergy, including bishops and metropolitans. On the shoulders of the clerics who were abroad and the clergy who had emigrated lay the burden of care for the spiritual nourishment of the huge Russian diaspora. That was the situation in which the part of the Russian Church that was abroad found itself on the eve of the formation of the Church Abroad.

"What was the prehistory of the Russian Church Abroad? Her beginnings went back to 1919, in Russia. In Stavropol in May, 1919 there took place the South Russian Church Council headed by the oldest hierarch in the South of Russia, Archbishop Agathodorus of Stavropol. There took part in the Council all the bishops who were on the territory of the Voluntary army, the members of the All-Russian Ecclesiastical Council and four people from each diocesan council. At the Council there was formed the Higher Church Administration of the South of Russia (HCA of the South of Russia), which consisted of: President – Archbishop Metrophanes of Novocherkassk, Assistant to the President – Archbishop Demetrius of Tauris, Protopresbyter G. Shavelsky, Protopriest A.P. Rozhdestvensky, Count V.V. Musin-Pushkin and Professor of theology P.V. Verkhovsky. In November, 1919 the Higher Church Administration was headed by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Galich, who had arrived from Kiev.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ For more details on this Council, see Andrej Alexandrovich Kostriukov, "Stavropol'skij Sobor 1919 g. i nachalo nezavisimoj tserkovnoj organizatsii na iuge Rossii" (The Stavropol Council of 1919 and the beginning of independent church organization in the south of Russia), *Ural'skij istoricheskij vestnik*, 2008, N 4 (21), pp. 71-75; *Pravoslavnaja Zhizn'*, N 5 (685), May, 2009, pp. 1-11. (V.M.)

“The aim of the creation of the HCA was the organization of the leadership of church life on the territory of the Volunteer army in view of the difficulties Patriarch Tikhon was experiencing in administering the dioceses on the other side of the front line. A little earlier, in November, 1918, an analogous Temporary Higher Church Administration had been created in Siberia headed by Archbishop Sylvester of Omsk. Later, a part of the clergy that submitted to this HCA emigrated after the defeat of Kolchak’s army and entered the composition of the Chinese dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church. The HCA of the South of Russia, like the Siberian HCA, was, in spite of its self-government, nevertheless in canonical submission to his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, and in this way Church unity was maintained.

“After the defeat of the armies of Denikin, in the spring of 1920 the head of the HCA of the South of Russia, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), was evacuated from Novorossiysk to Constantinople²⁴⁶, and was then for a time in a monastery on Mount Athos. However, in September, 1920, at the invitation of General Wrangel, he returned to Russia, to the Crimea, where he continued his work. The final evacuation of the HCA of the South of Russia took place in November, 1920, together with the remains of Wrangel’s army.²⁴⁷ On the steamer ‘Alexander Mikhailovich’ there set out from the Crimea to Constantinople the leaders of the HCA and a large number of simple priests.

“On arriving in Constantinople, as Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) indicates in his *Biography of Metropolitan Anthony*, Metropolitan Anthony ‘first considered that from now on all the activities of the Russian Higher Church Administration should be brought to an end and all the care for the spiritual welfare of the Russian Orthodox people should be taken upon herself by the Church of Constantinople and the Local Orthodox Churches in whose bounds the Russian Orthodox people found themselves.’ However, as soon became clear, the realization of this variant became extremely problematic in view of the fact that huge masses of Russian refugees did not know the language and customs of those countries to which they had come, and the nourishment of such a large flock by priests speaking other languages (for example Greeks) presented very many problems. Moreover, the numerous émigré Russian clergy, who were fully able to deal with these problems, would not be involved. Therefore it was decided to continue the activities of the Higher Church Administration.

²⁴⁶ Before being evacuated, while still in Yekaterinodar, Metropolitan Anthony came out of the cathedral, accompanied by all the clergy, and addressed the thousands of faithful, asking them – for one knows, he said, that “the voice of the people is the voice of God” – whether they should leave with the White Army or stay in Russia and suffer for the faith. The crowd replied that they should leave (Monk Anthony (Chernov), *Archvêque Theophane de Poltava* (Archbishop Theophan of Poltava), Lavardac: Monastère de St. Michael, 1988, p. 73) (V.M.).

²⁴⁷ About 200,000 military and civilian personnel in a fleet of 126 vessels were evacuated from Sevastopol to Constantinople (Schemanun Seraphima, *Saint Seraphim of Sophia*, Etna, Ca., 2008, p. 53, note). According to Zhukiov (*op. cit.*, p. 67) there were 125 ships with about 150,000 people on board. At the beginning of the 1920s about 85,000 Russian emigres had settled in Serbia. They built four churches and chapels and formed more than ten Russian parishes and spiritual brotherhoods (M. Skarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration). St. Petersburg, 2009, p. 26).

“In order to work out a plan of further action, the first session of the HCA outside the borders of Russia took place on November 19, 1920...²⁴⁸ Metropolitan Dorotheus [*locum tenens* of the Ecumenical patriarchal throne] gave his agreement [to the HCA’s decisions] and the HCA of the South of Russia was transformed into the Higher Church Administration Abroad.

“Literally the day after the above-mentioned session, on November 20, 1920, an event took place in Moscow that had an exceptional significance for the Russian Church Abroad – his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon passed decree № 362 concerning the self-governance of church dioceses in the case of a break of communications between this or that diocese and his Holiness the Patriarch for external reasons over which they had no control (what they had in mind was war or repression by the authorities). This is the decree’s main content:

“1. With the blessing of his Holiness the Patriarch, the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, in a joint session, judged it necessary... to give the diocesan Hierarch... instructions in case of a disconnection with the higher church administration or the cessation of the activity of the latter...

“2. If dioceses, as a result of the movement of the front, changes of state boundaries, etc., find themselves unable to communicate with the higher church administration or the higher church administration itself together with his Holiness the Patriarch for some reason ceases its activity, the diocesan hierarch will immediately enter into relations with the hierarchs of neighbouring dioceses in order to organize a higher instance of church authority for several dioceses in the same conditions (in the form of a temporary higher church government or metropolitan region, or something similar).

“3. The care for the organization of the higher church authority for the whole group who are in the situation indicated in point 2 is the obligatory duty of the eldest ranked hierarch in the indicated group...’

“This wise decree of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, which was passed in conditions of anti-church terror, was given to the foreign bishops a year after its passing with the help of Bishop Meletius of Nerchensk. It served as the canonical basis for the formation of the Russian Church Abroad, since the émigré clergy were in the situation indicated in points 2 and 3.

“Meanwhile the HCA in Constantinople continued to work out a plan for further action. At the sessions of April 19-21, 1921, it was decided to convene a ‘Congress of the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to unite, regulate and

²⁴⁸ The session of the HCA took place on board the steamer *Great Prince Alexander Mikhailovich*. In it took part Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev, Metropolitan Plato of Odessa, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Bishop Benjamin of Sebastopol. It was decided to continue the prerogatives of the members of the HCA, and discussed all aspects of the Church life of the refugees and soldiers in all states having relations with the Ecumenical Patriarch (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-48). (V.M.)

At the second session, on November 22, it was decided to include Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev, who was already living in Constantinople, in the HCA (Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 69)

revive church activity abroad', which was later renamed the 'Russian Church Council Abroad', also known in the literature as the Karlovtsy Council. Soon, at the invitation of Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia, the HCA led by Metropolitan Anthony moved to Sremskie Karlovtsy in Serbia – a fraternal country which in the course of many years proved to be a safe haven for the leadership of the Church Abroad."²⁴⁹

According to Andrei Psarev, already at the meeting of the HCA on April 21 it was decided to move to Serbia, and "the next meeting was convened already in Serbia on 22 July, 1921. "It is noteworthy that the Higher Church Administration did not find it necessary to request a blessing for the move; they simply notified the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The patriarchate, however, judging by the aforementioned edict, saw the situation differently: they believed that the Russian church exiles had been accepted in canonical subordination. It follows that in order to move to another Orthodox Church, the Russian exiles needed to ask for a canonical release from their new supreme authority. It is my belief that... these events laid the foundation for the canonical conflict between the Patriarchate of Constantinople and ROCOR..."²⁵⁰

Possibly; and it was certainly true that, according to a decree issued by Metropolitan Anthony on January 11/24, 1924 the HCA was founded as the successor of HCA of the South of Russia "by the resolution of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate N 9084 of December 20, 1920, on the foundation of the proposals of all eight Russian bishops in Constantinople, under the protection of the Ecumenical Patriarchate". Moreover, Metropolitan Dorotheus had said to Metropolitan Anthony: "Under your direction, the patriarchate gives its agreement to all your initiatives, for the patriarchate knows that Your Eminence will do nothing contrary to the canons."²⁵¹ This certainly looks like canonical subordination – albeit with a large degree of freedom. However, it was the later attempts by Constantinople to create autocephalous Churches on territories formerly dependent on the Russian Church that created the real conflict.

In any case, there is no doubt that ROCOR found greater sympathy among the Serbs than among the Greeks. As Victor Salni and Svetlana Avlasovich write, "Serbia repaid mercy [Russia's defence of Serbia in 1914] with mercy. Alexander I never identified Russia with her new communist government. Being a deeply believing Orthodox man, King Alexander could not contemplate the destiny of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church without pain... During the Civil war, by command of the Monarch of Yugoslavia, a Serbian corps of volunteers was formed in the South of Russia to fight against the Bolsheviks. When the civil war was lost and the remains of the Volunteer Army, thanks to the efforts of General Wrangel, were saved and left

²⁴⁹ Traskovsky, "Istoria Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi, 1921-1939 gg." (A History of the Russian Church Abroad, 1921-1939), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1995, pp. 20-24. Sremskie Karlovtsy was a significant centre for the Russian Church in Exile because in 1691 37,000 Serbian families had fled there from Turkish-ruled Serbia with the blessing of Patriarch Arsenius III, forming an autonomous metropolitanate in 1712. Just as the Serbs fled west from the Turks, so the Russians now fled west from the Bolsheviks.

²⁵⁰ Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

²⁵¹ Nicholas Ross, *Saint Alexandre Nevski. Centre Spirituel de l'emigration russe, 1918-1939*, Paris: Editions Syrtes, 2011, p. 33.

their homeland, Alexander I magnanimously stretched out his hand of help and received those who were without a homeland, the Russian refugees who were needed by nobody, and gave them the opportunity to set themselves up, work and live in this country. The young Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes needed cultural and intellectual forces. It well understood this, but it did not give refuge to Russian people out of avaricious motives - it strove to repay good with good, to repay the joyful hospitality it received from Russia when it was a political émigré, and for help in the war."²⁵²

The Serbian Church gave quasi-autocephalous status to ROCOR on the basis of the 39th canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. As her Council declared on December 6, 1927: "According to the canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, when an Orthodox hierarchy with its flock as a result of persecutions moves with its flock onto the territory of another Church, it has the right to independent organization and administration. As a consequence of this it is necessary to recognize that the Russian Church hierarchy on the territory of the Serbian Church also has this right."

Meanwhile, at the end of 1920, 200,000 Russian refugees with the retreating remnants of the White armies in Siberia crossed from Siberia into China. Among them were six bishops and many priests. This large colony of Russians recognized the authority of the HCA in Serbia.²⁵³

The canonical status of ROCOR was unique in the history of the Orthodox Church. She always called herself a part of the Local Russian Church - that part which was situated outside Russia and had jurisdiction exclusively outside Russia (point 1 of the Polozhenie or Statute of ROCOR). And yet she had dioceses and parishes on all six continents of Europe, North and South America, Asia, Africa and Australia, and was in canonical submission to none of the Local Orthodox Churches already existing in those places.

Moreover, at the beginning of the 1990s, when she returned to Russia, she claimed jurisdiction in Russia as well! And so ROCOR was, in effect, a world-wide jurisdiction claiming to have jurisdiction in every part of the globe, but which claimed to be only a part of one Local Church, the Russian!

This clearly anomalous situation was justified on a temporary basis, - until the fall of communism in Russia, according to the Polozhenie, and, at least for a time, such established Local Churches as Serbia and Jerusalem recognized her. The situation was seen as justified on the grounds, first, of the extraordinarily difficult situation of the three million or so Russian Orthodox scattered around the world, whose spiritual and physical needs had to be met by Russian-speaking pastors. And secondly, on the grounds of the critical situation in the Orthodox Church as a whole, when even the leaders of Orthodoxy were falling into heresy.

²⁵² Salni and Avlasovich, "Net bol'she toj ljubvi, kak esli kto polozhit dushu svoiu za drugi svoia" (There is no greater love than that a man should lay down his life for his friend), http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page*pid=966 .

²⁵³ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 51.

On October 13, 1921, in response to a request from ROCOR, the Russian Holy Synod and Higher Church Council under the presidency of Patriarch Tikhon issued resolution № 193, which declared: "(1) In view of the inappropriateness of submitting to the Higher Church Administration of the Russian Church Abroad all the Orthodox churches and communities of the Moscow Patriarchate beyond the borders of Soviet Russia, to leave this Administration with its former privileges, without spreading the sphere of its activities onto the Orthodox Churches in Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which preserve their presently existing form of Church administration, (2) also to turn down the petition for the creation of a post of deputy of his Holiness the Patriarch abroad, as being unnecessary, and (3) to accept the news of the proposed convening of a Council of the Russian Orthodox churches abroad on October 1 old style."²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ However, A.A. Kotstriukov writes that this resolution did not reach ROCOR ("Russkaia Zarubezhnaia Tserkov': sozdanie, vzaimootnosheniia s moskovskoj tserkovnoj vlastiu i vnutrennie razdeleniia v 1920-1938 gg." (The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad: creation, relations with the Moscow ecclesiastical authorities and internal divisions from 1920 to 1938)), Dissertation, 2012, <http://www.dissercat.com/content/russkaya-zarubezhnaya-tserkov-sozdanie-vzaimootnosheniya-s-moskovskoi-tserkovnoi-vlastyu-i-v#ixzz3HwE4FtaB>

20. MONARCHIST COUNCILS

The First All-Emigration Council opened in Sremskie Karlovtsy on November 21, 1921. Eleven Russian and two Serbian bishops took part; twenty-four Russian bishops who could not attend the Council sent telegrams recognizing its authority. Clergy, monastics and laity also took part in the Council – 163 people in all.²⁵⁵ Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) was the president of the Council, and Patriarch Demetrius of Serbia its honorary president. However, when the Bulgarian Metropolitan Stefan of Sophia arrived, bringing a greeting from the Bulgarian Holy Synod, this upset the Patriarch of Serbia, whose relations with the Bulgarians were not good. So he did not come, while Metropolitan Stefan immediately returned to Bulgaria.

Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev), who was in charge of the Russian communities in Bulgaria, reported to the Council about the great difficulty of their position in Bulgaria because of the Bulgarian schism and the impossibility of concelebrating with the Bulgarian clergy. The hierarchs discussed this matter from all sides and declared that they would like to restore communion with the Bulgarian Church, but could not exceed their canonical prerogatives without the participation of the other Local Churches, and in particular of the Church of Constantinople. In spite of that, continuing the practice of the Russian Church and basing themselves on the canons (71, 81, 88 and 122 of Carthage), the delegates allowed the Russian priests and deacons to serve all kinds of Divine services and sacraments with the bishops and clergy of the Bulgarian Church, and they also allowed the Russian bishops to serve with the Bulgarian clergy. Between bishops only joint serving of *molebens*, *pannikhidas*, etc. was allowed, but “in no way the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and other holy sacraments of the Orthodox Church”.²⁵⁶

The Council issued two Epistles, one addressed to the Russian emigration, and the other to the Genoa conference. The first epistle declared: “May [God] return to the All-Russian throne his Anointed One, strong in the love of the people, a lawful tsar from the House of the Romanovs”. 51 delegates voted for this motion, but 32 abstained, including Archbishop Evlogy of Paris, Bishop Benjamin of Sebastopol and most of the clergy. Evlogy abstained because they thought this was a political question beyond the competence of a Church Council.²⁵⁷ Ironically, he later joined the Moscow Patriarchate, which allowed the Bolsheviks to take control of church life...²⁵⁸ Archbishop Anastasy of Kishinev also voted against, but for different reasons: he was not anti-monarchist, but did not want the Romanovs to be designated as the only

²⁵⁵ According to Ross (*op. cit.*, pp. 50-51), all Russian bishops in exile, and all former members of the Moscow Council of 1917-18 were automatically members of the Council. There were about 150 delegates, of whom only 109 had full voting powers.

²⁵⁶ Ivan Snegarov, *Otnosheniata mezhdu B'lgarskata ts'rkva i drugite pravoslavni ts'rkvi sled prov'zglasiavaneto na skhizmata* (Relations between the Bulgarian Church and other Orthodox Churches following the declaration of the schism); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²⁵⁷ Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

²⁵⁸ Protodeacon German Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “Aktual'nost' Pervogo Vsezarubezhnogo Sobora” (The Contemporary Relevance of the First All-Abroad Council), *Nasha Strana* (Our Country), N 2929, December 3, 2011.

possible monarchs. The hierarchs were split in two, two-thirds of the clergy abstained, and the Epistle was issued only thanks to the votes of the laity.

The second epistle called on the statesmen assembled at Genoa to initiate a kind of crusade to drive the Bolsheviks out of Russia.

“At the Karlovtsy Council,” writes Bishop Dionysius (Alferov), “remembrance was finally made of St. Sergius’ blessing of the Christian Sovereign Demetrius Donskoj for his battle with the enemies of the Church and the fatherland, and of the struggle for the Orthodox Kingdom of the holy Hierarch Hermogenes of Moscow. The question was raised of the ‘sin of February’, but because some of the prominent activists of the Council had participated in this, the question was left without detailed review. The decisions of this Council did not receive further official development in Church life because of the schisms that began both in the Church Abroad and in the monarchist movement. But the question of the re-establishment of the Orthodox Kingdom in Russia had been raised, and thinkers abroad worked out this thought in detail in the works, first of Prince N.D. Zhevakhov and Protopriest V. Vostokov, and then, more profoundly, in the works of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), Professor M.V. Zyzykin, Archimandrite Constantine Zaitsev, V.N. Voejkov and N.P. Kusakov.”

The strongly monarchist tone of the Karlovtsy Council marks an important step in the spiritual recovery of the Russian Church. St. John of Kronstadt had said that Russia without a Tsar would be “a stinking corpse”. But this truth had been largely lost in the chaos and confusion of the revolution. As we have seen, the Holy Synod in February, 1917 had done little, if anything, to protect the monarchy. And the Councils that took place during the Civil War shied clear of any commitment to monarchism. As A.A. Kostriukov writes: “Both the Stavropol Council and the HTCA created by it tried to adopt a restrained political position. While speaking out against the Bolshevik dictatorship, the leadership of the Church in the south of Russia distanced itself from the monarchy and tried to stand on democratic principles. So as not to destroy the fragile peace between the representatives of various parties represented in the White armies.

“Recalling this period, Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov wrote in 1922: ‘In May, 1919 the South Russian Council in Stavropol under the presidency of Archbishop Metrophanes, and through the exceptional participation of Protopriest [George] Shavelsky, who at that time was working in agreement with the chief of staff General Romanovsky, did not allow those members to speak who tried to express themselves definitively in relation to ‘socialism’ and ‘the internationalist executioners’. And the word ‘Tsar’ was feared at the Council like fire.’

“According to the witness of Protopriest Vladimir Vostokov, even the open condemnation of regicide and the appeal to the people to repent of this sin dates to the period when the HTCA of the South-East of Russia was already in the Crimea. However, ‘not even the Crimean Church administration resolved on appealing’ for the reestablishment of the monarchy’.”²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Kostriukov, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

However, final defeat in the Civil War and the experience of exile gave the Karlovtsy Council, which was in many ways the successor to the Stavropol Council, the spiritual freedom to speak openly for the restoration of the monarchy. And the Russian Church in Exile continued to preserve the traditions of monarchism until the very end of its existence. This position was, however, intensely feared by the Bolsheviks, for whom the threat of the restoration of the monarchy remained real for many years. And so, under pressure from the Bolsheviks, Patriarch Tikhon resolved: "To close the Council (it was already closed), and to recognise the resolutions of the Karlovtsy Council as having no canonical significance in view of its invasion into the political sphere which does not belong to it. To demand the materials of the Council abroad, so as to judge on the degree of guilt of the participants in the Council." The Synod added: "To enter into discussion of the activity of those responsible for the Council, and to give them over to ecclesiastical trial after the establishment of the normal life of the Russian Synod."²⁶⁰

In defence of the Karlovtsy Council's position, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) said: "If by politics one understands all that touches upon the life of the people, beginning with the rightful position of the Church within the realm, then the ecclesiastical authorities and Church councils must participate in political life, and from this point of view definite demands are made upon it. Thus, the holy hierarch Hermogenes laid his life on the line by first demanding that the people be loyal to Tsar Basil Shuisky, and when the Poles imprisoned him he demanded the election of Tsar Michael Romanov. At the present time, the paths of the political life of the people are diverging in various directions in a far more definite way: some, in a positive sense, for the Faith and the Church, others in an inimical sense; some in support of the army and against socialism and communism, others exactly the opposite. Thus the Karlovtsy Council not only had the right, but was *obliged to bless the army* for the struggle against the Bolsheviks, and also, following the Great Council of Moscow of 1917-1918, to condemn socialism and communism."²⁶¹

Probably the last open and free manifestation of old, Holy, Monarchist Russia on Russian soil was the Zemsky Sobor that took place in Vladivostok from July 23 to August 10, 1922.

"It recognized the cause of the revolution to be the sins of the Russian people and called for repentance, proclaiming the only path of salvation for Russia to be the restoration of a lawful Orthodox monarchy. The Council resolved that 'the right to establish Supreme power in Russia belongs to the dynasty of the House of Romanov'. That is, the Council recognized the Romanov Dynasty to be still reigning in spite of the troubles, and for a short time re-established the Fundamental laws of the Russian empire in the Amur district (until the final conquest of the region by the Reds).

²⁶⁰ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

²⁶¹ Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, *A History of the Russian Church Abroad*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 1961, p. 24; Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (A Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. VI, p. 36.

“Accordingly it was decided that the Amur State formation free from the Bolsheviks should be headed by a representative of the Dynasty. For the transitional period General Michael Konstantinovich Diterichs was elected as Ruler. Patriarch Tikhon, who was in Moscow, was unanimously elected as the honourable president of the Council. The widowed Empress Maria Fyodorovna wrote a welcoming telegram to the Sobor in reply.

“In order no. 1 dated August 8, 1922 Lieutenant-General Diterichs wrote: ‘For our sins against the Anointed of God, Emperor Nicholas II, who was martyred with the whole of his Family by Soviet power, a terrible time of troubles has struck the Russian people and Holy Rus’ has been subjected to the greatest destruction, pillaging, torment and slavery by atheist Russians and thieves and robbers of other races, led by infidels of Jewish race who have even renounced their Jewish faith...

““Here, at the edge of the Russian land, in the Amur region, the Lord has placed a single thought and faith into the hearts and minds of everyone gathered at the Zemsky Sobor: there can be no Great Russia without a Sovereign, without an Anointed of God of inherited succession. And here in the Amur region, as we, the last people of the Russian land, are gathered in a small body, but one strong in faith and national spirit, we are set the task and the duty and the good intention of directing all our service to preparing the way for him – our future God-seer.’

“And here are the words of the last order of General Diterichs of October 17, 1922 before his departure from Russia under the pressure of the Reds: ‘I believe that Russia will return to the Russia of Christ, the Russia of the Anointed of God, but I believe that we were unworthy of this mercy from the Supreme Creator...’²⁶²

²⁶² Anton Ter-Grigorian, “Priamurskij zemskij sobor (kontsa 1922-ogo goda)”, <http://anton-tg.livejournal.com/307585.html>, July 24, 2006. See also Demetrius Anakshin, “Poslednij zemskij sobor”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, N 21 (1594), November 1/14, 1997, pp. 10-11, 15, and Danilushkin, *op. cit.*, chapter 6.

21. SECRET AGENTS IN CASSOCKS

The Bolsheviks believed that the roots of religion lay in poverty and ignorance, so that the elimination of these evils would naturally lead to the withering away of religion. This being the case, they could not believe that religious belief had any deeper roots in the nature of things. Therefore, writes E. Roslof, "the party explicitly rejected 'God-building', an attempt by its own members to develop a 'socialist religion of humanity'. Led by A.V. Lunacharskii, Leonid Krasin, and Bogdanov (A.A. Malinovskii), Bolshevik God-builders maintained that the proletariat would create a non-transcendent, earth-centered religion to complement its formation of the ultimate human society. Only this group within the party 'recognized that religion's power lay in its response to people's psychic needs and argued that a revolutionary movement could not afford to ignore these'."²⁶³

In May, 1921 Lenin supported a resolution calling for the replacement of the religious world-view by "a harmonious communist scientific system embracing and answering the questions to which the peasants' and workers' masses have hitherto sought answers in religion." At the same time he said that the Bolsheviks must "definitely avoid offending religious sensibilities". The result was the suspension of the "dilettantist" anti-religious commissions (Lenin's phrase) that had existed thereto, and their replacement by a Commission on the Separation of Church and State attached to the Politburo which lasted until 1929 under the Jew Emelian Yaroslavsky and whose aim was clearly the extirpation of all religion. The importance of this Commission in the Bolsheviks' eyes was clearly indicated by the extreme secrecy in which its protocols were shrouded and by the active participation in it, at one time or another, of all the top party leaders. The strategy of the Commission was directly defined, at the beginning by Lenin, and later – by Stalin.²⁶⁴

An important aspect of the Commission's strategy was "divide and rule". For while physical methods continued to be applied, the Bolsheviks recognized that the Church could not be defeated by direct physical assault alone, and that they needed subtler methods including the recruitment of agents among the clergy and the creation of schisms among them.

Thus already in December, 1920, T. Samsonov, head of a secret department of the Cheka, the forerunner of the KGB, wrote to Dzerzhinsky that "communism and religion are mutually exclusive... No machinery can destroy religion except that of the [Cheka]. In its plans to demoralize the church the Cheka has recently focussed its attention on the rank and file of the priesthood. Only through them, by long, intensive, and painstaking work, shall we succeed in destroying and dismantling the church completely."²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 28.

²⁶⁴ S. Savelev, "Bog i komissary" (God and the Commissars), in Bessmertny A.R. and Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, pp. 164-216.

²⁶⁵ Samsonov, in Edward Radzinsky, *Stalin*, New York: Doubleday, 1996. p. 244.

“According to archival data,” writes Fr. Victor Potapov, “the politics of enrolling the clergy began de facto already in the first years of Soviet power. This is what one of these Cheka documents, dated 1921, says about this:

“The question of having agents and informers among the clergy is the most difficult one in the Cheka both because of the difficulty of carrying out the work and because for the most part the Cheka has paid little attention to it up to now...

“There is no doubt that we have to stir them up and shift them from their places. And to realise this aim more quickly and efficiently it is necessary at the beginning to take the following measures:

“1. Use the clergy themselves for our own ends, especially those who have an important position in Church life – hierarchs, metropolitans, etc., forcing them under threat of severe punishment to distribute among their clergy this or that instruction that could be useful to us, for example: the cessation of forbidden agitation with regard to [Soviet anti-ecclesiastical] decrees, the closure of monasteries, etc.

“2. Clarify the character of individual bishops and vicars, encouraging their desires and plans.

“3. It is proposed that informers be recruited among the clergy after some acquaintance has been gained with the clerical world and the character traits of each individual servant of the cult has been clarified. This material can be gained in various ways, but mainly through removing correspondence at searches and through personal acquaintance with the clerical environment.

“It is necessary to interest this or that informer among the clergy with material rewards, since only on this soil is it possible to come to an agreement with the popes. It is impossible to hope for their benevolent attitude to Soviet power, while subsidies in money and in kind will undoubtedly also bind them to us more in another respect – namely, in that he will be an eternal slave of the Cheka, fearing that his activity will be unmasked.

“The recruitment of informers is carried out, and must be carried out, by frightening them with the threat of prison and the camps for insignificant reasons, for speculation, the violation of the rules and orders of the authorities, etc.

“True, a fairly unreliable method can be useful only if the object of recruitment is weak and spineless in character. Above all attention must be paid to the quality, and not to the quantity, of the informers. For only when those recruited are good informers and the recruitment has been carried out with care can we hope to draw from this or that environment the material that we need’ (TsA KGB f.1, op. 5, por. № 360, 1921, secret section, l. 6; signature: Assistant to the person authorized, So VChK).”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁶ Potapov, “...Molchaniem predaetsa Bog” (God is Betrayed by Silence), *Posev* (Sowing), № 166, 1992, pp. 209-210.

“One revealing incident,” writes Roslof, “involved Lenin, Lunacharskii, Dzerzhinskii, and [the schismatic] Bishop [Vladimir] Putiata. On April 6, 1921, Lunacharskii wrote to Dzerzhinskii about Metropolitan Sergii Stragorodskii, who had been arrested and sat in Butyrkii Prison. Lunacharskii suggested that Sergii might be useful in Putiata’s ‘mission’ in Kazan, the details of which were not given. Dzerzhinskii forwarded this letter for comments from one of his subordinates, M.Ia. Latsis, who rejected Sergii’s suitability for the task. Dzerzhinskii then sent a note to Latsis asking him to write a report on Lunacharskii’s letter to Lenin, adding, ‘In my opinion, the church is falling apart. We must help this process but by no means allow the church to regenerate itself and take some renewed form. Therefore, the Cheka and no one else should direct the government’s policy toward church disintegration. Official or unofficial relations between the party and priests are not permitted. Only the Cheka can manoeuvre toward the unique goal of disintegration among the priests. Any connection whatever by other agencies with priests casts a shadow on the party. This is a most dangerous matter that only our specialists will be capable of handling.’²⁶⁷

“This reply did not please Lunacharskii. In a telegram on May 9, 1921, he asked Lenin to meet briefly with Putiata. Lenin refused to receive the archbishop and asked Lunacharskii to give him a written report on the case. Lunacharskii responded quickly. He explained that Krasikov had started working with Putiata with the intention of exploring possible uses of the internal church feud begun by the archbishop. Lunacharskii became involved and communicated directly with Putiata at a time when Metropolitan Sergii was in prison.

“Archbishop Vladimir explained that (Sergii) was ready to transfer to the side of the so-called ‘Soviet church’, i.e. of the clergy determinedly and emphatically supporting the present regime and leading the battle with the patriarch. Archbishop Vladimir insisted that if Sergii were freed, Vladimir would acquire an extremely strong assistant in the task of destroying the official church.

“Lunacharskii at first did not want to interfere but was convinced by a colleague of Krasikov that Sergii would indeed join the ‘leftist’ clergy. After being released, Sergii took up the case for restoring Putiata to his former church position, from which he had been expelled for ‘ecclesiastical Bolshevism’. Tikhon derailed this move by Sergii by insisting on a vote by all Orthodox bishops on the question. Putiata then suggested a new strategy by which he would be installed as the head of a new Soviet Orthodox Church centered in Kazan. He claimed support for his views from many other bishops.”²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ Rayfield translates this sentence differently: “that is very, very dangerous. We’ve had enough trouble with just the ‘specialists’” (op. cit., p. 121). (V.M.)

²⁶⁸ Roslof, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

22. THE REQUISITIONING OF CHURCH VALUABLES

The movement for a "Soviet Orthodox Church" on the model of the emasculated church created by the French Jacobins was gathering pace... It was supported by Trotsky, who with the Cheka discussed recruiting clergy with money to report on themselves and others, thereby preventing anti-Bolshevik agitation.²⁶⁹ But it was the Volga famine of 1921-22, in which about 25 million people were starving, 15 million more were under threat, and more than one million actually died²⁷⁰, that provided the Bolsheviks with their first opportunity to create a major schism in the Church.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes: "At the end of the civil war, and as its natural consequence, an unprecedented famine developed in the Volga area... V.G. Korolenko, in his *Letters to Lunacharsky* explains to us Russia's total, epidemic descent into famine and destitution. It was the result of productivity having become reduced to zero (the working hands were all carrying guns) and the result, also, of the peasants' utter lack of trust and hope that even the smallest part of the harvest might be left to them. Yes, and someday someone will also count up those many carloads of food supplies rolling on and on for many, many months to Imperial Germany, under the terms of the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk - from a Russia which had been deprived of a protesting voice, from the very provinces where famine would strike - so that Germany could fight to the end in the West.

"There was a direct, immediate chain of cause and effect. The Volga peasants had to eat their children because we were so impatient about putting up with the Constituent Assembly.

"But political genius lies in extracting success even from the people's ruin. A brilliant idea was born: after all, three billiard balls can be pocketed with one shot. *So now let the priests feed the Volga region!* They are Christians. They are generous!

"1. If they refuse, we will blame the whole famine on them and destroy the Church.

"2. If they agree, we will clean out the churches.

"In either case, we will replenish our stocks of foreign exchange and precious metals.

"Yes, and the action was probably inspired by the actions of the Church itself. As Patriarch Tikhon himself had testified, back in August, 1921, at the beginning of the famine, the Church had created diocesan and all-Russian committees for aid to the starving and had begun to collect funds. But to have permitted any *direct* help to go straight from the Church into the mouths of those who were starving would have undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat. The committees were banned, and the

²⁶⁹ N.A., "One bo vragom Tvoim tajnu poviem..." (I will not give Thy Mystery to Thine enemies), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), 1992, № 1, p. 17; Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

²⁷⁰ N.N. Pokrovsky, S.G. Petrov, *Arkhivny Kremlia: Politburo i Tserkov' 1922-1925gg.* (The Kremlin Archives: the Politburo and the Church, 1922-1925), Moscow-Novosibirsk, 1997, vol. 1, p. 7.

funds they had collected were confiscated and turned over to the state and to the treasury. The Patriarch had also appealed to the Pope in Rome and the Archbishop of Canterbury for assistance – but he was rebuked for this, too, on the grounds that only the Soviet authorities had the right to enter into discussions with foreigners. Yes, indeed. And what was there to be alarmed about? The newspapers wrote that the government itself had all the necessary means to cope with the famine.

“Meanwhile, in the Volga region they were eating grass, the soles of shoes and gnawing at door jambs. And, finally, in December [27], 1921, Pomgol – the State Commission for Famine Relief – proposed that the churches help the starving by donating church valuables – not all, but those not required for liturgical rites. The Patriarch agreed. Pomgol issued a directive: all gifts must be strictly voluntary! On February 19, 1922, the Patriarch issued a pastoral letter permitting the parish councils to make gifts of objects that did not have liturgical and ritual significance.

“And in this way matter could again have simply degenerated into a compromise that would have frustrated the will of the proletariat, just as it once had been by the Constituent Assembly, and still was in all the chatterbox European parliaments.

“The thought came in a stroke of lightning! The thought came – and a decree followed! A decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on February 26: *all* valuables were to be requisitioned from the churches – for the starving!”²⁷¹

This decree annihilated the voluntary character of the offerings, and put the clergy in the position of accessories to sacrilege. And so on February 28, in order to resolve the perplexities of the faithful, the Patriarch decreed: “... In view of the exceptionally difficult circumstances, we have admitted the possibility of offering church objects that have not been consecrated and are not used in Divine services. Now again we call on the faithful children of the Church to make such offerings, desiring only that these offerings should be the response of a loving heart to the needs of his neighbour, if only they can provide some real help to our suffering brothers. But we cannot approve of the requisitioning from the churches, even as a voluntary offering, of consecrated objects, whose use for purposes other than Divine services is forbidden by the canons of the Ecumenical Church and is punished by Her as sacrilege – laymen by excommunication from Her, and clergy by defrocking (Apostolic Canon 73; Canon 10 of the First-Second Council).”²⁷²

This compromise decree represents the first major concession made by the Church to Soviet power. Thus no less an authority than the holy Elder Nectarius of Optina said: “You see now, the patriarch gave the order to give up all valuables from the churches, but they belonged to the Church!”²⁷³

²⁷¹ Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, London: Fontana, vol. 1, pp. 342-344.

²⁷² Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

²⁷³ Matushka Evgenia Grigorievna Rymarenko, “Remembrances of Optina Staretz Hieroschemamonk Nektary”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 36, № 3, May-June, 1986, p. 39. One concession to the Antichrist invariably leads to others. Thus on February 24, 1923 the GPU agent Jacob Savlovich Agranov forced the Patriarch to make further concessions on this issue. “From the point of view of the Bolsheviks,” writes N. Krivova, “Tikhon’s epistle of February 28, 1922 was incorrect juridically speaking, for

At the beginning of March, with the approval of the whole Politburo (Lenin, Molotov, Kamenev and Stalin), Trotsky formed a "completely secret" commission to mastermind the requisitioning.

On March 11 he wrote to the Politburo: "This commission must secretly prepare the political, organizational and technical aspects of the matter at the same time. The actual removal of the valuables must begin already in March and then be completed in the shortest possible time... I repeat: this commission is a complete secret. Formally, the requisitioning in Moscow will take place under the direct orders of the Central Committee of Pomgol... Our whole strategy at this time must be aimed at a schism in the clergy over the concrete question of the requisitioning of valuables from the churches. Since the question is a burning one, the schism on this basis can and must acquire a very burning character, and that part of the clergy which will support the requisitioning and aid it will no longer be able to return to Patriarch Tikhon's clique. Therefore I suggest that a block consisting of this section of the priesthood should be temporarily admitted into Pomgol, especially since it is necessary to avert any suspicion and doubts with regard to whether the requisitioning of valuables from the churches will be spent on the needs of the starving."²⁷⁴

On March 13, the Politburo accepted Trotsky's suggestion. "Moreover," writes Gregory Ravich, "the commission was ordered 'to act with maximal cruelty, not stopping at anything, including executions on the spot (that is, without trial and investigation), in cases of necessity summoning special (for which read: punitive) units of the Red Army, dispersing and firing on demonstrations, interrogations with the use of torture' and so on. The commission's members were, besides Trotsky, Saponov, Unschlicht, Medved and Samoilov-Zemliachka. It literally rushed like a hurricane through Russia, sweeping away... everything in its path."²⁷⁵

Soon clashes with believers who resisted the confiscation of church valuables took place. 1414 such clashes were reported in the official press. The first took place in the town of Shuye on March 15. Five Christians were killed and fifteen wounded, as a result of which two priests and a layman were condemned and executed. In 1921-23,

according to the decree of 1918 on the separation of the Church from the State Church property passed to the State and was declared the heritage of the State. Tikhon testified that in the Church canons there are no indications to the effect that State power in the event of the confiscation of Church valuables during popular disturbances should turn to the Church authorities for agreement. Although of course the Patriarch very well understood that the valuables taken from the Church would not be used for aid to the starving. And nevertheless he declared that the Soviet government need not turn to the Patriarch for agreement to the requisitioning. They managed to get an analogous testimony from the Patriarch's closest colleague, Archbishop Nicander (Fenomenov). "Thus the GPU obtained a most important testimony from the Patriarch to the effect that he was guilty in issuing an appeal with regard to the requisitioning of Church valuables, that the use of the Church valuables for the needs of the starving was not sacrilege and did not contradict the Church canons" (*Vlast' i Tserkov' v 1922-1925gg.* (The Authorities and the Church in 1922-1925), Moscow, 1997; S. Golubtsov, op. cit., pp. 151-152).

²⁷⁴ Krivova, op. cit., pp. 184-85. See also Roslof, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

²⁷⁵ Ravich, "Ograblennij Khristos, ili brillianty dlya diktatury proletariata" (Christ Robbed, or Diamonds for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), *Chas-Pik* (Rush Hour), № 18, pp. 24-25.

2,691 married priests, 1,962 monks, 3,447 nuns and an unknown number of laymen were killed on the pretext of resistance to the seizure of church valuables in the country as a whole.²⁷⁶ According to another estimate, the anti-ecclesiastical campaign cost the lives of 28 bishops and 1,215 priests - over 8000 people altogether.²⁷⁷ According to a third estimate, up to 10,000 believers were killed.²⁷⁸ According to yet another, in the parishes some 2,700 priests and 5,000 monks and nuns perished.²⁷⁹

On March 19, Lenin sent a long letter to the Politburo marked "Top Secret. No Copies to be Made": "It is precisely now and only now, when there is cannibalism in the famine-stricken areas and hundreds if not thousands of corpses are lying along the roads, that we can (and therefore must) carry out the confiscation of valuables with fanatical and merciless energy and not hesitate to suppress any form of resistance... It is precisely now and only now that the vast majority of the peasant masses will either support us or at least will be unable to give any decisive support to those... who might and would want to try to resist the Soviet decree. We must confiscate in the shortest possible time as much as possible to create for ourselves a fund of several hundred million roubles... Without this fund, government work.. and the defence of our positions in Genoa are absolutely unthinkable... Now our victory over the reactionary clergy is guaranteed... It is precisely now that we must wage a decisive and merciless war with the black-hundreds clergy and crush their opposition with such cruelty that they will not forget it for many decades... The more members of the reactionary bourgeoisie we manage to shoot the better."²⁸⁰

Concerning the Patriarch, however, Lenin said: "I think it is expedient for us not to touch Patriarch Tikhon himself, although he is undoubtedly heading this entire rebellion of slave-owners." As for the leader of the campaign, Lenin wanted Trotsky - "but he should at no time and under no circumstances speak out [on this matter] in the press or before the public in any other manner". This was probably, as Richard Pipes suggests, "in order not to feed rumors that the campaign was a Jewish plot against Christianity,"²⁸¹ because Trotsky was a Jew, and the high proportion of Jews in the Bolshevik party had aroused the people's wrath against them.

On March 20 there was a session of the Politburo "consisting of L.B. Kamenev, I.V. Stalin, L.D. Trotsky and V.M. Molotov. The Directive [on the requisitioning of church valuables] was sent to all the provincial committees. In accordance with it the requisitioning had to begin with the church at whose head was the clergy loyal to the

²⁷⁶ Ravich, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

²⁷⁷ Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, p. 355.

²⁷⁸ V. Petrenko, "Sv. Patriarkh Vserossijskij Tikhon" (His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon of All Russia), *Vestnik I.P.Ts.* (Herald of the True Orthodox Church), Odessa, № 1 (11), 1998, p. 27.

²⁷⁹ Donald Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 122.

²⁸⁰ Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), vol. 45, p. 666, cited in *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (The Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 94, pp. 54-60, Regelson, *op. cit.*, p. 314, and Richard Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 134). Volkogonov said that he had seen a document in which Lenin requested that he be informed on a daily basis how many priests had been executed (*Literator*, August 31, 1990, p. 4, in Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p. 11, note).

²⁸¹ Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p. 155. Volkogonov (*op. cit.*, p. 380) agrees with this opinion. As does Rayfield (*op. cit.*, pp. 121-122).

authorities. The times of the requisitioning were determined and the composition of the commission. Great attention was paid to agitation and creating a schism in the ranks of the clergy. The requisitioning of valuables was carried out as a large-scale military operation with the participation of GPU workers, the People's Commissariat of Justice, the Revolutionary Tribunals and military subunits. In general the huge role played by Trotsky should be noted; although remaining in the shadows, he was the de facto director of the whole operation..."²⁸²

In addition to being the head of the requisitioning commission, Trotsky also headed the commission for their monetary realization. And in a submission to this commission he wrote on March 23: "For us it is more important to obtain 50 million in 1922-23 for a certain mass of valuables than to hope for 75 million in 1923-24. The advance of the proletarian revolution in just one of the large countries of Europe will put a stop to the market in valuables... Conclusion: we must proceed as fast as possible..."²⁸³ However, the Bolsheviks failed to get the money they wanted – the sale of church valuables fetched only about \$1.5 million, or between \$4 and \$10 million according to another estimate.²⁸⁴ At the same time, Bukharin admitted to having spent nearly \$14 million on propaganda during the famine.²⁸⁵

As for helping the starving, "since the American Relief Administration had more food piled up in Russia's ports than could be distributed, the confiscation of Church valuables had little or nothing to do with ameliorating the plight of the starving. A well-publicised disbursement of one million rubles realised from Church valuables derived from a confiscation campaign itself funded to the tune of ten times that amount... By late 1922 the regime was exporting nearly a million tons of grain, which suggests that the confiscations of Church valuables had had nothing to do with famine relief."²⁸⁶

If the primary motive of the Bolsheviks in the requisitioning campaign was in fact to destroy the Church, then they must be judged to have failed – the Church emerged even stronger spiritually from her fiery ordeal. The blood of the martyrs was already starting to bring forth fruit as thousands of previously lukewarm Christians returned to the Church.

²⁸² D. Anashkin, "Khod iziatiia tserkovnykh tsennostej" (The Process of the Requisitioning of Church Valuables", *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), N 9 (677), September, 2008, p. 27.

²⁸³ "Mucheniki Shuiskiye", *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 170, III-1994, p. 190.

²⁸⁴ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 355. According to Rayfield, "barely four million gold roubles was realized of which one million was spent on famine relief" (*op. cit.*, pp. 120-121). For another estimate, see Volkogonov, *op. cit.*, p. 381. *Rukh* (№ 34, November 4, 1996) reports that the Bolsheviks received a "profit" of 2.5 million gold roubles.

²⁸⁵ Richard Joseph Cooke, *Religion in Russia and the Soviets*, p. 149. But the Bolsheviks already had the Russian crown jewels, worth one billion gold roubles, and jewels from the Kremlin museum, worth 300 million gold roubles – far more than the market price of the church valuables (Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 355).

²⁸⁶ Michael Burleigh, *Sacred Causes*, London: Harper Perennial, 2007, p. 45.

23. THE RENOVATIONIST COUP

Throughout the Civil War and the Bolsheviks' first savage onslaught against the Church, the Church had remained united against the external foe while her internal enemies fell silent. However, the crisis elicited by the requisitioning of church valuables gave a golden opportunity to the internal enemies of the Church – the renovationist heretics. The roots of renovationism are to be found in the liberal-democratic ideas that came to prominence in Church circles at the beginning of the century.

Philip Walters writes: "During the early 20th Century, in pre-revolutionary Russia, many groups of intellectuals, philosophers and churchmen began voicing their concern over the plight of the Orthodox Church in its enforced alliance with a reactionary State. It is possible to discover many lines of continuity between the democratic and socialist aims of these men and the aims of the men of the Living Church (also known as Renovationists). There is also a certain amount of personal continuity: for example, the so-called 'Group of Thirty-Two' reformist priests, who were active between 1905 and 1907, reappeared after the February Revolution of 1917 as the 'League of Democratic Orthodox Clergy and Laymen', a group which stood against the increasing conservatism of the Orthodox Church, and which included among its members one or two men who later became prominent in the Living Church.

"B.V. Titlinov's book, *Novaia Tserkov'* (*The New Church*), written in 1922, contains an apology for Renovationist ideology. Titlinov declares that the new movement is not a revolution or a reformation, which would imply a definite break with the historical Church, but a reform which remains true to the original spirit of Orthodoxy. The basic task of the Living Church is to 'do away with those accretions which have been introduced into Orthodox worship during the period of union between the Church and the [Tsarist] State'. Titlinov calls for 'priestly creativity' in the liturgy and for its celebration as in the early Church amidst the congregation. There must be ethical and moral reform in society, involving opposition to capitalism. Bishops should be elected from the lower clergy and should be allowed to marry. The Living Church, he claims, accepts the October Revolution as consonant with the aims of Christian truth.

"There are three basic ideological strands in Renovationism: a political strand, concerned with promoting loyalty to the Soviet regime; an organizational strand, concerned with the rights of the lower clergy and with the administration of the Church; and an ethical strand, concerned with making Church services more accessible to the masses and with moral and social reform. The first strand was characteristic of the Living Church movement as a whole...When the Living Church movement split into various factions, the second ideological strand was taken up chiefly by the followers of V.D. Krasnitsky, and the third by the groups which followed Bishop Antonin Granovsky and A.I. Vvedensky."²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ Walters, "The Living Church 1922-1946", *Religion in Communion Lands*, vol. 6, Winter, 1978, pp. 235-236.

The idea of splitting the official Church hierarchy by promoting the renovationists appears to have originated in 1921 with Lunacharsky, who since the early 1900s had been instrumental in developing a more subtle, less physically confrontational approach to the problem of eradicating religion.²⁸⁸ And at the beginning of the 1920s Trotsky said: "Let those popes who are ready to cooperate with us become leaders in the Church and carry out all our instructions, calling on the believers to serve Soviet power."²⁸⁹

That the Bolsheviks planned on using the *internal* enemies of the Church at the same time that they exerted *external* pressure through the confiscation of her valuables is clear from a project outlined by Trotsky to a session of the Politburo attended by Kamenev, Stalin and Molotov on April 2: "The agitation must not be linked with the struggle against religion and the Church, but must be wholly directed towards helping the starving" (point 5); "we must take a decisive initiative in creating a schism among the clergy", taking the priests who speak in support of the measures undertaken by Soviet power "under the protection of state power" (point 6); "our agitation and the agitation of priests loyal to us must in no case be mixed up", but the communists must refer to "the significant part of the clergy" which is speaking against the inhumanity and greed "of the princes of the Church" (point 7); spying is necessary "to guarantee complete knowledge of everything that is happening in various groups of clergy, believers, etc." (point 8); the question must be formulated correctly: "it is best to begin with some church led by a loyal priest, and if such a church does not exist, then with the most significant church after careful preparation" (point 9); "representatives of the loyal clergy must be allowed to be registered in the provinces and in the centre, after the population is well informed that they will have every opportunity to check that not one article of the church heritage goes anywhere else than to help the starving" (point 13).

In actual fact, according to a secret instruction, all church valuables taken from "the enemies of Soviet power" were to be handed over, not to Pomgol or the starving, but to the Economic administration of the OGPU.²⁹⁰

The Bolsheviks were counting on a modernist or "renovationist" faction in the Russian Church to provide them with their "loyal" clergy. Already in the revolutionary years of 1905 and 1917, the renovationists-to-be had reared their heads with a long list of demands for modernist reform of the Church. And in March, 1918, Professor Titlinov, who was later to become one of the main ideologists of renovationism, founded a newspaper in Petrograd which criticized the Patriarch's anathematization of Soviet power.²⁹¹ But the plotters had to wait until the spring of 1922, when both Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Benjamin were in prison in connection with the confiscation of church valuables, before they could seize power in the Church.

²⁸⁸ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

²⁸⁹ Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 33, footnote 19.

²⁹⁰ N.A., *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁹¹ Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

The spiritual calibre of the renovationists, or the “Living Church”, as their main faction was called, can be gauged from the career of perhaps their most moderate leader, Bishop Antonin Granovsky. In 1905 he had been such a thorn in the side of the Church that the Holy Synod retired him. Thereafter he refused to mention the Tsar’s name in Divine services, and in 1907 he even declared that the Tsarist regime was satanic. In 1921 he was again retired by Patriarch Tikhon for introducing innovations on his own authority into the Divine services. In 1922 he accepted a Soviet invitation to be a member of Pomgol, and in the same year he appeared as a witness for the government in the trial of the 54 Shuye Christians who had resisted the confiscation of church valuables. And yet Granovsky himself characterized his fellow-plotters as “the sewer of the Orthodox Church”, the rebellion of power-hungry priests pursuing their class interests against the bishops and monks.²⁹²

And indeed, this anti-monasticism was, with their socialism, one of the main characteristics of the renovationists. Fr. George Florovsky called it “Protestantism of the Eastern Rite”.²⁹³ Thus Titlinov wrote that the major task of the “Living Church” was “to free church life from the influence of the monastic episcopate and transfer the administration of church affairs into the hands of the white [married] clergy.”²⁹⁴

And so Soviet power was perhaps justified – in this respect, if in no other – in counting, in E. Lopeshanskaya’s words, “on the classically Marxist ‘inner contradictions’ and ‘class struggle’, which by its ideology was necessarily bound to arise everywhere – including the Church – between the black [monastic] and white [married] clergy, between the hierarchs and the priests, for the income of the Church.”²⁹⁵

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The first shots in the battle were fired in Petrograd, which was a stronghold of renovationism as it had been of the Bolshevik revolution. According to Levitin and Shavrov, the initiative here came from the Petrograd party chief, Zinoviev, who suggested to Archpriest Alexander Vvedensky that his group would be the appropriate one for an eventual concordat between the State and the Church.²⁹⁶ Vvedensky then joined Archpriest Vladimir Krasnitsky and Bishop Antonin Granovsky in plotting to overthrow the Patriarch.

²⁹² Jane Swan, *A Biography of Patriarch Tikhon*, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N.Y., 1964, p. 62; Levitin-Shavrov, in Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982, vol. I, pp. 55, 54.

²⁹³ Florovsky, in Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church*, op. cit. p. 45.

²⁹⁴ Titlinov, in Grabbe, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁹⁵ E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki* (Bishop-Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, p. 68. On October 8, 1922 Tuchkov reported to the Politburo: “On the Tikhon question. A group has been formed of the so-called ‘living church’, consisting chiefly of ‘white clergy’, and this has given us the chance to cause a quarrel between the priests and the bishops, like soldiers against generals, for there was hostility between the white and black clergy. We are working to push the Tikhonites out of the patriarchate and the parishes.” (Quoted in Volkogonov, op. cit., p. 382).

²⁹⁶ According to Danilushkin (op. cit., p. 180), Vvedensky admitted that both Zinoviev and Tuchkov were directly involved in the schism.

The leader of the Patriarchal Church in Petrograd was Metropolitan Benjamin, who had actually come to an agreement with the local authorities concerning the voluntary handing over of church valuables. These authorities evidently did not yet understand that the real purpose of the Soviet decree was not to help the starving but to destroy the Church. Having conferred with the central authorities in Moscow, however, they reneged on their agreement with the metropolitan.²⁹⁷

Then, on March 24, a letter signed by twelve people, including the future renovationist leaders Krasnitsky, Vvedensky, Belkov, Boyarsky and others, appeared in *Petrogradskaia Pravda* (it was reprinted five days later in *Izvestia*). The letter defended the measures undertaken by the Soviet government and distanced the authors from the rest of the clergy.

The clergy reacted strongly against this letter at a clergy meeting, during which Vvedensky gave a brazen and threatening speech. However, the metropolitan succeeded in calming passions sufficiently so that it was decided to enter into fresh negotiations with the authorities, the conduct of these negotiations being entrusted to Vvedensky and Boyarsky. They proceeded to win an agreement according to which other articles or money were allowed to be substituted for the church valuables...

On March 22-23 Trotsky wrote: "The arrest of the Synod and the Patriarch is necessary, but not now, but in about 10-15 days... In the course of this week we must arrange a trial of priests for stealing church valuables (there are quite a few facts)... The press must adopt a frenzied tone, giving [evidence of] a heap of priestly attempts in Smolensk, Petrograd, etc..."²⁹⁸

On April 1 the Patriarch was placed under house arrest...

The first instinct of the Russian Church in the face of Soviet power, as manifested in its anathematization at the 1917-18 Council, has never been extinguished among Russian Christians. It continued to manifest itself both at home and abroad (for example, in the First All-Emigration Council of the Russian Church Abroad in 1921), both in the early and the later decades of Soviet power (for example, among the "passportless" Christians of the Catacomb Church). However, it was very soon tempered by the realisation that such outright rejection of Soviet power on a large scale could be sustained only by *war* - and after the defeat of the White Armies in the Civil War there were no armies left to carry on the fight against the Bolsheviks.

Therefore from the early 1920s a new attitude towards Soviet power began to evolve among the Tikhonite Christians: loyalty towards it as a political institution ("for all power is from God"), and acceptance of such of its laws as could be interpreted in favour of the Church (for example, the law on the separation of Church and State), combined with rejection of its atheistic world-view (large parts of which

²⁹⁷ Grabbe, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 32.

²⁹⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

the renovationists, by contrast, accepted). In essence, this new attitude involved accepting that the Soviet State was not Antichrist, as the Local Council of 1917-18 and the Russian Church Abroad had in effect declared, but Caesar, no worse in principle than the Caesars of Ancient Rome, to whom the things belonging to Caesar were due. This attitude involved the assertion that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion.

But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved very hard to draw. For to the early Bolsheviks there was no such dividing line; for them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accord with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state did not pry. Thus unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives so long as they showed loyalty to the state (which the Christians were eager to do), the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as "anti-Soviet behaviour", i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: "Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it" (James 2.10), such a person was an *enemy of the people*.

In view of this, it is not surprising that many Christians came to the conclusion that there was no gain, and from a moral point of view much to be lost, in accepting a regime that made such impossible demands, since the penalty would be the same whether one asserted one's loyalty to it or not. And if this meant living as an outlaw, so be it... Nevertheless, the path of total rejection of the Soviet state required enormous courage, strength and self-sacrifice, not only for oneself but also (which was more difficult) for one's family or flock. It is therefore not surprising that, already during the Civil War, the Church began to soften her anti-Soviet rhetoric and try once more to draw the line between politics and religion. This is what Patriarch Tikhon tried to do in the later years of his patriarchate - with, it must be said, only mixed results. Thus his decision to allow some, but not all of the Church's valuables to be requisitioned by the Bolsheviks in 1922 not only did not bring help to the starving of the Volga, as was the intention, but led to many clashes between believers and the authorities and many deaths of believers.

The decision to negotiate with the Bolsheviks only brought confusion and division to the Church. Thus on the right wing of the Church there were those, like Archbishop Theodore of Volokolamsk, who thought that the patriarch had already gone too far; while on the left wing there were those, like Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who wanted to go further. The basic problem was that the compromises were always one-sided; the Bolsheviks always took and never gave; their aim was not peaceful co-existence, but the complete conquest of the Church. And so, as a "Letter from Russia"

put it many years later: "It's no use our manoeuvring: there's nothing for us to preserve except the things that are God's. For the things that are Caesar's (if one should really consider it to be Caesar and not Pharaoh) are always associated with the quenching of the Spirit..."²⁹⁹

However, the Patriarchal Church remained Orthodox under Patriarch Tikhon and his successor, Metropolitan Peter, for two major reasons: first, because the leaders of the Church did not sacrifice the lives of their fellow Christians for the sake of their own security or the security of the Church organisation; and secondly, because, while the Soviet regime was recognised to be, in effect, Caesar rather than Pharaoh, no further concessions were made with regard to the communist *ideology*.

On May 3, at a secret midnight meeting of the presidium of the GPU – Ushinsky, Menzhinsky, Yagoda, Samsonov and Krasikov – it was decided “to summon Tikhon and demand of him that he publish within 24 hours the expulsion from the Church, defrocking and removal from their posts of the above-mentioned clergy [the leaders of the Russian Church in Exile]. If Tikhon refuses to carry out the above-mentioned demands, he is to be immediately arrested and accused of all the crimes he has committed against Soviet power.”³⁰⁰

“This proposal,” writes Rayfield, “went to Trotsky and Stalin, who had the Politburo resolve [on May 4] ‘1) to bring Tikhon to trial; 2) to apply the death penalty to the priests’.”³⁰¹

On May 5, the following dialogue took place when he appeared for the last time as a witness in the case of the 54 Moscow clergymen:

President: “You ordered that your appeal calling on the people to disobey the authorities [this was the statement on church valuables] should be read out to the whole people.

Patriarch: “The authorities well know that in my appeal there was no call [to the people] to resist the authorities, but only to preserve their holy things, and in the name of their preservation to ask the authorities to allow their value to be paid in money, and, by helping their starving brothers in this way, to preserve their holy things.”

President: “Well, this call will cost the lives of your faithful servants.”

At this point the patriarch pointed to those on trial and said: “I always said and continue to say... that I alone am guilty of everything, and this is only my Christian army, obediently following the commands of the head sent to her by God. But if a redemptive sacrifice is necessary, if the death of innocent sheep of the flock of Christ is necessary” – at this point the voice of the Patriarch was raised and it became audible

²⁹⁹ *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), № 3143, March 17, 1977.

³⁰⁰ *Istochnik* (The Source), № 3, 1995, p. 116.

³⁰¹ Rayfield, op. cit., p. 123.

in all the corners of the huge hall, and he himself as it were grew tall as, addressing the accused, he raised his hands and blessed them, loudly and distinctly pronouncing the words – ‘I bless the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to go to torment and death for Him’. The accused fell on their knees. Both the judges and the prosecutors fell silent... The session did not continue that evening. In the morning the verdict was pronounced: 18 priests were to be shot. When they were being led out of the hall, they began to chant: “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life.”³⁰² The prosecutor also declared that the tribunal “establishes the illegality of the existence of the organization called the Orthodox hierarchy”. And so the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church was placed beyond the law!³⁰³

That evening, at GPU headquarters, T.P. Samsonov and V.R. Menzhinsky asked the patriarch to say what punitive measures he was taking in relation to the clergy abroad, and in particular Metropolitans Anthony and Eulogius. Menzhinsky even suggested that the Patriarch invite the metropolitans to Moscow to demand “a personal explanation”, to which the Patriarch replied: “They will hardly come here.” At the same interrogation it was demanded of the Patriarch that he issue a directive to the clergy abroad that they hand over all the Church Abroad’s property to representatives of Soviet power.³⁰⁴ It was therefore under extreme pressure that on the same day of May 5, Patriarch Tikhon convened a meeting of the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, at which he declared (decree № 347) that “neither the epistle, nor the address of the Karlovtsy Synod [to the Genoa conference] express the voice of the Russian Church”. And he ordered the dissolution of the Church in Exile’s Higher Church Administration and the transfer of all power over the Russian refugees in Europe to Metropolitan Eulogy of Paris.³⁰⁵

Decree № 347 has been used by the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate and its satellites to cast doubts on the canonicity of the Russian Church Abroad. However, the ukaz that ROCOR received did not have the Patriarch’s signature and was signed only by Archbishop Thaddeus of Astrakhan!³⁰⁶

As Igumen Luke points out: “If one reads the decree one will see that it contains nothing concerning violation of canons by the Higher Church Administration and nowhere declares it to be uncanonical. No one, not even Metropolitan Eulogy accepted the authority of the document. The Patriarch in assigning Metropolitan Eulogy to head the parishes in Western Europe ‘overlooked’ the fact that there were eight other dioceses in the Church Abroad and said nothing about their leadership. This and other confused aspects of the decree only support the universal opinion that it was issued under pressure from the Bolsheviks who desired by all means to weaken

³⁰² Protopriest Lev Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 573.

³⁰³ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

³⁰⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

³⁰⁵ *Acts of the Russian Pan-Diaspora Church Council in Sremsky-Karlovtsy*, Sremsky-Karlovtsy, 1922, p. 126; quoted by Fr. Victor Potapov, "What is False is also Corrupt", *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XIV, № 1, January-February, 1992, p. 26.

³⁰⁶ Protopriest Alexander Lebedev, “‘Ia napisal eto dlia vlastej, a ty sidi i rabotaj’” (I wrote this for the authorities, you sit and work), *Vozvrashchenie* (Return), № 2 (6), 1994, p. 29.

the anti-Communist voice from abroad. Upon receiving notification of his appointment as ruling bishop in Europe Metropolitan Eulogy wrote to Metropolitan Anthony: 'This decree amazed me by its suddenness and simply shocks one by the possible confusion it could bring into church life' (exactly what the communists wanted and continue to desire in order to eliminate any opposition to their control of the Church). 'There is no doubt that the decree was issued under pressure by the Bolsheviks.' Metropolitan Eulogius continues, 'I do not recognize this document as having any authority even though it might have been written and signed by the Patriarch. This document is political and not ecclesiological...'"³⁰⁷

In any case, the Patriarch did not actually anathematise the émigré bishops, nor remove any of them from their sees, so the action which was designed to placate the Bolsheviks only served to anger them.

The leaders of the Russian Church in Exile took the view – and in this they were at first supported, as we have seen, by Metropolitan Eulogy³⁰⁸ – that the patriarch had been acting under duress at the time. So they acted in order formally to obey the Patriarch's decree, while in effect ignoring it. They dissolved the Higher Church Administration and created a Synod of Bishops presided over by Metropolitan Eulogy in its place. The Patriarch, as if in tacit acknowledgement of this, issued no further condemnation of the Synod Abroad and acted in future as if he fully recognized its authority.³⁰⁹

On the evening of May 6 the Patriarch came back from an interrogation, exhausted. Fr. Michael Polsky writes that the Patriarch said:

“‘This time they interrogated me really strictly...’

“‘What will happen to you?’ asked one anxiously.

“‘They promised to cut off my head,’ replied the Patriarch with his usual geniality.”

The next day he served in the village of Bogorodsk with Fr. Michael. “He served

³⁰⁷ Igumen Luke, "An Answer to the Orthodox Church in America's Document, 'Why Deepen the Schism?'" , *Orthodox Life*, vol. 40, № 6, November-December, 1990, pp. 13-14. During his interrogation by the GPU on May 9, the Patriarch, according to Sergius Golubtsov (*op. cit.*, p. 115), "was forced to recognise Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky as 'an accursed enemy of the workers' and peasants' toiling masses of Russia'. But the patriarch made the substantial qualification that he had not up to that moment considered Metropolitan Anthony an enemy of Soviet power, while his 'antisoviet and interventionist speeches' became known to him only from February- March, 1922, having in mind, evidently, his address in the name of the Karlovtsy Council to the Genoa conference. By this recognition, in our view, the Patriarch underlined his walling off from the Church Abroad only with regard to the latter's political declarations, which he did not support. At the same time he strove by all means to avoid evaluations of Metropolitan Anthony both as a whole and during his time in the camp of Denikin, Wrangel and Skoropadsky."

³⁰⁸ For more detail on the evolution of Evlogy's views, see Ross, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-61.

³⁰⁹ Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 32. For example, he accepted the authority of the Synod Abroad to appoint Metropolitan Platon to head the American dioceses in 1922. See Igumen Luke, *op. cit.*, p. 14; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

the liturgy – as always, with not the slightest trace of nervousness or even tension in prayer. Looking at him, who was preparing himself for prison, and perhaps also for execution (that was a serious threat at the time), I involuntarily remembered the words of Christ: ‘The prince of this world come, and will find nothing of his own in Me’. Let them accuse, they will find nothing, he will be innocent...”³¹⁰

The same day, the Patriarch was placed under house arrest. According to his will, the temporary administration of the Church should now have passed to Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan. But since he was in prison, the next hierarch according to the will, Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslavl, should have taken over.

On May 9 the Patriarch was told the verdict of the court on the Muscovite clergy (11 condemned to be shot) and then told that he himself was to be brought to trial.

The interrogation again revolved around the Church Abroad. The Patriarch gave in and wrote: “I did not consider Anthony Khrapovitsky, Metropolitan of Kiev, to be an enemy of the workers-and-peasants’ power. But now, judging from his speeches in the foreign press – *Novoe Vremia* and others – I find that he, Anthony Khrapovitsky is an accursed enemy of the worker-peasant toiling masses of Russia. The anti-Soviet and interventionist speeches of Anthony Khrapovitsky became known to me only from March, 1922, perhaps from February.”³¹¹

On May 12, accompanied by two chekists, the renovationist priests Vvedensky, Belkov and Kalinovsky (who, as the Patriarch pointed out, had but a short time before renounced holy orders), visited the Patriarch at the Troitsky podvorye, where he was confined, and told him that they had obtained permission for the convening of a Council, but on condition that he resigned from the patriarchal throne. The Patriarch replied that the patriarchy weighed on him like a cross. “I would joyfully accept it if the coming Council removed the patriarchy from me, but now I am handing power to one of the oldest hierarchs and will renounced the administration of the Church.” The Patriarch rejected the candidacies of some modernist bishops and appointed Metropolitan Agathangel as his deputy.³¹²

³¹⁰ Polsky, *Polozhenie Tserkvi v Sovjetskoj Rossii* (The Situation of the Church in Soviet Russia), Jerusalem, 1931.

³¹¹ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 73. Metropolitan Michael (Ermakov) of Kiev witnessed in 1925: “In 1922 there was a meeting of churchmen in Ukraine. Among them were 7 bishops, including myself – 70 people in all. At this convention the desire was expressed that Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky, the metropolitan of Kiev, should be considered removed from the administration and calling of the metropolitan of Kiev. However, Patriarch Tikhon in the same year, or perhaps in 1923 or 1924, annulled this resolution, and sent a corresponding act to Bishop Gregory of Poltava in reply. That the Kiev metropolia should remain with Anthony was evident from the fact that in the document the Patriarch declared his non-acceptance of all the desires expressed at this convention. Thus I could not be the metropolitan of Kiev, or, more exactly, bear the title ‘metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia’, a title which, consequently remains with Anthony Khrapovitsky” (Archimandrite Damascene (Orlov), “Patriarshij mestobliustitel’ sviaschennomuchenik Petr (Patriarchal locum tenens Hieromartyr Peter), *Mucheniki, ispovedniki i podvizhniki blagochestia Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi XX stoletia* (Martyrs, Confessors and Ascetics of Piety of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century), book 2; in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 89).

³¹² Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 74.

“However,” writes Krivova, “the authorities did not allow Metropolitan Agathangel to leave for Moscow. Already on May 5, 1922 V.D. Krasnitsky had arrived at the Tolga monastery where the metropolitan was living, and demanded that he sign the appeal of the so-called ‘Initiative Group of Clergy’. The metropolitan refused to sign the appeal. Then, two days later, his signature declaring that he would not leave was taken from him, and a guard was placed outside his cell and a search was carried out.

“After Agathangel there remained in Moscow only three of the members of the Holy Synod and HCA, but they were not empowered to take any kind of decision that would be obligatory for the whole Church. Thus the path to the seizure of Church power by the renovationists was open. Using Tikhon’s temporary concession and the impossibility of Metropolitan Agathangel’s taking the place of the Patriarch, the renovationists declared that Tikhon had been removed and in an arbitrary manner seized power. Arriving on May 15, 1922 at a reception with M.I. Kalinin, they understood that Metropolitan Agathangel’s departure to Moscow was hardly possible. The next day the renovationists sent a letter to M.I. Kalinin, in which they declared that ‘in view of Patriarch Tikhon’s removal of himself from power, a Higher Church Administration is formed, which from May 2 (15) has taken upon itself the conducting of Church affairs in Russia.’”³¹³

On May 17 the Pope offered to buy back all the requisitioned valuables and hand them over to the leader of the Catholics in Russia, Archbishop Tseplyak. Chicherin considered the proposal tempting, but noted that “the transfer of Church objects to the Catholics will elicit a storm in Russia”. The Pope’s proposal was rejected.³¹⁴

On May 18 the renovationists complained to the Patriarch that in consequence of the existing circumstances, Church business remained unattended to. They demanded that he entrust his chancery to them until Metropolitan Agathangel’s arrival in Moscow, in order that they might properly classify the correspondence received. The Patriarch yielded, and inscribed their petition with the following resolution: “The undersigned persons are ordered to take over and transmit to the Right Reverend Metropolitan Agathangel, upon his arrival in Moscow, all the Synodical business with the assistance of secretary Numerov.”³¹⁵ The next day, the Patriarch was transferred under house arrest to the Donskoj monastery, and the renovationists took over his residence in the Troitsky podvorye.

On May 27, Trotsky wrote to Lenin: “The separation of the Church from the State, which we have established once and for all, by no means signifies that the state is indifferent to what is happening in the Church”. He spoke about “loyal and progressive elements in the clergy” and set the task of “raising the spirit of the loyal clergy” in indirect ways – through the press. He complained that “the editors of

³¹³ Krivova, op. cit.; Golubtsov, op. cit., p. 116.

³¹⁴ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 74.

³¹⁵ J.S. Curtiss, *The Russian Church and the Soviet State*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1953, pp. 159-160; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 290; Grabbe, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

Pravda and *Izvestia* are not taking sufficient account of the huge historical importance of what is happening in the Church and around her". Trotsky fully understood the importance of this, "the most profound spiritual revolution in the Russian people".

Lenin commented: "True! A thousand times true!"³¹⁶

However, the renovationists and communists still had to neutralize the threat posed by Metropolitan Agathangel. So Krasnitsky was sent to Yaroslavl and placed a number of conditions before the Patriarch's lawful deputy that amounted to his placing himself in complete dependence on the renovationists. When the metropolitan rejected these conditions, the renovationists spread the rumour that he "was not hurrying" to fulfil the Patriarch's command.

"Metropolitan Agathangel's behaviour," write Levitin and Shavrov, "would indeed have appeared quite incomprehensible if it had not been for one detail: for a month now E.A. Tuchkov and Metropolitan Agathangel had been conducting secret negotiations. E.A. Tuchkov, whom the Higher Church Administration considered their main support in negotiations with the metropolitan, expressed the desire to separate as quickly as possible from this unsolid institution [the HCA] and support Agathangel. However, a series of concessions was expected from Agathangel; he had to declare that he was renouncing Patriarch Tikhon's political line. After a month's negotiations, seeing that no progress was being made, Metropolitan Agathangel unexpectedly addressed the Russian Church with an appeal [dated June 5/18, 1922, № 214], which was printed by some underground printing-press and very quickly distributed in Moscow and the other cities...

"E.A. Tuchkov was taken completely by surprise. The HCA was also shocked. Metropolitan Agathangel was immediately arrested and sent into exile, to the Narymsk region. However, the appearance of this appeal showed that the unprincipled line of V.D. Krasnitsky was meeting with a sharp rejection in ecclesiastical circles..."³¹⁷

Agathangel wrote that the renovationists had "declared their intention to revise the dogmas and moral teaching of our Orthodox Faith, the sacred canons of the Holy Ecumenical Councils and the Orthodox Typicon of Divine services given by the great ascetics of Christian piety", and gave the bishops the right to administer their dioceses independently until the restoration of a canonical Higher Church Authority: "Deprived for a time of higher leadership, you must now administer your dioceses independently in accordance with the Scriptures, with the Church canons, your conscience and your hierarchical oath, until the re-establishment of the Higher Church Authority. Finally, carry out your work, for which you previously asked the permission of the Holy Synod, and in doubtful cases turn to my humility."³¹⁸ It is noteworthy that this was addressed to *all* the bishops of the Russian Church, including those abroad, and so implicitly disavowed the decision of May 5

³¹⁶ N.A. "Nye bo vragom Tvoim ajnu povyem...", *op. cit.*, p. 17.

³¹⁷ Levitin, A. and Shavrov, V. in Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 813.

³¹⁸ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-221.

disbanding the Higher Church Administration Abroad.

Metropolitan Agathangel was immediately arrested. Now both the patriarch and his only lawful deputy were in prison...

The metropolitan's reference to the renovationists' revising the dogmas and moral teachings of the Faith, as well as the canons and services, was correct. Thus in its "Reform Programme", the renovationists called for "the re-establishment of the evangelical teaching of the first Christians, with a deliberate development of the teaching concerning the human nature of Christ the Saviour and a struggle with the scholastic corruption of Christianity." And one of the subsections of the programme bore the title: "The terrible judgement, paradise and hell as moral concepts".³¹⁹

Moreover, at their first Council, the renovationists declared: "Freedom of religious propaganda (in addition to freedom to propagate antireligious ideas) enables believers to defend the value of their purely religious convictions in ideal circumstances. Therefore adherents of the Church cannot regard Soviet power as the realm of Antichrist. On the contrary, the Council draws attention to the fact that Soviet power is the sole entity in the world that is in a position to realize the Kingdom of God."³²⁰

Fr. Basil Redechkin writes that the renovationists "united the leaders of various rationalist tendencies. Therefore various voices were heard: some denied the Holy Icons, others - the sign of the Cross, others - the Holy Relics, others denied all the sacraments except baptism, while yet others tried to overthrow the veneration of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and even the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. They said about the All-holy Virgin Mary: 'She is a simple woman, just like all women, and her son was, of course, only a man, and not God!' And the 'livers' created a completely atheist 'symbol of faith' to please the God-fighting, antichristian authorities. It was published in the journal *Zhivaia Tserkov'* in 1925, and was composed of thirty articles. This 'symbol' began with the words: '1. I believe in one power that created the world, the heavens and the earth, the visible and invisible worlds. 2. In one catholic humanity and in it (in the man) Jesus Christ.'

"And it is completely understandable that after this they should declare that the Canonical rules by which the Holy Church has been guided for two thousand years: the rules of the Holy Apostles, of the Ecumenical and Local Councils and of the Holy Fathers - 'have become infinitely outdated' and have 'repealed' themselves... So the 'liver-renovationists', wanting to walk 'in step with the times',... introduced a married episcopate, allowed widowed priests to marry a second and even a third time, and took other liberties."³²¹

³¹⁹ *Zhivaia Tserkov'*, 10, October 1, 1922; Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

³²⁰ *Zhivaia Tserkov'*, 10, October 1, 1922; Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

³²¹ Redechkin, "Pojmi vremia: Iskazhenie Pravoslavnogo Uchenia Moskovskoj Patriarkhii" (Understand the Time: The Distortion of Orthodox Teaching by the Moscow Patriarchate), Moscow, 1992, samizdat, p. 5.

24. METROPOLITAN BENJAMIN OF PETROGRAD

The focus now shifts back to Petrograd. On May 25 Vvedensky appeared before Metropolitan Benjamin with a document signed by the renovationist Bishop Leonid, which said that he, "in accordance with the resolution of Patriarch Tikhon, is a member of the HCA and is sent to Petrograd and other cities on Church business". The metropolitan, not seeing the signature of the Patriarch, refused to accept it.

The next day, at the Sunday Liturgy, an Epistle from the metropolitan was read in all the churches of Petrograd, in which he anathematised the rebellious priest Alexander Vvedensky and Eugene Belkov and also those with them for trampling on the rights of the patriarch and removing him from his see. "According to the teaching of the Church," the Epistle said, "a diocese that is for some reason deprived of the possibility of receiving instructions from its Patriarch, is ruled by its bishops, who remains in spiritual union with the Patriarch... The bishop of Petrograd is the Metropolitan of Petrograd. By obeying him, you will be in union with him and will be in the Church."

The next day chekists arrived at the residence of the metropolitan and arrested him. Meanwhile, Vvedensky took over the chancellery. Without turning a hair, he went up to the hierarch for a blessing. "Fr. Alexander," said the metropolitan peacefully, "you and I are not in the Garden of Gethsemane". And without blessing the schismatic, he calmly listened to the statement about his arrest.³²²

On the same day, Metropolitan Benjamin was brought to trial together with 86 other people. They were accused of entering into negotiations with Soviet power with the aim of annulling or softening the decree on the requisitioning of church valuables, and that they were "in a plot with the worldwide bourgeoisie and the Russian emigration". He was given many chances to save himself in a dishonourable manner. Thus even before the trial Vvedensky and the commandant of the Petrograd GPU Bakayev had come to him in prison and given him the choice: either revoke the ban on Vvedensky or face trial. But the metropolitan refused to revoke the ban, thus signing his own death warrant.

Vvedensky now assembled the vicar-bishops, Nicholas, Innocent and Benedict, in his flat and tried to pressure them into asking the metropolitan to revoke the ban. But they all resisted the pressure, and dispersed to their homes.

The next day, June 4, the newspapers reported that Vicar-Bishop Alexis (Simansky) of Yamburg had removed the ban from Vvedensky. "I recognize," he wrote in an appeal, "that the decree of Metropolitan Benjamin on the unlawful acts of Protopriest Alexander Vvedensky and the other persons mentioned in the epistle of Vladyka Metropolitan has lost its validity, and I recognize them as being restored to communion with the Church." And he called himself the "direct and lawful successor to Vladyka Metropolitan Benjamin".

³²² Protopriest Vladislav Tsy-pin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1918*, chapter 2; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

According to A. Levitin and V. Shavrov, Alexis did this because the chekists threatened him that if he disobeyed Metropolitan Benjamin would be shot.³²³ But this seems highly unlikely, first because Metropolitan Benjamin was shot anyway, and secondly because Bishop Alexis showed himself to be pro-Soviet from this time until his death in the rank of patriarch... In any case, not only was Alexis here usurping the power of the metropolitan: neither he alone nor all the vicar-bishops together had the right to remove the ban placed by Metropolitan Benjamin, who was still alive and accessible, even though he was in prison.³²⁴

Bishop Alexis now formed, with Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich), the "Petrograd autocephaly", which for six months commemorated neither the renovationists nor the Patriarch. M.V. Shkarovsky writes: "The 'Petrograd autocephaly' by the fact of its six-month, de facto legal existence demonstrated the possibility of the existence of canonical church structures recognized by the organs of State power in the conditions of Soviet reality, and to a definite degree prepared the way travelled by the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate at the end of the 1920s."³²⁵ That is, comments Fr. Alexis Lebedev, "in fact there they worked out the Sergianist model of 'changing the content without changing the external forms'" of Orthodoxy.³²⁶

Later, faced with his extreme unpopularity because of his betrayal of Metropolitan Benjamin, Bishop Alexis was forced to ask the renovationist HCA to relieve him of his administration of his diocese, and was soon sent into exile for three years... However, even after his return from exile Bishop Alexis did not finally break with the renovationists. The Petrograd clergy, with few exceptions, continued to distrust him.³²⁷

During his trial, the judges hinted to Metropolitan Benjamin that he save himself by naming "the authors" of the proposition he had sent to Pomgol. The metropolitan again refused, saying: "I alone did it – I thought everything over; I formulated, wrote and sent the proposition myself. I did not allow anybody else to participate in deciding matters entrusted to me as archpastor."

The renovationists Krasnitsky and Vvedensky testified against Metropolitan Benjamin during the trial, which was staged in what had been the Club of the Nobility. Three witnesses came forward to defend the metropolitan. They were immediately arrested, so no-one else came forward.

Once the prosecutor Krasikov prophetically remarked: "The whole of the

³²³ Levitin and Shavrov, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 77.

³²⁴ Bishop Ambrose (Epiphany), "Pervij preemnik Sergia. K 40-letiu so dnia konchiny Patriarkha Aleksia I (Simanskogo). Chast' pervaja" (First successor of Sergius. On the 40th anniversary of the death of Patriarch Alexis I (Simansky), Part One), <http://www.portalcredo.ru/site/print.php?act=fresh&id=1206>, pp. 2, 3.

³²⁵ Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v XX veke* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century), Moscow, 2010, p. 99.

³²⁶ Lebedev, <http://p-alexey.livejournal.com/273210.html>, May 21, 2010.

³²⁷ Epiphany, op. cit., p. 3.

Orthodox Church is a counter-revolutionary organization. It follows that the whole Church should be put in prison!" In the thirties this is precisely what happened, when the whole of the True Church was either imprisoned or driven underground.

During the trial, Metropolitan Benjamin said: "I of course reject all the accusations made against me and once again triumphantly declare (you know, perhaps I am speaking for the last time in my life) that politics is completely alien to me. I have tried as far as I have been able to only a pastor of human souls. And now, standing before the court, I calmly await its sentence, whatever it may be, well remembering the words of the apostle: 'Take care that you do not suffer as evil-doers, but if any of you suffer as a Christian, thank God for it' (I Peter 4.15-16).

The defence lawyer Y.S. Gurovich delivered an eloquent speech, in which he said: "If the metropolitan perishes for his faith, for his limitless devotion to the believing masses he will become more dangerous for Soviet power than now... The unfailing historical law warns us that faith grows, strengthens and increases on the blood of martyrs."³²⁸

Gurovich's speech was greeted by tumultuous applause. Then the final word was given to the defendants (there were sixteen in all). When the metropolitan rose to speak, he first expressed sorrow at being called an "enemy of the people". "I am a true son of my people," he said. "I love, and always have loved, the people. I have dedicated my whole life to them and I felt happy to see that they - I mean the common people - repaid me with the same love. It was the Russian people who raised me to the high position I have been occupying in our Russian Church."

This was all that he had to say about himself. The rest of his speech dealt with the defence of the others. Referring to some written documents and other facts, he exhibited extraordinary memory, logic and calmness.

A reverent silence followed the metropolitan's speech, which was broken by the presiding judge. He addressed the metropolitan in a gentler tone of voice than before, as if he also was affected by the spiritual strength of the defendant. "All this time," he said, "you have spoken about others; the tribunal would like to hear about yourself."

The metropolitan, who had sat down, rose, looked at the presiding judge in a puzzled way, and asked in a low, clear voice: "About myself? But what else can I tell you about myself? One more thing perhaps: regardless of what my sentence will be, no matter what you decide, life or death, I will lift up my eyes reverently to God, cross myself and affirm: 'Glory to Thee, my Lord; glory to Thee for everything.'"

On July 5, Metropolitan Benjamin was convicted of "organizing a counter-revolutionary group having set himself the aim of struggling with Soviet power". In a letter written from prison, the metropolitan expressed the essence of what was to become the position of the Catacomb Church a few years later: "The reasonings of some, perhaps outstanding pastors are strange... - 'we must preserve the living

³²⁸ Regelson, op. cit., p. 302.

forces', that is, for their sake, we must abandon everything! Then what is Christ for? It is not the Platonovs, the Chuprins, the Benjamins and their like who save the Church, but Christ. That point on which they are trying to stand is destruction for the Church; it is not right to sacrifice the Church for oneself."³²⁹

The metropolitan was shot on the night of August 12 to 13, 1922. Bishop Alexis, it is said, on hearing the news, "sobbed like a child". And yet he never reversed the act whereby he betrayed the metropolitan to his death...

³²⁹ Polsky, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 294.

25. THE RENOVATIONIST COUNCIL OF 1923

In Russia the renovationist schismatics continued to gain ground throughout 1922. On June 16, three important hierarchs joined them, declaring: "We, Metropolitan Sergius [Stragorodsky] of Vladimir and Shuya, Archbishop Eudocimus of Nizhegorod and Arzamas and Archbishop Seraphim of Kostroma and Galich, having studied the platform of the Temporary Church Administration and the canonical lawfulness of its administration, consider it the only lawful, canonical, higher church authority, and all the instructions issuing from it we consider to be completely lawful and obligatory. We call on all true pastors and believing sons of the Church, both those entrusted to us and those belonging to other dioceses, to follow our example."³³⁰

Sergius' vicar, Bishop Barnabas (Belyaev) turned for advice to the Diveyevo eldress Maria Dmitrievna. "Hold on to the Holy Church," she said. Vladyka did, and, rejecting renovationism, remained faithful to the True Church in the catacombs until his death in 1963.

Metropolitan John (Snychev) wrote: "We do not have the right to hide from history those sad and staggering apostasies from the unity of the Russian Church which took place on a mass scale after the publication in the journal 'Living Church' of the epistle-appeals of the three well-known hierarchs. Many of the hierarchs and clergy reasoned naively. Thus: 'If the wise Sergius has recognized the possibility of submitting to the Higher Church Administration, then it is clear that we, too, must follow his example.'"³³¹

The GPU gave valuable aid to the renovationists, arresting and sending into exile all the clergy who remained faithful to the Patriarch. Also, by the end of 1922 and beginning of 1923 they had handed over to them nearly two-thirds of the functioning churches in the Russian republic and Central Asia, as well as many thousands in the Ukraine, Belorussia and Siberia – almost 20,000 churches.³³² However, these figures exaggerated the true strength of the renovationists, in that their churches were almost empty while the patriarchal churches were filled to overflowing.

On November 23 / December 6, 1922 Patriarch Tikhon anathematized the renovationists and the "Higher Church Administration" created by them as being "an institution of the Antichrist, in which are the sons of resistance to the Divine Truth and the holy canons of the Church". This measure was repeated on December 7/20, 1923.

In April, the government announced that the Patriarch was about to go on trial on charges arising from the trials of the 54 in Moscow and of Metropolitan Benjamin in Petrograd the previous year. D. Volkogonov writes: "Tikhon, imprisoned in Donskoi

³³⁰ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219.

³³¹ Snychev, "Mitropolit Sergij i Obnovlencheskij Raskol" (Metropolitan Sergius and the Renovationist Schism), in Danilushkin, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

³³² D. V. Pospelovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v XX veke* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century), Moscow, 1995, p. 74.

monastery, was being subjected to the standard treatment: interrogation, threats, pressure and bribes. The interrogations went on even after Lenin had lost his faculties, as his instructions on Church affairs continued to be carried out to the letter."³³³

International opinion now began to make itself felt in support of Patriarch Tikhon. On April 10, 1923 G.V. Chicherin reported to Stalin that the Anglo-Saxons were as interested in Orthodoxy as they were in Catholicism, and that the execution of the Patriarch would be disadvantageous in all respects.³³⁴ On April 21, Dzerzhinsky proposed to the Politburo that the Tikhon's trial be postponed. The Politburo agreed - the trial was postponed to June 17. On May 8, the British foreign minister Lord Curzon issued an ultimatum to the Soviets, demanding, among other things, a cessation of religious persecution and the liberation of Patriarch Tikhon, otherwise there would be a new intervention against the USSR. This was supported by an outcry in the British and American press. The conflict was resolved by the end of June, when the Soviets agreed to pay compensation for the shooting of two English citizens and the Patriarch was released from prison.³³⁵

One reason why the Soviets postponed the trial of the Patriarch was that they wanted the renovationists to condemn him first. This they duly did... At their first renovationist council, which they called "the second All-Russian Local Council of the Russian [Rossijskoj] Orthodox Church", which met in the cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow on April 29, 1923, Protopriest A. Vvedensky declared that "the Marxists, the Communists and Soviet power are working for the fulfilment of the commandments of Christ". The council officially declared that "Church people must not see in Soviet power the power of the Antichrist. On the contrary, the council directs attention to the fact that Soviet power is the only power in the world that is aiming, by state means, to realize the ideals of the kingdom of God. Therefore each believing churchman must be not only an honourable citizen, but also must by all means struggle, together with Soviet power, to realize the ideals of the Kingdom of God on earth."³³⁶

The council members were no less approving of Lenin himself: "We must turn with words of deep gratitude to the government of our state, which, in spite of the slanders of foreign informers, does not persecute the Church... The word of gratitude and welcome must be expressed by us to the only state in the world which performs, without believing, that work of love which we, believers, do not fulfil, and also to the leader of Soviet Russia, V.I. Lenin, who must be dear also to church people..."³³⁷

"We should note," writes Sergius Shumilo, "that it was precisely at this time, at the beginning of 1923, that a blasphemous farce was staged with the approval of the

³³³ Volkogonov, *op. cit.*, p. 383.

³³⁴ "G. Chicherin and L. Trotsky told the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets: 'Do nothing and say nothing that could close the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict with England'" (S. Bychkov, *Moskovskij Komsomolets* (Muscovite Komsomolian), May 16, 1990).

³³⁵ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

³³⁶ Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Shumilo, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

³³⁷ Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, 1960.

Soviet government in Moscow under the name of 'the trial of God'. In this regard the Soviet press informed that on January 10, 1923, in the club of the Moscow garrison, in the presence of Trotsky and Lunacharsky, there took place 'a session of the political tribunal to deliver a verdict on God'. Five thousand red army soldiers took part in the 'verdict on God'. The decision to deliver 'a verdict on God' 'was greeted with stormy applause by the meeting of five thousand red army soldiers'."³³⁸

The renovationist council tried Patriarch Tikhon in absentia, and deprived him both of his orders and of his monasticism, calling him thenceforth "layman Basil Bellavin". The restoration of the patriarchate was called "a definitely political, counter-revolutionary act", and was therefore abolished and replaced by a synod. Further resolutions were adopted allowing white clergy to become bishops and priests to remarry, and introducing the Gregorian calendar.

When the decisions of the council were taken to the Patriarch for his signature, he calmly wrote: "Read. The council did not summon me, I do not know its competence and for that reason cannot consider its decision lawful."³³⁹

Forty-six out of the seventy-three bishops who attended the council signed the decree condemning the Patriarch. One of them, Joasaph (Shishkovsky), told Fr. Basil Vinogradov how this happened. "The leaders of the council Krasnitsky and Vvedensky gathered all those present at the 'council' of bishops for this meeting. When several direct and indirect objections to these leaders' proposal to defrock the Patriarch began to be expressed, Krasnitsky quite openly declared to all present: 'He who does not immediately sign this resolution will only leave this room straight for the prison.' The terrorized bishops (including Joasaph himself) did not find the courage to resist in the face of the threat of a new prison sentence and forced labour in a concentration camp and... signed, although almost all were against the resolution. None of the church people had any doubt that the 'council's' sentence was the direct work of Soviet power and that now a criminal trial and bloody reprisal against the Patriarch was to be expected at any time."³⁴⁰

However, already at this 1923 council the renovationist movement was beginning to fall apart. The 560 deputies were divided into four groups: the supporters of Krasnitsky (the Living Church), of Vvedensky (the Ancient-Apostolic Church), of Antonin (Church Regeneration) and of Patriarch Tikhon. When Krasnitsky tried to take control of the council and reject any coalition between his group and the other renovationists, a schism amidst the schismatics was avoided only by strong behind-the-scenes pressure on his supporters from the communists, who succeeded in regrouping them under a "Holy Synod" led by Metropolitan Eudocimus.³⁴¹

³³⁸ Shumilo, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

³³⁹ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

³⁴⁰ Cited in Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), *Zhizneopisanie*, *op. cit.*, vol. VI, p. 114. The council also consecrated the married Protopriest John (Kedrovsky) as Metropolitan of the Aleutian Islands and North America. On returning to America, he conducted a stubborn struggle against Metropolitan Plato, drawing 115 churches to his side (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 96).

³⁴¹ Savelev, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

It should be pointed out that Bishop Nicholas of Peterhof, the future Soviet “metropolitan”, betrayed Patriarch Tikhon at this time. On May 2, 1923 he wrote to Vvedensky from Butyrka prison begging him to help him and assuring him “again and again” that he submitted without reservation to the HCA and would obey the new metropolitan of Petrograd. “I await the Council with joy, believing that it will open a new era in the life of the Church”, and promised to obey all its decisions. He demanded a strict trial and deposition for Patriarch Tikhon “for all his crimes”. And he vowed to serve not only the renovationist church but also “our great Workers-Peasants Authority”.³⁴²

But the people in their great majority rejected the renovationists, and the Patriarchal Church under Patriarch Tikhon remained unvanquished until the death of the patriarch in April, 1925. Two years later, however, in 1927, the second, “neo-renovationist” schism took place. And this time the official church fell, together with the majority of the people...

³⁴² TsGAOUU.F.263.Op.1.D.45504.L.54-55, in Alexander Nikolayevich Sukhorukov, “Maloizvestnie stranitsy tserkovnogo sluzhenia ekzarkha Ukrainy mitropolita Mikhaila (Yermakova) v 1922-23 godakh (po materialam sledstvennogo dela)” (Little-known pages in the church service of the exarch of the Ukraine Metropolitan Michael Yermakov in 1922-23 (from materials of his case), *Vestnik PSTGU II: Istorija Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi*, 2009, II:1 (3), pp. 79-122.

26. THE REPOSE OF PATRIARCH TIKHON

Early in 1925 Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) of Paris wrote to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky): "His Holiness Tikhon is getting better after a third bold attempt on his life, but he has become very weak and is terribly exhausted. He frequently serves and receives people every day. They come to him from all corners of Russia. He has the following rule: every day he receives not more than 50 people; he speaks with no more than 10 hierarchs, and not longer than 5 minutes with the others. Sometimes in consequence of his weakness he receives people lying on a sofa. He has become much older and looks like a very old man. He has neither a Synod nor a chancellery around him. He avoids issuing written decrees so as to escape complications with the authorities. He has weakened not only physically, but also in his will - he has begun to make more concessions than he should, and is not firm. Therefore hierarchs often rebel openly against his decrees, and then he revokes his decisions.

"In Moscow there are now around 60 hierarchs who have been appointed to various dioceses by his Holiness, but who have been detained by the authorities. These hierarchs are not free and have no work. Their only occupation is to serve in various churches and thereby earn their bread, living somewhere and somehow...

"His Holiness Tikhon enjoys enormous authority and love. It is forbidden to commemorate his name, in some places people are even persecuted for commemorating it. He himself does not force anyone to commemorate his name, and now in Russia they usually pray thus: 'For their Holinesses the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Moscow'...

"People in Russia are very unhappy with the political statements of the Karlovtsy Council; they consider that at this time hierarchs should wall themselves off from any political actions, since all this is blamed on the Patriarch. The attitude to those who have fled is in general negative. They are very much waiting for an Ecumenical Council, thinking for some reason that the union of the Anglicans and even of the Catholics will take place at it. Professor Dmitrievsky is even intending to go to the East for this. They are hoping that the foreign powers will force the Bolsheviks to let the Patriarch and the hierarchs go to the Council. They do not always have a good understanding of the situation of the autocephalous Churches and their attitude to our Church.

"The question of the new calendar has not died down and it has many supporters, especially in view of the fact that the Bolsheviks do not recognize the old feasts and the believers are very constrained when they go to services. It seems that the Bolsheviks again want to put pressure on the Patriarch to introduce the new style..."³⁴³

³⁴³ Monk Benjamin, "Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda" (A Chronicle of Church Events of the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>, pp. 135-136.

Shortly before his death, on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1925, the Patriarch confided to his personal physician and friend, Michael Zhizhilenko, that he felt that the unceasing pressure of the government would one day force the leadership of the Church to concede more than was right, and that the true Church would then have to descend into the catacombs like the Roman Christians of old. And he counselled his friend, who was a widower, that when that time came, he should seek the monastic tonsure and episcopal consecration.³⁴⁴

That time came in 1927 with the notorious declaration of Metropolitan Sergius; and Michael Zhizhilenko, following the advice of his mentor, was consecrated as the first bishop of the anti-sergianist Catacomb Church in 1928, for which he paid with his life in Solovki in 1931. Thus was the concept and even the name of the Catacomb Church foreseen by the Martyr-Patriarch himself; it was, and is the “Tikhonite” Church.

The concept of “the Catacomb Church” brings to mind the situation of the Christians in Roman times, and again during the iconoclast persecutions, when the Church was forced to live in a semi-legal or illegal position vis-à-vis the State. Such a move was to prove still more necessary under the militant atheists of the Soviet anti-State, whose enmity towards religion was much fiercer than that of the pagan Roman and heretical Greek emperors.

The idea that the Church might have to descend into the catacombs, in imitation of the Christians in early Rome, was suggested as early as 1909 by the future hieromartyr Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Petrograd: “Now many are complaining about the hard times for the Church... Remembering the words of the Saviour with complete accuracy, we must expect still worse times for the Church... Without any exaggeration, she must truly live through a condition close to complete destruction and being overcome by the gates of hell. Perhaps with us, as in the land of freedom, America, they will drive the Name of Christ out of the schools. They will adapt prayer assemblies into ordinary meetings permitted by the police, as in that other land of freedom, France, and will convert the heritage of the Church, together with the very right of faith, into the property of the state. Perhaps the faith of Christ will again hide in the woods, the deserts, the catacombs, and the confession of the faith will be only in secret, while immoral and blasphemous presentations will come out into the open. All this may happen! The struggle against Christ will be waged with desperation, with the exertion of the last drop of human and hellish energy, and only then, perhaps, will it be given to hell and to mankind to assure us with complete obviousness of the unfailing power and might of the priceless promise of Christ: ‘I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her’ (Matthew 16.18).”³⁴⁵

The first Catacomb Church hieromartyr was probably the married priest Timothy Strelkov. He was beheaded by the Bolsheviks in June, 1918. But then his severed head was miraculously restored to his body. He was forced to go into hiding for twelve

³⁴⁴ I.M. Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman Brotherhood Press, 1982, p. 56.

³⁴⁵ Archimandrite Joseph, *Kormchij*, 23 May, 1909; quoted in Sergius and Tamara Fomin, *Rossiapered vtorym prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Moscow: Rodnik, 1994, vol. I, p. 413.

years until he was caught and executed (cut into pieces) for the second time in 1930.³⁴⁶

In 1918, Patriarch Tikhon himself had called on the faithful to form unofficial, quasi-catacomb brotherhoods to defend the Orthodox Faith. Shemetov writes: "The brotherhoods which arose with the blessing of the Patriarch did not make the parishes obsolete where they continued to exist. The brotherhoods only made up for the deficiencies of the parishes."³⁴⁷

In fact, the organization of unofficial, catacomb bodies like the brotherhoods became inevitable once it became clear that the God-hating State was bent on destroying the Orthodox Church. Thus according to Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko), "the catacombs began in 1922, when renovationism began. The Optina elders blessed the Christians to go into the catacombs..."³⁴⁸

Sergius Shumilo writes: "On May 8, 1922 the Moscow tribunal in the course of a trial of a group of clergy resolved that it 'establishes the illegality of the existence of the organization called the Orthodox hierarchy'.

"Thus the Church headed by Patriarch Tikhon (called 'the Tikhonite Church' by the Bolsheviks) turned out to be outside the law. The universal repressions and mass closure of churches and monasteries had already, in the first years of Soviet power, compelled many church servers and believers to pass into an illegal situation. As the historian M. Shkarovsky note, 'we can say that the Catacomb Church began its existence in an elemental way from the first months of Soviet power, when many believers were forced conduct a double, secret life... The concealment of holy things often became the first step to departing into the 'catacombs'.

"Thus the closest co-struggler of Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kazansky) of Petrograd, already in the spring of 1922 blessed the creation in Petrograd of several illegal monastic communities. Gradually, in the course of the 1920s, practically the whole territory of the country, especially Russia and Ukraine, was covered by a net of small 'house' monasteries. Eyewitnesses remembered the elemental appearance of such illegal monasteries in the Tambov region:

"After the closure of the monastery some nuns lived for a while close by and baked bread, others dispersed in different directions. The former monastic residents got together to buy themselves houses in the city. They lived together in small communities of between 4 and 6 people... receiving spiritual nourishment from persecuted church servers. Instead of one large monastery in Kursanov there appeared many small ones.'...

³⁴⁶ Schemamonk Epiphany (Chernov), *Tserkov' Katakombnaia na Zemlie Rossijskoj* (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land) (MS), Woking, 1980.

³⁴⁷ N. Shemetov, "Khristos sredi nas" (Christ is in our midst), *Moskovskij tserkovnij vestnik* (Moscow Ecclesiastical Herald), № 11 (29), May, 1990, p. 3

³⁴⁸ "Vladyka Lazar otvechajet na voprosy redaktsii" (Vladyka Lazar replies to the questions of the editorial board), *Pravoslavnaja Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 22, 15/28 November, 1991, p. 5.

“In the words of M. Shkarovsky, ‘the appearance in the spring of 1922 of renovationism as the ruling tendency became the basic reason for the appearance of secret churches in which services were conducted in secret in a significant number of the country’s regions. Also, people who protested against the requisitioning of church valuables and zealots of Orthodoxy also departed into the ‘catacombs’... The transition to serving in secret was blessed by the well-known Optina Elder Nektary (Tikhonov). And the Danilov groups of hierarchs (so named for their dwelling in the monastery of St. Daniel of Moscow) became in practice the creators of a net of secret parishes and monasteries. It was headed by Archbishop Theodore (Pozdveyevsky) of Volokolamsk... The Danilovites were linked to Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhtomsky) of Ufa, who played an exceptionally important role in the creation of the Catacomb Church and who in the 1920s carried out ordinations (together with other hierarchs) of more than 10 secret bishops.’

“Patriarch Tikhon himself from prison blessed the departure of the Church into the ‘catacombs’ and the carrying out of secret ordinations. While under house arrest in the Donskoy monastery, the holy hierarch Tikhon was able from the balcony of his flat to shout to Archbishop Andrew (Ukhtomsky): ‘Vladyko, consecrate more hierarchs!’ As Bishop Sergius (Druzhinin) witnessed under interrogation, Patriarch Tikhon after his release used to say to every bishop who came to him: ‘The Bolsheviks want to shoot all the hierarchs and priests. So that the Church should not remain without an episcopate, and also without hierarchs, it is necessary to ordain to the priesthood and tonsure as monks as many as possible.’”³⁴⁹

On April 7, 1925, Patriarch Tikhon reposed in the Lord – it is almost certain that he was poisoned.³⁵⁰ According to his cell-attendant, Constantine Pashkovich, his next to last words, uttered with an unusual severity, were: “Now I shall go to sleep deeply and for a long time. The night will be long, and very dark...”³⁵¹

Two hours before his repose, Metropolitan Peter brought him the text of a declaration written by Tuchkov for his signature. From a room in the hospital next to

³⁴⁹ S. Shumilo, *V Katakombakh* (In the Catacombs), Lutsk, 2011, pp. 16-17, 20.

³⁵⁰ For evidence that he was in fact poisoned, see Chernov, *op. cit.*, Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 582; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 13; Shumilo, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30. D. Volkogonov (*Lenin*, London: Harper Collins, 1994, p. 384) hints at the same outcome, writing: “Lenin’s instructions had been clear: ‘the more reactionary clergy and reactionary bourgeoisie are shot... the better’, and ‘the priests must be sentenced to death’. Since it had proved impractical to execute Tikhon, the Cheka had had to find other ways of ensuring that the sixty-year-old Patriarch should not long survive his sojourn in their company.” A. Levitin and V. Shavrov write: “The rector of Prophet Elias Church on Obydenny Street in Moscow, Fr. Alexander Tolgsky, who died in 1962, told one of the authors: ‘After the acknowledgement, made to me during confession by one of the doctors of the Bakunin Hospital, I do not have the least doubt that Patriarch Tikhon was poisoned.’” (*Ocherki po istorii Russkoj Tserkvi* (Sketches on the History of the Russian Church), Kusnacht, 1997, p. 31; A. Paraev, “Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sergianstvo”, (True Orthodoxy and Sergianism), *Suzdal’skie Eparkhial’nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan Gazette), September, 1997 <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=544>).

³⁵¹ Quoted in M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 201.

that in which the Patriarch lay, he could be heard repeating in an excited voice: "I cannot do this, I cannot do this." It is very likely that the document which the Patriarch refused to sign was that which was published by *Izvestia* a week after his death as being supposedly his will and testament.

27. METROPOLITAN PETER OF KRUTITSA

On April 12, in the presence of over 50 bishops gathered from all over the country for his funeral, the deceased Patriarch's genuine will of January 7, 1925 was read out. It said that in the event of the Patriarch's death and the absence of the first two candidates for the post of patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Agathangelus of Yaroslavl, "our patriarchal rights and duties, until the lawful election of a new patriarch,... pass to his Eminence Peter, metropolitan of Krutitsa." At the moment of the Patriarch's death, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangelus were in exile and unable to rule the Church. Therefore the 59 assembled hierarchs decided that "Metropolitan Peter cannot decline from the obedience given him and... must enter upon the duties of the patriarchal locum tenens."³⁵²

However, not all even of the Orthodox bishops accepted Metropolitan Peter's leadership.³⁵³ Thus Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, who had already proclaimed his diocese autocephalous on the basis of Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz № 362 of November 7/20, 1920, declared: "I cannot recognize any leadership over myself, as a diocesan bishop, until a canonical Council. I am very firmly aware of my canonical duties, so as not to forget my rights to protect my flock from every unworthy 'episcopate' and from all dark powers plundering our spiritual sheep. Besides these considerations, I, on the basis of the 76th Apostolic Canon and the 23rd Canon of the Antiochian Council, cannot recognize the transfer of the administration of the whole Church by any secret spiritual testaments. This game with testaments is completely uncanonical."³⁵⁴

The transfer of ecclesiastical power by testaments was indeed unprecedented; but it had received the approval of the Council of 1917-18, so it could hardly be said to have violated the conciliar conscience of the Church. There would, however, come a time when "this game with testaments" would come to end, and the ukaz of 1920 would indeed become the basis of the Church's structure. But for two more years at least the patriarch's testament enabled the Russian Church to maintain a visible as well as a sacramental unity under the leadership of Metropolitan Peter. At the same time, there is no doubt that Metropolitan Peter, like Patriarch Tikhon before him, was distrusted by many churchmen, who suspected that he was too close to the communists.³⁵⁵

³⁵² M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Soyateishego Patriarkha Tikhona* (The Acts of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994, p. 413.

³⁵³ And some important groups delayed their recognition. Thus it was not until November 12 that the Synod of ROCOR decreed that Metropolitan Peter should be recognised as the lawful locum tenens and the head of the Russian Church, with the introduction of his commemoration in all churches abroad (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 145).

³⁵⁴ Archbishop Andrew, in Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Ekkleziologia Andrea Ufimskogo (kn. Ukhtomskogo)" (The Ecclesiology of Andrew of Ufa (Prince Ukhtomsky), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii* (Herald of the German Diocese), № 1, 1993, p. 20.

³⁵⁵ This was confirmed by Metropolitan Peter himself, who wrote to Tuchkov on January 14, 1926: "Forgive me for my frankness - the people do not trust a person who often has dealings with the GPU. For example, the frequent visits that I and Metropolitan Seraphim of Tver made to the GPU in Patriarch Tikhon's time were far from being interpreted in our favour, while Metropolitan Seraphim was even nicknamed 'the Lubyanka metropolitan' by the people. And I noticed that at the beginning of my administration of the Church many people kept away from me" (quoted in Hieromonk

According to A. Smirnov, “priests and monks in opposition to Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa founded the first wave of underground communities and secret sketes and founded their own Hierarchy. Sergianism arose much later [in 1927]; the first catacombniks entered into conflict already with Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter on the grounds that they were collaborators...”³⁵⁶

The first need of the Church at that time was the convocation of a Council to elect a new Patriarch. But, of course, the GPU had no intention of allowing this. Their aim was a tamed Church – that is, a Church that accepted legalization from the government on the government’s terms. Or, failing that, another schism. And that only as a stage towards the Church’s final destruction; for, as the Central Committee member and leading party ideologist, I.I. Skvortsov-Stepanov, had said in 1922, although the schisms in the Church were in the party’s interests, in principle the party remained the enemy of all religion and would eventually struggle against all of them.³⁵⁷

Encouraged by the Patriarch’s death, the renovationists energetically tried to obtain union with the Patriarchal Church in time for their second council, which was due to take place in the autumn of 1925. Their attempts were aided by the Soviet authorities, who put all kinds of pressures on the hierarchs to enter into union with the renovationists. Metropolitan Peter, however, proved to be, in the communists’ phrase, “a tough nut”, a rock against which the gates of hell surged in vain.

In an epistle dated July 28, 1925, after protesting against the propaganda of the uniates and sectarians, which was diverting attention away from the main battle against atheism, he rejected all overtures towards union with the renovationists. And he went on “At the present time the so-called new-churchmen more and more discuss the matter of reunion with us. They call meetings in cities and villages, and invite Orthodox clerics and laymen to a common adjudication of the question of reunion with us, and to prepare for their pseudo-council which they are convening for the autumn of this year. But it must be clearly recalled that according to the canonical rules of the Ecumenical Church such arbitrarily gathered councils as were the meetings of the ‘Living Church’ in 1923, are illegal.

“Thus the canonical rules forbid Orthodox Christians to take part in them and still more to elect representatives for such gatherings. In accordance with the 20th rule of the Council of Antioch, ‘no one is permitted to convene a Council alone, without those bishops who are in charge of the metropolitanates.’ In the holy Church of God only

Damascene (Orlovsky), *Mucheniki, Ispovedniki i Podvizhniki Blagochestia Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi XX Stoletia* (Martyrs, Confessors and Ascetics of Piety of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century), volume II, Tver: Bulat, 1995, p. 489).

³⁵⁶ A. Smirnov, “Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni” (Died out non-commemorators in the course of time), *Simvol* (Symbol), № 40, 1998, p. 175.

³⁵⁷ D. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1982, p. 91, note.

that is lawful which is approved by the God-ordained ecclesiastical government, preserved by succession since the time of the Apostles. All arbitrary acts, everything that has been done by the new-church party without the approval of the most holy Patriarch now at rest with God, everything that is now done without our approval – all this has no validity in accordance with the canons of the holy Church (Apostolic canon 34; Council of Antioch, canon 9), for the true Church is one, and the grace of the most Holy Spirit residing in her is one, for there can be no two Churches or two graces. 'There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all' (Ephesians. 4.4-6).

"The so-called new-churchmen should talk of no reunion with the Orthodox Church until they show a sincere repentance for their errors. The chief of these is that they arbitrarily renounced the lawful hierarchy and its head, the most holy Patriarch, and attempted to reform the Church of Christ by self-invented teaching (*The Living Church*, №№. 1-11); they transgressed the ecclesiastical rules which were established by the Ecumenical Councils (the pronouncements of the pseudo-council of May 4, 1923); they rejected the government of the Patriarch, which was established by the Council and acknowledged by all the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchs, i.e. they rejected that which the whole of Orthodoxy accepted, and besides, they even condemned him at their pseudo-council. Contrary to the rules of the holy Apostles, the Ecumenical Councils and the holy Fathers (Apostolic canons 17, 18; Sixth Ecumenical Council, canons 3, 13, 48; St. Basil the Great, canon 12), they permit bishops to marry and clerics to contract a second marriage, i.e. they transgress that which the entire Ecumenical Church acknowledges to be a law, and which can be changed only by an Ecumenical Council.

"The reunion of the so-called new-churchmen with the holy Orthodox Church is possible only on condition that each of them recants his errors and submits to a public repentance for his apostasy from the Church. We pray the Lord God without ceasing that He may restore the erring into the bosom of the holy Orthodox Church."³⁵⁸

The epistle had a sobering effect on many wavering clerics. As the renovationist *Vestnik Sviashchennago Sinoda* was forced to admit: "Immediately Peter's appeal came out, the courage of the 'leftist' Tikhonites disappeared." So at their renovationist 'council' "Metropolitan-Evangelist" Vvedensky publicly accused Metropolitan Peter of involvement with an émigré monarchist plot, producing a patently forged denunciation by the renovationist "bishop" Nicholas of Latin America.³⁵⁹

Deacon Andrei Psarev writes: "In autumn 1925, the *locum tenens* (...) resolved to compose and submit his Declaration to the Soviet government and show how he viewed the relationship between the ROC and the Soviet government. Metropolitan Peter sketched out an initial version and certain points of a draft of this declaration and sent it to Bishop Joasaph (Udalov) Chistopol'skii, asking him to turn it into a full-fledged text. Bishop Joasaph composed a draft of the text, read it out to several bishops

³⁵⁸ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 418-421.

³⁵⁹ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 744-745.

living at the time in Danilov Monastery – Bishops Pachomy (Kedrov) Chernigovskii, Parfeny (Brianskikh) Anan’evskii, and Amvrosy (Polyanskikh) of Kaments Podol’sk – and, having taken their comments into account, incorporated their corrections into the text and passed it on to the *locum tenens*. [ref], Hieromonk Damaskin (Orlovskii), *Mucheniki, ispovedniki i podvoizhniki blagochestiia Russkoi Pravoslavnoi Tserkvi XX stoletiiia* [Martyrs, Confessors, and Strugglers for Piety in the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th Century]. Vol. 2, p. 351[/ref] These bishops whom Metropolitan Peter consulted were of the same school of thought as Archbishop Feodor (Pozdeevskii).

“Metropolitan Peter's declaration did not say anything new relative to what Patriarch Tikhon had said, and was thus rejected by the regime...”³⁶⁰

The Bolsheviks gave ready support to the renovationists in their battle against Peter. Thus S. Savelev writes: “On November 11, 1925, Yaroslavsky, Skvortsov-Stepanov and Menzhinsky [members of the commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of the Church from the State] were discussing Tuchkov’s report ‘On the future policy in connection with the death of Tikhon’. A general order was given to the OGPU to accelerate the implementation of the schism that had been planned amidst the supporters of Tikhon. Concrete measures were indicated with great frankness: ‘In order to support the group in opposition to Peter (the patriarchal locum tenens...) it is resolved to publish in *Izvestia* a series of articles compromising Peter, and to use towards this end materials from the recently ended renovationist council.’... The censorship and editing of the articles was entrusted to the party philosopher Skvortsov-Stepanov. He was helped by Krasikov (Narkomyust) and Tuchkov (OGPU). This trio was given the task of censuring the declaration against Peter which was being prepared by the anti-Tikhonite group. Simultaneously with the publication in *Izvestia* of provocative articles against the patriarchal locum tenens, the Anti-Religious commission ordered the OGPU ‘to initiate an investigation against Peter’.”³⁶¹

Meanwhile, Tuchkov initiated discussions with Peter with regard to “legalizing” the Church. This “legalization” promised to relieve the Church’s rightless position, but on the following conditions:-

- 1) the issuing of a declaration of a pre-determined content;
- 2) the exclusion from the ranks of the bishops of those who were displeasing to the authorities;
- 3) the condemnation of the émigré bishops; and
- 4) the participation of the government, in the person of Tuchkov, in the future activities of the Church.³⁶²

However, Metropolitan Peter refused to accept these conditions or sign the text of the declaration Tuchkov offered him, thereby continuing to be a rock in the path of

³⁶⁰ Psarev, “Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhny Novgorod as Deputy Patriarchal Locum Tenens to Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa”, 1999, academia.edu.

³⁶¹ Savelev, "Bog i komissary" (God and the Commissars), in Bessmertny A.R. and Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, pp. 199-200.

³⁶² Gubonin, op. cit., p. 402.

the atheists' plans to seize control of the Church. For, as he once said to Tuchkov: "You're all liars. You give nothing, except promises. And now please leave the room, we are about to have a meeting."

On December 5, 1925 Metropolitan Peter composed a will in the event of his death. And on the next day he wrote another in the event of his arrest, indicating three deputies: Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Metropolitan Michael of the Ukraine, and Archbishop Joseph of Rostov.³⁶³ On December 9, the Anti-Religious Commission (more precisely: "the Central Committee Commission for carrying out the decree on the separation of Church and State") met and approved of the activities of the OGPU in inciting the Church groupings against each other. They also determined the timing of Metropolitan Peter's arrest. And the next day, December 10, Metropolitan Peter was placed under house-arrest...³⁶⁴

On December 12, Metropolitan Peter was imprisoned in the Lubyanka. The other possible *locum tenentes*, Metropolitans Cyril and Agathangel, had already been exiled. And nearly a month earlier, on November 19, a group of bishops living in Moscow and of like mind with him were also arrested: Archbishops Nicholas of Vladimir, Pachomius of Chernigov, Procopius of the Chersonese and Gurias of Irkutsk, and Bishops Parthenius of Ananievsk, Damascene of Glukhov, Tikhon of Gomel, Barsanuphius of Kargopol, Joasaph of Chistopol and others.³⁶⁵ The communists had removed the last canonical leaders of the Russian Church, and they were ready now to place their own candidate on the throne of the Russian first-hierarchy...

³⁶³ According to the anonymous author of *V Ob'iatyakh Semiglavago Zmia* (In the Embrace of the Seven Headed Serpent) (Montreal, 1984, p. 47), Metropolitan Peter made two wills regarding his deputies. In the first were three names, as indicated here. In the second were four: Metropolitans Cyril, Agathangelus, Arsenius and Sergius. Since Sergius was only fourth in order in the second will, he kept quiet about it.

³⁶⁴ Savelev, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

³⁶⁵ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

28. THE STRUGGLE ON VALAAM

We have seen that, under pressure from the Bolsheviks, Patriarch Tikhon had introduced the new calendar. However, after the people refused to obey his decree, he revoked it after three months. Only in one part of the Russian Church outside Russia was the new calendar ever implanted firmly – in Finland, whose Church had been taken away from the Russian Church by Patriarch Meletius of Constantinople. Already on July 19, 1923 he moved to force the great Russian monastery of Valaam, which was now outside Russia and within the bounds of the Finnish State, to accept the new calendar, writing mendaciously to Archbishop Seraphim (Lukyanov) that the new calendar had been accepted “with the agreement and by means of a decision of all the Orthodox Churches”.³⁶⁶ Now, since the Finnish Church had accepted the western paschalion, it was likely that that, too, would be imposed on Valaam...

At a general assembly of the 600 brothers, writes Nun Angelina (Zhavoronkova), “Abbot Paulinus read out an epistle from Bishop Seraphim in which he said that both Patriarchs Meletius of Constantinople and Tikhon of Moscow blessed Valaam to change to the new style from October 4. Two days later Vladyka Seraphim arrived. He was met by the objections of the brotherhood and the request that they remain with the old style. This was refused to them, and less than two weeks later five of the protesting brothers were forcibly expelled from Valaam and deprived of the mantia.

“... On June 25, 1924 the new Bishop of Karelia visited Valaam. In November the Valaam monks presented him with a petition asking him to allow them to keep the celebration at any rate of Pascha according to the old style, but this, too, was refused them, and those who refused to obey the decrees of the Finnish Church were threatened with exile from Valaam.

“Fr. Michael [Popov] was the spiritual father of the brotherhood at this exceptionally difficult time for Valaam. He encouraged everyone to remain faithful to the traditions of the Holy Orthodox Church. He often served in distant sketes and deserts and encouraged other Fathers to follow him. His nearest disciple and follower, Elder Michael the Younger, at that time Fr. Timon, was one of the most zealous defenders of the Orthodox calendar right until 1939, when the Valaam brotherhood was forced to leave their beloved monastery.

“Secret resistance increased especially in 1925. Fr. Michael sent his spiritual children by night with prosphoras to Gethsemane skete for Fr. Timon and they unflinching fulfilled their obedience, covering six kilometres every night. From the first days of the resistance the Gethsemane skete had become the place where people gathered for services according to the Old Church Calendar.

“On the question of the calendar, the Valaam monks entered into correspondence with the Athonite zealots of Holy Orthodoxy, the so-called zealots, the elders of Karoulia, especially the learned monk Theodosius, who even wrote a whole composition about the importance of the calendar question. On Valaam Hieromonk

³⁶⁶ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

Justinian, the main correspondent in this correspondence, was a disciple of Elder Michael. While Elder Theodosius was the last spiritual disciple by correspondence with Elder Theophanes the Recluse.

“In the evening on the eve of the monastery’s feast day of SS. Sergius and Herman of Valaam, September 10, 1925, Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira, the representative of the Patriarch of Constantinople, arrived [from London]. Having gathered together the brethren, he declared that the new calendar was being introduced from now. On September 16 the brotherhood sent to Sortavala their own representatives in the persons of Fr. Michael, Fr. Joasaph the deputy, Fr. Jerome and the other older priests of the monastery to talk with Metropolitan Germanus. With tears they besought him to keep the old style in the monastery. In reply the metropolitan irritably shouted at them. On September 20 Metropolitan Germanus accompanied by Bishop Germanus arrived on the island to celebrate the all-night vigil. Half of the brotherhood did not come to the service. He called the brotherhood to peace and love.

“Immediately after this repressions began. The antimins were taken from all the skete churches. Fr. Timon was transferred from the Gethsemane skete to the main monastery. A little later Hieromonk Polycarp was exiled to Russia to almost certain death in the concentration camps for his published articles against the leadership of the monastery.”³⁶⁷

“On September 25, 1925,” writes Schema-Monk Nicholas of Valaam, “there was a division of people in Valaam as to the ‘old’ and ‘new’ style. Many of the brothers remained true to the old style. Legal proceedings began. The church administration arrived; there was a court with Abbot Paulinus in charge. They began to summon the brothers one by one, and many were expelled from the monastery. Then my turn also came. I went into the room, and there sat Abbot Paulinus with others from the church administration. Father Abbot said, ‘Here is a slave of God; ask him.’ One of them said that he would speak and that everything should be recorded. They asked, ‘Do you accept Fr. Paulinus as Abbot?’ ‘Will you go to church services according to the new calendar?’ I could not answer this question; it was as if my tongue had become paralysed. They hesitated and said, ‘Well, why aren’t you answering?’ I couldn’t say anything. Then they said: ‘Well, go on, slave of God, and think this over.’

“I began to pray to the Mother of God, my ‘Surety’, in my heart. ‘Tell me and indicate my life’s path: Which side should I go to, the new or old style? Should I go to the cathedral or somewhere else?’ And I, the sinful one, prayed to the Mother of God during my obedience in the kitchen. When I finished my evening obedience, I went to my cell and thought in the simplicity of my heart, ‘Why don’t you answer me, Mother of God?’ But the grace of God did not abandon me, a sinner. He wants salvation for all. Suddenly the cathedral appeared before me, the same as it is: the same height, length and width. I was amazed at this miraculous apparition – how

³⁶⁷ Nun Angelina, “Starets Mikhail Starshij, ispovednik strazhduschego pravoslavia”, *Russkij Palomnik*, № 17, 1998, p. 64.

could it enter my small cell? But my inner voice said to me: 'Everything is possible with God. There is nothing impossible for Him.' 'Well,' I thought, 'one must go to church in the cathedral according to the new style.' Then, as I was thinking thus, a blue curtain came down from above, in the middle of which was a golden cross. The cathedral became invisible to me, and the inner voice said to me: 'Go to the old style and hold to it.' And I heard a woman's voice coming from above the corner: 'If you want to be saved, hold fast to the traditions of the Holy Apostles and the Holy Fathers.' And then the same thing was repeated a second time, and the third time the voice said: 'If you want to be saved, keep fast to the tradition of the Holy Apostles and Holy Fathers, but not these "wise" men.' After this miracle, everything disappeared and I remained alone in my cell. My heart began to rejoice that the Lord had indicated the path of salvation to me, according to the prayers of the Mother of God."³⁶⁸

"On September 12, 1926," continues Nun Angelina, "the former cathedral elders of Valaam, who had remained faithful to patristic Orthodoxy, were summoned to a new trial in Serdobol. The trial was pro forma, and 35 monks were condemned to exile, while the abbot was to deal with the rest, dispersing them among all the sketes.

"On October 9 the sentence was carried out. One of those exiled from Valaam, Hieromonk Nicander, the former spiritual father of the famed Lesna monastery, remembers:

"We shall never forget that... sad day... Our own Abbot Paulinus and our own monastic brothers handed us over to the police... For the sake of temporary comfort, out of fear of men, they drowned out the voice of their conscience and transgressed the holy canons of the Church... The day of our exile that autumn was exceptionally quiet, Lake Ladoga was calm and the first powdery snow covered Valaam... By eight o'clock in the morning we had all gathered on the ferry... the Old Calendarist monks who remained, together with some unwilling new calendarists, came to say goodbye to us; not a few tears were shed on both sides. (Even the gendarme wept, remembered Fr. Philemon)... How bitter it was for us to leave our native nest, but our souls were at peace, for we felt that we were suffering for the sake of righteousness and that God was with us.'

"On November 15 an Investigative Commission arrived at the monastery, and in the course of four days interrogated each of the brothers on their own, asking whether they recognised Bishop Germanus and whether they would serve with him. Fr. Michael was defrocked by a church court, removed from his obedience as Spiritual Father and exiled on December 15 to the distant St. Herman skete. (According to the words of Fr. Athanasius, who left memoirs of his elder, Fr. Michael was first exiled to Tikhvin island.) Thence he was transferred to the Skete of St. John the Forerunner in 1926, where he spent the following eight years [until his death on May 8, 1934], suffering from a weakness of the heart in the severe conditions of the strictest skete on Valaam. In that year 44 of the brothers were exiled and 48 left Valaam..."³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Schema-Monk Nicholas, *The Orthodox Word*, №№. 160-161, September-December, 1991, pp. 268-270.

³⁶⁹ Nun Angelina, op. cit., pp. 64-66. There was a nationalist, Russophobic element to the introduction

In 1939, when the Soviets captured Old Valaam, the spiritual life of the great monastery came to an end...³⁷⁰

of the new calendar in Finland. Bishop Germanus (Aav) forbade his priests to wear pectoral crosses of Russian make, and would even paint over Slavonic inscriptions on old icons. His successor, Paul (Gusev), was a Russian who pretended to be a Finn. He, according to one source, "showed an indefatigable concern for one thing alone: how to make services in his Church completely unlike those in the Russian Church ("Demons in cassocks", orthodox-tradition@yahogroups.com, December 22, 2003).

³⁷⁰ In New Valaamo in Finland, according to the witness of a True Orthodox Christian who spent a year there before his conversion, there continued to be Russian monks who confessed the Old Calendar - an abbot named Symphorian and another monk over one hundred years old. They lived in separate quarters and refused all communion with the new calendarists and visiting Soviet hierarchs. Abbot Symphorian died in the 1980s; nothing is known about the other monk.

29. THE RISE OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

The events that followed the arrest and imprisonment of Metropolitan Peter in December, 1925 are not at all clear. We know that a struggle for power took place between a group of bishops led by Archbishop Gregory (Yatskovsky) of Yekaterinburg (Sverdlovsk), on the one hand, and Metropolitan Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod (Gorky), on the other, a struggle which Sergius eventually won. It is usually considered that the Gregorians were the agents of the atheist authorities, whose plot was foiled by Sergius, and this may well have been the case.

However, it may be closer to the truth to say that the authorities were playing the two groups off against each other, and would have been happy with either outcome provided it gave them a more malleable church leader than Metropolitan Peter.

According to the more generally accepted version of events, on December 14, although unable to leave Nizhni-Novgorod at the time, Metropolitan Sergius, without consulting with any other senior bishop, announced that he was taking upon himself the rights and duties of the deputy of the Patriarchal locum tenens. However, he was prevented by the OGPU from coming to Moscow, many bishops refused to recognize him (for example, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa), and on December 22, 1925, a group of nine bishops led by Archbishop Gregory gathered at the Donskoy monastery.

The Grigorians, as they came to be called, gave a brief description of the succession of first-hierarchal power since 1917, and then declared concerning Metropolitan Peter: "It was not pleasing to the Lord to bless the labours of this hierarch. During his rule disorders and woes only deepened in the Holy Church... In view of this we... have decided to elect a Higher Temporary Church Council for the carrying out of the everyday affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and for the preparation of a canonically correct Council... Moreover, we have firmly decided not to enter into any relationship or communion with the renovationists and renovationism in all its forms... Instead, we consider it our duty to witness to our complete legal obedience to the powers that be of the Government of the USSR and our faith in its good will and the purity of its intentions in serving the good of the people. We in turn ask them to believe in our loyalty and readiness to serve the good of the same people..."³⁷¹

These words clearly revealed the pro-Soviet inspiration of the group. The next day they sought legalisation from the GPU, and ten days later, on January 2, 1926, they received it. On January 7, *Izvestia* published an interview with Archbishop Gregory thanking the authorities.

On January 14, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Archbishop Gregory demanding an explanation for his usurpation of power. Gregory replied on January 22, saying that while they recognized the rights of the three locum tenentes, "we know no conciliar decision concerning you, and we do not consider the transfer of administration and

³⁷¹ Protopriest Vladislav Tsy-pin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi 1925-1938* (A History of the Russian Church, 1925-1938) Moscow: Monastery of the Meeting of the Lord, 1999, p. 33.

power by personal letter to correspond to the spirit and letter of the holy canons."³⁷² This was a valid point which was later to be made by several catacomb bishops. But Sergius wrote again on January 29, impeaching Gregory and his fellow bishops, banning them from serving and declaring all their ordinations, appointments, awards, etc., since December 22 to be invalid.

It was a moot question whether Sergius had the power to act in this way. On February 26, Archbishop Hilarion of Verey wrote to Sergius from prison: "The temporary ecclesiastical organ must unite, and not divide the episcopate, it is not a judge or punisher of dissidents – that will be the Council."³⁷³ However, on March 18 Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter attempting to justify his "rights" as "first bishop", able to ban bishops even before the Council. And he gave the similar actions of Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter himself as precedents.³⁷⁴ But here he "forgot", as he was to "forget" again later, that his own position was much weaker than that of the Patriarch or Metropolitan Peter, each of whom were recognized in their time by the majority of the episcopate as the true head of the Russian Church.

On January 29, three Grigorian bishops wrote to Metropolitan Peter claiming that they had not known, in their December meeting, that he had transferred his rights to Sergius, and asking him to bless their administration. The free access the Grigorians had to Peter during this period, and the fact that Sergius was at first prevented from coming to Moscow, suggests that the GPU, while not opposing Sergius, at first favoured the Gregorians as their best hope for dividing the Church.³⁷⁵

On February 1 the Grigorians obtained an interview with Metropolitan Peter in prison, in which they asked him to annul Sergius' rights as his deputy and, in view of Sergius' inability to come to Moscow from Nizhni and the refusal of the other deputies, Michael of Kiev and Joseph of Rostov, to accept the deputyship, to hand over the administration of the Church to them. Fearing anarchy in the Church, Metropolitan Peter went part of the way to blessing the Grigorians' undertaking. However, instead of the Grigorian Synod, he created a temporary "college" to administer the Church's everyday affairs consisting of Archbishop Gregory, Archbishop Nicholas (Dobronravov) of Vladimir and Archbishop Demetrius (Belikov) of Tomsk, who were well-known for their firmness.

The Grigorians and Tuchkov, who was present at the meeting, were silent about the fact that Nicholas was in prison and that Demetrius could not come to Moscow. This conspiracy of silence again suggests that they were in league with each other.

Tuchkov proceeded to a further deception: he agreed to summon Demetrius from Tomsk, and even showed Peter the telegram – but never sent it. When Peter, feeling

³⁷² Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

³⁷³ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

³⁷⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

³⁷⁵ Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Russkaia Tserkov' pered litsom gospodstvuiushchego zla* (The Russian Church before the face of Dominant Evil), Jordanville, 1991, pp. 57-58. The Grigorian Bishop Boris of Mozhaisk also said that his Synod "received the rights to assemble, and to have publications and educational institutions." (Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 61)

something was wrong, asked for the inclusion of Metropolitan Arsenius (Stadnitsky) in the college of bishops, Tuchkov again agreed and promised to sign Peter's telegram to him. Again, the telegram was not sent.

It has been argued by Lev Regelson³⁷⁶ that Metropolitan Peter's action in appointing deputies was not canonical, and created misunderstandings that were to be ruthlessly exploited later by Metropolitan Sergius. A chief hierarch does not have the right to transfer the fullness of his power to another hierarch as if it were a personal inheritance: only a Council representing the whole Local Church can elect a leader to replace him. Patriarch Tikhon's appointment of three locum tenentes was an exceptional measure, but one which was nevertheless entrusted to him by – and therefore could claim the authority of – the Council of 1917-18. However, the Council made no provision for what might happen in the event of the death or removal of these three. In such an event, therefore, patriarchal authority ceased, temporarily, in the Church; and there was no canonical alternative, until the convocation of another Council, but for each bishop to govern his diocese independently while maintaining links with neighbouring dioceses, in accordance with the Patriarch's ukaz no. 362 of November 7/20, 1920.

In defence of Metropolitan Peter it may be said that it is unlikely that he intended to transfer the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Sergius, but only the day-to-day running of the administrative machine. In fact he explicitly said this later, in his letter to Sergius dated January 2, 1930.³⁷⁷ Moreover, in his declaration of December 6, 1925, he had given instructions on what should be done in the event of his arrest, saying that “the raising of my name, as patriarchal locum tenens, remains obligatory during Divine services.”³⁷⁸

This was something that Patriarch Tikhon had not insisted upon when he transferred the fullness of his power to Metropolitan Agathangel in 1922. It suggests that Metropolitan Peter did not exclude the possibility that his deputy might attempt to seize power from him just as the renovationists had seized power from the patriarch and his locum tenens in 1922, and was taking precautions against just such a possibility.

The critical distinction here is that whereas the patriarchal locum tenens has, de jure, all the power of a canonically elected Patriarch and need relinquish his power only to a canonically convoked Council of the whole local Church, the deputy of the locum tenens has no such fullness of power and must relinquish such rights as he has at any time that the Council or the locum tenens requires it.

Nevertheless, the important question remains: why did Metropolitan Peter not invoke ukaz no. 362 and announce the decentralization of the Church's administration at the time of his arrest? Probably for two important reasons:

³⁷⁶ Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi, 1917-1945* (The Tragedy of the Russian Church, 1917-1945), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977.

³⁷⁷ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 677.

³⁷⁸ Gubonin, op. cit., p. 422.

1. The restoration of the patriarchate was one of the main achievements of the Moscow Council of 1917-18, and had proved enormously popular. Its dissolution might well have dealt a major psychological blow to the masses, who were not always educated enough to understand that the Church could continue to exist either in a centralized (though not papist) form, as it had in the East from 312 to 1917, or in a decentralized form, as in the catacomb period before Constantine the Great.

2. The renovationists – still the major threat to the Church in Metropolitan Peter’s eyes – did not have a patriarch, and their organization was, as we have seen, closer to the synodical, state-dependent structure of the pre-revolutionary Church. The presence or absence of a patriarch or his substitute was therefore a major sign of the difference between the true Church and the false for the uneducated believer.

There is another important factor which should be mentioned here. Under the rules imposed upon the Church administration by Peter the Great in the eighteenth century, the Ruling Synod was permitted to move bishops from one see to another, and even to retire, ban or defrock them, in a purely administrative manner. This was contrary to the Holy Canons of the Church, which envisage the defrocking of a bishop only as a result of a full canonical trial, to which the accused bishop is invited to attend three times. Peter’s rules made the administration of the Church similar to that of a government department – which is precisely what the Church was according to his *Reglament*. It enabled the State to exert pressure on the Church to move and remove bishops in the speediest and most efficient manner, without the checks and balances – and delays – that following the Holy Canons would have involved. This was bad enough in itself, even when the State was kindly disposed towards the Church. It was catastrophic when the State became the enemy of the Church after 1917... Now Patriarch Tikhon, while not rescinding Peter’s rules, had opposed the pressure of the State, on the one hand, and had preserved the spirit of *sobornost’*, or conciliarity, on the other, consulting the bishops and the people as far as possible. But the danger remained that if the leadership of the Church were assumed by a less holy man, then the combination of the uncanonical, Petrine government, on the one hand, and an increase of pressure from the State, on the other, would lead to disaster...

On February 4, 1926, Metropolitan Peter fell ill and was admitted to hospital. A war for control of the Church now developed between the Grigorians and Sergius. The Grigorians pointed to Sergius’ links with Rasputin and the “Living Church”: “On recognizing the Living Church, Metropolitan Sergius took part in the sessions of the HCA, recognized the lawfulness of married bishops and twice-married priests, and blessed this lawlessness. Besides, Metropolitan Sergius sympathized with the living church council of 1923, did not object against its decisions, and therefore confessed our All-Russian Archpastor and father, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, to be ‘an apostate from the true ordinances of Christ and a betrayer of the Church’, depriving him of his patriarchal rank and monastic calling. True, Metropolitan Sergius later repented of these terrible crimes and was forgiven by the Church, but that does not mean that he should stand at the head of the Church’s administration.”³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

All this was true; but these arguments were not strong enough to maintain the Grigorians' position, which deteriorated as several bishops declared their support for Sergius. In particular, Archbishop Hilarion of Verey, who had been released from prison for talks with the GPU, refused to recognise the Grigorians – for which he received an extension of his sentence. Another bishop who strongly rejected the Grigorians was Basil of Priluki.

Yaroslavsky, Tuchkov and the OGPU had already succeeded in creating a schism between Metropolitan Sergius and the Grigorians. They now tried to fan the flames of schism still higher by releasing Metropolitan Agathangel, the second candidate for the post of patriarchal locum tenens, from exile and persuading him to declare his assumption of the post of locum tenens, which he did officially from Perm on April 18. They also decided, at a meeting in the Kremlin on April 24, to “strengthen the third Tikhonite hierarchy – the Temporary Higher Ecclesiastical Council headed by Archbishop Gregory, as an independent unit.”³⁸⁰

On April 22, Metropolitan Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Peter, as a result of which Peter withdrew his support from the Grigorians, signing his letter: “the penitent Peter”. It would be interesting to know whether Sergius knew of Metropolitan Agathangel's declaration four days earlier when he wrote to Peter. Orlovsky claims that Agathangel did not tell Sergius until several days later.³⁸¹ But the evidence is ambiguous; for Gubonin gives two different dates for the letter from Agathangel to Sergius telling the latter of his assumption of the rights of the patriarchal locum tenens: April 18 and 25.³⁸² If the later date is correct, then Sergius cannot be accused of hiding this critical information from Metropolitan Peter. If, however, the earlier date is correct, then Sergius already knew of Agathangel's assumption of the rights of locum tenens, and his keeping quiet about this very important fact in his letter to Metropolitan Peter was highly suspicious. For he must have realized that Metropolitan Agathangel, having returned from exile (he actually arrived in his see of Yaroslavl on April 27), had every right to assume power as the eldest hierarch and the only patriarchal locum tenens named by Patriarch Tikhon who was in freedom at that time. In view of the very ruthless behaviour now displayed by Metropolitan Sergius, it seems likely that he deliberately decided to hide the information about Metropolitan Agathangel's return from Metropolitan Peter.

In fact, with the appearance of Metropolitan Agathangel the claims of *both* the Grigorians *and* Sergius to supreme power in the Church collapsed. But Sergius, having tasted of power, was not about to relinquish it so quickly; and just as Metropolitan Agathangel's rights as locum tenens were swept aside by the renovationists in 1922, so now the same hierarch was swept aside again by the former renovationist Sergius.

³⁸⁰ Savelev, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

³⁸¹ Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky), "Zhizneopisanie patriarshego mestobliustitelia mitropolita Petra Krutitskago (Polianskogo)" (Biography of the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Peter (Poliansky) of Krutitsa), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 166, III-1992, pp. 213-242.

³⁸² Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

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The chronology of events reveals how the leadership of the Russian Church was usurped for the second time...

On April 30, Sergius wrote to Agathangel rejecting his claim to the rights of the patriarchal *locum tenens* on the grounds that Peter had not resigned his post. In this letter Sergius claims that he and Peter had exchanged opinions on Agathangel's letter in Moscow on April 22 – but neither Sergius nor Peter mention Agathangel in the letters they exchanged on that day and which are published by Gubonin.³⁸³

Therefore it seems probable that Peter's decision not to resign his post was based on ignorance of Agathangel's appearance on the scene. Indeed, there can be little doubt that if he had known he would have immediately handed over the administration of the Church to Agathangel.

On May 13, Agathangel met Sergius in Moscow, where, according to Sergius, they agreed that if Peter's trial (for unlawfully handing over his authority to the Grigorians) ended in his condemnation, Sergius would hand over his authority to Agathangel: "Should Metropolitan Peter for whatever reason abandon his position of *locum tenens*, our eyes will, of course, turn to the candidates indicated in [Patriarch Tikhon's] testament, that is, to Metropolitan Kyrill and then to Your Eminence." However, Sergius was simply playing for time, in order to win as many bishops as possible to his side. And three days later, on May 16, "after returning to Nizhny Novgorod, he wrote to him saying that he had misunderstood the Local Council's resolution about the *locum tenens*, and that he (Metropolitan Sergius) therefore could therefore not transfer authority to him."³⁸⁴

In effect Sergius was reneging on his agreement of three days before: "If the affair ends with Metropolitan Peter being acquitted or freed, I will hand over to *him* my authority, while your eminence will then have to conduct discussions with Metropolitan Peter himself. But if the affair ends with his condemnation, you will be given the opportunity to take upon yourself the initiative of raising the question of bringing Metropolitan Peter to a church trial. When Metropolitan Peter will be given over to a trial, you can present your rights, as the eldest [hierarchy] to the post of Deputy of Metropolitan Peter, and when the court will declare the latter deprived of his post, you will be the second candidate to the *locum tenens* of the patriarchal throne after Metropolitan Cyril."³⁸⁵

In other words, Sergius in a cunning and complicated way rejected Agathangel's claim to be the lawful head of the Russian Church, although this claim was now stronger than Metropolitan Peter's (because Peter was in prison and unable to rule the Church) and *much* stronger than Sergius'.

³⁸³ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 454-57.

³⁸⁴ Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³⁸⁵ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 461 (italics mine).

On May 20, Agathangel sent a telegram to Sergius: "You promised to send a project to the Bishops concerning the transfer to me of the authorizations of ecclesiastical power. Be so kind as to hurry up." On the same day Sergius replied: "Having checked your information, I am convinced that you have no rights; [I will send you] the details by letter. I ardently beseech you: do not take the decisive step." On May 21, Agathangel sent another telegram threatening to publish the agreement he had made with Sergius and which he, Sergius, had broken. On May 22, Sergius wrote to Peter warning him not to recognize Agathangel's claims (the letter, according to Hieromonk Damascene (Orlovsky), was delivered personally by Tuchkov, which shows which side the OGPU was on!). However, Peter ignored Sergius' warning and wrote to Agathangel on May 22 (and again on May 23), congratulating him on his assumption of the rights of patriarchal *locum tenens* and assuring him of his loyalty: "It is with love and good will that I welcome your assumption [of the powers of Patriarchal *locum tenens*]. After I am released, God-willing, we will speak in person about the future leadership of the Orthodox Church..."

At this point Sergius' last real canonical grounds for holding on to power – the support of Metropolitan Peter – *collapsed completely*.³⁸⁶ But Agathangel only received this letter on May 31, a (OGPU-engineered?) delay that proved to be decisive for the fortunes of the Russian Church.

"Metropolitan Agathangel again summoned Metropolitan Sergius to come to Moscow in order that he might gather together the bishops and take over Metropolitan Sergius' powers, but Metropolitan Sergius did not come, citing an exit ban as the reason, even though he had come to Moscow two weeks before receiving the letter".³⁸⁷ On May 24, after Sergius had again written rejecting Agathangel's claims, the latter wrote: "Continue to rule the Church... For the sake of the peace of the Church I propose to resign the office of *locum tenens*."³⁸⁸ On the same day Sergius, savagely pressing home his advantage, wrote to the administration of the Moscow diocese demanding that Agathangel be tried by the hierarchs then in Moscow.

Agathangel eventually received Peter's letter (which was confirmed by a third one dated June 9), in which he wrote: "In the event that Your Eminence should refuse or be unable to take up the duties of Patriarchal *locum tenens*, the rights and duties associated with this position are restored to myself, and the status of deputy to Metropolitan Sergius."

Agathangel then wrote to Sergius saying that he would send him a copy of the original and informing him that he had accepted the chancellery of the patriarchal *locum tenens*. And he asked him to come to Moscow so that he could take over power from him.

³⁸⁶ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 462-64.

³⁸⁷ *Za Khrista postradavshie: goneniia na Russkuiu Pravoslavnuuiu Tserkov' 1917-1956 gg. (Those Who Suffered for Christ's Sake: The Persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church from 1917 to 1956)*, Moscow: Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Institute, 1997, p. 34.

³⁸⁸ Regelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 404, 469.

But it was too late. Sergius was already in control of the Church's administration and refused to come to Moscow saying that he had signed a promise not to leave Nizhni-Novgorod (although he had gone to Moscow only two weeks before!). And on June 12, in a letter to Metropolitan Peter, Agathangel finally renounced all claims to the *locum tenancy* "for reasons of old age and extremely fragile health".

Why did Metropolitan Agathangel renounce the post of *locum tenens* at this point? The reason he gave to Sergius was his poor health; but some further light is shed on this question by Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), who wrote that when Metropolitan Agathangel returned from exile, "everyone began to come to him. Then Tuchkov with some archimandrite came to Agathangel and began to demand from him that he hand over his administration to Sergius. Metropolitan Agathangel did not agree to this. Then Tuchkov told him that he would now go back into exile. Then Agathangel, because of his health and since he had already been three years in exile, resigned from the administration [the post of *locum tenens*] and left it to Peter of Krutitsa as the lawful [*locum tenens*] until the second candidate, Metropolitan Cyril, should return from exile. I heard about this when I personally went to him in Yaroslavl and he himself explained his situation to me. And he said that the canonical administration was now really in the hands of Cyril, and temporarily, until the return of Cyril, with Metropolitan Peter. He did not recognize Sergius or Gregory..."³⁸⁹

Bishop Peter goes on to write: "I asked him: 'What must we do in the future if neither Cyril nor Peter will be around? Who must we then commemorate?' He said: 'There is still the canonical Metropolitan Joseph, formerly of Uglich, who is now in Leningrad. He was appointed by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon as a candidate in case the Patriarch, I, Cyril and Anthony [Khrapovitsky] died.'" Bishop Peter for a time commemorated Metropolitan Agathangel as *locum tenens*.³⁹⁰

The astonishing extent of Sergius' usurpation of power is revealed in his fifth letter to Agathangel, dated June 13, in which he refused to submit even to Metropolitan Peter insofar as the latter, "having transferred to me, albeit temporarily, nevertheless in full, the rights and obligations of the *locum tenens*, and himself being deprived of the possibility of being reliably informed of the state of ecclesiastical affairs, can neither bear responsibility for the course of the latter, nor, *a fortiori*, meddle in their administration... I cannot look on the instructions of Metropolitan Peter that have come out of prison as other than instructions or, rather, *as the advice of a person without responsibility* [italics mine - V.M.]."

A sergianist source comments on this letter: "It turns out that, once having appointed a deputy for himself, Metropolitan Peter no longer had the right to substitute another for him, whatever he declared. This 'supple' logic, capable of overturning even common sense, witnessed to the fact that Metropolitan Sergius was

³⁸⁹ Ladygin, "Kratkoe opisanie biografii menia nedostojnago skhiepiskopa Petra Ladygina" (Short Description of the Biography of me, the unworthy Schema-Bishop Peter Ladygin). *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), №№ 7-8, July-August, 1985, p. 200.

³⁹⁰ Tsypin, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

not going to depart from power under any circumstances.”³⁹¹

Sergius also said that Agathangel was given over to a hierarchical trial for his anticanonical act, for greeting which Metropolitan Peter “himself becomes a participant in it and is also subject to punishment”.³⁹² In other words, Sergius, though only Metropolitan Peter’s deputy as locum tenens for as long as the latter recognized him as such, was not only usurping the rights of the full (and not simply deputy) locum tenens, but was also threatening to bring to trial, on the charge of attempting to usurp the locum tenancy, two out of the only three men who could canonically lay claim to the post!³⁹³ Thus already before his notorious “Declaration”, that he was an ambitious usurper who would trample on the rights of those senior to himself for the sake of power over the Church.

³⁹¹ *Za Khrista Postradavshie* (Those Who Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 1997, p. 36.

³⁹² Gubonin, *op. cit.*, pp. 477-478.

³⁹³ Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), who later became one of the leaders of the Catacomb Church, had a different account of these events, which still more clearly incriminated Sergius (*op. cit.*, pp. 152-53).

30. DIVISIONS WITHIN ROCOR

In 1926, sharp differences of opinion began to emerge between the first two members of the ROCOR Synod, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov) of Poltava. One of these, we have seen, concerned the new calendar, on which Archbishop Theophan took an uncompromising position, considering the new calendarists to be schismatics, while Metropolitan Anthony accepted them (including the new calendarist Church of Poland, which had broken away from the Russian Church). Another, still more important dispute concerned the Church's teaching on redemption...

In 1926 there was published the second edition of Metropolitan Anthony's *Dogma of Redemption*, an attempt to conceptualise the mystery of salvation by means of a sharp contrast between redemption understood as an act of supremely compassionate love in which the satisfaction of justice played no significant role, on the one hand, and redemption understood as unquestionably an act motivated by love but aiming essentially towards the satisfaction of God's justice, being a sacrifice of God the Son to the Holy Trinity, the so-called "juridical theory", on the other. The "juridical theory" was rejected by Metropolitan Anthony as "scholastic", although it is the standard model of redemption to be found in the Holy Scriptures, the Holy Fathers and the Divine service-books of the Orthodox Church. According to him, the satisfaction of the justice of God was a "secondary, incidental aspect" of redemption; he sought to disengage, as it were, God's justice from His love in the economy of salvation. In fact, our salvation, according to Metropolitan Anthony, was not accomplished by a restoration of justice between God and man, but simply through an outpouring of Christ's compassionate love for man, as shown particularly in the Garden of Gethsemane, onto the whole of mankind. Metropolitan Anthony's theory of redemption had already been sharply criticized before the revolution by Archbishop Victor of Vyatka, and had other critics in the Catacomb Church such as Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov and Hieromonk Theodore Andreyev.

Archbishop Theophan, supported by his vicar, Bishop Seraphim (Sobolev), disagreed with the metropolitan.³⁹⁴ He considered the so-called "juridical theory" to be Orthodox, and Metropolitan Anthony's views on both redemption and original sin to be not Orthodox (he refrained from using the word "heretical"). While agreeing that God's motivation was always, and supremely, love, Archbishop Theophan could not agree that justice was secondary and incidental to our salvation, insofar as salvation consists in the destruction of the sin that separates us from God, which was achieved through the restoration of justice between God and man through the Sacrifice on the Cross. Nor could he agree with the metropolitan's attempt to reduce the importance of Golgotha by comparison with Gethsemane.

The issue first came to a head in a session of the Synod held in April, 1926. On the one hand, the Synod expressed its approval of Metropolitan Anthony's *Catechism*. On

³⁹⁴ Another Russian hierarch who disagreed with Metropolitan Anthony's views in this period was Archbishop, later Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania. His eight letters were published together in his book, *Ob Iskuplenii* (On the Redemption), Paris, 1937.

the other hand, no decision was made to replace the *Catechism* of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, the standard Catechism of the Russian Church, which Metropolitan Anthony criticised as “scholastic” but which Archbishop Theophan considered completely Orthodox.

Metropolitan Anthony’s views were also condemned by an official representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Protopriest Milosh Parenta, who wrote in that Church’s official organ: “When Metropolitan Anthony approaches a scientific-theological review and explanation of the dogmas, then either he insufficiently comprehends them, or he cannot avoid the temptation of, and enthusiasm for, modernism. The explanation of the dogma of Redemption offered by the author in his work openly destroys the teaching on this truth faithfully preserved by the Orthodox Church, and with it the Christian Religion itself, because the truth of the redemption together with the truth of Christ’s incarnation is its base and essence”. To which the editor added: “However, it is necessary to recognize that it is very difficult to analyse this work of the author, because in it there are often no definite and clear concepts, although there are many extended speeches which hide the concepts or say nothing, and because in part there are no logical connections in it, nor any strictly scientific exposition, nor systematic unity.”³⁹⁵

The dispute rumbled on. Thus in letters to Hieroschemamonk Theodosius of Mount Athos, a theologian who took the side of Archbishop Theophan, Metropolitan Anthony expressed the suspicion that Archbishop Theophan was in “spiritual delusion”, and continued to reject “the juridical theory of Anselm and Aquinas, completely accepted by P[eter] Moghila and Metropolitan Philaret”. And again he wrote: “We must not quickly return to Peter Moghila, Philaret and Macarius: they will remain subjects for historians”.

For his part, Archbishop Theophan was unhappy that Metropolitan Anthony did not abandon his mistaken views on redemption, but only refrained from pressing for their official acceptance by the Synod. As he wrote on February 16/29, 1932: “Under the influence of the objections made [against his work], Metropolitan Anthony was about to take back his *Catechism*, which had been introduced by him into use in the schools in place of Metropolitan Philaret’s *Catechism*. But, as became clear later, he did this insincerely, and with exceptional persistence continued to spread his incorrect teaching *On Redemption* and many other incorrect teachings contained in his *Catechism*.”

The general approach taken thereafter towards Metropolitan Anthony’s *Dogma* was not to dispute it openly, and in any case not to call it a heresy.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁵ *Herald of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate*, 1926, № II (1/14 June), pp. 168-174 (10-34).

³⁹⁶ For example, Abbot Herman of Platina wrote that Archbishop John (Maximovich) “differed theologially [from Metropolitan Anthony] although he personally loved and was devoted to him. In the early part of this century, Metropolitan Anthony had formulated a false ‘Dogma of Redemption’ based on the notion that our redemption was possible without the Cross. This teaching was promulgated by Metropolitan Anthony’s followers more strongly than by the Metropolitan himself, but Archbishop John, in spite of all his love for his Abba and his Abba’s love for him, did not share it. For this, the followers of Metropolitan Anthony among the hierarchs could not forgive Archbishop

An attempt to have it published again in Canada in the early 1970s was successfully foiled through the efforts of ROCOR hierarchs Averky, Andrew, Athanasius and Nektary (although it was published later in English).³⁹⁷

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Archbishop Theophan and Bishop Seraphim again cooperated fruitfully in the struggle that ensued between the leadership of ROCOR and its West European diocese of ROCOR under Metropolitan Evlogy. The quarrel centred around the foundation of the St. Sergius Theological Institute in Paris, which was largely inspired and financed by a Masonic organization, the YMCA.³⁹⁸ The St. Sergius Institute became the breeding ground of a circle of heterodox theologians known as “the Paris school”, whose leading lights were Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, Nicholas Berdyaev, Semyon Frank, Lev Zander, Nicholas Lossky and Nicholas Zernov.

The Paris theologians were both theologically and politically liberal. Berdyaev, for example, “asserted that the struggle with communism was not pleasing to God and antichristian. Berdyaev was echoed by the no less ‘Orthodox’ [Semyon Ludwigovich] Frank, who, while attacking ‘the idol of politics’ and recognizing that the Bolsheviks were ‘not pleasing to God’, at the same time insisted that ‘hatred for the Bolsheviks’, as well as politics directed at their overthrow, was as displeasing to God as ‘the idol of the revolution’ itself.”³⁹⁹

The Paris theologians were supported by Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, and they in turn supported him. This symbiotic relationship, combined with the intrigues of the communists, laid the basis for the schism of the “Paris exarchate” from the Russian Church Abroad. The beginning of the schism was discernible in the session

John... I remember once, when Archbishop John came to our store, we asked him what this teaching of the Dogma of Redemption was all about and whether it was an outright heresy. To this Archbishop John shrugged his shoulders and said, ‘No, not really,’ and began all of a sudden to talk about Blessed Augustine of Hippo, whose writings, like those of Metropolitan Anthony, contained theological imprecisions. After this discussion which Fr. Seraphim and I had with Archbishop John, Fr. Seraphim concluded that if you can forgive the theological imprecisions of Blessed Augustine, then you can forgive Metropolitan Anthony. But if you do not forgive Blessed Augustine and dismiss him as a heretic, you must do the same with Metropolitan Anthony.”
(<http://saintjohnwonderworker.org/sanc05.htm>).

³⁹⁷ “Bishop Andrew [Rymarenko] of Rockland was a firm, but tactful opponent of the false teaching of Metr. Anthony (Khrapovitsky) on the ‘Dogma of Redemption’... When this teaching surfaced again in the Church Abroad, under Metropolitan Philaret, a whole group of the best hierarchs, not wishing to offend the first-hierarch, asked Archbishop Andrew, as the spiritual father of the metropolitan himself, to remove this subject from the agenda of the 1972 Council, so as to prevent a schism. When the danger had passed through the efforts of Bishops Nectarius, Athanasius and Averky, Bishop Andrew crossed himself, thanking God that Orthodoxy had been preserved for the Americans.” (“Batiushka O. Adrian” (Batiushka Fr. Adrian), *Russkij Palomnik* (The Russian Pilgrim), № 18, 1998, p. 105)

³⁹⁸ Donald E. Davies, “The American YMCA and the Russian emigration”, *Sobornost*, 9:1, 1987, pp. 24-41.

³⁹⁹ Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Rodine i za Rubezhom* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and Abroad), Paris, 2005, p. 110.

of ROCOR's Hierarchical Council of June 30, 1926. Archbishop Theophan read a report linking the YMCA with Masonry, and the St. Sergius Theological Institute with the YMCA. In the same report Vladyka exposed the ecumenist teachings of several teachers at the Institute, including Bulgakov, Kartashev, Berdyaev and Zenkovsky. Then the question arose of separating the German diocese into a separate diocese from Metropolitan Evlogy's West European diocese. Evlogy rebelled, insisting that either he was given autonomous rights in Western Europe or he would separate from the Synod. Not receiving the agreement of the other bishops, he went into schism, taking all his vicar-bishops and parishes with him. About sixty clergy, the majority in Western Europe, followed him into schism.⁴⁰⁰

Archbishop Averky writes: "Archbishop Theophan was the first to expose and document the anti-Christian nature of certain so-called Christian organizations, some of which were eager to extend their influence to the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and even to subjugate it to themselves somewhat by rendering financial assistance much needed by our refugees who had no stable sources of their own to draw from in exile. Vladyka Theophan himself categorically refused to accept the monthly allowance offered to him by these organizations, and did not approve of those who did, for he believed that this caused them to lose their spiritual freedom, and that in one way or another they would consequently be forced to do the will of their sponsors. Vladyka Theophan guarded his independence and spiritual freedom, preferring a beggarly existence to a secure situation. This discloses the most characteristic trait of our great pastor, a trait that he shared with the great Fathers of Christian antiquity: any compromise of conscience, no matter how small, was for him altogether inconceivable. In all of his actions and conduct, in his private life as well as in his service to the Church and society, he was utterly constant, never departing in any way from what his convictions dictated. Absolute incorruptibility, uncompromising honesty and straightforwardness, demand for unconditional loyalty to the true Church, to the Word of God, and to Patristic tradition – these were his hallmarks, ideals which guided his life and which he liked to see in other servants of the Church as well."⁴⁰¹

In August, 1926, Archbishop Theophan wrote: "The real causes of the division are deeper than would appear at first glance. Two of them are especially significant. 'They' consider the Soviet authorities as 'ordained by God', but we consider them antichristian. On the basis of overwhelming documentary evidence, we recognized that the YMCA is a masonic organization. They consider it a Christian organization." And he predicted: "Metropolitan Evlogy will not give in. Those around him are pushing him toward schism. We could let him have his way, but we cannot entrust the fate of Orthodoxy to him. He is ensnared in the nets of the YMCA. The YMCA in turn is having a demoralizing effect on student groups. In the magazine *The Way* № 5, Professor Berdyaev stated openly that the schism in the church is unavoidable and necessary. Metropolitan Evlogy is the only hierarch who 'has raised his consciousness

⁴⁰⁰ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Zhukov, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁴⁰¹ Archbishop Averky (Taushev), *Vysokopreosviashchennij Feofan, Arkhiepiskop Poltavskij i Pereiaslavskij* (His Eminence Theophan, Archbishop of Poltava and Pereiaslavl), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1974.

to the realization that it is necessary to reform Orthodoxy', and he is therefore 'a tool of God's Providence' in our days!"⁴⁰²

However, Archbishop Theophan was not finding the support that he might have expected from Metropolitan Anthony. He protested against the publication of an epistle of Metropolitan Anthony dated July 22, 1926 to the secretary of the Russian Student Christian Movement, L. Liperovsky, which said that it was not forbidden to be an official of the YMCA.⁴⁰³

Again, on February 29, 1927 he wrote a report to the ROCOR Synod to which he attached two reports of the "Russian Patriotic Society" and a report of four laymen protesting against the letter of Metropolitan Anthony published in *Vozrozhdenie*: "The clear and categorical resolution of the Council of 1926 on the YMCA was violated soon after the end of this Council not only by Metropolitan Eulogius together with the bishops subject to him (Archbishop Vladimir, Archbishop Seraphim and Bishop Benjamin), but also by the president of the Council himself, Metropolitan Anthony, as also by Archbishop Anastasy who followed his example. Believing Orthodox people were particularly disturbed by the written declarations on this question by the president of the Council Metropolitan Anthony which were published in the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie* (22 July, 1926 and 10 September, 1926) and in № 10 of the *Vestnik Russkogo Studencheskogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia*, in which he calls the resolution of the Council of 1926 with regard to the YMCA a simple 'repetition of the response of the Council of 1921' and based on the Council member's 'small knowledge' of this question (letter of June 22, 1926 printed in the newspaper *Vozrozhdenie*. According to the witness of the composers of the Paris report, this kind of declaration of the president of the Council with regard to the resolution of the Council of 1926 on the question of the YMCA 'is now interpreted by everyone as nothing other than a juridical annulment of their meaning and significance' (pp. 9-10). On their side, the composers of the reports find that the president of the Council

⁴⁰² Helen Kontzevich wrote: "in Paris, Archpriest Sergius Chetverikov asked to come and see Archbishop Theophan, to converse with him on the theme of the Jesus Prayer. But he was presented with the condition that he cease all contact with the YMCA. The Archpriest did not agree to it."

⁴⁰³ "... A regional Orthodox Council, uniting personally and through letters 32 hierarchs in three parts of the world, cannot officially give its blessing to any institution other than those which call themselves Orthodox; but it has not forbidden its flock to be members of the YMCA society, and has not approved only of their remaining under its spiritual leadership as being an institution which, although Christian, is inter-confessional; but the Council has not forbidden serving in this society in the capacity of its officials, nor has it forbidden participation in its publishing houses, in which I have taken part, since in the last four or five years I have not found any anti-Orthodox propaganda either in the publications of the Society or in the Paris Theological institute that is subsidised by it, or in its relationship to Russian young people... As regards the attitude of the Council to the YMCA itself, that was, naturally, a repetition of the attitude of the Council of 1921; since then a significant evolution has taken place in the Society, but this was so little known to the Council that I, while knowing about it, could not impose my convictions on my brother hierarchs, to whose Council you wrote requesting its blessing; I hope that your activity, growing and entering into the life of the Orthodox Church will, by the time of later Councils, dispose them to complete trust and sympathy towards your movement." (*Vozrozhdenie* (Regeneration), September 10, 1926, p. 2; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 156)

does not have the right to make declarations in the press annulling the meaning and significance of conciliar resolutions, both in general and in particular with regard to this question, and ask the Synod to confirm and, if possible, clarify the true meaning of the conciliar resolutions on the given question. Moreover, they declare that if they find no support in their struggle for the purity of Orthodoxy in the Synod, they will be forced 'to seek, with the pastors faithful to Orthodoxy, ways of saving the Russian Church without the Synod and even in spite of it (Paris report, p. 16), following the example of the brotherhoods of the South-West of Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries..."⁴⁰⁴

Vladyka Theophan "warned and admonished, but his warnings were not heeded in time and the subsequent reproach of those who broke away [Evlogy of Paris and Plato of America] not only had no positive results, but even deepened the division, as Vladyka had also foreseen. Such ecclesiastical schisms and divisions caused Vladyka to sorrow in his heart, to suffer in his soul and to grieve. Although he had at the very beginning identified the root of the problem, he did not always approve of the measures taken to stop the schisms and establish unity in the Church, and he indicated the errors sometimes made in so doing."⁴⁰⁵

Archbishop Seraphim of Finland wrote: "... If relations with Russia are impossible, then the dioceses abroad are canonically bound to have a temporary ecclesiastical authority, which was indicated by the Synod and Patriarch of Moscow in 1920 [in ukaz № 362]. In addition, I cannot understand why Metropolitan Evlogy, alone of all the diocesan hierarchs abroad, should continually have bad relations with the [ROCOR] Synod and threatens to make a schism (he has written about this to me many times). All the other hierarchs - of Japan, of China and of Harbin, and I, who rule the Finnish Church, have all voluntarily and peacefully submitted to the Councils and the Synod, although I, for example, am not bound to do this. After all, Metropolitan Evlogy is the same as all the other diocesan hierarchs, and the whole of the Church Abroad has never been subject to him. He was given to rule only the abroad part of the Petrograd diocese, and nothing more, and he can in no way be considered the head of the Church Abroad. I, for example, have occupied a more lofty see than all the other hierarchs, but I have never striven towards disunity or disobedience to the Synod..."⁴⁰⁶

On January 26, 1927 the ROCOR Synod suspended Metropolitan Evlogy and his vicar bishops pending an ecclesiastical trial that was to take place at the next Council. On February 4, the Synod sent a circular letter to all the parishes in the Diocese of Western Europe in which it announced its decision of January 26 and exhorted the faithful not to commune with the suspended Metropolitan, bearing in mind that the validity of the Mysteries received might be placed in doubt.

There were schisms in many dioceses in Western Europe; in London, for example,

⁴⁰⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁴⁰⁵ Archbishop Averky, *op. cit.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Tserkovnie Vedomosti*, 1927, №№ 5-6, pp. 5, 6, 10; in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhiejskie Sobory Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej 1938-1939 g.* (Hierarchical Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, 1938-1939), Minneapolis: AARDM Press, 2003, pp. 10-11.

where supporters of the two camps were about equally divided, two parishes sharing the same church but with different hierarchs were formed.⁴⁰⁷

On September 8, the Council of Bishops convened an Episcopal Tribunal comprising twelve bishops to judge the case of Evlogy. He was condemned, and the Act of Sentence read, in part: "Every liturgical function performed by him is devoid of grace, the Mysteries administered by him are not Mysteries, and the ordinations he performs are anticanonical."

The Council again appealed to the clergy of the Western European diocese, threatening them with canonical penalties, and Archbishop Seraphim, in the name of the Council, wrote a declaration to all the faithful of the Western European diocese that "it is absolutely forbidden, under pain of excommunication for schism, to remain in prayerful communion with Metropolitan Evlogy, Archbishop Vladimir, Bishop Sergius and their clergy, since the Mysteries administered by them are devoid of benefit."⁴⁰⁸

Unfortunately, Evlogy was under the strong influence of the Paris theologians, who supported him as he supported them. They encouraged him to remain in schism from ROCOR, knowing that ROCOR saw through their heretical ideas.

The most notorious of these ideas was Fr. Sergius Bulgakov's heresy about the mythological, quasi-divine figure of Sophia, which was based, according to Archbishop Theophan in a letter written in 1930, "on the book of Fr. [Paul] Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. But Florensky borrowed the idea of Sophia from V.S. Soloviev. And V.S. Soloviev borrowed it from the medieval mystics.

"In V.S. Soloviev Sophia is the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. Florensky tries to prove that Sophia, as the feminine principle of God, is a special substance. He tries to find this teaching in St. Athanasius the Great and in Russian iconography. Protopriest Bulgakov accepts on faith the basic conclusions of Florensky, but partly changes the form of this teaching, and partly gives it a new foundation. In Bulgakov this teaching has two variants: a) originally it is a special Hypostasis, although not of one essence with the Holy Trinity (in the book *The Unwaning Light*), b) later it is not a Hypostasis but 'hypostasisness'. In this latter form it is an energy of God coming from the essence of God through the Hypostases of the Divinity into the world and finding for itself its highest 'created union' in the Mother of God. Consequently, according to this variant, Sophia is not a special substance, but the Mother of God.

"According to the Church teaching, which is especially clearly revealed in St. Athanasius the Great, the Sophia-Wisdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴⁰⁷ See Protodeacon Christopher Birchall, *Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen; The Three Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Publications, 2014, chapter 8.

⁴⁰⁸ Archpriest Alexander Lebedev, "Re: the debate on grace", orthodox_synod@indiana.edu, May 5, 1998.

“Here, in the most general terms, is the essence of Protopriest Bulgakov’s teaching on Sophia! To expound any philosophical teaching shortly is very difficult, and so it is difficult to expound shortly the teaching of the ‘sophianists’ on Sophia. This teaching of theirs becomes clear only in connection the whole of their philosophical system. But to expound the latter shortly is also impossible. One can say only: their philosophy is the philosophy of ‘pantheism’, that is, a moderate form of ‘pantheism’. The originator of this ‘pantheism’ in Russia is V.S. Soloviev.”

In 1935 both the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR condemned Sophianism as heretical, which forced Metropolitan Eulogius to create a commission to investigate Bulgakov’s teaching. Although the majority of the commission members were supporters of Bulgakov, the metropolitan also appointed to it Fr. Georges Florovsky, the foremost “conservative” at the institute, who was known to be opposed to Bulgakov’s teaching.

“Up to the time of the commission,” writes Andrew Blane, “each had expounded his views through lectures and writings, neither apparently inclined to rebut directly the opinions of the other. The closest that Florovsky had come to open reproach was his ‘harsh review’ in 1930 of a belated Western language edition of Father Pavel Florensky’s ‘psychological esoteric’ Sophian book on the Church,’ whose exposition was known to be generally akin to that promulgated by Bulgakov. Now as a member of the Metropolitan’s investigative commission, Florovsky could no longer avoid open assessment of Father Bulgakov’s Sophiological speculations. His conclusion was that however mistaken those views were, they could not be judged heretical. To begin with, Bulgakov had made no effort ‘to substitute his teaching for the teaching of the Church.’ And although ‘... a theologian is, of course, responsible,... theology should not be taken, or mistaken, for Church doctrine. I, for one,’ continued Father Georges, ‘would repudiate and reject critically the contentions of Bulgakov... And Zenkovsky never concealed that he said that the starting point of the whole theological system of Bulgakov was wrong... but it is a theological dispute.’ Another member of the commission, Father Chetverikov, took the same stance: ‘erroneous, yes; heretical, no.’ The other commission members, said Father Georges, were either of the view there was insufficient substance for the matter to be decreed a theological error, much less heresy, or that the whole matter was the artefact of ecclesiastical intrigue, and thereby called for full exoneration.

“The commission’s deliberations, according to Florovsky, were supposed to proceed in secrecy to assure a full airing of opinions, but regrettably the gist of the various members’ views became known to the Paris emigration on the morrow after the very first meeting. Without access to the details and nuances of the discussions, the wider public tended to view Florovsky’s and Chetverikov’s reluctance to absolve Bulgakov without some qualification as a veiled attempt to brand him a heretic. The remainder of the story as reported by Father Georges is equally unhappy: the majority never submitted its report, and it has never been explained why; a minority report, belatedly prepared by Father Chetverikov, with his and Florovsky’s signatures, was later turned over to the Metropolitan. The bishops of the Church were then assembled to consider the case, and a retractio was asked of Father Bulgakov. He complied, and

so far as his jurisdictional superiors were concerned, the matter was closed."⁴⁰⁹

However, Bulgakov continued to be popular in Paris, and the influence of the Paris school in general continued to vitiate Russian Orthodox life for several decades to come. Florovsky, meanwhile, was forced to spend less and less time in Paris. Eventually he emigrated to America...

⁴⁰⁹ Blane, *Georges Florovsky*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993, pp. 66-67.

31. THE CHURCH DECENTRALIZED

On June 7, 1926 a group of bishops imprisoned in the former monastery of Solovki issued the following epistle: "The signatories of the present declaration are fully aware of how difficult the establishment of mutually reliable relations between the Church and the State in the conditions of present-day actuality are, and they do not consider it possible to be silent about it. It would not be right, it would not correspond to the dignity of the Church, and would therefore be pointless and unpersuasive, if they began to assert that between the Orthodox Church and the State power of the Soviet republics there were no discrepancies of any kind. But this discrepancy does not consist in what political suspicion wishes to see or the slander of the enemies of the Church points to. The Church is not concerned with the redistribution of wealth or in its collectivization, since She has always recognized that to be the right of the State, for whose actions She is not responsible. The Church is not concerned, either, with the political organization of power, for She is loyal with regard to the government of all the countries within whose frontiers She has members. She gets on with all forms of State structure from the eastern despotism of old Turkey to the republics of the North-American States. This discrepancy lies in the irreconcilability of the religious teaching of the Church with materialism, the official philosophy of the Communist Party and of the government of the Soviet republics which is led by it.

"The Church recognizes spiritual principles of existence; Communism rejects them. The Church believes in the living God, the Creator of the world, the Leader of Her life and destinies; Communism denies His existence, believing in the spontaneity of the world's existence and in the absence of rational, ultimate causes of its history. The Church assumes that the purpose of human life is in the heavenly fatherland, even if She lives in conditions of the highest development of material culture and general well-being; Communism refuses to recognize any other purpose of mankind's existence than terrestrial welfare. The ideological differences between the Church and the State descend from the apex of philosophical observations to the region of immediately practical significance, the sphere of ethics, justice and law, which Communism considers the conditional result of class struggle, assessing phenomena in the moral sphere exclusively in terms of utility. The Church preaches love and mercy; Communism - camaraderie and merciless struggle. The Church instils in believers humility, which elevates the person; Communism debases man by pride. The Church preserves chastity of the body and the sacredness of reproduction; Communism sees nothing else in marital relations than the satisfaction of the instincts. The Church sees in religion a life-bearing force which does not only guarantee for men his eternal, foreordained destiny, but also serves as the source of all the greatness of man's creativity, as the basis of his earthly happiness, sanity and welfare; Communism sees religion as opium, inebriating the people and relaxing their energies, as the source of their suffering and poverty. The Church wants to see religion flourish; Communism wants its death. Such a deep contradiction in the very basis of their Weltanschauungen precludes any intrinsic approximation or reconciliation between the Church and the State, as there cannot be any between affirmation and negation, between yes and no, because the very soul of the Church, the condition of Her existence and the sense of Her being, is that which is categorically

denied by Communism.

“The Church cannot attain such an approximation by any compromises or concessions, by any partial changes in Her teaching or reinterpretation of it in the spirit of Communism. Pitiful attempts of this kind were made by the renovationists: one of them declared it his task to instill into the consciousness of believers the idea that Communism is in its essence indistinguishable from Christianity, and that the Communist State strives for the attainment of the same aims as the Gospel, but by its own means, that is, not by the power of religious conviction, but by the path of compulsion. Others recommended a review of Christian dogmatics in such a way that its teaching about the relationship of God to the world would not remind one of the relationship of a monarch to his subjects and would rather correspond to republican conceptions. Yet others demanded the exclusion from the calendar of saints ‘of bourgeois origin’ and their removal from church veneration. These attempts, which were obviously insincere, produced a profound feeling of indignation among believing people.

“The Orthodox Church will never stand upon this unworthy path and will never, either in whole or in part, renounce her teaching of the Faith that has been winnowed through the holiness of past centuries, for one of the eternally shifting moods of society...”⁴¹⁰

On June 10, Metropolitan Sergius issued an address to the archpastors, pastors and flock of the Russian Church in the same spirit, noting that there were certain irreconcilable differences between the Church and the State. At the same time, however, he argued for the necessity of the Church being legalized by the State: “The lack of free registration for our church government bodies is creating for the hierarchy many practical inconveniences, imparting to its activities a kind of secret and even conspiratorial character, which, in turn, generates all sorts of misunderstandings and suspicion. And he went on: “On receiving the right to a legal existence, we clearly take account of the fact that, together with rights, obligations are also laid upon us in relation to those authorities that give us these rights. And I have now taken upon myself, in the name of the whole of our Orthodox Old-Church hierarchy and flock, to witness before Soviet power to our sincere readiness to be completely law-abiding citizens of the Soviet Union, loyal to its government and decisively setting ourselves apart from all political parties and undertakings directed to the harm of the Union. But let us be sincere to the end. We cannot pass over in silence the contradictions which exist between us Orthodox people and the Bolshevik-Communists who govern our Union. They see their task to be the struggle against God and His authority in the hearts of the people, while we see the significance and aim of our entire existence in the confession of faith in God as well as in the widest dissemination and affirmation of that faith in the hearts of the people. They accept only the materialistic conception of history, while we believe in Divine Providence, in miracles, etc. Far from promising reconciliation of that which is irreconcilable and from pretending to adapt our Faith to Communism, we will remain from the religious point of view what we are, that is,

⁴¹⁰ Regelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 417-20.

Old Churchmen or, as they call us, Tikhonites..."⁴¹¹

With regard to the émigré bishops, who were, as we have seen, among the most anti-Soviet of the Russian bishops, Metropolitan Sergius kept to the same position as his predecessors, rejecting the possibility of taking any sanctions against them: "We cannot assume punitive functions and apply ecclesiastical punishments for vengeance... To inflict ecclesiastical punishment upon the émigré clergy for their disloyalty to the Soviet Union would be wholly inappropriate and would give unnecessary occasion for people to speak of the Soviet regime compelling us to do so."

A little later some ROCOR bishops asked Metropolitan Sergius to mediate in the dispute between their Synod and Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, who refused to recognize the Synod's authority. In his reply of September 12, 1926, Sergius refused "to be a judge in a case of which I know absolutely nothing... And in general, can the Moscow Patriarchate be the leader of the life of Orthodox émigrés?" No, he replied. And he called on the émigré bishops to create a single "central organ of Church administration which would be sufficiently authoritative to resolve all misunderstandings and differences, and which would have the power to cut off all disobedience, without recourse to our support. For grounds will always be found to suspect the authenticity of our instructions."⁴¹²

And again in its letter of April, 1927, Sergius' Synod said that to govern the Orthodox dioceses which have arisen abroad "from Moscow is in the ecclesiastical sense impossible due to the lack of legal forms of relations with them", demonstrating in detail that the Moscow Ecclesiastical Authorities were unable to judge the hierarchs abroad because the canons did not permit an ecclesiastical trial for political crimes, and also because it was impossible formally to organize a correct canonical court."⁴¹³

This letter is important as it constitutes a de facto recognition of ROCOR by the Moscow Patriarchate. That recognition was withdrawn only when ROCOR refused to accept Sergius' demand, in 1927, that her hierarchs swear loyalty to the Soviet Union...

The increasing divisions in the Church required the convening of a Church Council and the election of a lawful patriarch. This was the only possible way to solve the problem according to Orthodox tradition. But the Council had to take place in secret

⁴¹¹ Tsypin, *op. cit.*, p. 59; Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 474. Cf. Fr. Alexander Mazyrin, "Legalizing the Moscow Patriarchate in 1927: The Secret Aims of the Authorities", *Social Science: A Quarterly Journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences*, no. 1, 2009, p. 3. The article was first published in Russian in *Otechestvennaia Istoria*, no. 4, 2008.

⁴¹² Grabbe, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *A History of the Russian Church Abroad*, pp. 61-62; Pospelovksy, "Mitropolit Sergij i raskoly sprava" (Metropolitan Sergius and the schisms from the right), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), № 158, I-1990, p. 65.

⁴¹³ Bishop Gregory Grabbe, "Toward a History of the Ecclesiastical Divisions within the Russian Diaspora", chapter IV, *Living Orthodoxy*, #83, vol. XIV, № 5, September-October, 1992, p. 27; quoting from S.V. Troitsky, *Pravda o Russkoj Tserkvi Na Rodine i Za Rubezhom* (The Truth about the Russian Church in the Homeland and in the Diaspora).

because of the authorities' obstructionist tactics.

"Such a secret Council," writes Sergius Shumilo, "took place de facto in 1926 by means of the collection of the signatures... The initiators of this secret election of a patriarch were Bishops Paulinus (Kroshechkin), Cornelius (Sobolev) and Athanasius (Sakharov), who relied on the support of the exiled Solovki bishops. Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) at first refused to support this initiative of the episcopate. However, the signatures of 25 bishops in support of the carrying out of the election of a patriarch were collected. Besides, this undertaking received the written support of the bishops in exile on Solovki. In such a situation Metropolitan Sergius was forced to submit to the opinion of the majority, although he declined from active support of this conciliar undertaking. As Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev) witnessed concerning this: 'In my opinion, he [Metropolitan Sergius] was as it were not especially inclined to carry out the matter of the election of Cyril, but the situation and the canons obliged him to do this'.⁴¹⁴

"However, the conciliar will of the episcopate of the Russian Church was simply not realized in life because of the opposition of Soviet power. During the final phase of the elective process two participants in the secret collection of signatures [messengers of Bishop Paulinus] were unexpectedly arrested. The OGPU now had in its hand almost all the documents of this enterprise that had not been sanctioned by the authorities, including election ballots with the signatures of bishops. The majority of the participants in the secret conciliar election were arrested and cast into prisons or camps. Metropolitan Cyril was also not allowed to execute his duties. On December 21, 1926 he was arrested by the organs of the OGPU and cast into prison for a new term (his term of exile had expired in the autumn of 1926). Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) was also arrested in connection with this affair. However, by contrast with the other hierarchs, he was very quickly released. As it turned out, the OGPU had been informed from the beginning about the secret elections of a patriarch and used this process for fresh repressions against the episcopate. There is an opinion that it was a planned provocation in which Metropolitan Sergius took part. But no confirmation of this version has yet been found..."⁴¹⁵

On December 8 Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd took over as Peter's deputy, in accordance with the latter's will of one year before.⁴¹⁶ But Joseph was prevented from leaving Yaroslavl by the authorities, so he handed the leadership of the Church to his deputies: Archbishop Cornelius (Sobolev), Archbishop Thaddeus (Uspensky) and Archbishop Seraphim (Samoilovich) of Uglich. On December 29, Metropolitan Joseph was arrested, and on the same day Archbishop Seraphim wrote that he was taking

⁴¹⁴ "There were several votes for the second candidate, and no more than one for Metropolitan Sergius." (*Za Khrista postradavshie*, p. 570) (V.M.)

⁴¹⁵ Shumilo, *V Katakombakh* (In the Catacombs), Lutsk, 2011, pp. 36-38. According to the author of an anonymous work, the initiative for the election of Metropolitan Cyril came from Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky), who was at that time in prison on Solovki. And, according to this version, it was Metropolitan Sergius who informed the authorities ("The way of the cross of his Eminence Athanasius Sakharov", in Regelson, *op. cit.*, p. 406).

⁴¹⁶ Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 422. Peter's choice of deputies was: Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Michael of the Ukraine, and Joseph of Rostov, in that order.

upon himself the duties of the deputy of the patriarchal locum tenens.⁴¹⁷

In the same month of December, 1926, Tuchkov proposed to Metropolitan Peter, who was in prison in Suzdal, that he renounce his locum tenancy. Peter refused, and then sent a message to everyone through a fellow prisoner that he would “never under any circumstances leave his post and would remain faithful to the Orthodox Church to death itself”.⁴¹⁸

Then, on January 1, 1927, while he was in Perm on his way to exile on the island of Khe in Siberia, Metropolitan Peter confirmed Sergius as his deputy, being apparently unaware of the recent changes in the leadership of the Church.⁴¹⁹ Though he came to regret this decision, Metropolitan Peter was not able to revoke it officially from his remote exile. And Metropolitan Sergius now acted as if he did not exist...

At the beginning of March, Archbishop Seraphim was summoned from Uglich to Moscow and interrogated for three days by the GPU. He was offered a Synod, and indicated who should be its members. Seraphim refused, and put forward his own list of names, which included Metropolitan Cyril.

“But he’s in prison,” they said.

“Then free him,” said the archbishop.

The GPU then presented him with the familiar conditions for legalization.

Arfed Gustavson writes: “He refused outrightly without entering into discussions, pointing out that he was not entitled to decide such questions without the advice of his imprisoned superiors. When he was asked whom he would appoint as his executive deputy he is said to have answered that he would turn over the Church to the Lord Himself. The examining magistrate was said to have looked at him full of wonder and to have replied:

“‘All the others have appointed deputies...’

“To this Seraphim countered: ‘But I lay the Church in the hands of God, our Lord. I am doing this, so that the whole world may know what freedom Orthodox Christianity is enjoying in our free State.’”⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁷ If Archbishop Seraphim had not been in freedom, then, according to Metropolitan Joseph’s epistle, the bishops were to govern their dioceses independently (Tsypin, op. cit., p. 86).

⁴¹⁸ Regelson, op. cit., p. 408.

⁴¹⁹ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 492-493.

⁴²⁰ Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960; see N.A., op. cit., p. 18.

Another account of this dialogue was given by Archbishop Seraphim’s senior subdeacon, Michael Nikolaevich Yaroslavsky: “For 100 days Vladyka Seraphim happened to rule the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church. This was in 1926. Metropolitan Sergius was in prison, everybody was in prison... And so, as he had been put in charge, Vladyka told me that at that time the authorities offered him, as the Primate of the Church, a Synod of bishops. He did not agree and immediately received three years in Solovki camp. He did not betray the Church, but... declared the autocephaly of each diocese, since each Church Primate was another candidate for prison...” (Tape recorded

This was a decisive moment in the history of the Church, for the central hierarchy of the Church was effectively declaring the Church's decentralization...

And not before time. For with the imprisonment of the last of the three possible locum tenentes the last slender canonical basis for establishing a central administration for the Church before the convocation of a Local Council disappeared. But the communists would in no way allow the convocation of a Council... Now the system of deputies of the deputy of the locum tenens had no basis in Canon Law or precedent in the history of the Church. And if it was really the case that the Church could not exist without a first hierarch and central administration, then the awful possibility existed that with the fall of the first hierarch the whole Church would fall, too...

conversation with Protopriest Michael Ardov in 1983, *Church News*, vol. 13, № 11 (112), p. 6).

According to the same source, Vladyka Seraphim mentioned Metropolitan Cyril. "But he is behind bars," Tuchkov said. "He is behind your bars, and you must release him," said Seraphim.

"According to a letter written by Archbishop Seraphim a few days after his Lubyanks interview, Tuchkov said to him 'at parting': 'We don't harbour evil thoughts; we are releasing you and assign to you Uglich as your place of residence; you can officiate wherever you want, but under no circumstances can you govern. You should neither appoint, nor transfer, nor dismiss, nor reward.' 'But what about enquiries from the dioceses, current affairs,' asked Archbishop Seraphim. 'You cannot stop life, it will claim its own.' 'Well, you can make purely formal replies. After all, you have declared autonomy. So what do you want? You have left no deputies. So you should act accordingly: you must not send around any papers on the new government system. You can write to the dioceses that "since I have refused to govern, you should manage on your own in your localities." But if it comes into your head to write something, send it to me with a trusted man, I'll look through it and give you my opinion...As for now, goodbye. We'll buy you a ticket and see you to the railway station. Go back to Uglich and sit there quietly.'" (in Mazyrin, op. cit., p. 4)

III. THE SOVIET VERSUS THE CATACOMB CHURCHES
(1927-1953)

32. THE DECLARATION OF METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

On March 20, 1927 (OS) Metropolitan Sergius was released from prison and was given back the reins of the Church by Archbishop Seraphim.⁴²¹ Whatever doubts hierarchs and people may have had about his firmness, there seemed to be no other legal claimant to the post in freedom at that time... On March 28 Metropolitan Cyril was given another term in exile – and it is clear from the court records that the main reason was his secret election as patriarch by the confessing bishops.⁴²² But why, then, was Metropolitan Sergius not imprisoned, too? Evidently, he had reached an agreement with the authorities, while Metropolitan Cyril (together with Metropolitan Agathangel) had rejected any such agreement. Indeed, the conversation between Tuchkov and Metropolitan Cyril concerning the conditions of the latter's leadership of the Church is reported to have gone something like this:-

“If we have to remove some hierarch, will you help us in this?”

“Yes, if the hierarch appears to be guilty of some ecclesiastical transgression... In the contrary case, I shall tell him directly, ‘The authorities are demanding this of me, but I have nothing against you.’”

“No!” replied Tuchkov. “You must try to find an appropriate reason and remove him as if on your own initiative.”

To this the hierarch replied: “Eugene Nikolayevich! You are not the cannon, and I am not the shot, with which you want to blow up our Church from within!”⁴²³

But they found the shot – Metropolitan Sergius, who had played a leading role in the first Church revolution in 1917 and in the second, renovationist one in 1922, when he officially declared the renovationists' Higher Church Authority to be “the only canonical, lawful supreme ecclesiastical authority, and we consider all the decrees issuing from it to be completely lawful and binding”⁴²⁴. In 1923 Metropolitan Sergius had supported the renovationists' defrocking of Patriarch Tikhon as “a traitor to Orthodoxy”. True, on August 27, 1923, he was forced to offer public repentance for his betrayal of Orthodoxy in renovationism. But as Hieromartyr Damascene later pointed out, he had not been in a hurry to offer repentance... Moreover, as the Catholic writer Deinber points out, “the fact of the liberation of Metropolitan Sergius at this moment, when the repressions against the Church throughout Russia were all the time increasing, when his participation in the affair of the election of Metropolitan Cyril, for which a whole series of bishops had paid with exile, was undoubted, immediately aroused anxiety, which was strengthened when, on April 25 / May 8, a

⁴²¹ In later years, after Sergius' betrayal of the Church, Archbishop Seraphim is reported to have reasserted his rights as patriarchal locum tenens. See Michael Khlebnikov, “O tserkovnoj situatsii v Kostrome v 20-30-e gody” (On the Church Situation in Kostroma in the 20s and 30s), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), 49, N 5 (569), May, 1997, p. 19.

⁴²² http://www.pstbi.ru/cgi-htm/db.exe/no_dbpath/docum/cnt/ans, “Kirill (Smirnov Konstantin Ilarionovich)”.

⁴²³ Regelson, op. cit., p. 413.

⁴²⁴ *The Living Church*, NN 4-5, 14 July, 1922; Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 218-19.

Synod was unexpectedly convoked in Moscow. It became certain that between Metropolitan Sergius, during his imprisonment, and the Soviet government, i.e. the GPU, some sort of agreement had been established, which placed both him and the bishops close to him in a quite exceptional position relative to the others. Metropolitan Sergius received the right to live in Moscow, which right he had not enjoyed even before his arrest. When the names of the bishops invited to join the Synod were made known, then there could be no further doubts concerning the capitulation of Metropolitan Sergius before Soviet power. The following joined the Synod: Archbishop Sylvester (Bratanovsky) – a former renovationist; Archbishop Alexis Simansky – a former renovationist, appointed to the Petrograd see by the Living Church after the execution of Metropolitan Benjamin [Kazansky]; Archbishop Philip [Gumilevsky] – a former *beglopopovets*, i.e. one who had left the Orthodox Church for the sect of the *beglopopovtsi*; Metropolitan Seraphim [Alexandrov] of Tver, a man whose connections with the OGPU were known to all Russia and whom no-one trusted...⁴²⁵

On May 20, the OGPU officially recognized this Synod, which suggested that Metropolitan Sergius had agreed to the terms of legalization that Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter had rejected. One of Sergius' closest supporters, Bishop Metrophan of Aksaisk, had once declared that "the legalisation of the church administration is a sign of heterodoxy" ... In any case, Metropolitan Sergius and his "Patriarchal Holy Synod" now wrote to the bishops enclosing the OGPU document and telling them that their diocesan councils should now seek registration from the local organs of Soviet power. Then, in June, Sergius wrote to Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris directing him to sign a declaration of loyalty to the Soviet power. He agreed... On July 14, in *ukaz* № 93, Sergius demanded that all clergy abroad should sign a formal pledge to cease criticizing the Soviet government. It also stated that any clergyman abroad who refused to sign such would no longer be considered to be a part of the Moscow Patriarchate. This *ukaz*, which completely contradicted his previous *ukaz* of September 12, 1926, which blessed the hierarchs abroad to form their own independent administration, even included the actual text of the pledge that was to be signed: "I, the undersigned, promise that because of my actual dependence upon the Moscow Patriarchate, I will not permit myself in either my social activities nor especially in my Church work, any expression that could in the least way be considered as being disloyal with regard to the Soviet government."⁴²⁶

The clergy abroad were given until October 15 to sign this pledge. The Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), in their encyclical dated August 26, 1927, refused this demand and declared: "The free portion of the Church of Russia must terminate relations with the ecclesiastical administration in Moscow [i.e., with Metropolitan Sergius and his synod], in view of the fact that normal relations with it are impossible and because of its enslavement by the atheist regime, which is depriving it of freedom to act according to its own will and of freedom to govern the Church in accordance with the canons."

⁴²⁵ Regelson, op. cit., p. 415; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 407.

⁴²⁶ Protopriest Alexander Lebedeff, "Is the Moscow Patriarchate the 'Mother Church' of the ROCOR", Orthodox@ListServ.Indiana.Edu, 24 December, 1997.

However, Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris, agreed to sign, "but on condition that the term 'loyalty' means for us the apoliticisation of the émigré Church, that is, we are obliged not to make the *ambon* a political arena, if this will relieve the difficult situation of our native Mother Church; but we cannot be 'loyal' to Soviet power: we are not citizens of the USSR, and the USSR does not recognise us as such, and therefore the political demand is from the canonical point of view non-obligatory for us..."

On July 5, 1928, the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR decreed: "The present *ukaz* [of Sergius] introduces nothing new into the position of the Church Abroad. It repeats the same notorious *ukaz* of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon in 1922, which was decisively rejected by the whole Church Abroad in its time." In response to this refusal, Metropolitan Sergei expelled the ROCOR hierarchs from membership of the Moscow Patriarchate. On September 13, Metropolitan Eulogy wrote to Sergius asking that he be given autonomy. On September 24 Sergius replied with a refusal. So the first schism between the Russian Church inside and outside Russia took place as a result of the purely political demands of Sergius' Moscow Patriarchate.

The refusal of ROCOR was supported by the Solovki bishops: "The epistle threatens those church-servers who have emigrated with exclusion from the Moscow Patriarchate on the grounds of their political activity, that is, it lays an ecclesiastical punishment upon them for political statements, which contradicts the resolution of the All-Russian Council of 1917-18 of August 3/16, 1918, which made clear the canonical impermissibility of such punishments, and rehabilitated all those people who were deprived of their orders for political crimes in the past."⁴²⁷

Meanwhile, ominous events were taking place in Georgia. "Between June 21 and 27, 1927," writes Fr. Elijah Melia, "a Council elected as Catholicos Christopher Tsitskichvili. On August 6 he wrote to the Ecumenical Patriarch Basil III who replied addressing him as Catholicos. The new Catholicos entirely changed the attitude of the ecclesiastical hierarchy towards the Soviet power, officially declared militant atheist, in favour of submission and collaboration with the Government."⁴²⁸

During a synodal session under the presidency of the new Catholicos, it was decided to introduce the new style into the Georgian Church. However, the reform was rejected by the people and the majority of the priests. So it fell through and was repealed within a few months. All this, according to Boris Sokolov, took place under the influence of the head of the Georgian KGB, Laurence Pavlovich Beria, who wrote in 1929: "By our lengthy labours we succeeded in creating an opposition to Catholicos Ambrose and the then leading group in the Georgian Church, and... in January, 1927 we succeeded in completely wresting the reins of the government of the Georgian Church from the hands of Ambrose, and in removing him and his supporters from a leading role in the Georgian Church. In April, after the death of Catholicos Ambrose, Metropolitan Christopher was elected Catholicos. He is completely loyal to Soviet

⁴²⁷ Regelson, op. cit., p. 436.

⁴²⁸ Melia, "The Orthodox Church of Georgia", *A Sign of God: Orthodoxy 1964*, Athens: Zoe, 1964, p. 113.

power, and already the Council that elected Christopher has declared its loyalty to the power and has condemned the politics and activity of Ambrose, and in particular, the Georgian emigration."⁴²⁹ There followed, as Fr. Samson Zateishvili writes, "the persecution of clergy and believers, the dissolution of monasteries, the destruction of churches and their transformation into warehouses and cattle-sheds... The situation of the Church in Georgia was, perhaps, still more tragic and hopeless [than in the Russian Church], insofar as the new trials were imposed on old, unhealed wounds which remained from previous epochs."⁴³⁰

In October, 1930, the future Archbishop Leonty of Chile noted: "I arrived in Tbilisi in the evening," he wrote in his *Memoirs*, and went straight with my letter to the cathedral church of Sion... The clergy of the cathedral were so terrified of the Bolsheviks that they were afraid to give me shelter in their houses and gave me a place to sleep in the cathedral itself."⁴³¹

As if taking his cue from the Georgians, on July 16/29, Metropolitan Sergius issued the infamous Declaration that has been the basis of the existence of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate ever since, and which was to cause the greatest and most destructive schism in the history of the Orthodox Church since the fall of the Papacy in the eleventh century.

First he pretended that Patriarch Tikhon had always been aiming to have the Church legalized by the State, but had been frustrated by the émigré hierarchs and by his own death. There is a limited truth in this – but it was not the émigré hierarchs that frustrated the patriarch, nor did he want the kind of legalization Sergius wanted... Then he went on: "At my proposal and with permission from the State, a blessed Patriarchal Synod has been formed by those whose signatures are affixed to this document at its conclusion. Missing are the Metropolitan of Novgorod, Arseny, who has not arrived yet, and Archbishop Sebastian of Kostroma, who is ill. Our application that this Synod be permitted to take up the administration of the Orthodox All-Russian Church has been granted. Now our Orthodox Church has not only a canonically legal central administration but a central administration that is legal also according to the law of the State of the Soviet Union. We hope that this legalization will be gradually extended to the lower administrative units, to the dioceses and the districts. It is hardly necessary to explain the significance and the consequences of this change for our Orthodox Church, her clergy and her ecclesiastical activity. Let us therefore thank the Lord, Who has thus favoured our Church. Let us also give thanks before the whole people to the Soviet Government for its understanding of the religious needs of the Orthodox population. At the same time let us assure the Government that we will not misuse the confidence it has shown us.

⁴²⁹ Monk Benjamin (Gomarteli), *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1928-1938)* (Chronicle of Church Events (1928-1938), vol. 2, pp. 5-6.

⁴³⁰ Zateishvili, "Gruzinskaia Tserkov' i polnota pravoslavia" (The Georgian Church and the Fullness of Orthodoxy), in Bessmertny and Filatov, op. cit., p. 422.

⁴³¹ A.B. Psarev, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Leontia Chilijskogo (1904-1971 gg.)" (A Life of Archbishop Leonty of Chile (1904-1971), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), N 3 (555), March, 1996, p. 20.

“In undertaking now, with the blessings of the Lord, the work of this Synod, we clearly realize the greatness of our task and that of all the representatives of the Church. We must show not only with words but with deeds, that not only people indifferent to the Orthodox Faith or traitors to the Orthodox Church can be loyal citizens of the Soviet Union and loyal subjects of the Soviet power, but also the most zealous supporters of the Orthodox Church, to whom the Church with all her dogmas and traditions, with all her laws and prescriptions, is as dear as Truth and Life.

“We want to be Orthodox, and at the same time to see the Soviet Union as our civil Fatherland, whose triumphs and successes are also our triumphs and successes, whose failures are our failures. Every attack, boycott, public catastrophe or an ordinary case of assassination, as the recent one in Warsaw, will be regarded as an attack against ourselves...”

Lebedev comments: “This murder in Warsaw was the murder by B. Koverdaya of the Bolshevik Voikoff (also known as Weiner), who was one of the principal organizers of the murder of the Imperial Family, which fact was well known then, in 1927. So Sergius let the Bolsheviks clearly understand that he and his entourage were at one with them in all their evil deeds up to and including regicide.”⁴³²

Metropolitan Sergei continued: “Even if we remain Orthodox, we shall yet do our duties as citizens of the Soviet Union ‘not only for wrath but also for conscience’s sake’ (Romans 13.5), and we hope that with the help of God and through working together and giving support to one another we shall be able to fulfil this task.

“We can be hindered only by that which hindered the construction of Church life on the bases of loyalty in the first years of Soviet power. This is an inadequate consciousness of the whole seriousness of what has happened in our country. The establishment of Soviet power has seemed to many like some kind of misunderstanding, something coincidental and therefore not long lasting. People have forgotten that there are no coincidences for the Christian and that in what has happened with us, as in all places and at all times, the same right hand of God is acting, that hand which inexorably leads every nation to the end predetermined for it. To such people who do not want to understand ‘the signs of the times’, it may also seem that it is wrong to break with the former regime and even with the monarchy, without breaking with Orthodoxy... Only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities. Now, when our Patriarchate, fulfilling the will of the reposed Patriarch, has decisively and without turning back stepped on the path of loyalty, the people who think like this have to either break themselves and, leaving their political sympathies at home, offer to the Church only their faith and work with us only in the name of faith, or (if they cannot immediately break themselves) at least not hinder us, and temporarily leave the scene. We are sure that they will again, and very soon, return to work with us,

⁴³² Lebedev, “Dialogue between the ROCA and the MP: How and Why?” Great Lent, 1998.

being convinced that only the relationship to the authorities has changed, while faith and Orthodox Christian life remain unshaken... ”⁴³³

An article in *Izvestia* immediately noted the essence of the declaration – a return to renovationism: “The far-sighted part of the clergy set out on this path already in 1922”. So “sergianism”, as Sergius’ position came to be known, was “neo-renovationism”, and therefore subject to the same condemnation as the earlier renovationism of “the Living Church”. As recently as November, 2008 the True Orthodox Church of Russia⁴³⁴ defined sergianism as “a neo-renovationist schism”.

The radical error that lay at the root of this declaration lay in the last sentence quoted, in the idea that, in an antichristian state whose aim was the extirpation of all religion, it was possible to preserve loyalty to the State while “faith and Orthodox Christian life remained unshaken”. This attitude presupposed that it was possible, in the Soviet Union as in Ancient Rome, to draw a clear line between politics and religion. But in practice, even more than in theory, this line proved impossible to draw. For the Bolsheviks, there was no such dividing line; for them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accordance with their ideology, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state and its ideology did not pry. Unlike most of the Roman emperors, who allowed the Christians to order their own lives in their own way so long as they showed loyalty to the state, the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere: in family life (civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents), in education (compulsory Marxism), in economics (dekulakization, collectivization), in military service (the oath of allegiance to Lenin), in science (Darwinism, Lysenkoism), in art (socialist realism), and in religion (the requisitioning of valuables, registration, commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, reporting of confessions by the priests). Resistance to any one of these demands was counted as “anti-Soviet behaviour”, i.e. *political* disloyalty. Therefore it was no use protesting one's political loyalty to the regime if one refused to accept just one of these demands. According to the Soviet interpretation of the word: “Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one has become guilty of all of it” (James 2.10), such a person was an *enemy of the people*. Metropolitan Sergei’s identification of his and his Church’s joys and sorrows with the joys and sorrows of Soviet communism placed the souls of the millions who followed him in the most serious jeopardy.

The publication of the Declaration was greeted with a storm of criticism. Its opponents saw in it a more subtle version of renovationism. Even its supporters and neutral commentators from the West have recognized that it marked a radical change in the relationship of the Church to the State.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Regelson, op. cit., pp. 431-32.

⁴³⁴ At its Council in Odessa under the presidency of Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia.

⁴³⁵ Thus Professor William Fletcher comments: “This was a profound and important change in the position of the Russian Orthodox Church, one which evoked a storm of protest.” (*The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1971*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 57) Again, according to the Soviet scholar Titov, “after the Patriarchal church changed its relationship to the Soviet State, undertaking a position of loyalty, in the eyes of the believers any substantial difference whatsoever between the Orthodox Church and the renovationists disappeared.” (Fletcher, op.

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As was said above, the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius created the most serious schism in Orthodox Church history since the schism of the Papacy in 1054.⁴³⁶ If only a few had followed the traitor, the damage would have been limited to the loss of those few souls. But in fact the majority followed him; which brought down the just retribution of God in the form of the greatest persecution of the Church in history...

The persecution of those who rejected the Declaration began in the winter of 1927-28, which was critical in other ways in the history of the Russian revolution. In that winter Stalin came to supreme power in the Soviet Union, having banished his main rival, Trotsky, from the Party. At the same time he began his genocidal policy of forcible collectivization of the peasantry, the mainstay of the Orthodox Church. So through Sergius he began a spiritual assault on the integrity of his main rival, the Church at the same time as he began assaulting it politically and economically.

Before the Declaration, although the pre-revolutionary State had been destroyed, the economy amputated and enormous damage inflicted on the Church, with huge numbers of churches and monasteries destroyed, 117 bishops in prison or exile and hundreds of thousands, if not millions of Christians martyred, the foundations of the building of Holy Rus' still stood: the mass of the population, most of the peasants and many workers and *intelligenty*, still held to the Orthodox faith and the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, while the structure of daily life in the countryside remained largely unchanged. Moreover, in some vital respects Holy Rus' was reviving. Thus the spiritual authority of the Church had never been higher, church attendance was up, and church activities of all kinds were on the increase. E. Lopeshanskaia writes: "The Church was becoming a state within the state... The prestige and authority of the imprisoned and persecuted clergy was immeasurably higher than that of the clergy under the tsars."⁴³⁷

Five years later, everything had changed. The official church was a slave of Soviet power; the True Church, after suffering still more thousands of martyrdoms, had gone underground. The structure of country life had been destroyed, with most of

cit., p. 59) Again, according to Archimandrite (later Metropolitan) John (Snychev), quoting from a renovationist source, in some dioceses in the Urals up to 90% of parishes sent back Sergei's declaration as a sign of protest." (in Regelson, op. cit., p. 434) Again, Donald Rayfield writes: "In 1927... Metropolitan Sergius formally surrendered the Orthodox Church to the Bolshevik party and state." (*Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 123)

⁴³⁶ Sergei Chechuga, "Deklaratsia", ili *Novij Velikij Raskol* (The "Declaration", or a New Great Schism), St. Petersburg, 2006) compares it to the schism of the Old Ritualists in the seventeenth century. There is indeed a resemblance, but the schismatics in the seventeenth century were those who rejected the Orthodox State, whereas the schismatics after 1927 were those who identified their interests with the interests of the theomachist State.

⁴³⁷ E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki* (Bishop-Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, p. 70. See Vladimir Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo Obvinenia* (Witness for the Prosecution), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988, vol. II, pp. 167-191; D. Pospelovksy, "Podvig Very v Ateisticheskom Gosudarstve" (The Exploit of Faith in the Atheist State), *Grani* (Edges), N 147, 1988, pp. 227-265.

the local churches destroyed and the peasants either “dekulakized” – that is, exiled to the taiga or the steppe, with no provision for their shelter or food – or “collectivized” – that is, were deprived of all their private property and herded into state farms where life was on a subsistence level. The result of all this was *hunger*: physical hunger on a vast scale, as fourteen million starved to death in the Ukraine, Kuban and Kazakhstan; and spiritual hunger, as the only true sources of spiritual food were either destroyed or hidden underground.

Vladimir Rusak writes: “The Church was divided. The majority of clergy and laymen, preserving the purity of ecclesiological consciousness, did not recognize the Declaration... On this soil fresh arrests were made. All those who did not recognize the Declaration were arrested and exiled to distant regions or confined in prisons and camps. [In 1929] about 15 hierarchs who did not share the position of Metropolitan Sergei were arrested. Metropolitan Cyril, the main ‘opponent’ of Metropolitan Sergius, was exiled to Turukhansk in June-July. The arrest procedure looked something like this: an agent of the GPU appeared before a bishop and put him a direct question: what is your attitude to the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius? If the bishop replied that he did not recognize it, the agent drew the conclusion: that means that you are a counter-revolutionary. The bishop was arrested.”⁴³⁸

The first recorded verbal reaction of the anti-sergianists (or, as they now came to be called, the “True Orthodox Christians”) came from the bishops imprisoned on Solovki. On the initiative of Bishop Basil of Priluki, in a letter dated September 14/27, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, they wrote: “The subjection of the Church to the State’s decrees is expressed [in Sergius’ declaration] in such a categorical and sweeping form that it could easily be understood in the sense of a complete entanglement of Church and State... The Church cannot declare all the triumphs and successes of the State to be Her own triumphs and successes. Every government can occasionally make unwarranted, unjust and cruel decisions which become obligatory to the Church by way of coercion, but which the Church cannot rejoice in or approve of. One of the tasks of the present government is the elimination of all religion. The government’s successes in this direction cannot be recognized by the Church as Her own successes... The epistle renders to the government ‘thanks before the whole people to the Soviet government for its understanding of the religious needs of the Orthodox population’. An expression of gratitude of such a kind on the lips of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church cannot be sincere and therefore does not correspond to the dignity of the Church... The epistle of the patriarchate sweepingly accepts the official version and lays all the blame for the grievous clashes between the Church and the State on the Church...”

“In 1926 Metropolitan Sergius said that he saw himself only as a temporary deputy of the patriarchal *locum tenens* and in this capacity as not empowered to address pastoral messages to the entire Russian Church. If then he thought himself empowered only to issue circular letters, why has he changed his mind now? The pastoral message of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod leads the Church into a pact with the State. It was considered as such by its authors as well as by the government.

⁴³⁸ Rusak, op. cit., p. 175; Gubonin, op. cit., p. 409.

Sergius' action resembles the political activities of the 'Living Church' and differs from them not in nature but only in form and scope..."⁴³⁹

Although over 20 bishops signed this epistle, the majority of them did not consider Sergei's declaration a reason for immediately breaking communion with him. Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan wrote to an unknown person that the Solovki bishops wanted to wait for the repentance of Sergius "until the convening of a canonical Council... in the assurance that the Council could not fail to demand that of him".⁴⁴⁰

On October 21, Sergius directed all the clergy in Russia to commemorate the Soviet authorities, and not the bishops who were in exile. The commemoration of the authorities was seen by many as the boundary beyond which the Church would fall away from Orthodoxy. And the refusal to commemorate the exiled hierarchs implied that the hierarchs themselves were not Orthodox and constituted a break with the tradition of commemorating exiled hierarchs that extended back to the time of the Roman catacombs. Sergius was in effect cutting the faithful off from their canonical hierarchs.

On October 25, Bishop Nicholas (Yarushevich) proclaimed in the cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Petrograd the decision of the Provisional Synod, taken on September 13, to transfer Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) from Petrograd to Odessa. This caused major disturbances in Petrograd, henceforth one of the major centres of the True Orthodox Church. Joseph himself refused to obey Sergius, regarding his transfer as "anti-canonical, ill-advised and pleasing to an evil intrigue in which I will have no part".⁴⁴¹ He saw in it the hand of the OGPU. Certainly, the fact that more than 40 bishops were transferred by Sergius in this period was one of the main complaints of the confessing bishops against him.

On October 30 Joseph wrote to Sergius: "You made me metropolitan of Leningrad without the slightest striving for it on my part. It was not without disturbance and distress that I accepted this dangerous obedience, which others, perhaps wisely (otherwise it would have been criminal) decisively declined... Vladyko! Your firmness is yet able to correct everything and urgently put an end to every disturbance and indeterminateness. It is true, I am not free and cannot now serve my flock, but after all everybody understands this 'secret'... Now anyone who is to any degree firm and needed is unfree (and will hardly be free in the future)... You say: this is what the authorities want; they are giving back their freedom to exiled hierarchs on the condition that they change their former place of serving and residence. But what sense or benefit can we derive from the leap-frogging and shuffling of hierarchs that this has elicited, when according to the spirit of the Church canons they are in an indissoluble union with their flock as with a bride? Would it not be better to say: let it be, this false human mercy, which is simply a mockery of our human dignity, which strives for a cheap effect, a spectre of clemency. Let it be

⁴³⁹ Regelson, op. cit., p. 440.

⁴⁴⁰ Nicholas Balashov, "Esche raz o 'deklaratsii' i o 'solidarnosti' solovchan" (Again on the 'declaration' and on 'the solidarity of the Solovkians'), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 157, III-1989, pp. 197-198.

⁴⁴¹ Gubonin, op. cit., pp. 516, 524.

as it was before; it will be better like that. Somehow we'll get to the time when they finally understand that the eternal, universal Truth cannot be conquered by exiles and vain torments... One compromise might be permissible in the given case... Let them (the hierarchs) settle in other places as temporarily governing them, but let them unflinchingly retain their former title... I cannot be reconciled in my conscience with any other scheme, I am absolutely unable to recognize as correct my disgustingly tsarist-rasputinite transfer to the Odessa diocese, which took place without any fault on my part or any agreement of mine, and even without my knowledge. And I demand that my case be immediately transferred from the competence of your Synod, in whose competence I am not the only one to doubt, for discussion by a larger Council of bishops, to which alone I consider myself bound to display my unquestioning obedience."⁴⁴²

However, Metropolitan Sergius paid no attention to the disturbances in Petrograd. Taking upon himself the administration of the diocese, he sent in his place Bishop Alexis (Simansky), who was distrusted by the people because of his role in the betrayal of Metropolitan Benjamin in 1922. So already, only three months after the declaration, the new revolutionary cadres were being put in place... Then, on October 31, Archimandrite Sergei (Zenkevich) was consecrated Bishop of Detskoe Selo, although the canonical bishop, Gregory (Lebedev), was still alive but languishing in a GPU prison. From that moment many parishioners stopped going to churches where Metropolitan Sergius' name was commemorated, and Bishop Nicholas was not invited to serve.⁴⁴³

Meanwhile, antisergianist groups were forming in different parts of the country. Thus between October 3 and 6 an antisergianist diocesan assembly took place in Ufa, and on November 8 Archbishop Andrew of Ufa issued an encyclical from Kzyl-Orda in which he said that "even if the lying Sergius repents, as he repented three times before of renovationism, under no circumstances must he be received into communion". This encyclical quickly circulated throughout Eastern Russia and Siberia.

In November, Bishop Victor of Glazov broke with Sergius. He had especially noted the phrase in the declaration that "only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organisation, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities." To Sergei himself Bishop Victor wrote: "The enemy has lured and seduced you a second time with the idea of an organization of the Church. But if this organization is bought for the price of the Church of Christ Herself no longer remaining the house of Grace-giving salvation for men, and he who received the organization ceases to be what he was - for it is written, 'Let his habitation be made desolate, and his bishopric let another take' (Acts 1.20) - then it were better for us never to have any kind of organization. What is the benefit if we, having become by God's Grace temples of the Holy Spirit, become ourselves suddenly worthless, while at the same time receiving

⁴⁴² Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

⁴⁴³ V.V. Antonov, "Otvét na Deklaratsiu" (Reply to the Declaration), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), N 24, 1996, p. 73.

an organization for ourselves? No. Let the whole visible material world perish; let there be more important in our eyes the certain perdition of the soul to which he who presents such pretexts for sin will be subjected." And he concluded that Sergius' pact with the atheists was "not less than any heresy or schism, but is rather incomparably greater, for it plunges a man immediately into the abyss of destruction, according to the unlying word: 'Whosoever shall deny Me before men...' (Matthew 10.33)."444

At the same time antisergianism began to develop in the Ukraine with the publication of the "Kievan appeal" by Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), Bishop Damascene of Glukhov and Fr. Anatolius Zhurakovsky. They wrote concerning Sergius' declaration: "Insofar as the deputy of the patriarchal *locum tenens* makes declarations in the person of the whole Church and undertakes responsible decisions without the agreement of the *locum tenens* and an array of bishops, he is clearly going beyond the bounds of his prerogatives..."445 In December the Kievans were joined by two brother bishops – Archbishops Averky and Pachomy (Kedrov).446

Typical of the attitude of True Orthodox Christians in the Ukraine was the letter of the famous writer Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus to L.A. Orlov in February, 1928: "As long as there is a church of God that is not of 'the Church of the evildoers', go to it whenever you can; but if not, pray at home... They will say: 'But where will you receive communion? With whom? I reply: 'The Lord will show you, or an Angel will give you communion, for in 'the Church of the evildoers' there is not and cannot be the Body and Blood of the Lord. Here in Chernigov, out of all the churches only the church of the Trinity has remained faithful to Orthodoxy; but if it, too, will commemorate the [sergianist] Exarch Michael, and, consequently, will have communion in prayer with him, acting with the blessing of Sergius and his Synod, then we shall break communion with it."447

In Moscow the Catacomb Church was led by the future Hieromartyr Bishop Michael (Novoselov) of Sergievo (+1938), who had already distinguished himself before the revolution as a layman, when he denounced Rasputin and the Synod's failure to expose him. He was a fine theologian, who made a new and important distinction in ecclesiology between the Church as an organism and the Church as an organization: "One should distinguish between the Church-Organism and the Church-organization. Only to the Church-Organism are some names for the Church applicable, which we find in the Holy Scripture; for example: 'glorious, holy, blameless' (Ephesians 1: 4), 'without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27), "the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 19: 7, 21:9), 'the Body of Christ' (Ephesians 1: 23; Colossians 1.18), "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15) and many others. These concepts do not apply to the Church organization (or are applicable with great restrictions)...

444 Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982, pp. 141-143.

445 Regelson, op. cit., p. 435.

446 Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': 'Kochuiushchij' Sobor 1928 g." (The Catacomb Church: The 'Nomadic' Council of 1928), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 3 (7), 1997, p. 3.

447 Sergei Nilus, "Pis'mo otnositel'no 'sergianstva'", *Russkij Pastyr'*, 28-29, II/III, 1997, pp. 180-189.

“The Church-Organism is the same in all ages, for it is eternal in essence, while the Church-organization depends on the historical conditions of its existence. The Church-Organism is the pure ‘Bride of Christ, adorned for her husband’ (Revelation 21:2), while the Church-organization has all the shortcomings of human society and always bears the imprint of human infirmities.

“The Church-Organism does not include anything that defiles, while in Church-organizations wheat and tares grow together – and they need to grow, according to the word of the Lord, to the end of this age (Matthew 13: 24-30).

“The Church-organization often persecutes the saints of God, and the Church-Organism takes them into its core. How much the Church-organization and the Church-Organism do not coincide can be seen from many examples: St. Athanasius the Great, St. John Chrysostom (who was clearly persecuted by an Orthodox church-organization), St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Gregory Palamas and others. The Church-organization throws them out of its midst, deprives them of Episcopal sees, etc., while in the Church-Organism they are and eternally remain the most glorious members...”⁴⁴⁸

But perhaps the most famous confessor of the Church in Moscow was Protopriest Valentine Sventitsky. Princess Natalia Urusova writes of him: “In the church of St. Nicholas the Great Cross, there was an old priest. Fr. Valentine Sventitsky, who was unbending in his firmness against the Bolsheviks and in his open opposition to Sergius and his decree. When he served the church was so full that masses of people stood not only on the staircase but also in the courtyard. Of course, the Bolsheviks would have killed him in exile if he had not fallen ill and died a natural death. His glory spread far, and the Bolshevik power, for which the end justified the means, needed to discredit him with a common lie before the believers. He was dying without coming to consciousness, and they printed in all the newspapers a letter supposedly written by him before his death, in which he addressed all his parishioners, beseeching them in his last moments to follow Metropolitan Sergius and recognize his decree and commemoration. A false signature was affixed to the letter. The Bolsheviks arranged a magnificent funeral for him. Many of the parishioners were led into deception and joined the sergianist church, but those with minds understood the new and diabolic cunning contained in the false signature. It was a terrible time, quite indescribable. Those who rejected the commemoration and did not agree to sign the demand linked with the decree were immediately arrested and shot, no matter how many they happened to be. As the rumour went, in the course of one month up to 10,000 people were shot in Moscow, beginning with a metropolitan and ending with readers, while laypeople were shot in their millions in Russia: some were imprisoned, others were exiled to the terrible conditions of the concentration camps of the North and Siberia. The Lubyanka in Moscow became a place of mass martyrdom. Passers-by tried to avoid passing by the GPU’s house of death because of the intolerable stench of death that spread to a great distance. The corpses were taken out at night; they tried to do this as secretly as possible, but did not succeed.”⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ Novoselov, *Pis'ma k Druziam* (Letters to Friends), Moscow, 1994, letter 18.

⁴⁴⁹ Urusova, “Memoirs of Prot. Valentine Sventitsky”.

In Petrograd, the largest antisergianist group was being organized by Bishop Demetrius of Gdov with the blessing of Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. The “Josephites” were later to assume the leadership of the antisergianists in Petrograd, Tver, Moscow, Voronezh and still further afield. On December 12, they sent a delegation led by Bishop Demetrius and representing eight Petrograd bishops, clergy and academics to Moscow to meet Sergius. Here the conversation centred, not on Sergius’ canonical transgressions, but on the central issue of his relationship to Soviet power.

At one point Sergius said: “By my new church policy I am saving the Church.” To which Archpriest Victorinus Dobronravov replied: “The Church does not have need of salvation; the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. You, yourself, Vladyka, have need of salvation through the Church.”⁴⁵⁰

On December 15 Tuchkov, having received a secret report from Leningrad on this meeting with Sergius, wrote the following in his own handwriting: “To Comrade Polyansky. 1. Tell Leningrad that Sergius had a delegation with such-and-such suggestions. 2. Suggest that the most active laymen be arrested under some other pretenses. 3. Tell them that we will influence Sergius that he ban certain of the oppositional bishops from serving, and let Erushevich then ban some of the priests.”⁴⁵¹

Bishops Dimitri of Gdov and Sergius of Narva separated from Sergius on December 26: “for the sake of the peace of our conscience we reject the person and the works of our former leader [predstoiatelia – Sergiusi was meant], who has unlawfully and beyond measure exceeded his rights”.

This was approved by Metropolitan Joseph (who had been prevented from coming to Petrograd) on January 7. We may take this date as the birthday of what became known as the Catacomb Church. From this point, the opposition of the True Orthodox Christians assumed a massive character, as even the “sergianists” recognize: “The leaders of the groupings and the oppositionists, spreading orally and in writing various slanders against the higher church government, persuaded believers to break prayer relations with Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod as alleged sinners against the purity of Orthodoxy and the freedom of the Church. Calling them traitors to Orthodoxy and murderers of church freedom, they persuaded the people that the temples of Sergei's orientation were without grace, and, not considering themselves guilty of spreading confusion in the Church, openly required 'the traitors of the Church to resign their positions and transfer the government administration into other hands, or tearfully repent of doing evil and lead the ship of the Church in the old channel.’”⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.

⁴⁵¹ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., p. 175.

⁴⁵² Glukov, I. “Patriarch Sergei and his Activity”, *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, March, 1967, p. 66.

In a letter to a Soviet archimandrite, Metropolitan Joseph rejected the charge of being a schismatic and accused Sergius of being the schismatic.

He went on: "The defenders of Sergius say that the canons allow one to separate oneself from a bishop only for heresy which has been condemned by a Council. Against this one may reply that the deeds of Metropolitan Sergius may be sufficiently placed in this category as well, if one has in mind such an open violation by him of the freedom and dignity of the Church, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. But beyond this, the canons themselves could not foresee many things, and can one dispute that it is even worse and more harmful than any heresy when one plunges a knife into the Church's very heart – Her freedom and dignity?... 'Lest imperceptibly and little by little we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us as a free gift by His Own Blood' (8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council)... Perhaps I do not dispute that 'there are more of you at present than of us'. And let it be said that 'the great mass is not for me', as you say. But I will never consider myself a schismatic, even if I were to remain absolutely alone, as one of the holy confessors once was. The matter is not at all one of quantity, do not forget that for a minute: 'The Son of God when He cometh shall He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18.8). And perhaps the last 'rebels' against the betrayers of the Church and the accomplices of Her ruin will be not only bishops and not protopriests, but the simplest mortals, just as at the Cross of Christ His last gasp of suffering was heard by a few simple souls who were close to Him..."⁴⁵³

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It remained now to unite these scattered groups under a common leadership, or, at any rate, under a common confession, through the convening of a Council of the Catacomb Church... Now we can infer from a remark of Hieromartyr Maximus, Bishop of Serpukhov, that there was *some* Catacomb Council in 1928 that anathematized the sergianists.⁴⁵⁴ Other sources describe a so-called "Nomadic Council" attended at different times by over 70 bishops in 1928 which likewise anathematized the sergianists. But hard evidence for the existence of this council has proved hard to obtain,⁴⁵⁵ and there are reasons for suspecting its historicity...

⁴⁵³ Andreyev, op. cit., p. 100.

⁴⁵⁴ His words, as reported by Protopresbyter Michael Polsky (*Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Russian Martyrs), Jordanville, 1949-57, vol. II, p. 30), were: "The secret, desert, Catacomb Church has anathematized the 'Sergianists' and all those with them."

⁴⁵⁵ Our information about this Council is based exclusively on Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Kochuiushchij Sobor 1928 g." ("The Catacomb Church: The 'Nomadic' Council of 1928"), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 3 (7), 1997, whose main source is claimed to be the archives of the president of the Council, Bishop Mark (Novoselov), as researched by the Andrewite Bishop Evagrius. Historians such as Osipova ("V otvet na statiu 'Mif ob 'Istinnoj Tserkvi'" (In Reply to the Article, "The Myth of 'the True Church'"), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 3 (7), 1997, pp. 18-19) and Danilushkin (*Istoria Rossijskoj Tserkvi*, p. 534) appear to accept that this Council took place; but it is difficult to find anything other than oblique supporting evidence for it, and von Sievers has refused to allow the present writer to see the archives. A. Smirnov (perhaps von Sievers himself) writes that the "non-commemorating" branch of the Catacomb Church, whose leading priest was Fr. Sergius Mechev, had bishops who "united in a constantly active Preconciliar Convention" and who were linked with each other by special people called

Whether or not the Catacomb Church formally anathematized the Sergianists at this time, Metropolitan Sergius considered her graceless. On August 6, 1929 his synod declared: "The sacraments performed in separation from Church unity... by the followers of the former Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad, the former Bishop Dimitri (Lyubimov) of Gdov, the former Bishop Alexei (Buj) of Urazov, as also of those who are under ban, are also invalid, and those who are converted from these schisms, if they have been baptized in schism, are to be received through Holy Chrismation."

Bishop Alexei's followers "set up their own autonomous church, the 'True Orthodox Church', which had its own clergy of wandering priests who had been expelled from the church headed by the patriarch. This 'Desert Church' had no buildings of its own, the faithful would meet to pray in any number of places, such as private homes, hermitages, or even caves. These 'True Orthodox Christians' as they called themselves, were persecuted with particular severity; several thousand of them were arrested and deported as 'specially displaced' or simply sent to camps."⁴⁵⁶

The area occupied by the "Bujevtsy" in Tambov, Voronezh and Lipetsk provinces had been the focus of a major peasant rebellion against Soviet power in 1921. It continued to be a major stronghold of True Orthodoxy for many decades to come.⁴⁵⁷

Out of the approximately 150 Russian bishops in 1927, 80 declared themselves definitely against Sergei's declaration, 17 separated from him but did not make their position clear, and 9 at first separated but later changed their mind.⁴⁵⁸ These figures probably do not take into account all the secret bishops consecrated by the Ufa Autocephaly. In 1930 Sergei claimed he had 70% of the Orthodox bishops (not including the renovationists and Gregorians), which implies that about 30% of the Russian episcopate joined the Catacomb Church.⁴⁵⁹ According to the Catholic Bishop Michel D'Herbigny, once the Vatican's representative in Russia, three quarters of the episcopate separated from him, but this is probably an exaggeration.⁴⁶⁰

So, whatever the exact figures, we can be certain that a large part of the Russian episcopate went underground and formed the "Catacomb", "Desert" or "True

'svyazniki'" ("Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni" (The Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Passing of Time), *Simvol* (Symbol), N 40, 1998, p. 174).

⁴⁵⁶ Nicholas Werth, "A State Against its People: Violence, Repression, and Terror in the Soviet Union", in Stéphane Courtois, Nicholas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrezej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 173.

⁴⁵⁷ See A.I. Demianov, *Istinno Pravoslavnoe Khristianstvo* (True Orthodox Christianity), 1977, Voronezh University Press; "New Information on the True Orthodox Christians", *Radio Liberty Research*, March 15, 1978, pp. 1-4; Christel Lane, *Christian Religion in the Soviet Union*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978. ch. 4; "Registered and unregistered churches in Voronezh region", *Keston News Service*, 3 March, 1988, p. 8.

⁴⁵⁸ *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 7.

⁴⁵⁹ Pospelovsky, "Mitropolit Sergij i raskoly sprava", op. cit., p. 70.

⁴⁶⁰ D'Herbigny and Alexandre Deubner, "Évêques Russes en Exil - Douze ans d'Épreuves 1918-1930" (Russian Bishops in Exile - Twelve Years of Trials, 1918-1930), *Orientalia Christiana*, vol. XXI, N 67.

Orthodox" Church. These "schismatic" hierarchs, as even the sergianist Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) admitted, were among the finest in the Russian Church: "It is the best pastors who have fallen away and cut themselves off, those who by their purity in the struggle with renovationism stood much higher than the others."⁴⁶¹ They stood much higher then, in the early 1920s, and they continued to stand much higher after Metropolitan Sergei's declaration in 1927.

Wandering clergy served the faithful in secret locations around the country. Particular areas buzzed with underground activity. Thus Professor Ivan Andreyevsky testified that during the war he personally knew some 200 places of worship of the Catacomb Church in the Leningrad area alone: "My friends and I had ceased going to the Sergianist churches since the end of 1927, i.e. 10 years already, and this was the routine. I arrive secretly at one of my friend's houses in Petrograd. A secret nun visits her house. She in turn takes me to the clandestine church service of the Catacomb Church. As we travel, I ask no questions and am not interested where we are going. I purposely don't want to know because if later - God forbid, I will be arrested, even under torture I would not be able to divulge information about where I had been.

"It's late at night...Dark. We board a train at one of the stations and travel for more than an hour. We alight at some small sub-station and trek 2-3 kilometers in the dark. We arrive at some small village. On the edge of the village there is a hut. The night is dark and quiet. A soft knock on the door. It opens and we enter the hut. We walk into a clean room with all the windows heavily curtained. In one corner there are several icons with lit lampadas. There are 15 people, mostly women wearing scarfs, 3 middle-aged men and several children 12-14 years of age...

"The night vigil begins. Pronouncements and singing are done in a whisper. Emotional tears can be seen in many eyes... prayer comes easily! Nothing distracts or disturbs. Never and nowhere have I experienced so clearly and deeply the legitimacy of Saint John of the Ladder's demand: 'Enclose your mind in the words of prayer!'

"It's impossible to impart what I experienced at this night vigil. At its conclusion, I drank a cup of tea with some bread and kissed everyone three times on the cheeks... Dawn was breaking. Walking back quietly with my nun. Tranquillity and focus reside in my soul. We get on the train and depart for Petrograd. I walk over to another platform and head home".⁴⁶²

Popovsky writes that the Catacomb Church "arose in our midst at the end of the 20s. First one, then another priest disappeared from his parish, settled in a secret place and began the dangerous life of exiles. In decrepit little houses on the outskirts of towns chapels appeared. There they served the Liturgy, heard confessions, gave communion, baptized, married and even ordained new priests. Believers from distant

⁴⁶¹ M.V. Shkarovsky, "Iosiflianskoe Dvizhenie i Oppozitsia v SSSR (1927-1943)" (The Josephite Movement and Opposition in the USSR (1927-1943)), *Minuvshee* (The Past), N 15, 1994, p. 450.

⁴⁶² Andreyevsky did land up in prison, but was later able to emigrate to the USA. He reposed in 1976

towns and regions poured there in secret, passing on to each other the agreed knock on the door..."⁴⁶³

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The idea that the Russian Church might have to descend into the catacombs, in imitation of the Christians in early Rome, had been prophesied as early as 1909 by none other than the future Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Petrograd, then an archimandrite: "Now many are complaining about the hard times for the Church... Remembering the words of the Saviour with complete accuracy, we must expect still worse times for the Church... Without any exaggeration, she must truly live through a condition close to complete destruction and her being overcome by the gates of hell. Perhaps with us, exactly as in the land of freedom, America, they will drive the Name of Christ out of the schools. They will adapt prayer assemblies into ordinary meetings permitted by the police, as in that other land of freedom, France, and will convert the heritage of the Church, together with the very right of faith, into the property of the state. Perhaps the faith of Christ will again hide in the woods, the deserts, the catacombs, and the confession of the faith will be only in secret, while immoral and blasphemous presentations will come out into the open. All this may happen! The struggle against Christ will be waged with desperation, with the exertion of the last drop of human and hellish energy, and only then, perhaps, will it be given to hell and to mankind to assure us with complete obviousness of the unfailing power and might of the priceless promise of Christ: 'I will build My Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against her' (Matthew 16.18)."⁴⁶⁴

In the birth of the Catacomb Church in 1927-28 we can see the rebirth of the spirit of the 1917-18 Council. In the previous decade, first under Patriarch Tikhon and then under Metropolitan Peter, the original fierce tone of reproach and rejection of the God-hating authorities, epitomized above all by the anathematization of Soviet power, had gradually softened under the twin pressures of the Bolsheviks from without and the renovationists from within. Although the apocalyptic spirit of the Council remained alive in the masses, and prevented the Church leaders from actually commemorating the antichristian power, compromises continued to be made - compromises that were never repaid by compromises on the part of the Bolsheviks.

However, the line separating compromise from apostasy was passed by Metropolitan Sergius when he recognized *the God-accursed power to be God-established*, and commemorated it while banning the commemoration of the confessing bishops.

From this time Metropolitan Sergius' church became a Sovietized institution. We see this already in the official church calendar for 1928, which included among the feasts of the church: the memory of the Leader of the Proletariat Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (on the 32nd Sunday after Pentecost), the Overthrow of the Autocracy (in the Third

⁴⁶³ Grabbe, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴⁶⁴ Archimandrite Joseph, *In the Father's Embrace*.

Week of the Great Fast), the memory of the Paris Commune (the same week), the Day of the Internationale and the Day of the Proletarian Revolution.⁴⁶⁵

At this point the spirit of the 1917-18 Council flared up again in all its original strength.

For, as Protopresbyter Michael Polsky wrote: "The Orthodoxy that submits to the Soviets and has become a weapon of the worldwide antichristian deception is not Orthodoxy, but the deceptive heresy of antichristianity clothed in the torn raiment of historical Orthodoxy..."⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶⁵ *Pravoslavnoe obozrenie* (Orthodox Review), St. Petersburg, N10 (23), 1999, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁶ Polsky, *O Tserkvi v SSSR* (On the Church in the USSR), New York - Montreal, 1993, p. 13.

33. ROCOR AND METROPOLITAN SERGEI

Probably late in 1927, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, first-hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), wrote: "Now everywhere two epistles are being published in the newspapers and are being read in many churches which until recently were Orthodox - epistles of two, alas, former beloved pupils of mine with whom I was once in agreement, Metropolitans Sergius and Eulogy, who have now fallen away from the saving unity of the Church and have bound themselves to the enemies of Christ and the Holy Church - the disgusting blaspheming Bolsheviks, who have submitted themselves in everything to the representatives of the Jewish false teaching which everywhere goes under the name of communism or materialism... Let these new deceivers not justify themselves by declaring that they are not the friends of the Bolsheviks and Jews who stand at the head of the Bolshevik kingdom: in their souls they may not be their friends, but they have submitted, albeit unwillingly, to these enemies of Christ, and they are trying to increase their power not only over the hapless inhabitants of Holy Russia, but also over all Russian people."

In an encyclical of August 27, 1927 the ROCOR council of Bishops pointed out that "the higher church authority in Russia finds itself in grave captivity to the enemies of the Church"; the council has decided to sever relations with the Moscow church authorities 'in view of the impossibility of having normal relations with it and in view of its captivity to the God-fighting authorities, which are depriving it of freedom in the expression of its will and in the canonical government of the Church'".

On September 1, 1927, Archbishop Theophan of Poltava wrote: "It is impossible to recognize the epistle of Metropolitan Sergius as obligatory for ourselves. The just-completed Council of Bishops rejected this epistle. It was necessary to act in this way on the basis of the teaching of the Holy Fathers on what should be recognized as a canonical power to which Christians must submit. St. Isidore of Pelusium, having pointed to the presence of the God-established order of the submission of some to others everywhere in the life of rational and irrational beings, draws the conclusion: 'Therefore we are right to say that the thing in itself, I mean power, that is, authority and royal power, have been established by God. But if a lawless evildoer seizes this power, we do not affirm that he has been sent by God, but we say that he, like Pharaoh, has been *permitted* to spew out this cunning and thereby inflict extreme punishment on and bring to their senses those for whom cruelty was necessary, just as the King of Babylon brought the Jews to their senses.' (*Works*, part II, letter 6). Bolshevik power in its essence is an antichristian power and there is no way that it can be recognized as God-established."⁴⁶⁷

On September 5, the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR declared: "1. The abroad part of the all-Russian Church must cease relations with the Moscow church authorities in view of the impossibility of normal relations with them and in view of its enslavement

⁴⁶⁷ Archbishop Theophan, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1976; translated in *Selected Letters*, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1989.

to the atheist Soviet power which deprives it of its freedom in its administration of the Church.

“2. So as to free our hierarchy in Russia from responsibility for the non-recognition of Soviet power by the abroad part of our Church, until the re-establishment of normal relations with Russia and until the liberation of our Church from the persecutions of Soviet power, the abroad part of our Church must administer itself in accordance with the sacred canons, the definitions of the Sacred Council of the All-Russian Local Orthodox Church of 1917-18 and the decree of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the Higher Administrative Council of November 7/20, 1920, with the help of the Hierarchical Synod and the Council of Bishops, under the presidency of Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev.

“3. The abroad part of the Russian Church considers itself to be an inseparable, spiritually-at-one branch of the Great Russian Church. It does not separate itself from its Mother Church and does not consider itself autocephalous. As before, it considers its head to be the Patriarchal Locum Tenens Metropolitan Peter and commemorates his name in Divine services.

“4. If there will come a decree of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod on the exclusion of the abroad bishops and clergy who do not want to sign their loyalty to the Soviet government from the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, this decree will be uncanonical.”

On May 9, 1928 Metropolitan Sergei threatened to ban the ROCOR hierarchs if they did not dissolve their Administration. On June 20, his Synod issued another ukaz to the Church Abroad declaring that any clergyman who recognized the Moscow Synod but did not accept Soviet citizenship would be removed from his post.⁴⁶⁸ Nobody obeyed this ukaz...

On August 28, 1928, Metropolitan Anthony issued “the completely definitive declaration of our Synod of Bishops that the Moscow Synod has deprived itself of all authority, since it has entered into agreement with the atheists, and without offering any resistance it has tolerated the closing and destruction of the holy churches, and the other innumerable crimes of the Soviet government... That illegally formed organization which has entered into union with God’s enemies, which Metropolitan Sergius calls an Orthodox Synod – but which the best Russian hierarchs, clergy and laymen have refused to recognize - ... must not be recognized by our Orthodox Churches, nor by our Synod of Bishops with its flock here abroad. Furthermore, the organization of the Moscow Synod must be recognized to be exactly the same sort of apostates from the Faith as the ancient libellatici, that is, Christians who although they refused to blaspheme openly against Christ and offer sacrifices to the idols, nevertheless still received from the priests of the idols false documents verifying that they were in complete accord with the adherents of pagan religion...”⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 4.

⁴⁶⁹ *Pis'ma Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskogo)* (The Letters of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106, and Archbishop Nikon, *Zhizneopisaniye Blazhenneishago*

Unfortunately, however, this “completely definitive” statement did not prove to be *completely* definitive for the ROCOR hierarchs in years to come; their attitude to the Moscow Patriarchate wavered between strictness and condescension, and finally, in 2007, they fell away from the faith completely and joined the MP...

Early in 1930, just after Sergius had given his interview denying that there had ever been persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia, the archbishop of Canterbury invited Metropolitan Evlogy to go to London for a day of prayers for the suffering Church of Russia. “I decided to go,” he wrote. “The whole of England will pray for us, and I will remain in Paris as a witness of the unanimous sympathy of all the Churches for our suffering Church, but not take part? Impossible! My conscience ordered me to take part in these prayers; and my flock undoubtedly felt the same way.

“I spent about a week in England. It is a long time since I experienced such a radiant feeling of brotherly Christian love between the Churches as I experienced in those unforgettable days, when the whole of ecclesiastical and believing England prayed on her knees for a cessation of the terrible sufferings of our Russian Orthodox Church... I pursued no political aims in England, and nowhere gave political speeches. Everywhere that I had to give speeches I only gave thanks for their sympathy and asked them to support our suffering Mother Church by their prayers. And now these speeches have served as an excuse for a strict inquiry from Metropolitan Sergius in Moscow: on what basis could I allow myself to go round England calling people to protest against the USSR? Then it was demanded that I condemn my journey and give an undertaking not to repeat such speeches... It was bitter for me to read these unjust reproaches, which were dictated by Soviet power, and I replied sharply to Metropolitan Sergius that my prayers in England did not have a political, but only a religious character: it was a protest of the religious and in general the human conscience against the terrible persecutions against the Church in Soviet Russia...”⁴⁷⁰

On June 10, 1930, Sergei retired Metropolitan Evlogy from his post administering the Russian parishes in Western Europe. On July 10 Evlogy broke communion with

Mitropolita Antonia, vol. 7, pp.218-223, quoted in the *Archpastoral Epistle of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*, 1969 and translated in *Orthodox Christian Witness*, March 8/21, 1982. Metropolitan Anthony secretly distributed this encyclical with an appeal to the archpastors to join ROCOR; it was widely read among the Josephites (Shkarovsky, M.B. “Iosiflianskoe dvizhenie i ‘Sviataia Rus’” (The Josephite Movement and ‘Holy Russia’), *Mera* (Measure), 1995, # 3, p. 101).

⁴⁷⁰ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 13. If Metropolitan Sergius had been thinking ecclesiastically rather than politically, he would have protested, not at the supposedly political character of Metropolitan Evlogy’s visits to England, but at his violation of the canons by his recognizing the Anglican clergy. Thus on May 16, 1935, on the initiative of the Russian Clergy and Church Aid Fund, a prayer service was arranged in London for the cessation of the persecutions against the faith in Soviet Russia. Metropolitan Evlogy came again, together with ROCOR’s Archbishops Anastasy and Seraphim. During the service in the Anglican church the Orthodox hierarchs stood with their mantias on. Then, at a liturgy and moleben in the Russian church many Anglican clergy stood and prayed in their vestments. (*Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), 6, 1935, pp. 100-101; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 47)

the Moscow Patriarchate, and in February was received by Constantinople...

On May 6, 1933 Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Sergius, who had reproached the ROCOR bishops for abandoning their sees: "... It is not from you and not for us to hear an exhortation to martyrdom, which we would not have avoided if we had stayed in the South of Russia. We are ready to listen to it and to many such reproaches, if we deserve them, from those who even now display an example of confession, and have not, like you, sold the purity of the faith for a mess of pottage of seeming freedom, which is in fact the most heavy and shameful slavery...

"What divides you from us is the fact that you, in your desire to guarantee a secure existence for your ecclesiastical centre, have tried to unite light with darkness. You have fallen into the temptation whose essence was revealed in the holy Gospel. Once the spirit of evil tried to draw even the Son of God Himself by a picture of external easy success, placing as a condition His worship of him, the son of destruction. You have not followed the example of Christ, the holy martyrs and confessors, who rejected such a compromise, but have bowed down to the age-old enemy of our salvation, when, for the sake of an illusory success, for the sake of the preservation of an external organization, you declared that the joys of the godless authorities are your joys and its enemies your enemies. You even tried to remove the crowns from the recent martyrs and confessors (including yourself, for I know that once you showed firmness and were in prison), affirming that they are suffering imprisonment, exile and torments not for the name of Christ, but as counter-revolutionaries. In this way you blasphemed against them. You denigrated their exploit, and dampened the enthusiasm of those who could have been numbered to the ranks of the martyrs for the faith. You excommunicated them from the flower and adornment of the Russian church. In this neither I nor my brothers abroad will ever follow you... We have no intercourse with the Orthodox archpastors, pastors and laymen who are imprisoned in Russia, except that we pray for them and know that they suffer only for the faith, though the persecutors charge them with State crimes which are alien to them, as the enemies of the Christians loved to do in ancient times... For you the way of the cross is now madness like it was to the Greeks contemporary with the Apostles (I Corinthians 1.23). I implore you, as a pupil and friend, free yourself from this temptation, renounce publicly every lie which Tuchkov and other enemies of the Church have put into your mouth, do not yield in the face of probably tortures. If you are counted worthy of a martyr's crown, the earthly and heavenly Churches will combine in glorification of your courage and of the Lord Who strengthened you; but if you stay on this wide path leading you to perdition (Matthew 7.13), on which you stand now, you will be ignominiously led to the pit of hell and until the end of its earthly existence the Church will not forget your betrayal. I always think of this when I look at the panagia of the Vladimir Mother of God with the engraved inscription which you presented to me twenty years ago: 'To a dear teacher and friend.' Your further words in this inscription are: 'give us some of your oil, for our lamps are fading.' Here we offer you the salutary oil of faith and loyalty in the Holy Church. *Do not refuse it, but reunite with it* as in 1922 when you solemnly declared to Patriarch Tikhon your repentance for your former wavering loyalty. Do not refuse the friendly

appeal of one who tenderly loved you and continues to love you."⁴⁷¹

On July 8, 1933 the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR issued an encyclical to the Russian Orthodox flock with regard to Sergei's epistle of March 23: "His appeal in its essence remains the same as it was in 1927 and can be formulated in the words: he who is with Soviet power is with the Russian Church; he who is against the former cannot be with the latter. In this way the link with the Mother Church can be realized for us in no other way than by accepting the God-fighting authorities that now rule in Russia. Before stretching out the hand of communion with Metropolitan Sergei, we must stretch it out first to the Bolsheviks and receive from them attestation of our political reliability, without which the deputy of the locum tenens cannot re-establish fraternal and canonical union with us..."⁴⁷²

At the same time, this encyclical, - penned, according to Archbishop Nikon, by Metropolitan Anastasy, - declared: "As regards relations toward the Mother Church, the Russian ecclesial organization abroad has considered itself no more than a branch of the latter, bound organically to the whole body of the Church of Russia, even though temporarily deprived only of outward unity with the latter in ecclesiastical administration.

"To the present day the entire Church organization abroad has considered and still considers itself an extraordinary and temporary institution, which must be abolished without delay after the restoration of normal social and ecclesiastical life in Russia.

"We are taking fully into account the extraordinary difficulties of the position of Metropolitan Sergei, who is now the de facto head of the Church of Russia, and are aware of the heavy burden of responsibility for the fate of the latter, which lies upon him. No one, therefore, has the audacity to accuse him for the mere attempt to enter into dialogue with the Soviet regime so as to obtain legal standing for the Church of Russia. Not without foundation does the deputy locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne say in his aforementioned Declaration that only 'armchair dreamers can think that such a vast community as our Orthodox Church, with all its organization, can exist peacefully in a country while walling itself off from the authorities.' While the church exists on earth, it remains closely bound up with the fates of human society and cannot be imagined outside time and space. It is impossible for it to refrain from all contact with a powerful societal organization such as the government; otherwise it would have to leave the world."⁴⁷³

However, in his 1934 Paschal encyclical Metropolitan Anthony was stricter: "It is noteworthy that several hierarchs and their flocks, for the most part Russians, have already fallen away from Ecumenical unity, and to the question: 'What do you

⁴⁷¹ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), № 8, 1933; in *Orthodox Life*, vol. 27 (2), March-April, 1977; Archbishop Nikon, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Biography of His Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. 6, pp. 263-269; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 24-27.

⁴⁷² Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 27.

⁴⁷³ <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/english/pages/history/1933epistle.html>;
<http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/Poslania/poslanie.sobor.1933.html>.

believe?', reply with references to self-proclaimed heads of all sorts of schisms in Moscow, America, and Western Europe. It is clear that, without admitting it, they have ceased to believe in the unity of the Church throughout the world. They try to bear calmly the refusal of the true Church to have relations with them, and imagine that one can save one's soul even without communion with Her... Unfortunately, some Orthodox laymen, even, alas, many priests (and hierarchs) have subjected themselves to this state of gracelessness, although still retaining the outward appearance of the church services and the apparent performance of the Mysteries..."⁴⁷⁴

On July 5, 1934, Metropolitan Sergius banned the ROCOR hierarchs. On August 7, Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Metropolitan Eleutherius of Lithuania explaining that he could not accept this ban because "a hierarch cannot be removed from his see except through a trial"⁴⁷⁵.

Now Eleutherius was a supporter of Sergius, and on the departure of Metropolitan Evlogy for Constantinople was entrusted with oversight of the patriarchal parishes in Western Europe. In 1935 he published a book defending the MP against ROCOR and Metropolitan Anthony, in which he argued that while Soviet power acted in the religious sphere "by the inspiration of Satan", Christians were still bound to obey it, because "all power is from God". If they obeyed Soviet power, as God commanded, then Soviet power, "would see this, and the Spirit of God would proclaim good things for the Church through it".⁴⁷⁶

Professor Ivan Ilyin subjected this argument to detailed criticism. The communists could not be simultaneously servants of God and servants of Satan. If they were acting "by the inspiration of Satan", as was clearly the case, then they had to be opposed. In any case, Church history contained many examples of hierarchs refusing to obey the secular authorities, beginning with the apostles who told the Sanhedrin: "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5.29).

Ilyin quotes "the law of freedom" (James 1.25; I Peter 2.16) to illumine the meaning

⁴⁷⁴ On November 26 / December 9, 1979, Metropolitan Philaret of New York wrote to Abbess Magdalena of Lesna convent: "Ponder these last words of the great Abba: the apparent performance of the Mysteries... What horror! But these words of his concur totally with my own conviction regarding the gracelessness and inefficacy of schismatic Mysteries" - and he went on to make clear that he regarded the sacraments of the Moscow Patriarchate, and of the American and Parisian jurisdictions, to be graceless.

⁴⁷⁵ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 40. It is interesting to note that Metropolitan Chrysostom of Florina said the same thing when clarifying a pastoral epistle of his: "no clergyman, and certainly no hierarch, is to be deposed for wrong belief and excised from the universal body of the Eastern Orthodox Church without a prior trial and defense... For the age-old history of the Orthodox Church teaches us that no wrong-believing person who is liable to deposition and excision has ever been declared heretical or schismatic by Hierarchs acting in isolation, without any trial or defense, but by a valid and canonical Synod, coming together and taking counsel with the aid of the Holy Spirit and putting forth its vote of condemnation only after the defendant has stood trial and defended himself, and after all means of enlightenment and admonition have been exhausted..." (Letter of January 18, 1945; http://www.trueorthodoxy.org/schismatics_matthewites_postings.shtml)

⁴⁷⁶ Metropolitan Eleutherius, *Moj Otvjet Mitropolitu Antoniu* (My Reply to Metropolitan Anthony), Kovno, 1935, pp. 18, 67.

of the words “all power is from God”. They “signify not that power is unrestrained, but that it is bound and limited. ‘Being from God’ means being called to the service of God and *undertaking* this service; it binds and limits this power. It does not mean that the power is free to do any baseness or abomination, sin or iniquity, and that, whatever it does, it will always ‘come from God’, and that obedience in conscience will be demanded by it from its subjects as if it were the voice of God. But it means that the power is established by God *for the doing of good and the overcoming of evil*; that it must rule precisely in this way, and not otherwise. And if it does rule in this way, the subjects are obliged to obey it out of conscience.

“Thus the calling of the power by God becomes for it a rule and obligation, as it were a court before the face of God. While the free obedience of subjects according to conscience turns out to be strengthened, but also limited, by this law. But how far is it ‘limited’? To the extent that the law of Christian freedom calls them to loyalty or forbids them to show loyalty.

“And it is precisely to this freedom, infused with love, conscience and clear perception of its object, that we must turn for an exit when the power turns out to be in the hands of Satan, whom we can in no way serve or want to serve – neither out of fear, nor for conscience’s sake. We can and must serve only God, for we are ‘servants of God’ (I Peter 2.16); we are called to serve Him *in freedom*, speaking and acting as people who must be judged, not according to the letter of the Scripture, but according to the law of freedom. And if it turns out that according to our free and object-directed Christian conscience (not out of arbitrariness or passion!), this power is satanic, then we are called to condemn it, refuse to obey it and conduct a struggle against it in word and deed, by no means using our Christian freedom in order to cover up evil, that is, without distorting the voice of our Christian conscience, and not embellishing the words of Satan and not ascribing them in crookedness of soul to Christ...”⁴⁷⁷

The issue dividing ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergius is often described by the supporters of Sergei as “political” – a question only of the political recognition of the Soviet regime. However, as the Catacomb confessor Professor Ivan Andreyev pointed out: “To dissociate oneself in principle from any politics is impossible for an Orthodox person, for religion and politics are at the present time organically blended. The question: to be with Christ or against Him, has a political meaning today, because it commits one to protesting against those political systems which have as their main goal the destruction of Christianity. Whoever at the present time denies the necessity of political discussions (reasoning) and jurisdictional explanations (interpretations) denies the necessity of distinguishing the wolves in sheep’s clothing and finding out where Christ is and where the Antichrist...”⁴⁷⁸

In this connection, it is worth recalling the following decree issued by Metropolitan Sergei and his Synod on July 25, 1935 recently discovered by researchers: “The

⁴⁷⁷ Ilyin, “O ‘Bogoustanovlennosti’ sovietskoj vlasti” (On the ‘God-establishedness’ of Soviet Power), <http://www.portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=lib&id=2711>

⁴⁷⁸ Andreev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 54.

decision of the former Most Holy Governing Synod of April 20, 1813 to deprive Archbishop Barlaam (Shishatsky) of Mogilev of his rank and priesthood, is to be completely rescinded as being issued for political reasons and under pressure of political circumstances. His Eminence Archbishop Barlaam Shishatsky is to be recognized as having died in his hierarchical rank. Therefore he is to be commemorated among those who have reposed as an Archbishop." Deacon Alexander Mazyrin comments on this: "Archbishop Barlaam was defrocked in his time because in the summer of 1812, after the French took Mogilev, he swore allegiance to the Emperor Napoleon. In rescinding the indicated decree of the Most Holy Synod, 'as being issued for political reasons and under pressure of political circumstances', Metropolitan Sergei clearly let us understand how we should relate to his own decrees, at the base of which there also lay political motives."⁴⁷⁹

True; and yet there is a still more pertinent conclusion to be drawn from this. Archbishop Barlaam was undoubtedly *justly* defrocked by the Most Holy Synod in 1813, because he swore allegiance to a man, Napoleon, who had been anathematized by the Synod. That being the case, Metropolitan Sergei was no less justly defrocked for swearing allegiance to the Bolsheviks, who were also under the Russian Church's anathema and whose enmity to Orthodoxy was still more obvious. For the fact that both acts were committed "under political pressure" is strictly irrelevant. Both acts, although clothed as concessions to political necessity, were acts of *ecclesiastical* betrayal; both men betrayed Christ and His Holy Church, and were therefore subject to anathema and expulsion from the Church.

From distant China, Metropolitan Innocent of Peking (Figurovsky) (+1931) declared: "Metropolitan Sergei had ordered a prayer to be offered for the Soviet power before the throne of God and recognized its joys as his joys and her sorrows as his sorrows.

"It is difficult to think of a more terrible blasphemy against Orthodox hierarchs and the Orthodox people. Is it really still necessary to prove now that the government that openly fights with God, which turned more than 3,000 churches into temples of their satanic religion, which brutally destroyed thousands of hierarchs and priests, ruined more than 20 million by executions and starvation. the Russian people - that this power is not from God, but from the devil. Is it really necessary to convince someone that we cannot rejoice in the joys of the government, which has decided to wipe the very name of the Russian people from the face of the earth, which cripples and corrupts the souls of children and youth, inoculating them with vile vices and disgusting diseases! To argue otherwise, one must lose either reason or conscience.

"After 12 years of bloody terror, it is clear to everyone except those who deceive themselves that one cannot speak of any power in Russia in the human sense of the word, there are no laws and human rights; for where a wild beast reigns, instead of law, disgusting arbitrariness reigns! And this satanic power you, Your Eminence,

⁴⁷⁹ Mazyrin, "K istorii vysshevo upravlenia Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v 1935-1937 gg.", 16th Annual Theological Conference of PSTGU, Moscow, 2006, vol. 1, p. 166, <http://pstgu.ru/download/1269284749.mazyrin.pdf>

together with Metropolitan Sergei, now you want to recognize the power as legitimate. How do you not feel the horror of such blasphemy? Do you really want, together with him and his Synod, to persecute the Orthodox Church, whose true hierarchs are now not in cities and not in royal palaces, but in prisons and in exile. Do you really want, together with Metropolitan Sergei and the Chekists to plant the abomination of desolation in the holy place, do you want to join with the Antichrist and do his work?

“Do not try to deceive yourself and others with words of guile. By recognizing Metropolitan Sergei as your head - does this not mean fulfilling all his orders, following the path along which he himself is going? To be loyal to the Bolsheviks, to renounce any active struggle with them, which is demanded by Metropolitan Sereis from all who recognize him - is not this a renunciation of Christ, the acceptance of that seal of the Antichrist, about which St. John the Evangelist speaks in his Revelation?

“You are trying in vain to play on the tender family feelings of the emigration for our brothers, who were captured in the USSR. Believe me, many of them preferred prison and exile to the confession of Metropolitan Sergei. The time is coming in the USSR, and it has already come, when all who have not accepted the seal of the antichrist will be deprived of the right to life, the right to sell and buy. You, no doubt, have read about the persecution of the Bolsheviks against the "kulak" - honest workers who earn their bread by their labor and are guilty only of not going into slavery to satanic power. For this, their property is taken from them; many of them are killed. But they continue to fight and suffer for the Orthodox faith and Holy Russia, sacrificing everything. And here, at large, will we calmly look at their torment, will we refuse to fight their executioners in our cowardice? Or do you not feel that we will join the crimes of the Chekists, we will be guilty of the death of those tortured by them, if we do not fight with all our might against the army of Satan, which is oppressing our Motherland? The fight against the communists ... is our sacred duty.”

34. THE MARTYRDOM OF THE TRUE ORTHODOX CHURCH

Stalin's collectivization campaign was so destructive, so self-defeating and so senseless by any normal political or economic calculation, that its motivation, according to Stephen Kotkin, could only have been ideological: "Collectivization would give the Communists control over the vast countryside, a coveted goal no regime in Russia had ever had. But still more fundamentally, collectivization, like state-run and state-owned industry, constituted a form of ostensible modernization that negated capitalism."⁴⁸⁰ "Capitalism" here meant the kulaks, farming that was just one step less primitive than subsistence agriculture. So collectivization was dekulakization, a campaign of *class warfare* designed to extirpate a whole class in order to make way for the classless (or one-class) socialist society.

But there was another aspect of the campaign almost all historians touch on only lightly, that was also ideological, but of a deeper kind: the war against religion. Stalin's collectivization campaign recalled Lenin's campaign of War Communism in 1918-21. And, as in Lenin's time, it was, in the words of Alan Bullock, "as much an attack on [the peasants'] traditional *religion* as on their individual holdings".⁴⁸¹ For, as Vladimir Rusak writes, "Stalin could no longer 'leave the Church in the countryside'. In one interview he gave at that time he directly complained against 'the reactionary clergy' who were poisoning the souls of the masses. 'The only thing I can complain about is that the clergy were not liquidated root and branch,' he said. At the 15th Congress of the party [in December 1927] he demanded that all weariness in the anti-religious struggle be overcome."⁴⁸²

The 15th Congress took place just after the tenth anniversary of the October revolution. This was during the peak of the modernist (and therefore westernizing) revolution in Soviet culture, when new styles in poetry, in drama, in painting, in music and in architecture were all the rage. The old was being swept away to make way for the new. This was especially the case in architecture, where the plans of the likes of Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier could be realized most naturally by the destruction of Orthodox churches such as the Chudov monastery and the cathedral of Christ the Saviour. As Catherine Merridale writes, "the pressure to 'cleanse' (that is, remove) religious buildings and imperial sites increased."⁴⁸³

But the pressure that Stalin brought to bear was on the cleansing of minds rather than cityscapes. And so, "on 8 April 1929," as W. Husband writes, "the VtsIK and Sovnarkom declaration 'On Religious Associations' largely superseded the 1918 separation of church and state and redefined freedom of conscience. Though reiterating central aspects of the 1918 separation decree, the new law introduced important limitations. Religious associations of twenty or more adults were allowed, but only if registered and approved in advance by government authorities. They retained their previous right to the free use of buildings for worship but still could

⁴⁸⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin. Paradoxes of Power*, vol. I, London: Penguin, 2015, p. 726.

⁴⁸¹ Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin*, p. 430.

⁴⁸² Rusak, *Svidetel'stvo Obvinenia*, Jordanville, NY.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1988, part I, p. 176.

⁴⁸³ Merridale, *Red Fortress* New York: Picador, 2013, p. 103.

not exist as a judicial person. Most important, the new regulations rescinded the previously guaranteed [!] right to conduct religious propaganda, and it reaffirmed the ban on religious instructions in state educational institutions. In effect, proselytising and instruction outside the home were illegal except in officially sanctioned classes, and religious rights of assembly and property were now more circumscribed."⁴⁸⁴

"Henceforth," writes Nicholas Werth, "any activity 'going beyond the limits of the simple satisfaction of religious aspirations' fell under the law. Notably, section 10 of the much-feared Article 58 of the penal code stipulated that 'any use of the religious prejudices of the masses... for destabilizing the state' was punishable 'by anything from a minimum three-year sentence up to and including the death penalty'. On 26 August 1929 the government instituted the new five-day work-week – five days of work, and one day of rest – which made it impossible to observe Sunday as a day of rest. This measure deliberately introduced 'to facilitate the struggle to eliminate religion'.

"These decrees were no more than a prelude to a second, much larger phase of the antireligious campaign. In October 1929 the seizure of all church bells was ordered because 'the sound of bells disturbs the right to peace of the vast majority of atheists in the towns and the countryside'. Anyone closely associated with the church was treated like a kulak and forced to pay special taxes. The taxes paid by religious leaders increased tenfold from 1928 to 1930, and the leaders were stripped of their civil rights, which meant that they lost their ration cards and their right to medical care. Many were arrested, exiled, or deported. According to the incomplete records, more than 13,000 priests were 'dekulakised' in 1930. In many villages and towns, collectivisation began symbolically with the closure of the church, and dekulakization began with the removal of the local religious leaders. Significantly, nearly 14 percent of riots and peasant uprisings in 1930 were sparked by the closure of a church or the removal of its bells. The antireligious campaign reached its height in the winter of 1929-30; by 1 March 1930, 6,715 churches had been closed or destroyed. In the aftermath of Stalin's famous article 'Dizzy with Success' on 2 March 1930, a resolution from the Central Committee cynically condemned 'inadmissible deviations in the struggle against religious prejudices, particularly the administrative closure of churches without the consent of the local inhabitants'. This formal condemnation had no effect on the fate of the people deported on religious grounds.

"Over the next few years these great offensives against the church were replaced by daily administrative harassment of priests and religious organizations. Freely interpreting the sixty-eight articles of the government decree of 8 April 1929, and going considerably beyond their mandate when it came to the closure of churches, local authorities continued their guerrilla war with a series of justifications: 'unsanitary condition or extreme age' of the buildings in question, 'unpaid insurance', and non-payment of taxes or other of the innumerable contributions imposed on the members of religious communities. Stripped of their civil rights and their right to teach, and without the possibility of taking up other paid employment

⁴⁸⁴ Husband, *"Godless Communists"*, Northern University of Illinois Press, 2000, p. 66.

- a status that left them arbitrarily classified as 'parasitic elements living on unearned wages' - a number of priests had no option but to become peripatetic and to lead a secret life on the edges of society."⁴⁸⁵

It was the True Orthodox Church that took the brunt of this offensive. For opposition to the betrayal of the Church by Metropolitan Sergius went hand in hand with opposition to collectivization. The collectivization of agriculture and persecution of its opponents coincided with a general attack on religion⁴⁸⁶ spearheaded by Yaroslavsky's League of Militant Godless, who numbered 17 million by 1933. As Naumov points out, in Ukraine "the boundaries of the famine coincided with the boundaries of the bread baskets of the country, which were always regions of agricultural abundance and *strongholds of Orthodoxy*."⁴⁸⁷

Thus in 1929, the Bolsheviks began to imprison the True Orthodox on the basis of their membership of a "church monarchist organization" called "True Orthodoxy". The numbers of True Orthodox Christians arrested between 1929 and 1933 exceeded by seven times the numbers of clergy repressed from 1924 to 1928.⁴⁸⁸ The main case against the True Orthodox was called the case of "The All-Union Counter-Revolutionary Church Monarchist Organization, 'the True Orthodox Church'". In 1929 5000 clergy were repressed, three times more than in 1928; in 1930 - 13,000; in 1931-32 - 19,000.⁴⁸⁹ On February 18, 1932, in a single night, almost the whole monastic population of Petrograd, the national centre of True Orthodoxy was arrested and imprisoned - with the full knowledge and acquiescence of Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), the future "Patriarch of Moscow".

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A distinction must be made between the rebellions against collectivization by True Orthodox Christians, and the rebellions by non-Christian peasants. Thus in Ivanovo ten thousand demonstrators "ransacked the party and police buildings ('Toss the Communists... out of the window'). Stalin dispatched Kaganovich, who mobilized local party agitators to speak with workers and himself heard out their grievances. [However,] Ivanovo's striking workers did not reject socialism, only its building at their expense, and mostly blamed local officials for their plight."⁴⁹⁰ But the war of the

⁴⁸⁵ Werth, "A State against its People", in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172-173.

⁴⁸⁶ The Protestants and Jews had welcomed the revolution and thus escaped the earlier persecutions, but were now subjected to the same torments as the Orthodox (D. Pospelovsky, "Podvig very", pp. 233-34).

⁴⁸⁷ Naumov, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸⁸ I.I. Osipova, "Istoria Istinno Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po Materialam Sledstvennago Dela" (The History of the True Orthodox Church according to Materials from the Interrogation Process), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁹ I.I. Osipova, *O Premiloserdij... Budi s nami neotstupno... Vospominania veruiuschikh Istinno-Pravoslavnoj (Katakombnoj) Tserkvi. Konets 1920-kh - nachalo 1970-kh godov* (O Most Merciful One... Remain with us without fail. Reminiscences of believers of the True-Orthodox (Catacomb) Church. End of the 1920s - beginning of the 1970s), Moscow, 2008.

⁴⁹⁰ Kotkin, *Stalin*, vol II, p. 95.

True Orthodox against collectivization was much more principled, being motivated by a root-and-branch rejection of Soviet power. It was especially fierce in the Central Black Earth region, where resistance to collectivization and resistance to Soviet power and the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate crystallized into a single powerful movement under the leadership of Bishop Alexis (Buy) of Voronezh.⁴⁹¹ Meetings of the "Buyevtsy", as Bishop Alexis' followers were called, took place in the Alexeyev monastery in Voronezh. During one of these, in December, 1929, Archimandrite Tikhon said that collectivization was a way of removing the peasants from their churches, which were then closed. And Igumen Joseph (Yatsk) said: "Now the times of the Antichrist have arrived, so everything that Soviet power tried to impose upon the peasantry: collective farms, cooperatives, etc., should be rejected." At the beginning of 1930 the Voronezh peasantry rebelled against forcible collectivization in several places. Thus in Ostrog district alone between January 4 and February 5 there were demonstrations in twenty villages: Nizhny Ikorets, Peskovatka, Kopanishche, Podserednoye, Platava, Kazatskoye, Uryv, Dyevitsa, Godlayevka, Troitskoye, Drakonovo, Mashkino, Badyeyevo, Selyavnoye and others. At the same time there were demonstrations in the neighbouring areas of Usman district, from where they moved to the Kozlov, Yelets, Belgorod and other districts, encompassing more than forty districts in all. The OGPU considered that these demonstrations took place under the influence of the "Buyevtsy". On January 21-22, in Nizhny Ikorets, some hundreds of peasants, mainly women, destroyed the village soviet, tore down the red flag, tore up the portraits of the "leaders" and walked down the streets with a black flag, shouting: "Down with the collective farms! Down with the antichrist communists!" An active participant in this event was Nun Macrina (Maslovskaya), who said at her interrogation: "I preached Christ everywhere... [I urged] the citizens to struggle with the apostates from God, who are emissaries of the Antichrist, and [I urged] the peasants not to go into the collective farms because by going into the collectives they were giving their souls to the Antichrist, who would appear soon..."

In February-March, 1930, the OGPU investigated 492 people in connection with these disturbances. The anti-Soviet organization called "The Flock" which they uncovered was supposedly made up of 22 leaders and 470 followers, including 4 officers, 8 noblemen, 33 traders, 8 policemen, 13 members of the "Union of the Russian people", 81 priests, 75 monastics, 210 kulaks, 24 middle peasants, and 2 beggars. 134 people were arrested, of whom some were freed, some had their cases referred to higher authorities and some died during the investigation because of the violent methods used to extort confessions. There were several more trials of "Buyevites" in the 1930s, and Voronezh remains a citadel of the True Orthodox Church to this day...⁴⁹²

This persecution began to arouse criticism in the West – specifically, from Pope Pius XI and the Archbishop of Canterbury. On February 14, 1930 the Politburo

⁴⁹¹ M.V. Shkarovsky, "Iz Novyeishej Istorii Russkoj Tserkvi", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 15 (1540), August 15/28, 1995, pp. 6-10; *Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve*, Moscow, 2005, pp. 232, 233.

⁴⁹² Vladimir Moss, *A Century of Russian Martyrdom*, vol. 2, pp. 124-125, <https://www.lulu.com/en/gb/shop/vladimir-moss/a-century-of-russian-martyrdom-volume-2/paperback/product-j8zdgv.html?page=1&pageSize=4>

decided “to entrust to Comrades Yaroslavsky, Stalin and Molotov the decision of the question of an interview” to counter-act these criticisms. The result was two interviews, the first to Soviet correspondents on February 15 and published on February 16 in *Izvestia* and *Pravda* in the name of Sergius and those members of his Synod who were still in freedom, and a second to foreign correspondents three days later. In the first interview, which is now thought to have been composed entirely by the Bolsheviks with the active participation of Stalin, but whose authenticity was never denied by Sergei⁴⁹³, it was asserted that “in the Soviet Union there was not and is not now any religious persecution”, that “churches are closed not on the orders of the authorities, but at the wish of the population, and in many cases even at the request of the believers”, that “the priests themselves are to blame, because they do not use the opportunities presented to them by the freedom to preach” and that “the Church herself does not want to have any theological-educational institutions”.

Sergei’s lying interview caused great grief in Russia. Hieroconfessor Schema-Bishop Peter Ladygin (+1957) writes in his *Autobiography* that in June, 1930 he was in exile in a remote village: “The village soviet had five bishops and 450 priests and deacons living in exile in flats. We all came together to pray in one church. At this time they published in a Russian newspaper Metropolitan Sergius’ declaration to the effect that Orthodoxy was triumphing in our country, that no one was exiled or arrested for church activity, and that those who had been exiled were enemies of Soviet power. When we read this newspaper, there was great weeping in the church. Everyone wept, and when we began to sing ‘O fervent protectress’, the whole church was sobbing...”

Commenting on the interview, Archbishop Andrew of Ufa, who was shot in 1937, wrote: “Such is the opinion of the false-head of the false-patriarchal church of Metropolitan Sergius... But who is going to recognize this head after all this? For whom does this lying head remain a head, in spite of his betrayal of Christ?... All the followers of the lying Metropolitan Sergius... have fallen away from the Church of Christ. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is somewhere else, not near Metropolitan Sergius and not near his ‘Synod’.”⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Igor Kurlyandsky, “Nash Otvet Rimskomu Pape: kak tt. Stalin, Yaroslavsky i Molotov v 1930 godu pisali ‘interview’ Mitropolita Sergia i ego Sinoda” (Our Reply to the Pope of Rome: how Comrades Stalin, Yaroslavsky and Molotov wrote the ‘interview’ of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod in 1930), *Politicheskij Zhurnal* (The Political Journal), 183-184, N 21, April, 2008;

<http://www.politjournal.ru/index.php?action=Articles&dirid=50&tek=8111&issue=218>

⁴⁹⁴ Zelenogorsky, M. *Zhizn’ i deiatel’nost’ Arkhiepiskopa Andreia (Kniazia Ukhtomskogo)* (The Life and Activity of Archbishop Andrew (Prince Ukhtomsky)), Moscow, 1991, p. 216. According to Archbishop Bartholomew (Remov), who never joined the Catacomb Church, the whole activity of Metropolitan Sergius was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Bolsheviks (*Za Khrista Postradavshie* (Suffered for Christ), Moscow: St. Tikhon’s Theological Institute, 1997, p. 220).

35. STALIN AND THE VATICAN

There was one way in which Stalin, without meaning to, did a certain service to Orthodoxy - in hindering closer relations with the Vatican...

On the eve of the Russian revolution, Pope Pius X declared: "Russia is the greatest enemy of the [Roman] Church". In spite of this age-old enmity, the Vatican at first appeared to condemn the revolution, and support the Orthodox. Thus on March 12, 1919 Pope Benedict XV protested to Lenin against the persecutions of the Orthodox clergy, while Archbishop Ropp sent Patriarch Tikhon a letter of sympathy. The Bolshevik Commissar for Foreign Affairs Chicherin noted with dissatisfaction this "solidarity with the servers of the Orthodox Church".⁴⁹⁵

However, such sympathy was not typical. Fr. Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty writes: "The Roman Catholic world greeted the Bolshevik Revolution with joy. 'After the Jews the Catholics did probably more than anyone else to organize the overthrow of tsarist power. At least they did nothing to stop it.' Shamelessly and with great candour they wrote in Rome as soon as the Bolshevik 'victory' became evident: 'there has been uncontainable pleasure over the fall of the tsarist government and Rome has not wasted any time in entering into negotiations with the Soviet government.' When a leading Vatican dignitary was asked why the Vatican was against France during World War I, he exclaimed: 'The victory of the Entente allied with Russia would have been as great a catastrophe for the Roman Catholic Church as the Reformation was.' Pope Pius conveyed this feeling in his typically abrupt manner: 'If Russia is victorious, then the schism is victorious.' ...

"Even though the Vatican had long prepared for it, the collapse of the Orthodox Russian Empire caught it unawares. It very quickly came to its senses. The collapse of Russia did not yet mean that Russia could turn Roman Catholic. For this, a new plan of attack was needed. Realizing that it would be as difficult for a Pole to proselytise in Russia as for an Englishman in Ireland, the Vatican understood the necessity of finding a totally different method of battle with Orthodoxy, which would painlessly and without raising the slightest suspicion, ensnare and subordinate the Russian people to the Roman Pope. This Machiavellian scheme was the appearance of the so-called 'Eastern Rite', which its defenders understood as 'the bridge by which Rome will enter Russia', to quote an apt expression of K.N. Nikolaiev.⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁵ Peter Sokolov, "Put' Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi v Rossii-SSSR (1917-1961)" (The Path of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia-USSR (1917-1961)), in *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' v SSSR: Sbornik* (The Russian Orthodox Church in the USSR: A Collection), Munich, 1962, p. 16.

⁴⁹⁶ Nicholas Boyeikov writes: "In his epistle of 25 June, 1925, the locum tenens of the All-Russian Patriarchal Throne, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, who suffered torture in Soviet exile, expressed himself on the 'Eastern Rite' as follows: 'the Orthodox Christian Church has many enemies. Now they have increased their activity against Orthodoxy. The Catholics, by introducing the rites of our divine services, are seducing the believing people - especially those among the western churches which have been Orthodox since antiquity - into accepting the unia, and by this means they are distracting the forces of the Orthodox Church from the more urgent struggle against unbelief.'" (*Tserkovnie Vedomosti* (Church Gazette), 1925, NN 21-22); Boyeikov, *Tserkov', Rus' i Rim* (The Church, Russia and Rome), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, p. 13). (V.M.)

“This treacherous plot, which can be likened to a ship sailing under a false flag, had very rapid success in the first years after the establishment of Soviet power. This too place in blood-drenched Russia and abroad, where feverish activity was begun amongst the hapless émigrés, such as finding them work, putting their immigration status in order, and opening Russian-language schools for them and their children.

“It cannot be denied that there were cases of unmercenary help, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, this charitable work had a thinly disguised confessional goal, to lure by various means the unfortunate refugees into what seemed at first glance to be true Orthodox churches, but which at the same time commemorated the pope...”⁴⁹⁷

In 1922 Hieromartyr Benjamin of Petrograd said to the exarch of the Russian Catholics, Leonid Fyodorov: “You offer us unification... and all the while your Latin priests, behind our backs, are sowing ruin amongst our flock.” For the Latins, following the “prophecy” of Fatima in 1917, welcomed the revolution as providing a wonderful, God-sent opportunity to convert Russia to the “Holy Father”. As the Benedictine monk Chrysostom Bayer put it in *Bayrischer Kurier*: “Bolshevism is creating the possibility of the conversion of stagnant Russia to Catholicism.” So powerful was this desire to convert Russia that even when Fyodorov was put on trial by the Bolsheviks in March 1923 along with fourteen other clergymen and one layman, “he pathetically testified to the sincerity of his feelings in relation to the Soviet authorities, who, Fyodorov thought later, did not fully understand what could be expected from Roman Catholicism. He explained: ‘From the time that I gave myself to the Roman Catholic Church, my cherished dream has been to reconcile my homeland with this church, which for me is the only true one. But we were not understood by the government. All Latin Catholics heaved a sigh of relief when the October Revolution took place. I myself greeted with enthusiasm the decree on the separation of Church and State... Only under Soviet rule, when Church and State are separated, could we breathe freely. As a religious believer, I saw in this liberation the hand of God.’”⁴⁹⁸

“The Catholics,” continues Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “were ready to close their eyes to all the atrocities of Bolshevism, including the shooting of the Roman Catholic Bishop Butkevich in April of 1923 and the imprisonment of Bishops Tseplyak, Maljetsky and Fyodorov. Six weeks later, the Vatican expressed its sorrow over the assassination of the Soviet agent Vorovsky in Lausanne! The People’s Commissar of Foreign Affairs told the German Ambassador, ‘Pius XI was amiable to me in Genoa, expressing the hope that we [the Bolsheviks] would break the monopoly of the Orthodox Church in Russia, thus clearing a path for him.’

“We have discovered information of the greatest importance in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A secret telegram N 266 of February 6, 1925 from Berlin, stated that the Soviet ambassador, Krestinsky, told Cardinal Pacelli (the future

⁴⁹⁷ Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, “The Vatican and Russia”, <http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/new.htm>.

⁴⁹⁸ Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, op. cit.

Pius XII) that Moscow would not oppose the existence of Roman Catholic bishops and a metropolitan on Russian territory. Furthermore, the Roman clergy were offered the very best conditions. Six days later, secret telegram № 284 spoke of permission being granted for the opening of a Roman Catholic seminary. Thus, while our holy New Martyrs were being annihilated with incredible cruelty, the Vatican was conducting secret negotiations with Moscow. In short, Rome attempted to gain permission to appoint the necessary bishops and even permission to open a seminary. Our evidence shows that this question was discussed once more in high circles in the autumn of 1926."⁴⁹⁹

But this did not stop the persecution of Catholics. Thus, as John Cornwell, writes, "by 1925 most of the bishops of the Latin rite in Soviet Russia had been thrown out, imprisoned, or executed. [In spite of that,] that year, Pius XI sent a French Jesuit, Michel d'Herbigny, on a secret mission to Russia to ordain as bishop half a dozen clandestine priests.⁵⁰⁰ On his way to Moscow, d'Herbigny stayed in Berlin with Pacelli [then papal nuncio to Germany], who advised him and secretly ordained him bishop. Herbigny's mission was successful insofar as he managed to ordain his six secret Russian bishops, but they were all discovered and eliminated.

"In 1929, the year Pacelli was appointed Cardinal Secretary of State, Pius XI founded a Vatican 'Commission for Russia'. Later that year he opened on Vatican territory the 'Pontifical Russian College', better known as the Russicum, and the 'Pontifical Ruthenian College' where students were to be trained for service in the Soviet Union.⁵⁰¹ Other institutions were also secretly enlisted to educate men for the Russian mission...

"Meanwhile, many hundreds of bishops, clergy, and laity were rounded up and transported to... Solovki... By 1930 there were no more than three hundred Catholic priests in Soviet Russia (compared with 923 in 1921), of whom a hundred were in prison."⁵⁰²

However, the decisive factor in convincing the Vatican to turn against the Bolsheviks was an "unexpected and indirect result" of the declaration of Metropolitan Sergei. For "Moscow put an end to the negotiations and the attention it was devoting to Vatican offers... The restitution of the traditional [in appearance] Russian Orthodox Church, neutralized as it were, seemed more useful to the Soviet authorities than the

⁴⁹⁹ Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, op. cit.

⁵⁰⁰ The Pope's continued optimism, according to Mark Aarons and John Loftus, was based on his confidence "that Communism was corrupt and transitory. The inevitable collapse of Soviet rule in Russia would give the Vatican the longed for opportunity to bring the Orthodox schismatics back into Rome's fold. Therefore, 'quiet but thorough preparations [were] continually being made in Rome' for eventual missionary work in the East" (Aarons and Loftus, *Unholy Trinity: the Vatican, the Nazis and the Swiss Banks*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998, p. 5). (V.M.)

⁵⁰¹ Hieromonk Constantine (Simon) writes: "The Jesuits who founded the Russicum at the end of the 1920's wanted very much to convert all of Russia to (Roman) Catholicism. Monsignor d'Herbigny, who was really the founder of the Russicum behind the scenes, had the view that the Communists would probably completely destroy the Orthodox Church in Russia, and then the (Roman) Catholics would simply move in and convert the people." (V.M.)

⁵⁰² Cornwell, op. cit., pp. 263, 112-113.

Vatican. From then on, the Soviets lost interest in the Vatican. Only at the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1930 did the Vatican finally admit that it had suffered a political defeat and began vociferously to condemn the Bolshevik crimes. It had somehow not noticed them until 1930. Only in 1937 did Pope Pius XI release the encyclical *Divini Redemptori* (Divine Redeemer), which denounced communism..."⁵⁰³

⁵⁰³ Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, op. cit.

36. THE GREAT TERROR AND THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

The category of the population that suffered most during Stalin's great purges - a fact woefully neglected by secular historians - was neither the party, nor the army, but *the Orthodox clergy*, followed by *the Orthodox laity*. If Metropolitan Sergius, deputy leader of the Russian Church (patriarch in 1944), thought that by his "Declaration" of loyalty to the Communist state in 1927 he would "save the Church", - the ecclesiastical equivalent of the political appeasement of Hitler, - the next few years would prove him terribly wrong. From 1935 the Bolsheviks, having repressed most of the True Orthodox clergy, began to repress the sergianists - i.e. those who accepted Sergius' leadership and justified his Declaration. In fact, the sergianists often received longer sentences than their True Orthodox brothers whom they had betrayed. This only went to show how futile their Judas-like collaboration with the Antichrist, and betrayal of their brothers in Christ, had been. Even a recent biography of Sergius by a sergianist author accepts this fact: "If Metropolitan Sergius, in agreeing in his name to publish the Declaration of 1927 composed by the authorities, hoping to buy some relief for the Church and the clergy, then his hopes not only were not fulfilled, but the persecutions after 1927 became still fiercer, reaching truly hurricane-force in 1937-38."⁵⁰⁴

It is sometimes forgotten that for the Russian Church the persecution began immediately after the revolution. Thus in the nineteen years *before* the Great Terror of 1937-38, Soviet power killed: 128 bishops; 26,777 clergy; 7,500 professors; about 9,000 doctors; 94,800 officers; 1,000,000 soldiers; 200,000 policemen; 45,000 teachers; 2,200,000 workers and peasants. Besides that, 16 million Orthodox Russians died from hunger and three million from forced labour in the camps.⁵⁰⁵ As for the years of the Great Terror, according to Russian government figures, in 1937 alone 136,900 clergy were arrested, of whom 106,800 were killed (there were 180,000 clergy in Russia before the revolution). Again, between 1917 and 1980, 200,000 clergy were executed and 500,000 others were imprisoned or sent to the camps.⁵⁰⁶ The numbers of functioning Orthodox churches declined from 54,692 in 1914 to 39,000 at the beginning of 1929 to 15, 835 on April 1, 1936.⁵⁰⁷ By 1939, there were none at all in Belorussia (Kolarz), "less than a dozen" in Ukraine (Bociurkiw), and a total of 150-200 in the whole of Russia.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁴ Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia* (Guardian of the House of the Lord), Moscow, 2003, p. 262.

⁵⁰⁵ *Kharbinskoe Vremia*, February, 1937, N 28, in Protopriest John Stukach, "Vysokomerie kak prepona k uiedineniu" (Haughtiness as an obstacle to union), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=1357>

⁵⁰⁶ A document of the Commission attached to the President of the Russian Federation on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repressions, January 5, 1996; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), N 204, January, 1996, p. 15. The rate of killing slowed down considerably in the following years. In 1939 900 clergy were killed, in 1940 - 1100, in 1941 - 1900, in 1943 - 500. In the period 1917 to 1940 205 Russian hierarchs "disappeared without trace"; 59 disappeared in 1937 alone. According to another source, from October, 1917 to June, 1941 inclusive, 134,000 clergy were killed, of whom the majority (80,000) were killed between 1928 and 1940 (Cyril Mikhailovich Alexandrov, in V. Lyulechnik, "Tserkov' i KGB" (The Church and the KGB), in <http://elmager.livejournal.com/217784.html>).

⁵⁰⁷ Nicholas Werth, "A State against its People", in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Packowski, Karel Bartošek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The Black Book of Communism*, London: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 172, 173.

⁵⁰⁸ Nathanael Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003, p. 13.

This was the greatest persecution of Christianity in history. But it did not wipe out the faith: the census of 1937 established that one-third of city-dwellers and two-thirds of country-dwellers still believed in God. Stalin's plan that the Name of God should not be named in Russia by the year 1937 had failed...

Nevertheless, the immediate outlook for believers was bleak indeed. Thus E.L. writes about Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene (+1937): "He warmed the hearts of many, but the masses remained... passive and inert, moving in any direction in accordance with an external push, and not their inner convictions... The long isolation of Bishop Damascene from Soviet life, his remoteness from the gradual process of sovietization led him to an unrealistic assessment of the real relations of forces in the reality that surrounded him. Although he remained unshaken himself, he did not see... the desolation of the human soul in the masses. This soul had been diverted onto another path - a slippery, opportunistic path which led people where the leaders of Soviet power - bold men who stopped at nothing in their attacks on all moral and material values - wanted them to go... Between the hierarchs and priests who had languished in the concentration camps and prisons, and the mass of the believers, however firmly they tried to stand in the faith, there grew an abyss of mutual incomprehension. The confessors strove to raise the believers onto a higher plane and bring their spiritual level closer to their own. The mass of believers, weighed down by the cares of life and family, blinded by propaganda, involuntarily went in the opposite direction, downwards. Visions of a future golden age of satiety, of complete liberty from all external and internal restrictions, of the submission of the forces of nature to man, deceitful perspectives in which fantasy passed for science... were used by the Bolsheviks to draw the overwhelming majority of the people into their nets. Only a few individuals were able to preserve a loftiness of spirit. This situation was exploited very well by Metropolitan Sergei..."⁵⁰⁹

Sergei has had many apologists. Some, especially the leaders of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate, have claimed that he "saved the Church" for the future. This claim cannot be justified. First, it is God that saves the Church, not man. Secondly, Sergei saved only Judas-traitors like himself; he "saved" a false church that had been morally crushed by surrendering to the Antichrist.

It was rather the Catacomb Church, which "in a sense saved the official Church from complete destruction because the Soviet authorities were afraid to force the entire Russian Church underground through ruthless suppression and so to lose control over it."⁵¹⁰

As St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco wrote: "The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius brought no benefit to the Church. The persecutions not only did not cease, but also sharply increased. To the number of other accusations brought by the Soviet regime against clergy and laymen, one more was added - non-recognition of the

⁵⁰⁹ E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki* (Bishop Confessors), San Francisco, 1971, pp. 65-66.

⁵¹⁰ W. Alexeyev, "The Russian Orthodox Church 1927-1945: Repression and Revival", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 7, N 1, Spring, 1979, p. 30.

Declaration. At the same time, a wave of church closings rolled over all Russia... Concentration camps and places of forced labor held thousands of clergymen, a significant part of whom never saw freedom again, being executed there or dying from excessive labors and deprivations."⁵¹¹

Others have tried to justify Sergei by claiming that there are two paths to salvation, one through open confession of the truth, which necessitated the descent into the catacombs, and the other through compromise. Sergius, according to this view, was no less a martyr than the Catacomb martyrs, only he suffered the "martyrdom" of losing his good name.⁵¹² However, this view comes close to the "Rasputinite" heresy that there can be salvation through sin – in this case, lying, the sacrifice of the freedom and dignity of the Church, and the betrayal to torments and death of one's fellow Christians! For example, Hieromartyr Sergius Mechev was betrayed by Bishop Manuel Lemeshevsky.⁵¹³ And more generally, Metropolitan Sergius' charge that all the catacomb clergy were "counter-revolutionaries" was sufficient to send them tens of thousands to their deaths.⁵¹⁴

This fact demonstrates that "sergianism" can best be defined as, quite simply, the sin of Judas...

Meanwhile, deep in the underground, the Catacomb, True Orthodox Church delivered its verdict. In July, 1937, four bishops, two priests and six laymen met in Ust-Kut, Siberia, convened a council, and declared:-

"1. The Sacred Council forbids the faithful to receive communion from the clergy legalized by the anti-Christian State.

"2. It has been revealed to the Sacred Council by the Spirit that the anathema-curse hurled by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon is valid, and all priests and Church-servers who have dared to consider it as an ecclesiastical mistake or political tactic are placed under its power and bound by it.

"3. To all those who discredit and separate themselves from the Sacred Council of 1917-18 – **Anathema!**

"4. All branches of the Church which are on the common trunk – the trunk is our pre-revolutionary Church – are living branches of the Church of Christ. We give our blessing to common prayer and the serving of the Divine Liturgy to all priests of these

⁵¹¹ St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29.

⁵¹² E.S. Polishchuk, "Patriarkh Sergei i ego deklaratsia: kapitulatsia ili kompromiss?" (Patriarch Sergius and his Declaration: Capitulation or Compromise?), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), Paris, N 161, 1991-I, pp. 233-250.

⁵¹³ Alla D. "Svidetel'stvo" (Witness), in *Nadezhda* (Hope), vol. 16, Basel-Moscow, 1993, 228-230. See also N.V. Urusova, *Materinskij Plach Sviatoj Rusi* (The Maternal Lament of Holy Russia), Moscow, 2006, pp. 285-287.

⁵¹⁴ I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God Present in the Soviet Church?*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, p. 30.

branches. The Sacred Council forbids all those who do not consider themselves to be branches, but independent from the tree of the Church, to serve the Divine Liturgy. The Sacred Council does not consider it necessary to have administrative unity of the branches of the Church, but unity of mind concerning the Church is binding on all.”⁵¹⁵

This completed the de-centralization of the Church, which Patriarch Tikhon had already begun through his famous *ukaz* no. 362 of 1920. It was elicited by the fact that the organization of the Church was now destroyed, and all its leaders dead or in prison or so deep underground that they could not rule their dioceses. This process was sealed in the autumn of 1937, when the patriarchal *locum tenens* Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and his only possible successors, Metropolitans Cyril of Kazan and Joseph of Petrograd, were all shot.

And so by the end of 1937, the Church’s descent into the catacombs, which had begun in the early 20s, was completed. From now on, with the external administrative machinery of the Church destroyed, it was up to each bishop – sometimes each believer – individually to preserve the fire of faith, being linked with his fellow Christians only through the inner, mystical bonds of the life in Christ. Thus was the premonition of Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene fulfilled: “Perhaps the time has come when the Lord does not wish that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers, but that everyone is called to stand directly before the Lord and himself answer for himself as it was with the forefathers!”⁵¹⁶

Even sergianist sources have spoken about the falsity of Sergius’ declaration, the true confession of those who opposed him, and the invalidity of the measures he took to punish them. Thus: “Amidst the opponents of Metropolitan Sergius were a multitude of remarkable martyrs and confessors, bishops, monks, priests... The ‘canonical’ bans of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and his Synod were taken seriously by no one, neither at that time [the 1930s] nor later by dint of the uncanonicity of the situation of Metropolitan Sergius himself...”⁵¹⁷ And again: “The particular tragedy of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius consists in its principled rejection of the *podvig* of martyrdom and confession, without which witnessing to the truth is inconceivable. In this way Metropolitan Sergius took as his foundation, not hope on the Providence of God, but a purely human approach to the resolution of church problems... The courage of the ‘catacombniks’ and their firmness of faith cannot be doubted, and it is our duty to preserve the memory of those whose names we shall probably learn only in eternity...”⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov), personal communication; B. Zakharov, *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), September 7, 1949; "Vazhnoe postanovlenie katakombnoj tserkvi" (An Important Decree of the Catacomb Church), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 18, 1949. According to one version, there is a fifth canon: "To all those who support the renovationist and sergianist heresy – Anathema". See Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Ust'-Kutskij Sobor 1937g." (The Catacomb Church: the Ust-Kut Council of 1937), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 4 (8), 1997, pp. 20-24.

⁵¹⁶ E.L., *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁵¹⁷ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatejshago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 809, 810.

⁵¹⁸ M.V. Danilushkin, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkvi ot Vosstanovlenia Patriarshestva do nashikh dnei* (A History of the Russian Church from the Reestablishment of the Patriarchate to our Days), vol. I, St. Petersburg, 1997, pp. 297, 520.

Sergius forgot that it is God, not man, Who saves the Church. The faith that saves is the faith that “with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19.26). “Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God” (Psalms 19.7). This is the faith that, being founded on “the Rock, which is Christ” (I Corinthians 10.7), the Church will prevail against the gates of hell. But Sergius’ “faith” was of a different, more “supple” kind, the kind of which the Prophet spoke: “Because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we have an agreement; when the overwhelming scourge passes through it will not come to us; for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter’; therefore thus says the Lord God,... hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and waters will overwhelm the shelter. Then your covenant with death will be annulled, and your agreement with hell will not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through you will be beaten down by it...” (Isaiah 28.15, 17-19)

A Catacomb Appeal of the period wrote: “May this article drop a word that will be as a burning spark in the heart of every person who has Divinity in himself and faith in our One Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Beloved brethren! Orthodox Christians, peace-makers! Do not forget your brothers who are suffering in cells and prisons for the word of God and for the faith, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, for they are in terrible dark bonds which have been built as tombs for all innocent people. Thousands and thousands of peace-loving brothers are languishing, buried alive in these tombs, these cemeteries; their bodies are wasting away and their souls are in pain every day and every hour, nor is there one minute of consolation, they are doomed to death and a hopeless life. These are the little brothers of Christ, they bear that cross which the Lord bore. Jesus Christ received suffering and death and was buried in the tomb, sealed by a stone and guarded by a watch. The hour came when death could not hold in its bonds the body of Christ that had suffered, for an Angel of the Lord coming down from the heavens rolled away the stone from the tomb and the soldiers who had been on guard fled in great fear. The Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. But the thunder will also strike these castles where the brothers languish for the word of God, and will smash the bolts where death threatens men...”⁵¹⁹

Another member of the Catacomb Church, Ivan Mikhailovich Andreyev, wrote: “‘Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.’” (Romans 13:1)

“This same was claimed by Plato in pre-Christian antiquity, understanding authority as a hierarchy rising toward God. In other words, only a God-established authority is a genuine authority. But an authority which does not recognize the higher authority of God over it, is not an authority, but despotism.

“The Soviet authority in the USSR is not a true authority, but a denial of the essence itself, of the principle itself, of the idea of authority itself, and an affirmation of

⁵¹⁹ M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo: techenie v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Josephism: a tendency in the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: Memorial, 1999, p. 236.

despotism. Atheism is a horrible evil. It is generated by either the greatest sin of pride, or is conditioned by a total indifference toward the question of religion and morality (i.e. toward Truth and Love), or it is the result of criminal misconjuncture. 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.' (Psalm 14:1)

"The state authority in the USSR, showing itself as an open and cynical despotism, sets as the main task of its ideological politics the spreading of atheism, helped by the principle of extreme spiritual and physical state force. A system of universal propaganda, bought to perfection, built on state-organized falsehood, deception, temptations and terror, together with the diabolically cruel, perfected system of torture and torments, being systematically and by principle used by the Soviet state for the glory of atheism is a phenomenon, which is absolutely new, and by nature, profoundly different from all known aspects of cruelty and force in world history.

"The main aggression of the Bolshevik state is directed toward Christianity, as the most perfect form of religion, and especially towards Orthodoxy, the most perfect form of Christianity. Bolshevism, the highest phenomenon of anti-Christianity, is the idea of antichrist.

"If the Orthodox Christian Church is mystically the 'Body of Christ,' then the Bolshevik Communist party is mystically the body of antichrist.

"The personal, historical, apocalyptic phenomenon of antichrist does not principally add anything new to this idea of antichrist. He is only giving it a final shape, centralizing and universalizing this idea throughout the whole world, creating an absolutely hopeless situation for all humanity. For before every man then arises the question, which one cannot avoid answering (not only verbally, but also in one's deeds): Does he submit to the 'authority' of antichrist, in order to receive the stamp of antichrist on 'his forehead' or 'the hand'? (According to [New Hieromartyr] Bishop Damaskin, 'on the forehead' means 'voluntary, full spiritual enslavement', and 'on the hand' – association 'because of fear.')

Those not receiving the stamp will be tortured and tormented so that 'even the elect will be tempted,' (Mark 13:22) and if time would not be curtailed 'no flesh would endure.' (Mark 13:20)

"The final goal of Bolshevism is, to establish its 'authority' throughout the world with the help of world revolution. If this happens, the Bolshevik communist world government, in the person of 'the leader of the nation of the world,' will stand as head of the whole world – and this surely will be the place for the personification of the historical, apocalyptic antichrist.

"One must clearly, distinctly and firmly understand, that the Soviet authority is the first in the history of the world, an original cynically-open antichristian authority, that is - a theomachistic [God-fighting] absolute power. Without the acknowledgement of this profoundly and innately, unique evaluation of the 'Soviet authority' – there is no 'problem with communism.'

“If Bolshevism is only one out of many systems of government, in quality not a new occurrence in the history of the world, if the ‘Soviet authority’ is only one out of the worst and most cruel systems (let her even be the worst of the worst and the most cruel), then there is no special ‘spiritual crisis of humanity’ and there is altogether no new spiritual problem. Then one must consider the phenomenon of communism only from a political, economical, military or ‘utilitarian-moral’ point of view, just as at the present time the majority of political leaders of the whole world do. We see the results of such interpretation: bolshevism slowly, unimpeded is conquering the world.

“Few people understand the mystical force of bolshevism. Let us remember the tremendous scene in the book *Tales about Antichrist* by Vladimir Soloviev, when the first hierarch of the Orthodox Church, the holy elder John, suddenly understanding who stood before him, exclaimed loudly, clearly, firmly, resolutely, and convincingly: ‘Children, but this is Antichrist!’

“The Russian Orthodox Catacomb Church in the USSR, a church of confessors of faith and martyrs, considers the Soviet state authority to be the authority of the antichrist.”⁵²⁰

⁵²⁰ Andreyev, “On Authorities and Anti-Authorities”.

37. THE RUSSIAN DIASPORA

The Russian diaspora numbered in the millions and was scattered all round the world, with major concentrations in Western Europe, Serbia and China. It contributed mightily to the culture of their host nations in Europe and America in such fields as philosophy, painting, music and ballet.

In 1936 General Vladimir Voeikov wrote: "Although our emigration is divided by personal disagreements and we are at odds both in political and in moral-religious questions, there are practically no people who are not dreaming of the day when we shall all return to our homeland.

"Understanding this, both individual persons, and whole organizations, are striving, by means of various deceptions, to enrol as many as possible adherents. Not a little effort in this direction has been contributed by the Masons, who have instilled the conviction that in the re-establishment of Russia the leading role will belong to them, as being now the only united and well organized union. However, even now the leading role belongs to them in certain states, where all the appointments, elections, reception of orders, etc., depend exclusively on that organization, which (according to information provided by the press and literature) number 4,252,910 members and have 556 billion francs at their disposal.

"Their brothers, the leaders of leftist society, who openly supported the revolution, are applying all their efforts to instil liberal ideas into the masses and to root out patriotism from the growing generation...

"Our émigré press, with few exceptions, instead of stirring up the feeling of patriotism, sings in unison with the Russophobe circles; they instil the thought that the re-establishment of a patriotic, national and, perhaps, also monarchical Russia is dangerous, and they do much to support quarrels in the emigration that have been strengthened as a consequence of the family disagreements that have arisen even among the members of our royal dynasty. Being exposed to publicity, these quarrels have been far from helping to raise their prestige."⁵²¹

The political make-up of the Russian Diaspora was complex; every part of the political spectrum from monarchists to communists was represented. The monarchists continued the struggle against Bolshevism, but with very little success. At the end of 1921 a Monarchical Union of Central Russia (MUCR), known by the Cheka as "The Trust", was established in Moscow, with close links with the Diaspora. However, it was infiltrated by the Cheka, and its leaders inside the Soviet Union executed.

In September, 1923, in Sremsky Karlovtsy in Serbia, General Wrangel established ROVS (the Russian Inter-Forces Union) - 25,000 veterans of the Civil War who

⁵²¹ Voeikov, *So Tsarem i Bez Tsaria* (With and Without the Tsar), Moscow, 1995, pp. 331, 332.

recognized the Romanov Grand Duke Kyril Vladimirovich as heir to the Throne of Russia.⁵²²

After the death of General Wrangel, the leader of ROVS became General Eugene Karlovich Miller. He wrote: "For every victory it is necessary to strive for a single goal with maximum effort. For victory over Soviet power the Russian emigration must recognize that not one émigré can have the right to do or say anything that could harm another émigré, that is, a man who in one way or another fights Bolshevism, and not one émigré can have the right not to do what is in his power and he can do in one way or another to harm communism. With this thought in mind must he get up in the morning and go to sleep in the evening. From this point of view he must evaluate every step he makes, every work, sacrificing everything personal, secondary and factional to the main and only important thing. He must never do what could give joy to the common enemy. All his efforts must be directed against communism, the communists and the communist authorities in Moscow. Discipline and self-limitation will lead to victory."

On September 22, 1937 this noble warrior was kidnapped by NKVD agents from Paris to Moscow. He was sentenced by the Supreme Court of the USSR and shot in the inner prison of the NKVD on May 11, 1939.⁵²³

The Russian Diaspora was as divided ecclesiastically as it was politically. The Russian Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) brought the light of patristic Orthodoxy to both Russians and foreigners and remained strongly opposed to the Moscow Patriarchate. Another jurisdiction was the Russian Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, whose centre was the church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Rue Daru, Paris. The Paris theologians, such as Berdiaev and Bulgakov, had a strong influence on western, especially Catholic theologians, although their teaching was not always strictly Orthodox.⁵²⁴

⁵²² Roland Gaucher, *Opposition in the USSR 1917-1967*, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969.

⁵²³ <http://pereklichka.livejournal.com/67964.html>). St. Philaret of New York wrote in 1975 to Protopresbyter George Grabbe: "When [Ivan] Solonevich published his famous work "Russia in the Concentration Camp", the affair ended with his being murdered by a bomb. Kutepov, and Miller were liquidated. The Communists do not fear anyone..."

⁵²⁴ Bulgakov, for example, proclaimed the heresy of Sophiology, or Sophianism, which centred on the mythological, quasi-divine figure of Sophia, and was based, according to Archbishop Theophan of Poltava in a letter he wrote in 1930, "on the book of Fr. [Paul] Florensky, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. But Florensky borrowed the idea of Sophia from V.S. Soloviev. And V.S. Soloviev borrowed it from the medieval mystics.

"In V.S. Soloviev Sophia is the feminine principle of God, His 'other'. Florensky tries to prove that Sophia, as the feminine principle of God, is a special substance. He tries to find this teaching in St. Athanasius the Great and in Russian iconography. Protopriest Bulgakov accepts on faith the basic conclusions of Florensky, but partly changes the form of this teaching, and partly gives it a new foundation. In Bulgakov this teaching has two variants: a) originally it is a special Hypostasis, although not of one essence with the Holy Trinity (in the book *The Unwaning Light*), b) later it is not a Hypostasis but 'hypostasisness'. In this latter form it is an energy of God coming from the essence of God through the Hypostases of the Divinity into the world and finding for itself its highest 'created union' in the Mother of God. Consequently, according to this variant, Sophia is not a special substance, but the Mother of God.

Nevertheless, as the apostle said, “in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached, and in this I rejoice” (Philippians 1.18).

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On August 14, 1938 the Second All-Diaspora Council of ROCOR consisting of 13 bishops, 26 priests and 58 laymen was convened in Belgrade. The main question discussed was what attitude ROCOR should take to other Orthodox Churches.

Bishop John (Maximovich) of Shanghai in one report at the Council was sharply critical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In another, entitled “The Situation of the Orthodox Church after the War”, he said: “We (the faithful of the Russian Church Abroad) must firmly stand on the ground of the Church canons and not be with those who depart from them. Formerly, in order to reproach canonical irregularities in a Local Church, canonical communion with her was broken. The Russian Church Abroad cannot act in this way since her position has not been completely determined. For that reason she must not break communion with other Churches if they do not take this step first. But, while maintaining communion, she must not be silent about violations of Church truth...”⁵²⁵

This relatively “liberal” position was followed by a still more liberal declaration, Protocol number 8 for August 16, which stated: “Judgement was made concerning concelebrations with clergy belonging to the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod. Metropolitan Anastasy pointed out that clergy coming from Russia from the named jurisdiction were immediately admitted to communion in prayer, and cited the opinion of Metropolitan Kyril of Kazan in his epistle published in *Church Life* to the effect that the sin of Metropolitan Sergius did not extend to the clergy subject to him. It was decreed: to recognize that there is no obstacle to communion in prayer and concelebration with the clergy of Metropolitan Sergius.”⁵²⁶

This was a dangerous declaration that threatened to put ROCOR at odds with the Catacomb Church, whose position in relation to Metropolitan Sergius was much stricter than ROCOR’s. Moreover, it was not accurate in its assertions. First, Metropolitan Kyril never expressed the view that “there are no obstacles to prayerful communion and concelebration with clergymen of Metropolitan Sergius”. On the

“According to the Church teaching, which is especially clearly revealed in St. Athanasius the Great, the Sophia-Wisdom of God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Here, in the most general terms, is the essence of Protopriest Bulgakov’s teaching on Sophia! To expound any philosophical teaching shortly is very difficult, and so it is difficult to expound shortly the teaching of the ‘sophianists’ on Sophia. This teaching of theirs becomes clear only in connection the whole of their philosophical system. But to expound the latter shortly is also impossible. One can say only: their philosophy is the philosophy of ‘panentheism’, that is, a moderate form of ‘pantheism’. The originator of this ‘panentheism’ in Russia is V.S. Soloviev.”

In 1935 both the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR condemned Sophianism as heretical. (V.M.)

⁵²⁵ Monk Benjamin, *Letopis’ Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (A Chronicle of Church Events of the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917),

<http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>, part 2, p. 75.

⁵²⁶ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 2, p. 75.

contrary, in his epistle of 1929, he wrote: "I acknowledge it as a fulfilment of our archpastoral duty for those Archpastors and all who consider the establishment of the so-called 'Temporary Patriarchal Synod' as wrong, to refrain from communion with Metropolitan Sergei and those Archpastors who are of one mind with him."

Nor did he ever declare that while it was wrong to have communion with the Sergianist bishops, it was alright to have communion with their priests – which would have been canonical nonsense in any case. True, he refrained – at that time – from declaring the sergianists to be graceless. However, he *did* say, in his epistle of 1934, that Christians who partook of the sergianist sacraments knowing of Sergius' usurpation of power and the illegality of his pro-Soviet Synod would receive them *to their condemnation* – a point for all those contemplating union with the MP today to consider very carefully...

Moreover, we now know (as Metropolitan Anastasy did not know) that by 1937 Metropolitan Kyril's position had hardened considerably: "The expectations that Metropolitan Sergei would correct himself have not been justified, but there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incentive and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened; and very many have both investigated and understood that Metropolitan Sergius is departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted to us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox. The recent events have finally made clear the renovationist [that is, heretical] nature of Sergianism..."⁵²⁷

The 1938 Council also discussed the Church's participation in the ecumenical movement. As early as 1920 the Ecumenical Patriarchate had declared the Catholics and Protestants to be "fellow heirs" of the promises of Christ together with the Orthodox; and the main purpose of the introduction of the new calendar into the Greek and Romanian Churches had been to facilitate union in prayer with the western heretics. In the inter-war years progress towards union with the heretics had been slow but steady. ROCOR had said little against this, and had sent representatives to ecumenical conferences in Lausanne, Edinburgh and Oxford. In his report, Bishop Seraphim (Lyade) of Berlin defended this position, saying that the Orthodox had always expounded and defended the sacred dogmas. "Therefore the Orthodox delegates both in Lausanne and in Edinburgh considered it their duty to give and publish special declarations; in this way they clearly marked the Orthodox Church off from other confessions calling themselves 'churches'... We must disperse all perplexities and ideas about Orthodoxy that are often simply caricatures... To be reconciled with the existing situation of alienation of the larger part of the Christian world from the Orthodox Church, and an indifferent attitude towards the ecumenical seeking of the unity of the Church, would be an unforgiveable sin, for we must bear responsibility for the destiny of those who still remain beyond the boundaries of the Church and for the future destiny of the whole of the Christian world... But while participating in the ecumenical movement, we must beware of concessions and condescension, for this is extremely harmful and dangerous, and confirms the

⁵²⁷ Letter of Metropolitan Cyril to Hieromonk Leonid, February 23 / March 8, 1937, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 16, August 15/28, 1997, p. 7. Italics mine (V.M.).

heterodox in the conviction that they are members of the true Church. In the sphere of dogmatics and other essential and basic questions we cannot diminish our demands...”

Bishop Seraphim’s position was supported by Metropolitan Anastasy and Protopresbyter George Grabbe, chancellor of the ROCOR Synod. However, others took a more “rightist” position. Thus N.F. Stefanov read a report on the influence of Masonry on the Oxford conference. And Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) said: “Extra-ecclesiastical unity brings nothing but harm. Orthodox Truth is expressed in the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is precisely what the ecumenical movement does not want to know... Unity can take place only on the ground of grace-filled life. The aims of the ecumenical movement are unattainable. ‘Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the council of the ungodly.’”

Metropolitan Anastasy said: “We have to choose between two dangers – a temptation or a refusal to engage in missionary work in the confession of Orthodoxy. Which danger is greater? We shall proceed from our premises. The grace-filled Church must carry out missionary work, for in this way it is possible to save some of those who waver. Beside the leaders who want to disfigure Orthodoxy, there are others, for example the young, who come to conferences with true seeking. Comparing that which they see and hear from their own pastors and from the Orthodox pastor, they will understand the truth. Otherwise they will remain alone. I have heard positive reviews from heterodox of Bishop Seraphim’s speeches at conferences. We must also take into account that the Anglo-Saxon world is in crisis, and is seeking the truth. Protestantism is also seeking support for itself. Moreover, we have a tradition of participating in such conferences that was established by the reposed Metropolitan Anthony. To avoid temptation we must clarify the essence of the matter.”

A resolution was passed that ROCOR members should not take part in the ecumenical movement. However, for the sake of missionary aims, bishops could instruct their representatives to attend conferences and explain without compromise the teaching of the Orthodox Church, without allowing the slightest deviation from the Orthodox point of view.⁵²⁸

The lack of clarity in the definition of ROCOR’s relationship to the Moscow Patriarchate, to the rest of World Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and to the ecumenical movement in general, continued to plague ROCOR in the post-war period, causing complications in her relations with other True Orthodox Churches. This problem was not really resolved until Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) became first-hierarch in 1964; he firmly established that the only True Church inside the Soviet Union was the Catacomb Church, wrote a series of “sorrowful epistles” to the leaders of World Orthodoxy condemning their heresy, and finally, in 1983 secured the anathema against ecumenism – probably the most important ecclesiastical document of the second half of the twentieth century. The incorrupt body and many

⁵²⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 75-77.

miracles of Metropolitan Philaret made it clear to all those with eyes to see that his position was the correct one, truly expressing the mind of Christ...

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Bishop John Maximovich provided an assessment of the spiritual condition of the Diaspora as a whole that was not encouraging: "A significant portion of the Russians that have gone abroad belong to that intellectual class which in recent times lived according to the ideas of the West. While belonging to the Orthodox Church and confessing themselves to be Orthodox, the people of that class had strayed far from Orthodoxy in their world view. The principal sin of these people was that their beliefs and way of life were not founded on the teachings of the Orthodox faith; they tried to reconcile the rules and teachings of the Church with their own habits and desires. For this reason they had, on the one hand, very little interest in the essence of Orthodox teaching, often even considering the Church's dogmatic teaching completely unessential, and, on the other hand, they fulfilled the requirements and rites of the Orthodox Church but only insofar as this did not interfere with their more European than Russian way of life. This gave rise to their disdain for the fasts, to their going to church for only a short time (and then only to satisfy a more aesthetic than religious feeling) and to a thorough lack of understanding of religion as the principal foundation of man's spiritual life. Many, of course, were inwardly otherwise disposed, but few possessed sufficient strength of spirit and the ability to manifest it outwardly in their way of life.

"In the social sphere this class also lived by the ideas of the West. Without giving any room at all to the influence of the Church, they strove to rebuild the whole life of Russia, especially in the realm of government, according to Western models. This is why in recent times an especially bitter struggle was waged against the government. Liberal reforms and the democratic structuring of Russia became, as it were, a new faith. Not to confess this idea meant that one was behind the times. Seized with a thirst for power and utilizing for their struggle with the monarchy widespread slander against the Royal Family, the intelligentsia brought Imperial Russia to its downfall and prepared the way for the Communist regime. Then, unreconciled to the thought of losing the power for which they had waited for so long, they declared war on the Communists, in the beginning mainly out of their unwillingness to cede them power. The struggle against Soviet power subsequently involved broad sectors of the populace, especially drawing in the youth to an outburst of enthusiasm to reconstruct a 'United, indivisible Russia', at the cost of their lives. There were many exploits which manifested the valor of the Christ-loved Russian army, but the Russian nation proved itself still unprepared for liberation, and the Communists turned out to be the victors.

"The intelligentsia was partially annihilated and partially it fled abroad to save itself. Meanwhile, the Communists showed their true colors and, together with the intelligentsia, large sections of the population left Russia, in part to save their lives and in part because of ideology: they did not want to serve the Communists. Finding themselves abroad, the Russian people experienced great spiritual shocks. A significant crisis occurred in the souls of a majority, which was marked by a mass return of the intelligentsia to the Church. Many churches abroad are filled primarily

by these people. The intelligentsia took an interest in questions of spiritual life and began to take an active part in church affairs. Numerous circles and societies were formed for the purpose of religious enlightenment. Members study the Holy Scriptures, the works of the Holy Fathers, general spiritual life and theological questions, and many of them have become clergy.

“However, all these gratifying manifestations also had a negative aspect. Far from all of those who returned to the faith adopted the Orthodox teaching in its entirety. The proud mind could not be reconciled to the fact that, until then, it had stood on a false path. Many began to attempt to reconcile Christian teaching with their previous views and ideas. This resulted in the appearance of a whole series of new religious-philosophical trends, some completely alien to Church teaching. Among them Sophiology was especially widespread. It is based on the recognition of man’s worth in and of himself and expresses the psychology of the intelligentsia.

“As a teaching, Sophiology is known to a comparatively small group of people and very few openly espouse it. Nonetheless, a significant part of the immigrant intelligentsia is spiritually related to it because the psychology of Sophiology is based on the worship of man, not as a humble servant of God, but rather as a little god himself, who has no need for being blindly obedient to the Lord God. The feeling of keen pride, joined with faith in the possibility of man living by his own wisdom, is quite characteristic of many people considered to be cultured by today’s standards, who place their own reasonings above all else and do not wish to be obedient in everything to the teaching of the Church, which they regard favourably but with condescension. Because of this, the Church Abroad has been rocked by a series of schisms which have harmed her up till now and have drawn away even a part of the hierarchy. This consciousness of a feeling of personal worthiness is manifested also in social affairs, where each person who has advanced a little among the ranks, or thinks he has, puts his own opinion higher than everyone’s and tries to be a leader. As a result, Russian society is split into countless parties and groups irreconcilably at odds with each other, each trying to put forwards its own program, which is sometimes a thoroughly developed system and sometimes simply an appeal to follow this or that personality.

“With the hope of saving and resurrecting Russia through the realization of their programs, these social activists almost always lose sight of the fact that besides human activity making history, there moves the hand of God. The Russian people as a whole has committed great sins, which are the reasons for the present misfortunes; namely, oath-breaking and regicide. Civic and military leaders renounced their obedience and loyalty to the Tsar, even before his abdication, forcing the latter upon him, who did not want internal bloodshed. The people openly and noisily greeted this act, without any loud protest anywhere. This renunciation of obedience was a breach of the oath taken to the Emperor and his lawful heirs. On the heads of those who committed this crime fell the curses of their forefathers, the Zemsky Sobor of 1613, which imposed a curse on those who disobeyed its resolutions. The ones guilty of the sin of regicide are not only those who physically performed the deed but the people as a whole, who rejoiced when the Tsar was overthrown and allowed his degradation, his arrest and

exile, leaving him defenceless in the hands of criminals, which itself spelled out the end.

“Thus, the calamity which befell Russia is the direct result of terrible sins, and her rebirth is possible only after she has been cleansed from them. However, until now there has been no real repentance; the crimes that were committed have not been openly condemned, and many active participants in the Revolution continue even now to assert that at the time it was impossible to act otherwise.

“By not voicing an outright condemnation of the February Revolution, of the uprising against the Anointed One of God, the Russian people continues to participate in the sin, especially when they defend the fruits of the Revolution, for in the words of the Apostle Paul, those men are especially sinful who, ‘knowing... that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them’ (Romans 1.32).

“While punishing the Russian people, the Lord at the same time is pointing out the way to salvation by making them teachers of Orthodoxy throughout the world. The Russian Diaspora has acquainted the four corners of the earth with Orthodoxy, for a significant part of the Russian immigration unconsciously preaches Orthodoxy. Everywhere, wherever Russians live, they build little refugee churches or even majestic cathedrals, or simply serve in premises adapted for this purpose.

“The majority of Russian refugees are not familiar with the religious tendencies of their intelligentsia, and they are nourished by those spiritual reserves which they accumulated in the homeland. Large masses of refugees attend Divine services, some of them actively participate in them, helping with the singing and reading on cliros and serving in the altar. Affiliated organizations have been established which take upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the churches, often performing charitable work as well.

“Looking at the faithful who pack the churches on feast days, one might think that in fact the Russian people have turned to the Church and are repenting of their sins. However, if you compare the number who go to church with the number of Russians who live in a given place, it turns out that about one-tenth of the Russian population regularly goes to church. Approximately the same number attend Divine services on major feasts, and the rest either very rarely – on some particular occasions – go to church and occasionally pray at home, or have left the Church altogether. The latter sometimes is a conscious choice under sectarian or anti-religious influences, but in most cases it is simply because people do not live in a spiritual manner; they grow hard, their souls become crude, and sometimes they become outright nihilists.

“The great majority of Russians have a hard life full of personal difficulties and material deprivation. Despite the hospitable attitude towards us in some countries, especially in our fraternal Yugoslavia, whose government and people are doing everything possible to show their love for Russia and to ease the grief of the Russian exiles, still, Russians everywhere feel the bitterness of being deprived of their homeland. Their surrounding environment reminds them that they are strangers and

must adapt to customs that are often foreign to them, feeding of the crumbs that fall from the table of their hosts. Even in those countries which are very well disposed towards us, it is natural that in hiring practices preference should be given to the country's citizens; and with the current difficult situations of most countries, Russians often cannot find work. Even those who are relatively well provided for are constantly made to feel their lack of rights in the absence of organizations which could protect them from injustices. Although only a comparatively insignificant number have been completely absorbed into local society, it quite often happens in such cases that they become totally alienated from their own people and their own country.

“In such a difficult situation in all respects, the Russian people abroad have shown a remarkable degree of patient endurance and self-sacrifice. It is as if they have forgotten about their formerly wonderful (for many) conditions of life, their service to their homeland and its allies in the Great War, their education and everything else that might prompt them to strive for a comfortable life. In their exile they have taken up every kind of work and occupation to make a living for themselves abroad. Former nobles and generals have become simple workmen, artisans and petty merchants, not disdaining any type of work and remembering that no work is degrading, provided it is not bound up with any immoral activity. The Russian intelligentsia in this respect has manifested an ability, whatever the situation, to preserve its vitality and to overcome everything that stands in the way of its existence and development. It has also shown that it had lofty spiritual qualities, that it is capable of being humble and long-suffering.

“The school of refugee life has morally regenerated and elevated many people. One has to give honor and credit to those who bear their refugee cross doing difficult work to which they are unaccustomed, living in conditions which previously they did not know or even think of. Remaining firm in spirit, they have maintained a nobility of soul and ardent love for their homeland, and, repenting over their former sins, they endure their trial without complaints. Truly, many of them, men and women, are now more glorious in their dishonour than in the years of their glory. The spiritual wealth which they have now acquired is better than the material wealth they left in the homeland, and their souls, like gold purified by fire, have been cleansed in the fire of suffering and burn like brightly glowing lamps...”⁵²⁹

Although the Serbs had invited the Russians to Serbia, by the beginning of the Second World War it became clear that the ROCOR Synod would have to move to another country sooner or later. Nevertheless, ROCOR always remained grateful to the Serbs for the protection they had been offered. Patriarch Barnabas defended ROCOR even in its split with the Moscow Patriarchate.⁵³⁰

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⁵²⁹ St. John Maximovich, “The Spiritual Condition of the Russian People in the Diaspora”, in *Man of God*, Redding, Ca.: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1994, pp. 204-210.

⁵³⁰ A.A. Kostriukov, “K istorii vzaimootnoshenij mezhdru Serbskoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkoviu i Arkhιεrejskim Sinodom v Sremskikh Karlovtsakh” (Towards a History of the Mutual Relations between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Hierarchical Synod in Sremsky Karlovtsy), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, N 2 (682), February, 2009, pp. 1-13.

In 1935 ROCOR's Hierarchical Council approved a "Statute on the Orthodox Diocese of Berlin and Germany" which had been worked out in the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs of the Third Reich. This Statute envisaged the following demands: the agreement of the government on appointing the head of the diocese of Berlin and Germany; the agreement of the local State organs in the appointment to a parish of a priest "who is a foreigner or without citizenship", which affected almost all the clergy of ROCOR in Germany; and in the appointment by a bishop of members of the diocesan council and when forming new parishes or accepting old ones into the diocese.⁵³¹

On February 14, 1936 the German government began to help ROCOR, seeing it was now a State-recognized institution: the German clergy of ROCOR began to receive regular salaries; subsidies were granted for various needs of the German diocese and its parishes; and the clergy and the diocese received various privileges.⁵³² On February 25, 1938 Hitler signed a law "On the land-ownership of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany", according to which "the State in the person of the minister of ecclesiastical affairs received the right to dispose of the Russian ecclesiastical property in the country and in the territories joined to it." On the basis of this law the German State handed over all the pre-revolutionary property of the Russian Church in Germany into the possession of ROCOR, besides the church in Dresden.⁵³³ However, it did not do this immediately. As Metropolitan Evlogy of Paris writes in his *Memoirs* (p. 648), for some time the government still retained parishes in Berlin, in Eastern Prussia and in Dresden. But on May 5, 1939 the law was extended to Dresden and the Sudetenland.

Why was the German government so favourably disposed to ROCOR? Part of the answer may lie in the fact that the authorities had a negative opinion of the Paris jurisdiction of Metropolitan Evlogy because of its links with the YMCA and other internationalist and Masonic organizations, and were therefore more favourably disposed to ROCOR, which had broken links with the Evlogians. Also, some of the churches in their possession had been built with the participation of German royalty who had family links with the House of the Romanovs, and ROCOR was, of course, the Orthodox jurisdiction with the closest links with the Romanovs. Perhaps also they were hoping in this way to elicit the sympathy of the Balkan Slavic peoples towards Germany.⁵³⁴

In 1938 Hitler gave ROCOR a plot of land in Berlin to build a church, for which Metropolitan Anastasy thanked him. This formed the basis for "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow to accuse him of sympathy for fascism, an accusation which has been repeated many times since then.

⁵³¹ A.K. Nikitin, *Polozhenie russkoj pravoslavnoj obschiny v Germanii v period natsistskogo rezhima (1933-1945)* (The Position of the Russian Orthodox Community in Germany in the Nazi Period (1933-1945)), annual theological conference PSTBI, Moscow, 1998, pp. 321-322; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, pp. 52-53.

⁵³² Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 2, p. 55.

⁵³³ A.K. Nikitin, *op. cit.*; Monk Benjamin, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, part 2, p.71.

⁵³⁴ G.M. Soldatov, personal communication, March 19, 2006.

The truth of the matter was explained by Metropolitan Anastasy himself in October, 1945 as follows: "Soon after his coming to power Hitler learned that the Russian Orthodox people in Berlin did not have a church of their own after the church built by them had been removed from the parish because they could not pay the debts they had incurred for it. This led immediately to order the release of considerable sums of money for the building of a new Orthodox church on a beautiful plot of land set aside for this in the German capital. We should note that Hitler took this step without any deliberate request on the part of the Russian Orthodox community and did not attach any conditions to his offering that might have been compensation for it. The Hierarchical Synod as well as the whole of Russia Abroad could not fail to value this magnanimous act, which came at a time when Orthodox churches and monasteries were being mercilessly closed, destroyed or used for completely unsuitable purposes (they were being turned into clubs, cinemas, atheist museums, food warehouses, etc.), and other holy things in Russia were being mocked or defiled. This fact was noted in the address [given by the metropolitan], but the Synod of course gave no 'blessing to destroy and conquer Russia'."⁵³⁵

In fact, according to Bishop Gregory Grabbe, the address sent to Hitler was not composed by Metropolitan Anastasy, but by the president of the Russian colony in Berlin, General Biskupsky. When it was shown to the metropolitan, he found it too "flowery". But it had already been sent to the ministry of the interior, and it was too late to compose a new, more moderate variant.⁵³⁶

As regards Metropolitan Anastasy's attitude towards Fascism, he displayed, as Shkarovsy writes, "a negative attitude towards how some Russian émigré figures were toying with fascist ideas. Vladyka Anastasy said that 'fascism is incompatible with Christianity because it suppresses personal spiritual freedom, without which the spiritual life of Christianity is not possible.

"Again, on July 15, 1936, the Metropolitan clearly stated his stance against fascism at the Saint Vladimir Festival in Belgrade: 'Fascism as a type of state-political structure can never be our ideal. It is founded upon principles of compulsion which extend to a person's very ideology. Yet without freedom, there can be no moral heroism nor moral responsibility. Without either of the latter a Russian Orthodox state is also unthinkable for us.' In his 1939 Christmas encyclical, Vladyka Anastasy outlined, as a counterweight to the race theory of Nazism, the Church's understanding of love for one's people and for one's native country: 'The very concept of our native country has, in our consciousness, never been crudely materialistic, and our national image has never been defined by purely outward zoological racial markers. What we call our Fatherland is not the physical air that we breathe, nor the vast expanses of forests,

⁵³⁵ Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnyim liudiam po povodu 'Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastyriam i kliru tak nazyvaemoj Karlovatskoj orientatsii' (Epistle to the Russian Orthodox people on the 'Address of Patriarch Alexis to the archpastors and clergy of the so-called Karlovtsy orientation), in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhiejskij Sobor Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej, Miunkhen (Germania) 1946 g.* (The Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Munich in 1946), Minneapolis, 2003, p. 13.

⁵³⁶ Soldatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

rivers and seas... but rather first and foremost our native spiritual atmosphere engendered by Holy Orthodoxy, the incorruptible moral values passed down to us by the past millennium of history.'"⁵³⁷

After the German annexation of Czechia and Moravia in March, 1939, the Germans tried to put all the Orthodox there in the jurisdiction of ROCOR's Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade), a German national. On November 3, Seraphim concluded an agreement with the Eulogian Bishop Sergius of Prague whereby his parishes were transferred, from a purely juridical point of view, into the jurisdiction of Archbishop Seraphim, but retained their real independence and submission to Metropolitan Evlogy.⁵³⁸

The influence of Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Seraphim in the German government was to prove useful again. On November 4, 1940 the Eulogian Archbishop Alexander (Nemolovsky) of Brussels was arrested after the liturgy and imprisoned as "enemy № 2" in Aachen. From there he was transferred to a prison in Berlin. It was Archbishop Seraphim who rescued Archbishop Alexander from prison and settled him at the Russian church in Tegel, where he remained until the end of the war.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷ Shkarovsky, "The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Holocaust", translated in *ROCORA Studies*, December 7, 2019.

⁵³⁸ M. Nazarov, *Missia russkoj emigratsii* (The Mission of the Russian Emigration), Moscow, 1994, vol. 1, p. 266; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 5; M.V. Shkarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Church Emigration), St. Petersburg, 2009.

The parishes of the Serbian Bishop Vladimir (Raich) in Transcarpathia and Slovakia also passed into Seraphim's jurisdiction after Vladimir was detained by the Hungarian authorities (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 1).

⁵³⁹ M.V. Shkarovsky, in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 14-15.

38. RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY UNDER THE NAZI YOKE

On June 22, 1941, the feast of All Saints of Russia, the Nazis invaded Russia. With the aid of massive shipments of machinery and food from the Anglo-Americans, the Soviets finally defeated the Nazis in perhaps the most savage and bloody war in history. The main result was the consolidation and strengthening of Communism from Berlin to Vladivostok for another two generations.

The invasion had been prophesied by Elder Aristocles of Moscow in 1911: "You will hear about it in that country where you will be at that time, you will hear that the Germans are rattling their sabres on the borders of Russia... Only don't rejoice yet. Many Russians will think that the Germans will save Russia from the Bolshevik power, but it will not be so. True, the Germans will enter Russia and will do much, but they will depart, for the time of salvation will not be yet. That will be later, later... Germany will suffer her punishment in her own land. She will be divided..."⁵⁴⁰

The holy Catacomb Elder Theodosius (Kashin) of Minvody (+1948) said: "There's going to be a war, such a terrible war, like the Terrible Judgement: people will perish, they have departed from the Lord, they have forgotten God, and the wind of war will carry them away like ashes, and there will be no sign of them. But if anyone calls on God, the Lord will save him from trouble."⁵⁴¹

The war compelled the Soviets to try and reactivate an ethnically Russian patriotism. Thus "Vyacheslav Molotov, the Foreign Minister, gave a radio address in which he spoke of the impending 'patriotic war for homeland, honour and freedom'. The next day the main Soviet army newspaper, *Krasnaia Zvezda*, referred to it as a 'holy war'. Communism was conspicuously absent from Soviet propaganda in the war. It was fought in the name of Russia, of the 'family of peoples' in the Soviet Union, of Pan-Slav brotherhood, or in the name of Stalin, but never in the name of the communist system."⁵⁴²

The Nazi invasion had huge consequences for Church life in Russia... By 1939 in the whole of the country there were only four bishops at liberty, all sergianists, and only a tiny handful of Orthodox churches open. Stalin had silenced his greatest enemy, the Church of Christ, and the Russian people were now apparently defenceless against the most powerful and antichristian state in human history... However, the Word of God is not bound, and from 1941, thanks in part to the advance of the Germans deep into Russia, Orthodoxy experienced a miraculous revival. Thus "in the years of the war," writes Anatoly Krasikov, "with the agreement of the German occupying authorities, 7547 Orthodox churches were opened (as against 1270 opened in 1944-1947 with the permission of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian

⁵⁴⁰ Molotov, in Fomin, S., *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming)*, Sergiev Posad, 1993, p. 237.

⁵⁴¹ Chernov, *Tserkov' Katakombnaia na Zemle Rossijskoj (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land)*, MS, Woking, 1980.

⁵⁴² Oliver Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, London: Penguin, 2002, p. 489.

Orthodox Church).⁵⁴³ Even in fully Sovietized regions such as Pskov and the Eastern Ukraine, 95% of the population, according to German reports, flooded into the newly-opened churches.

In the Baltic region, the Germans were quite happy to deal with the MP's exarch, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), who quickly showed his loyalty to them.⁵⁴⁴ He immediately proceeded to bless the formation of an "Orthodox mission in the liberated regions of Russia", otherwise known as the "Pskov Orthodox Mission", whose official aim was the restoration of church life "destroyed by Soviet power". This mission included within its jurisdiction parts of the Leningrad and Kalinin regions, as well as the Pskov and Novgorod regions, with a population of about two million people. By 1944 it had 200 parishes and 175 priests. Lectures were read on Pskov radio, help was given to Soviet prisoners of war, and a children's home was created in a church in Pskov. The mission, on the insistence of Metropolitan Sergius (who was, after all, an NKVD agent), remained subject to the Leningrad diocese under Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), whose name was commemorated in each service. However, while remaining formally within the MP, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) carried out the commands of the Germans. For example, in the summer of 1943 he ordered that a thanksgiving service with the participation of all the clergy should take place in Pskov to mark the Germans' handing back of the land into the hands of the peasantry.

The True Orthodox Church supported neither the Soviets nor the Germans. The elders did not allow their spiritual children to fight in the Red Army, and some Catacomb Christians were martyred for their refusal to do so.⁵⁴⁵ They were also wary of the Germans, while taking advantage of the freedom of worship they provided. Thus the Kiev-Caves Lavra was reopened, and Catacomb Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze) returned to it with his monks, staying there until his death in 1942.⁵⁴⁶ Also in Kiev, Archimandrite Michael (Kostyuk), together with Schema-Abbess Michaela (Shelkina), directed a large community of catacomb monks and nuns. They were even able to build an above-ground church with the permission of the Germans.⁵⁴⁷ In the German-occupied north-west, however, the True Orthodox Christians remained underground.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴³ Krasikov, "'Tretij Rim' i Bol'sheviki" (The Third Rome and the Bolsheviks), in L.M. Vorontsova, A.V. Pchelintsev and S.B. Filatov (eds.), *Religia i Prava Cheloveka* (Religion and Human Rights), Moscow: "Nauka", 1996, p. 203.

⁵⁴⁴ In Latvia, Metropolitan Augustine asked the Germans to allow him to re-establish the Latvian Church within the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. But they refused...

⁵⁴⁵ Chernov, op. cit. Soldatov (op. cit.) writes: "In the Catacomb Church a tradition has been preserved about Schema-Monk Leontius (Mymrikov), who blessed True Orthodox Christians to go to war against the communists".

⁵⁴⁶ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 32.

⁵⁴⁷ Chernov, op. cit.; A. Smirnov, "Ugasshie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni" (Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Flow of Time), *Simvol* (Symbol), N 40, 1998, pp. 250-267.

⁵⁴⁸ M.V. Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo: techenie v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (Josephitism: a tendency in the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: Memorial, 1999, pp. 187-188; Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Istoki i sviazi Katakombnoj Tserkvi v Leningrade i obl. (1922-1992)" (Sources and Links of the Catacomb Church in Leningrad and district (1922-1992), report read at the conference "The Historical Path of Orthodoxy in Russia after 1917", Saint Petersburg, 1-3 June, 1993; "Episkopat

M.V. Shkarovsky writes that “the activity of the True Orthodox Christians seriously worried the higher leadership of the country. It received discouraging reports about a significant rise in the influence of the catacomb movement in the first years of the war. Thus the July, 1943 special communication of the head of the NKVD Administration in Penza province spoke of the activity of more than 20 illegal and semi-illegal groups that arranged prayers in private flats. In some region there were hundreds of these groups. In the report of the president of the Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, G. Karpov, to V. Molotov dated October 5, 1944, it was emphasised: ‘In the provinces with an insignificant number of functioning churches, and in the regions where there are no churches, a massive spreading of group worship in the homes of believers or in the open air has been noticed... Moreover, in these cases, believers invite clergy who are not registered to carry out the rite... A significant part of the activists of these unregistered church groups, together with their clergy, are hostile to the legal patriarchal church, condemning the latter for its loyal relationship to Soviet power and for its patriotic stance...’⁵⁴⁹

On July 7, 1944, as the Red Army returned to the occupied territories, Beria petitioned Stalin for the deportation of 1,673 Catacomb Christians from the Ryazan, Voronezh and Orel regions to Siberia. He said the Catacombniks led “a parasitical way of life, not paying taxes, refusing to fulfil their obligations and service, and forbidding their children to go to school.”⁵⁵⁰

As Bishop Irinarchus of Tula and Briansk writes: “In 1943, according to the personal order of Stalin, several hundred Catacomb Orthodox Christians were removed from Tula and Ryazan regions and sent to Siberia. Many of them perished, but not all, glory to God. In Tula region they have been preserved to this day [2004]. The Lord entrusted them to me, and with God’s help I am spiritually caring for them... Before the war only a few Catacomb priests were surviving in Briansk region. But when the region was occupied by the Germans, several hundred churches were opened in it, where they commemorated, not Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) as first hierarch, but Metropolitan Anastasy, the head of ROCOR. In Briansk region the Catacomb Christians were served by Bishop Stefan (Sevbo). Under the pressure of the red army Bishop Stefan and many clergy and laity emigrated to Belorussia, and then to Germany. Vladyka Stefan later ruled the Viennese diocese of ROCOR, and died in 1965.”⁵⁵¹

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Istinno-Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi 1922-1997gg.” (The Episcopate of the True Orthodox Church, 1922-1997), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 4 (8), 1997, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁴⁹ Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, pp. 250-251.

⁵⁵⁰ I.F. Bugayem, "Varvarskaia aktsia" (A Barbaric Action), *Otechestvo* (Fatherland), N 3, 1992, pp. 53-73; text in Shkvarovsky, *Iosiflyanstvo*, pp. 262-263.

⁵⁵¹ “Interviu s episkopom Irinarkhom Tul’skim i Brianskim (RPATs)” (Interview with Bishop Irinarch of Tula and Briansk (ROAC), *Vertograd*, N 440, 10 March, 2004.

“The beginning of the Second World War,” writes Mikhail Shkarovsky, “stimulated hopes in a part of the emigration regarding the possibility of the fall of Soviet power, and these hopes were bound up, above all, with the excitation of the spiritual powers of the people itself. In an address on September 3, 1939 by Metropolitan Anastasy and representatives of the Russian national organizations in Yugoslavia to Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich, it was said: ‘The cruel war that has begun could raise the question of the destiny of the Russian people and of our much-suffering Homeland... The course of developing events will keep us in extreme tension, and the Russian emigration abroad does not have the right to refrain from using the opportunity that has presented itself. We can and must count on ourselves and on the popular forces “there” that have preserve in their souls the feeling of love for all that is native and Russian.’ Moreover, every possibility of compromise with Soviet power in the name of a resolution of the historical tasks of Russia was rejected. The power of the communists was represented as an absolute evil than which there could be nothing worse.”⁵⁵²

But the metropolitan was cautious. “There is a reference in the Russian émigré literature to the fact that the occupation authorities had offered that Metropolitan Anastasy make a special appeal to the Russian people to cooperate with the Russian army, as if a crusade for the liberation of Russia from Bolshevism were taking place. This suggestion was supposedly strengthened by the threat of internment in the case of his refusal. But the metropolitan rejected it, ‘pointing out that since the Germans’ policy was unclear to him, and their aims in invading Russia were completely unexplained, he could not do it.’ According to other sources representative of some émigré organizations asked him to make a similar speech. In any case the metropolitan, who always displayed caution and tried not to admit extremes in the expression of his sympathies and antipathies, did not write any epistle in connection with the beginning of the war in the summer of 1941.”⁵⁵³

However, ROCOR could not refrain from welcoming the resurrection of Orthodoxy in the occupied territories. Thus in his paschal epistle for 1942 Metropolitan Anastasy wrote: “The day that they (the Russian people) expected has come, and it is now truly rising from the dead in those places where the courageous German sword has succeeded in severing its fetters... Both ancient Kiev, and much-suffering Smolensk and Pskov are radiantly celebrating their deliverance as if from the depths of hell. The liberated part of the Russian people everywhere has already begun to chant: ‘Christ is risen!’”⁵⁵⁴

However, the Germans what did *not* want was the resurrection of the Great Russian people through the Church, and they hindered ROCOR’s attempt to send priests into the occupied territories. Moreover, as the war progressed and the behaviour of the Germans became steadily crueller, the attitude of the Russian Orthodox to them changed. As Metropolitan Anastasy wrote in October, 1945, in

⁵⁵² Shkarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii* (A History of the Russian Emigration), St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2009, p. 31.

⁵⁵³ Shkvarovsky, *Istoria Russkoj Tserkovnoj Emigratsii*, p. 33.

⁵⁵⁴ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), 1942, N 4; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 41.

response to Patriarch Alexis' charge that ROCOR sympathized with the Nazis: "... The Patriarch is not right to declare that 'the leaders of the ecclesiastical life of the Russian emigration' performed public prayers for the victories of Hitler'. The Hierarchical Synod never prescribed such prayers and even forbade them, demanding that Russian people prayed at that time only *for the salvation of Russia*. Of course, it is impossible to conceal the now well-known fact that, exhausted by the hopelessness of their situation and reduced almost to despair by the terror reigning in Russia, Russian people both abroad and in Russia itself placed hopes on Hitler, who declared an irreconcilable war against communism (as is well-known, this is the explanation for the mass surrender of the Russian armies into captivity at the beginning of the war), but when it became evident that he was in fact striving to conquer Ukraine, Crimea and the Caucasus and other rich regions of Russia, and that he not only despised the Russian people, but was even striving to annihilate it, and that in accordance with his command our prisoners had been starved to death, and that the German army during its retreat had burned and destroyed to their foundations Russian cities and villages on their path, and had killed or led away their population, and had condemned hundreds of thousands of Jews with women and children to death, forcing them to dig graves for themselves, then the hearts of all reasonable people - except those who 'wanted to be deceived' - turned against him..."⁵⁵⁵

G.M. Soldatov writes: "It was suggested to the metropolitan that he issue an appeal to the Russian people calling on them to cooperate with the German army, which was going on a crusade to liberate Russia from the Bolsheviks. If he were to refuse to make the address, Vladyka was threatened with internment. However, the metropolitan refused, saying that German policy and the purpose of the crusade was unclear to him. In 1945 his Holiness Patriarch Gabriel of Serbia witnessed to Metropolitan Anastasy's loyalty to Serbia and the Germans' distrust of him..."

"Referring to documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other departments of the German government, the historian M.V. Shkvarovsky pointed out that Metropolitan Anastasy and the clergy of ROCOR were trying to go to Russia to begin organizing missionary and charitable work there, but this activity did not correspond to the plans of Germany, which wanted to see Russia weak and divided in the future."⁵⁵⁶

In October 1945 Metropolitan Anastasy wrote to "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow in response to his call for reunification with Moscow that many Russians (including ROCOR clergymen) had harboured illusions about the Germans' plans. But these illusions had been shattered, among other things, by the extermination of the Jews, which he condemned in no uncertain terms: "One cannot, of course, attempt to

⁵⁵⁵ Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnym liudiam po povodu 'Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastyriam i kliru tak nazyvaemoj Karlovatskoj orientatsii' (Epistle to the Russian Orthodox people on the 'Address of Patriarch Alexis to the archpastors and clergy of the so-called Karlovtsy orientation), in G.M. Soldatov, *Arkhiejskij Sobor Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej, Miunkhen (Germania) 1946 g.* (The Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad at Munich in 1946), Minneapolis, 2003, p. 13.

⁵⁵⁶ Soldatov, op. cit., pp. 12, 13.

conceal the commonly known fact that [some people,] worn down by the hopelessness of their situation and brought almost to the point of despair [by what was happening] in Russia, had placed their hope in Hitler, since he had declared an uncompromising struggle against communism. This, as you know, is the explanation for why Russian armies surrendered themselves *en masse* into captivity at the beginning of the war; yet when it became clear that he was actually seeking to conquer the Ukraine, Crimea, Caucasus, and other well-off regions of Russia, and that he not only had disdain for the Russian people but also was seeking to destroy it; that our prisoners were being starved to death at his orders; that the German army was burning down towns and villages, massacring their inhabitants or taking them captive, condemning hundreds of thousands of Jews together with their women and children to death, and forcing them to dig their own graves – then the hearts of all right-minded people turned against him, with the exception of those who wished to be deceived.”⁵⁵⁷

Nevertheless, of the two alternatives – the Germans or the Soviets – ROCOR considered the latter the more dangerous enemy. For Soviet power had been anathematized at the Russian Local Council in 1918, and had subjected the Russian Church to an unprecedentedly severe persecution.

Thus Metropolitan Anastasy supported the Russian Liberation Army under General Vlasov, which fought as part of the Germany army, and in November, 1944 addressed them as follows: “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit! From ancient times there has existed such a custom in the Russian land; before undertaking any good work, especially a collective work, they used to ask the blessing of God on it. And you have gathered here, dear brothers and fellow-countrymen, you workers and inspirer of the Russian national movement, thereby demonstrating the historical link of the great work of the liberation of Russia with the actions of our fathers and great-grandfathers... We are now all united by one feeling – a feeling of deadly irreconcilability with the Bolshevik evil and a flaming desire to extirpate it on the Russian land. For we know that as long as it reigns there, no rational human life is possible, no spiritual movement forward; as long as this evil threatens both our fatherland and the whole of Europe, death and destruction will be established everywhere. And insofar as you, dear brothers and sisters, are striving to crush this terrible evil... you are doing a truly patriotic, even more than that, universal work, and the Church cannot fail to bless your great and holy beginning... Dear brothers and sisters, let us all unite around this Liberation Movement of ours, let each of us struggle on this path and help the common great work of the liberation of our Homeland, until this terrible evil of Bolshevism falls and our tormented Russia is raised from her bed...”⁵⁵⁸

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⁵⁵⁷ Metropolitan Anastasy, in M.V. Shkarovsky, “The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Holocaust”, in *ROCOR Studies*, December 7, 2019.

⁵⁵⁸ I.L. Solonevich, “Rossia v kontslagere” (Russia in the concentration camp), *Volia Naroda* (The Will of the People), November 22, 1944; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 78-79.

In Belorussia and the Ukraine, the Germans encouraged the formation of national Churches independent of the Moscow Patriarchate. A Belorussian Autonomous Church was formed under Archbishop Philotheus of Slutsk (later of Hamburg).⁵⁵⁹ Pressure from Belorussian nationalists to form a completely autocephalous Church was rejected. The Belorussian Church had no contact with the MP - the Germans forbade the commemoration of Patriarch Sergius. So formally speaking the Belorussians were *not* part of the MP. Moreover, in October, 1943, the Germans for the first time allowed the convening of a Council of ROCOR bishops in Vienna at which the Belorussians were represented by Archbishop Benedict of Grodno and Belostok and Archimandrite Gregory (Boriskevich). So *de facto* they were now in communion with ROCOR.

On October 25 the ROCOR bishops condemned the election of the patriarch as unlawful and invalid, comparing Sergius' compromises to the third temptation of the Saviour, to whom Satan promised to give all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship him... "The conference composed and sent to the German authorities a memorandum which contained a series of bold demands. The memorandum is the best proof of the fact that the Conference took decisions independently, and not at the command of the Nazis. In it first of all should be highlighted the protest against the Nazis' not allowing the Russian clergy abroad to go to the occupied territories of the USSR. The memorandum demanded 'the removal of all obstacles hindering the free movement of bishops from this side of the front', and the reunion of bishop 'on occupied territories and abroad'. (A.K. Nikitin, *Polozhenie russkoj pravoslavnoj obschiny v Germanii v period natsistkogo rezhima (1933-1945 gg.)* [The Situation of the Russian Orthodox Community in Germany in the Nazi period (1933-1945)], Annual Theological Conference PSTBI, Moscow, 1998). A vivid expression of this protest was the consecration by the participants of the Conference of Bishop Gregory (Boriskevich). He was consecrated for the Belorussian Autonomous Church and received the title of Bishop of Gomel and Mozyr. At the Council an appeal to Russian believers was agreed. The conference did not send any greetings to Hitler or other leaders of the Third Reich. The third agreed point was unexpected for the Nazi institutions. *De facto* it contained a critique of German policy in relation to the Russian Church and included demands for greater freedom: '(1) The free development and strengthening of the Orthodox Church in the occupied regions and the unification of all Orthodox ecclesiastical provinces liberated from Soviet power with the Orthodox Church Abroad under one common ecclesiastical leadership would serve as an earnest of the greater success of these parts of the Russian Church in the struggle with atheist communism... (3) It is necessary to give Russian workers in Germany free satisfaction of all their spiritual needs. (4) In view of the great quantity of various Russian military units in the German army, it is necessary to create an institution of military priests... (6) A more energetic preaching of the Orthodox religio-moral world-view... (9) Petition for the introduction of apologetic programmes on the radio... (10) The organization of theological libraries attached to the parishes... (13)

⁵⁵⁹ Michael Woerl, "A Brief Biography of Archbishop Filofei (Narko)", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 50, N 6, November-December, 2000.

Giving Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities the possibility of opening theological schools and the organization of pastoral and religio-moral courses.”⁵⁶⁰

This 1943 Council was attended by 14 people including the following hierarchs: Metropolitans Anastasy, Seraphim (Lukyanov) and Seraphim (Lyade), and Bishops Benedict (Bobkovsky) of Grodno, Basil (Pavlovsky) of Vienna, Sergei of Prague, Philip (von Gardner)⁵⁶¹, and Gregory (Boriskevich) of Gomel.⁵⁶² After fleeing to the West the entire episcopate of the Belorussian and Ukrainian Autonomous Churches was received into ROCOR “in their existing rank” on May 6, 1946.⁵⁶³ Another Belorussian hierarch, Bishop Stefan (Sevbo) of Smolensk, had good relations with the Catacomb Church.⁵⁶⁴

In Ukraine, the Germans allowed the creation of two Churches independent of the MP. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Church was in essence a reactivation of the Lypkivsky “self-consecrators” schism, which had flourished in the Ukraine in the 1920s before being eliminated by Stalin, via the Polish Autocephalous Church. Thus on December 24, 1941, Metropolitan Dionysius of Warsaw, at the request of Ukrainian political and social-ecclesiastical activists, appointed Archbishop Polycarp (Sikorsky) of Lutsk as “Temporary Administrator of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church on the liberated lands of Ukraine”.⁵⁶⁵ Into this Church, without reordination, poured the remnants of the Lypkivsky schism, which soon led it onto the path of extreme Ukrainian nationalism. About 40% of the Orthodox in the Ukraine were attracted into this Church, which was especially strong in the West; but it had no monastic life, and very soon departed from traditional Orthodoxy.

On August 18, 1941, a Council of Bishops meeting in the Pochaev monastery elected Metropolitan Alexis (Gromadsky) as leader of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church, which based her existence on the decision of the 1917-18 Local Council of the Russian Church granting the Ukrainian Church autonomy within the framework of

⁵⁶⁰ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 63-64, 64-65; M.V. Shkvarovsky, *RPTsZ na Balkanakh v gody Vtoroj Mirovoj Vojny* [ROCOR in the Balkans in the years of the Second World War]; Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), *Arkhiejskij Synod vo II Mirovuiu Vojnu* [The Hierarchical Synod in World War II].

⁵⁶¹ Philip’s status as bishop is disputed.

⁵⁶² George later became bishop of Chicago and Detroit. See “Episkop Vasilij Venskij – 1880-1945gg.” (Bishop Basil of Vienna – 1880-1945), *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), N 18 (1663), September 14/27, 2000, p. 5.

⁵⁶³ *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), N 20 (1545), October 15/28, 1995, p. 4; Alexeyev, W. and Stavrou, T., *The Great Revival*, op. cit., chapter 4.

⁵⁶⁴ “Good, albeit also not unambiguous relations were established between the True Orthodox Christians and the Belorussian Church. In particular, thanks precisely to the katakombniki the Belorussian Church took a more anti-patriarchal stand and entered into conflict with Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky), who was trying to infiltrate his people into Belorussia. The most ardent relations were with Bishop Stefan (Sevbo) of Smolensk (+1963), who even ordained several priests for the True Orthodox Christians and of whom a good memory was preserved in the ‘catacombs’. It was precisely in Smolensk province and Mozhaisk district in Moscow province that the True Orthodox Christians became so active that they regenerated and greatly increased their flock, which had become very thin on the ground since the repressions of 1937” (Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), “Istinno-Pravoslavnie Khristiane i Vojna 1941-1945gg.” (True Orthodox Christians and the War, 1941-1945), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 1 (15), 1999, pp. 23-24).

⁵⁶⁵ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 35.

the Russian Church. Although the Germans tended to favour the Autocephalous Church over the Autonomous Church, it was the latter that attracted the majority of believers (55%) and opened the most churches. It even attracted catacomb priests, such as Archimandrite Leonty (Filippovich), who after his consecration as Bishop of Zhitomir restored about 50% of the pre-revolutionary parishes in his diocese and ordained about two hundred priests, including the future leader of the "Seraphimo-Gennadiite" branch of the Catacomb Church, Gennady Sekach, before he (Leonty) himself fled westwards with the Germans and joined ROCOR.⁵⁶⁶ Also linked with the Autonomous Churches was the Georgian Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), who lived in retirement in Kiev.

Andrew Psarev writes: "The Ukrainian Autonomous Church was formally subject to the Moscow Patriarchate, insofar as her leading hierarchs considered that they did not have the canonical right to declare themselves an autocephaly. But since the Moscow Patriarchate was subject to the Bolsheviks, in her administrative decisions the Autonomous Church was completely independent, which is why her spiritual condition was different from that of the Moscow Patriarchate."⁵⁶⁷ Thus in 1943 she sent a representative to ROCOR's Council in Vienna, which condemned the election of Sergius as uncanonical.⁵⁶⁸

On March 30, 1942 the Autonomous Church declared that the newly formed autocephalists were to be considered as "the Lipkovtsy sect", and all the clergy ordained by them – graceless. In consequence, and because the Autonomous Church did not go along with the extreme nationalist politics of the autocephalists, it suffered persecution in the German-occupied regions both from the autocephalists and the Ukrainian nationalist "Benderite" partisans, who had formed an alliance.

Although the revival of ecclesiastical life in these regions was brief, it had important consequences for the future. First, many of the churches reopened in this period were not again closed by the Soviets when they returned. Secondly, some of those bishops and priests who could not, or chose not to, escape westwards after the war went underground and helped to keep the Catacomb Church alive in the post-war period. And thirdly, ROCOR received an injection of new bishops and priests from those who fled westwards to Germany in the closing stages of the war.

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⁵⁶⁶ Alexeyev & Stavrou, *The Great Revival*, op. cit., chapter 5; Friedrich Heyer, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche in der Ukraine* (The Orthodox Church in the Ukraine), Koln: Rudolf Muller, 1953 (in German); "Archbishop Leonty of Chile", *The Orthodox Word*, 1981, vol. 17, N 4 (99), pp. 148-154; Bishop John and Igumen Elijah, *Taynij Skhimitropolit* (The Secret Schema-Metropolitan), Moscow: Bogorodichij Tsentri, 1991; Andrei Psarev, "Zhizneopisanie Arkhiepiskopa Leontia Chilijskij (1901-1971 gg.)" (A Life of Archbishop Leonty of Chile (1901-1971)), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), N 4 (556), April, 1996, pp. 9-14. With the blessing of Schema-Archbishop Anthony (Abashidze), Leonty was consecrated on November 7, 1941 by Archbishop Alexis (Gromadsky) of Volhynia, Bishop Benjamin (Novitsky) of Poltava) and Bishop Damascene (Malyuta) of Kamenets-Podolsky (Sviatitel' Leontij (Filippovich) Chilijskij", http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pdi=707.

⁵⁶⁷ Psarev, op. cit., p. 10.

⁵⁶⁸ Woerl, op. cit.

Not only all patriotic and cultural forces, but also the Moscow Patriarchate was enrolled in defence of the Soviet “motherland”. Thus on the very first day of the invasion, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) made an appeal to the nation to support the Soviets. Then the Germans asked the MP’s exarch in the Baltic, Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky), who had refused to be evacuated eastwards with the Red Army, to react to it. His response was: “Soviet power has subjected the Orthodox Church to an unheard of persecution. Now the punishment of God has fallen on this power... Above the signature of Metropolitan Sergius of Moscow and Kolomna, the patriarchal *locum tenens*, the Bolsheviks have distributed an absurd appeal, calling on the Russian people to resist the German liberators. We know that the blessed Sergius, a man of great learning and zealous faith, could not himself compose such an illiterate and shameless appeal. Either he did not sign it at all, or he signed it under terrible threats...”⁵⁶⁹

Sergius Shumilo writes: “The hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territories that remained under the Soviets officially declared a ‘holy war’ and unambiguously called on the people to fight on the side of the God-hating regime of Stalin. Thus Metropolitan Sergius, who had usurped for himself the title ‘patriarchal *locum tenens*’, already on the first day of the war, June 22, 1941, appealed to ‘the Soviet people’, not only calling on them to ‘the defence of the Soviet Homeland’, but also declaring ‘a direct betrayal of pastoral duty’ even the very thought that the clergy might have of ‘possible advantages to be gained on the other side of the front’. With the cooperation of the NKVD this appeal was sent to all the parishes in the country, where it was read after services as a matter of obligation.

“Not having succeeded in starting the war first, and fearing to lose the support of the people, Stalin’s regime in desperation decided to use a German propaganda trick – the cultivation of national-patriotic and religious feelings in the people. As E.I. Lisavtsev affirms, already in July, 1941 unofficial negotiations took place for the first time between Stalin’s government and Metropolitan Sergius. In the course of a programme of anti-Hitlerite propaganda that was worked out in October, 1941, when the German armies had come right up to Moscow, Metropolitan Sergei issued an Epistle in which he discussed the Orthodox hierarchs and clergy who had made contact on the occupied territories with the local German administration. *De facto* all the hierarchs and clergy on the territories occupied by the Germans, including those who remained in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, came under Metropolitan Sergius’ excommunication.

“Having issued the Epistle, Metropolitan Sergius and all the members of the chancellery of the MP, together with the Soviet government and the leadership of the Soviet army and the NKVD, were evacuated from Moscow to Ulyanovsk (formerly Simbirsk), where on November 24 Metropolitan Sergei delivered a new appeal to the people, in which he called them to ‘a holy war for Christian civilization, for freedom of conscience and faith’. In all during the years of the war S. Stragorodsky delivered more than 23 similar addresses. Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) also repeatedly

⁵⁶⁹ M.V. Shkarovsky, *Pravoslavie i Rossia* (Orthodoxy and Russia); Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 31.

called to a 'holy war'; his appeals to the partisans and the people in the form of leaflets were scattered in enormous quantities by Soviet military aviation onto the territories occupied by the German armies. However, such epistles only provoked the German command, and elicited reprisals against the local clergy and population. Besides this, Metropolitan Nicholas repeatedly appealed to the 'erring' Romanian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches, to the Romanian and Bulgarian soldiers who were fighting on the side of Germany, and also to the population and Church in Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Greece and other countries. Nicholas Yarushevich himself was appointed a member of the so-called 'Pan-Orthodox Committee' created according to a decision of the communist party, and also of the Extraordinary State Commission for the investigation of fascist crimes. And it is precisely on Metropolitan Nicholas, as a member of this commission, that there falls the blame for the lie and disinformation concerning Stalin's crimes: he was among those who signed the unprecedentedly mendacious declaration to the effect that the shootings of thousands of Polish officers in a wood near Katyn were carried out by the Germans, and not by Soviet punishment squads, as was the case in actual fact. Moreover these were not the only such cases.

"It was for the same propagandistic aims that in 1942, in the printing-house of the Union of Militant Atheists, which had temporarily been handed over for the use of the MP, there appeared in several foreign languages a solidly produced book, *The Truth about Religion in Russia*, the foreword to which was composed by S. Stragorodsky. As it said in the foreword: '... This book is a reply first of all to the "crusade" of the fascists undertaken by them supposedly for the sake of liberating our people and our Orthodox Church from the Bolsheviks'. The whole of the book, from the first page to the last, is overflowing with outpourings of unreserved devotion to Stalin's regime and with false assurances about 'complete religious freedom in the USSR'.⁵⁷⁰

"The text of the telegram of Metropolitan Sergius of Moscow on November 7, 1942 addressed to Stalin on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Bolshevik coup sounds like an evil joke, a mockery of the memory of hundreds of thousands of martyrs for the faith who perished during the years of the Stalinist repressions: 'In your person I ardently and prayerfully greet the God-chosen leader of our military and cultural forces, leading us to victory over the barbarian invasion...'

"However, besides propagandistic and ideological support for the Soviet regime, the clergy and parishioners of the MP also provided serious financial help to the army in the field. Thus in a telegram of Metropolitan Sergei to I. Stalin on February 25, 1943 we are formed: 'On the day of the jubilee of our victorious Red Army I greet you as its Supreme Commander in the name of the clergy and believers of the Russian Orthodox Church, I prayerfully desire that you experience the joy of complete victory over the enemy... The believers in their desire to help the Red Army have willingly

⁵⁷⁰ Sergius wrote: "With complete objectivity we must declare that the Constitution, which guarantees complete freedom for the carrying out of religious worship, in no way constrains the religious life of believers and the Church in general..." Concerning the trials of clergy and believers, he said: "These were purely political trials which had nothing to do with the purely ecclesiastical life of religious organizations and the purely ecclesiastical work of individual clergy. No, the Church cannot complain about the authorities."

responded to my appeal: they have collected money to build a tank column in the name Demetrius Donskoy. In all about 6,000,000 roubles have been collected, and, besides, a large quantity of gold and silver things..."⁵⁷¹

In fact, all parishes in Soviet Russia were required to make contributions to the Soviet war effort. Sergius - the "compatriarch" or communist patriarch, as the Germans called him - announced huge contributions towards the equipping of a tank unit. From November, 1941 even the last open church of the Josephites in Leningrad began to contribute. However, helping the Soviet war effort and remaining True Orthodox were clearly incompatible aims; when such a compromise was attempted, it unfailingly led to the loss of God's grace. Thus in November, 1943 the Trinity parish applied to join the MP...⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Shumilo, "Sovietskij Rezhim i 'Sovietskaia Tserkov'" v 40-e-50-e gody XX stoletia" (The Soviet Regime and the 'Soviet Church' in the 40s and 50s of the 20th Century).

⁵⁷² "Iosiflianskiye obshchiny v blokadnom Leningrade" (Josephite Communities in Blockaded Leningrad), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), N 14 (1731), July 15/28, 2003, pp. 12-13.

38. THE STALIN-SERGIUS PACT

Shumilo continues: "Taking into consideration this loyal position of the leadership of the MP, and relying on the successful experiment of Nazi Germany on the occupied territories, Stalin, after long hesitations, finally decided on a more broadly-based use of religion in order to attain his own political ends. The more so in that this would help the new imposition of communist tyranny on the 'liberated' territories and in the countries of Eastern Europe. 'First of all,' wrote the Exarch of the MP in the Baltic region, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky), in his report to the German occupying authorities already on November 12, 1941, 'for the Soviet state the existence of legal ecclesiastical administration was very important for purposes of advertisement and propaganda. In the foreign Jewish press, which wanted to attract the hearts of its liberal readers to "Stalin's constitution", it was possible to point to the existence of the "Patriarchate" as an indisputable proof that in the Soviet state even the Orthodox Church, that support of tsarist reaction, had complete religious freedom. On the other hand, if the patriarchal administration and its members were annihilated, it would be difficult to bring the press abroad to silence. This would elicit a particularly powerful and long-lasting response among the Orthodox Balkan peoples... The existence of the patriarchal administration was allowed, since its abolition, like any form of open persecution of the Church, would not correspond to the interests of the subtle atheist propaganda, and could elicit politically undesirable disturbances in the broad masses of the Orthodox believers (their number is calculated at from 30 to 60 million) and arouse still greater hatred for the authorities.

""The forcible disbanding of the officially recognized leadership of the patriarchate would inevitably call into existence a secret leadership, which would significantly increase the difficulties of police supervision... In general there has existed in Russia a very lively secret religious life (secret priests and monks; secret places for prayer; secret Divine services; christenings; confessions; communions; marriages; secret theological studies; secret possession of the Sacred Scriptures, liturgical vessels, icons, sacred books; secret relations between communities).

""In order to destroy the catacomb patriarchate also, they would have to execute all the bishops, including the secret ones that would undoubtedly be consecrated in case of need. And if we imagine the impossible, that the whole ecclesiastical organization would be annihilated, then faith would still remain, and atheism would not make a single step forward. The Soviet government understood this, and preferred to allow the existence of a patriarchal administration.'⁵⁷³

"But there were other more substantial reasons: already at the end of September, 1941 William Everell, the authorized representative of President Franklin Roosevelt of the USA in Moscow, during negotiations with Molotov and Stalin with regard to drawing the USA onto the side of the USSR in the war with Nazi Germany, raised the question of politics in relation to religion in the USSR. For Roosevelt this was one of the key questions, on which depended the final result of the negotiations and the

⁵⁷³ See also Wassilij Alexeev and Keith Armes, "German Intelligence: Religious Revival in Soviet Territory", *Religion in Communist Lands*, vol. 5, N 1, Spring, 1977, pp. 27-30 (V.M.).

possibility of giving military help to the USSR.⁵⁷⁴ In connection with this, on October 4, 1941 the Soviet deputy foreign minister Solomon Lozovsky assured the delegation of the USA that religion both in the USSR and outside it had a great significance for raising the patriotic spirit in a country, and for that reason, if some faults and mistakes had been admitted in the past, they would be corrected. So as to imitate so-called 'freedom of conscience' in the USSR and thereby win over the countries of the West, Stalin began cautiously flirting with religion. But in the beginning not with the Moscow Patriarchate, ... but with the Vatican...

"Cardinal changes in the internal politics of Stalin in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate... took place in the second half of 1943. At the beginning of autumn the leaders of the allied countries in the anti-Hitlerite coalition were preparing for their first personal meeting in Teheran. Stalin placed great hopes on the Teheran meeting, and so he sought out various means of urging on the allies. First of all, public movements in England and the USA for giving help to the USSR were given the most active support. Among these organizations with whose leaders Stalin carried out a personal correspondence, was Hewitt Johnson, the rector of the cathedral church of Canterbury. The Soviet historian V. Alexeev thinks that 'this was a partner whom Stalin treasured, and who had no small influence in an allied country, where the Anglican church was the state religion.'

"Besides Hewitt Johnson, other hierarchs of the Anglican church were actively involved into the movement for the speediest provision of help to the USSR, including Archbishop Cosmo Lang. More than a thousand activists of the Episcopalian church of the U.S.A. addressed similar appeals to the president of the USA Franklin Roosevelt. Moreover, by the autumn of 1943 the leadership of the Anglican church had addressed the Soviet government through the embassy of the USSR in Great Britain with a request to allow a visit of their delegation to Moscow. As V. Alexeev remarks: 'On the eve of the Teheran conference the visit of the delegation was recognized as desirable and useful by Stalin. In this situation it was extremely advantageous that the head of the delegation, the Archbishop of York, should be received by the higher leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church headed by the patriarch.'

"In connection with the above-mentioned political perspectives, Metropolitan Sergius (from Ulyanovsk) and Metropolitan Alexis (from Leningrad) were very quickly transported to Moscow on government planes. Together with Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), they were brought late at night on September 4, 1943 to Stalin in the Kremlin. Besides Stalin, the deputy president of the Sovnarkom of the USSR. V. Molotov and NKVD General-Major G. Karpov took part in the talks. As Alexeev witnesses, relying on G. Karpov's report, at the meeting 'Stalin approved of the convening of a council, but advised that a Hierarchical, not a Local council be convened at the given time... The metropolitans agreed. When Sergei touched upon

⁵⁷⁴ See D. Volkogonov, *Triumfi Tragedia* (Triumph and Tragedy), Moscow: Novosti, 1989, book II, part 1, pp. 382-83; Shkarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo*, p. 185. Donald Rayfield writes: "Stalin may also have listened to an American envoy, who had pointed out that Congress would not hesitate to send the USSR military aid if religious suppression stopped" (*Stalin and his Hangmen*, London: Viking, 2004, p. 405). (V.M.)

the question of the time necessary for the preparation of the council, Stalin asked him: "Can we not produce a Bolshevik tempo?" Then, turning to Karpov, he asked him to help the leadership of the church to get the bishops to the council as quickly as possible. For this he was to bring in aviation and other forms of transport. Karpov assured Stalin that all the necessary work would be carried out and the council could be opened already in three to four days. Immediately Stalin and Metropolitans Sergei, Alexis and Nicholas agreed to set September 8 as the opening of the council.'

"Here we must note that Karpov's report⁵⁷⁵ sins through obvious exaggerations, which create the deceptive impression that the initiative in these 'negotiations' came from the hierarchs, while Stalin spoke only in the role of a 'kind magician' who carried out all their demands. In actual fact the subject of the so-called 'negotiations', and the decisions taken during them, had been worked out long before the meeting. Stalin, Malenkov and Beria had examined this question in their dacha already before the middle of the day on September 4. Confirmation of this is given by the speedy transport of Sergius and Alexis to Moscow, and also the spineless agreement of the metropolitans with Stalin's proposals - 'the metropolitans agreed', as it says in Karpov's report. But the delegation of metropolitans, being loyal to the authorities, could not act differently in their meeting with the dictator, in connection with which Karpov spiced up his report with invented initiatives of Sergei.

"Reviewing the question of the convening of the council, it was decided that Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) should, for political reasons, be proclaimed 'patriarch of all Rus'" and not 'of Russia [*Rossii*]', as it was under Patriarch Tikhon (Bellavin).⁵⁷⁶ Turning to the metropolitans, Stalin said that the government was ready to provide her with the necessary financial means to support the international image of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also informed them that for the accommodation of the chancellery of the MP he was giving over to them a three-storey house with all its furniture - the past residence of the German ambassador Schulenberg. Obviously, Stalin presented this gift to annoy the Germans, who had opened Orthodox churches on the occupied territories.

"At the end of the meeting Stalin declared that he was intending to create a special organ for control of the Church - the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church (SD RPTs). '... In reply the metropolitans thanked the government and Stalin personally for the reception he had given them, his enormous help to, and respect for, the Church, and assured the president of the Sovnarkom of their patriotic position, noting that they looked very favourably on the creation of a new state organ for the

⁵⁷⁵ According to Karpov's report, Metropolitan Sergei brought up the question of electing a patriarch right at the beginning of the meeting as being "the most important and most pressing question" (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 53). This report was published in full in Russian in Monk Benjamin, op. cit., pp. 53-60, and in English in Felix Corbey (ed.), *Religion in the Soviet Union: an archival reader*, New York: New York University Press, 1996. (V.M.)

⁵⁷⁶ This was an important symbolic change. The pre-revolutionary Russian Church was *rossijskaia*, that is, the Church of the whole of the Russian empire and of all the Orthodox in it, whether they were Russian by race or not. By changing the title to *rusaskaia*, Stalin emphasized that it was the Church exclusively of the ethnically Russian people - that is, of the *ruskikh*. Over half a century later, ROAC - the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church - resumed the title *rossijskaia*. (V.M.)

affairs of the Orthodox Church and on the appointment of [NKVD Major-General] G. Karpov to the post of its president... Turning to Metropolitan Sergius, Molotov asked him when it would be better, in his opinion, to receive the delegation of the Anglican church in Moscow... Sergius replied that since the council at which they would elect the patriarch would be held in four days, the delegation could be received practically at any time after that. On hearing this, Molotov concluded that it would be appropriate to receive it in a month's time [that is, on the eve of the Teheran conference]. Stalin agreed."⁵⁷⁷

The three hierarchs also raised the question of opening more churches. Stalin replied that the government had no objections. Then Metropolitan Alexis raised the question of releasing certain hierarchs who were in the camps. Stalin said: "Give me a list, and we shall look at it."⁵⁷⁸

And so, as Eugene Blum writes, "the Church structure called the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (ROC-MP) was organized with the personal participation of the dictator Stalin in September, 1943. Not one priest of this 'church', could LEGALLY carry out services and rites without the corresponding permission of the 'competent organs' – first of all, the secret police of the NKVD-KGB, and was forced to cooperate with them. Every priest, or at least every bishop had to give a signed promise that he would cooperate. He also had to sign that he would not publicize this fact of his recruitment under threat of the death penalty."⁵⁷⁹

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⁵⁷⁷ Shumilo, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 56. According to Anatoly Levitin-Krasnov, Molotov at one point "said that the Soviet government and Stalin personally would like to know the needs of the Church. While the other metropolitans remained silent, Metropolitan Sergius suddenly spoke up... The metropolitan pointed out the need for the mass re-opening of churches... for the convocation of a church council and the election of a patriarch... for the general opening of seminaries, because there was a complete lack of clergy. Here Stalin suddenly broke his silence. 'And why don't you have cadres? Where have they disappeared?' he said... looking at the bishops point blank... Everybody knew that 'the cadres' had perished in the camps. But Metropolitan Sergei... replied: 'There are all sorts of reasons why we have no cadres. One of the reasons is that we train a person for the priesthood, and he becomes the Marshal of the Soviet Union.' A satisfied smile touched the lips of the dictator: 'Yes, of course. I am a seminarian...' Stalin began to reminisce about his years at the seminary... He said that his mother had been sorry to her very death that he had not become a priest..." (*Likhie Gody, 1925-1941* (The Savage Years, 1925-1941), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977). Rayfield notes that the metropolitans went to the meeting "all wearing ordinary suits" (*op. cit.*, p. 405). The story (perhaps fictional) goes that on seeing this, Stalin looked up to heaven and said: "Do you not fear Him? You fear me more..." According to Archimandrite Ioann (Razumov), Sergei was enchanted by Stalin. "How kind he is!... How kind he is!" he said in a hushed voice (in Sergei Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia. Patriarkh Moskovskij i vseia Rusi Sergij Stragorodskij*, (Guardian over the House of the Lord: Patriarch Sergei Stragorodsky of Moscow and All Rus'); Moscow Sretenskij monastery, 2003, p. 702). It was at about this time that Stalin is said to have "told the British ambassador that, in his own way, 'he too believed in God'. The word began to appear in Pravda with a capital letter." (Overy, *op. cit.*, p. 162) Levitin-Krasnov, *Likhie Gody, 1925-1941* (The Savage Years, 1925-1941), Paris: YMCA Press, 1977. Donald Rayfield notes a (perhaps fictional) story that the metropolitans went to the meeting "all wearing ordinary suits". On seeing this, Stalin looked up to heaven and said: "Do you not fear Him? You fear me more..." (Rayfield, *op. cit.*)

⁵⁷⁹ Blum, LaSalle University Thesis, 2014.

The Moscow Patriarchate now became officially a part of the Soviet State. For that reason, many ascribe its final loss of grace precisely to this moment... The new *Soviet* church was given the name of "The Russian (*Russkaia*) Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate". Under Patriarch Tikhon the Church had been called "The Russian (*Rossijskaia*) Orthodox Church". The difference in wording ("*Russkaia*" instead of "*Rossijskaia*") pointed, paradoxically, to the greater emphasis on Russian nationalism in the Soviet as opposed to the pre-revolutionary Russian Church.

The Church also acquired a precarious, semi-legal existence – the right to open a bank account, to publish *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* and a few booklets, to reopen some seminaries and churches, and, most important, to "elect" a new patriarch after the release from prison of some of the most malleable bishops. In return, it had to accept censorship and control of every aspect of its affairs by the newly constituted Council for Russian Orthodox Affairs, which came to be nicknamed "Narkombog" (People's Commissar for God) and "Narkomopium" (People's Commissar for Opium).

Stalin's new ecclesiastical policy was effective. Rayfield writes: "Promoting Orthodoxy had been more effective in galvanizing the nation than reiterating the slogans of Stalinism. Stalin may also have listened to an American envoy, who had pointed out that Congress would not hesitate to send the USSR military aid if religious suppression stopped. Right until Stalin's death Russian metropolitan bishops were delivered in large black limousines to appear on international platforms, such as peace congresses, in the company of such stalwart atheists as Fadeev and Ehrenburg."⁵⁸⁰

But from the Church's point of view, the new policy, while it ensured the Church's physical survival, made it completely a slave of the State. As Rayfield writes: "The Church was now... an arm of the state."⁵⁸¹

At first, the Council for Religious Affairs exerted its control downwards via the bishops in accordance with the Church's rigidly centralized structure. From 1961, however, its control came to be exercised also from below, through the so-called *dvadsatky*, or parish councils of twenty laypeople, who could hire and fire priests at will, regardless of the bishops. Thus for all its increased size and external power, the MP remained as much a puppet of Soviet power as ever. As Vasilyeva and Knyshevsky write: "There is no doubt that Stalin's 'special organ' and the government (to be more precise, the Stalin-Molotov duet) kept the patriarch under 'eternal check'. Sergius understood this. And how could he not understand when, on November 1, 1943, the Council made it obligatory for all parishes to submit a monthly account with a detailed description of their activity in all its facets?"⁵⁸²

Shumilo continues: "The so-called 'hierarchical council' ... took place on September 8, 1943. In all 19 hierarchs took part in it, six of whom were former renovationists who

⁵⁸⁰ Rayfield, op. cit., p. 405.

⁵⁸¹ Rayfield, op. cit., p. 405.

⁵⁸² Vasilieva, O., Kniashevsky, P., "Tainaia Vecheria" (The Last Supper), *Liternaturnaia Rossia* (Literary Russia), N 39, September 27, 1991.

had been hastily consecrated not long before the 'council', and also several loyal bishops who were specially freed from prison and sent to Moscow in planes. At the given assembly there were no bishops from the occupied territories, nor from the emigration, or, still more, those who did not agree with Sergius and his ecclesiastical politics, who continued to languish in Soviet concentration camps. As the patriarchal historian D. Pospelovsky notes: '... At that time there were at least some tens of bishops in exile and the camps... Some of the imprisoned bishops refused to recognize the ecclesiastical politics of Sergei after 1927 as the condition of their liberation. At that time the Catacomb Church was still very active.'⁵⁸³

At the 1943 council, contrary to the rules laid down by the 1917-18 Council, only one candidate for the patriarchy was put forward. "I think that this will be made infinitely easier for us by the fact that we already have someone bearing the patriarchal privileges, and so I suppose that an election with all the details that usually accompany such events is not necessary for us," declared Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), who put forward the candidacy of Sergei. There was nothing for the delegates to do but submit to the will of "the father of the peoples, Joseph Stalin", and to the question of Metropolitan Sergius: "Is nobody of another opinion?", reply: "No, agreed".⁵⁸⁴

"At the end of the session the council accepted a resolution read out by Sergei that was unprecedented in its amorality and uncanonicity. It said that 'every person who is guilty of betraying the common work of the Church and of passing over to the side of fascism is to be counted as excommunicated as being an enemy of the Cross of the Lord, and if he is a bishop or cleric is deprived of his rank.' Thus practically the whole of the population and clergy of the occupied territories - except, of course, the red partisans - fell under the anathema of the Soviet church, including 7.5 million Soviet prisoners of war, who had become prisoners of the Germans. According to Stalin's *ukaz* № 260 of September, 1941, all of them were declared traitors to their Homeland. 'There are no captives, there are only deserters,' declared Molotov, commenting on this *ukaz*."⁵⁸⁵

Sergius was enthroned on September 12. Then the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church was created, headed by Karpov. Since 1940 he had been "head of the Fifth Department of the NKVD, whose assignment was to combat 'the counterrevolutionary clergy.' In the NKVD Karpov's duty was to fight the church, in the council [-] to assist it..."⁵⁸⁶

In this way and at this time was the organization now calling itself the Moscow Patriarchate created - on the basis of a pact between the Church and the bloodiest persecutor of Christianity in history. This pact between the supposed representative of Christ and Belial had profoundly ungodly consequences. However, church leaders round the world welcomed it.

⁵⁸³ Shumilo, op. cit.

⁵⁸⁴ Shumilo, op. cit.

⁵⁸⁵ Shumilo, op. cit.

⁵⁸⁶ Radzinsky, *Stalin*, p. 508.

“A week after the enthronement,” writes Shumilo, “on the orders of the Sovnarkom, Sergius accepted the long-awaited delegation of the Anglican church led by Archbishop Cyril Garbett in Moscow... In general, in the run-up to the Teheran conference the politics of the Soviet regime was ‘reconstructed’ not only in relation to the Moscow Patriarchate but also in relation to the Vatican. In October, 1943 support had been given to the official Georgian Orthodox and Armenian-Gregorian churches. The regime cooperated with the Muslims in convening in Tashkent a conference of loyal Muslim clergy and believers, in the organization in Bujnaks of a legal spiritual administration of the Muslims of the North Caucasus, in the opening of Muslim theological schools (*medrese*) in Bukhara, Tashkent, etc. However, it is quite mistaken to think that this ‘warming’ was a fully-fledged offering of freedom to the religious organizations in the USSR. In spite of their external freedom, the religious workers of the country, all without exception, remained hostages of the totalitarian system and remained under the constant strict supervision of the Soviet special services. But in relation to the so-called ‘unreliables’, the communist repressive apparatus continued to operate as before, although the religious workers themselves in all their official declarations categorically denied this, insinuating into popular opinion abroad the false idea that complete freedom of conscience and religious organizations had been re-established in the USSR. As V. Alexeev remarks: ‘... The deeply religious [!] F.D. Roosevelt was very satisfied with the new relationship of the authorities to the church in the USSR. These steps undertaken by Stalin also received approval in England, Canada and France, where the position of religious organizations in society was very strong. The Russian emigration was also satisfied with them.’”⁵⁸⁷

In an encyclical dated October 14, 1943, Metropolitan Sergius threatened all the clergy who were cooperating with the Germans with an ecclesiastical trial.⁵⁸⁸ On October 27, 1943 he wrote to Karpov: “I ask you to petition the government of the USSR for an amnesty for the people named in the attached list, whom I would like to draw into Church work under my administration. I will not take upon myself to decide the question to what extent these people deserved the punishment they underwent. But I am convinced that clemency given them by the Government would arouse them (and give them the opportunity) to apply all their energy to demonstrate their loyalty to the Government of the USSR and to wipe out their guilt completely.” To this declaration was attached a list of 26 clergy, including 24 hierarchs. Most of them, as it turned out, had already been shot or had perished in the camps.⁵⁸⁹

On October 31, after the Georgians had congratulated Sergius on his election, Sergius’ representative, Archbishop Anthony of Stavropol and Pyatigorsk,

⁵⁸⁷ Shumilo, op. cit. Of course, not all of the Russian emigration – only that (large) part that believed in the good intentions of the Soviet government.

⁵⁸⁸ The Germans countered by confronting Metropolitan Sergei (Voskresensky) with the acts of the Vienna conference of ROCOR, which condemned Sergius Stragorodsky’s election as uncanonical, and demanded that he approve of them. In April, 1944, Metropolitan Sergius (Voskresensky) was ambushed and shot, probably by Soviets dressed in German uniforms. (Vasilieva, op. cit.; Bishop Tikhon of San Francisco (OCA), “Truth/Consequences”, ORTHODOX@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU, archives for September 21, 1999)

⁵⁸⁹ GARF, f. 6991, op. 1, d. 5, l. 1; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, p. 66.

concelebrated with Catholicos Callistratus of Georgia in Tbilisi. So eucharistic communion was re-established without preconditions. Until 1990 the Ecumenical Patriarch did not accept this act since it was carried out without his agreement.⁵⁹⁰

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Sergei did more than place the MP in unconditional submission to the God-haters. As Bishop Nektary (Yashunsky) wrote, he introduced a heretical concept of the Church and salvation: "Metropolitan Sergius' understanding of the Church (and therefore, of salvation) was heretical. He sincerely, it seems to us, believed that the Church was first of all an organization, an apparatus that could not function without administrative unity. Hence the striving to preserve her administrative unity at all costs, even at the cost of harming the truth contained in her.

"And this can be seen not only in the church politics he conducted, but also in the theology [he evolved] corresponding to it."

Thus in an article entitled "The Relationship of the Church to the Communities that have Separated from Her" (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*), Metropolitan Sergius explained the differences in the reception of heretics and schismatics, not on the basis of their objective confession of faith, but on the subjective (and therefore changeable) relationship of the Church's first-hierarchy to them. Thus "we receive the Latins into the Church through repentance, but those from the Karlovtsy schism through chrismation". And so for Sergius, concluded Bishop Nektary, "the truth of Holy Orthodoxy is not necessary for salvation, but it is belonging to a legal church-administrative organization that is necessary!"⁵⁹¹

This heretical transformation of the MP into an "eastern papacy" was described by Fr. Vyacheslav Polosin: "If Metropolitan Sergius was ruled, not by personal avarice, but by a mistaken understanding of what was for the benefit of the Church, then it was evident that the theological foundation of such an understanding was mistaken, and even constituted a heresy concerning the Church herself and her activity in the world. We may suppose that these ideas were very close to the idea of the *Filioque*: since the Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, but also from the Son, that means that the vicar of the Son... can dispose of the Spirit, so that the Spirit acts through Him *ex opere operato*...

"It follows necessarily that he who performs the sacraments of the Church, 'the minister of the sacrament', must automatically be 'infallible', for it is the infallible Spirit of God Who works through him and is inseparable from him... However, this Latin schema of the Church is significantly inferior to the schema and structure created by Metropolitan Sergius. In his schema there is no Council, or it is replaced by a formal assembly for the confirmation of decisions that have already been taken – on the model of the congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

⁵⁹⁰ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 3, pp. 61-63.

⁵⁹¹ Hierodeacon Jonah (Yashunsky), "Sergianstvo: Politika ili Dogmatika?" (Sergianism: Politics or Dogmatics?), 29 April / May 12, 1993, pp. 2-3, 5 (MS).

“The place of the Council in his Church structure is taken by something lacking in the Latins’ scheme – Soviet power, loyalty to which becomes in the nature of a dogma. This scheme became possible because it was prepared by Russian history. But if the Orthodox tsar and the Orthodox procurator to some extent constituted a ‘small Council’, which in its general direction did not contradict the mind-set of the majority of believers, with the change in world-view of those at the helm of Soviet power this scheme acquired a heretical character, since the decisions of the central ecclesiastical authorities, which were associated in the minds of the people with the will of the Spirit of God, came to be determined neither by a large nor by a small Council, but by the will of those who wanted to annihilate the very idea of God (the official aim of the second ‘godless’ five-year-plan was to make the people forget even the word ‘God’). Thus at the source of the Truth, instead of the revelation of the will of the Holy Spirit, a deadly poison was substituted... The Moscow Patriarchate, in entrusting itself to the evil, God-fighting will of the Bolsheviks instead of the conciliar will of the Spirit, showed itself to be an image of the terrible deception of unbelief in the omnipotence and Divinity of Christ, Who alone can save and preserve the Church and Who gave the unlying promise that ‘the gates of hell will not overcome her’... The substitution of this faith by vain hope in one’s own human powers as being able to save the Church in that the Spirit works through them, is not in accord with the canons and Tradition of the Church, but *ex opere operato* proceeds from the ‘infallible’ top of the hierarchical structure.”⁵⁹²

⁵⁹² Polosin (Sergius Ventsel), "Razmyshlenia o Teokratii v Rossii" (Thoughts on Theocracy in Russia), *Vestnik Khristianskogo Informatsionnogo Tsentra* (Herald of the Christian Information Centre), N 48, November 24, 1989.

39. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH IN 1945

"Patriarch" Sergius died on May 15, 1944. "They say that not long before his death [he] had a vision of Christ, after which he sobbed for a long time over the crimes he had committed."⁵⁹³ It would be good to know that this Judas had really repented of his terrible crimes; but there is no evidence that he ever tried to mitigate, let alone reverse, their impact on Church life...

The former renovationist Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky) of Leningrad became patriarchal *locum tenens*. His first act was to send a telegram on May 19 to Stalin, in which he thanked him for the trust he had showed him, promised to continue the politics of Stalin without wavering and assured him of his love and devotion to the cause of the party and Stalin. He kept his promise...

In the period from the Stalin-Sergius pact of September, 1943 to the enthronement of the new "patriarch" Alexis in January, 1945, the 19 bishops of the MP (they had been only four at the beginning of the war) were more than doubled to 41. Catacomb Bishop "A." wrote: "Very little time passed between September, 1943 and January, 1945. Therefore it is difficult to understand where 41 bishops came from instead of 19. In this respect our curiosity is satisfied by the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* for 1944. Looking through it, we see that the 19 bishops who existed in 1943, in 1944 rapidly gave birth to the rest, who became the members of the 1945 council.

"From the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* we learn that these hasty consecrations were carried out, in the overwhelming majority of cases, on renovationist protopriests.

"From September, 1943 to January, 1945, with a wave of a magic wand, all the renovationists suddenly repented before Metropolitan Sergius. The penitence was simplified, without the imposition of any demands on those who caused so much evil to the Holy Church. And in the shortest time the 'penitent renovationists' received a lofty dignity, places and ranks, in spite of the church canons and the decree about the reception of renovationists imposed [by Patriarch Tikhon] in 1925...

"As the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* informs us, the 'episcopal' consecrations before the 'council' of 1945 took place thus: the protopriest who had been recommended (undoubtedly by the civil authorities), and who was almost always from the 'reunited' renovationists or Gregorians, was immediately tonsured into monasticism with a change in name and then, two or three days later, made a 'hierarchy of the Russian Church'."⁵⁹⁴

This acceptance of the renovationists was dictated in the first place by the Bolsheviks, who now saw the sergianists as more useful than the renovationists. Thus

⁵⁹³ Shumilo, op. cit.

⁵⁹⁴ "Pis'mo 2-oe Katakombnogo Episkopa A. k F.M." (The Second Letter of Catacomb Bishop A. to F.M.), *Russkij Pastyr'* (Russian Pastor), N 14, III-1992; *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), 1996, N 2 (2), pp. 10, 11.

on October 12, 1943 Karpov wrote to Stalin and Molotov: "The renovationist movement earlier played a constructive role but in recent years has lost its significance and base of support. On this basis, and taking into account the patriotic stance of the Sergianist church, the Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs has decided not to prevent the dissolution of the renovationist church and the transfer of the renovationist clergy and parishes to the patriarchal, sergianist church."⁵⁹⁵

On October 16 Karpov sent secret instructions to the regions not to hinder the transfer of renovationists to the sergianists.⁵⁹⁶ Since he wanted the renovationists to join the state church, the rules for their reception were relaxed. Thus in 1944 Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky) severely upbraided Bishop Manuel (Lemeshevsky) for forcing "venerable" renovationist protopriests to "turn somersaults", i.e. repent, before the people, in accordance with Patriarch Tikhon's rules.⁵⁹⁷

As Roslof writes: "The relaxation of rules by the patriarchate reflected the needs of both church and state. The patriarchal synod had full backing from the government and expected to emerge as the sole central authority for the Orthodox Church. So it could afford to show mercy. At the same time, the patriarchate faced a scarcity of clergy to staff reopened parishes and to run the dioceses. Sergii's bishops had problems finding priests for churches that had never closed. This shortage of clergy was compounded by the age and poor education of the candidates who were available. The patriarchate saw properly supervised red priests as part of the solution to the problem of filling vacant posts."⁵⁹⁸

Stalin now needed to convene a council to elect a new patriarch. He convened it "at the beginning of 1945, that is, in time for the official meeting of the heads of the governments of the USSR, USA and Great Britain from February 4 to 12 in Yalta, which had for Stalin a strategically important significance. With this aim, already at the end of November, 1944 a congress of bishops had been carried out in Moscow at which they were given special instructions and commands on the order in which the council was to be carried out and the role of each of them in it. It was here that the projected conciliar documents were drawn up, and the order for the election of the new Soviet patriarch was drawn up. The former Catacomb Archbishop Luke (Vojno-Yasensky), who had been freed from a camp during the war and united to the MP, reminded the gathered bishops of the resolution of the Local Council of 1917-1918 to the effect that the patriarch had to be elected by secret ballot from several candidates. But none of the sergianist bishops decided to support this resolution and the single candidate, as had been planned, remained Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky). Since

⁵⁹⁵ Karpov, in Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 194-195.

⁵⁹⁶ Roslof, op. cit., p. 195.

⁵⁹⁷ See Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, *Mitropolit Manuil (Lemeshevsky)* (Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky), St. Petersburg, 1993, p. 185. Of course, a guilty conscience may also have had something to do with it: both "Patriarch" Sergius and his successor, "Patriarch" Alexis, were themselves "repentant renovationists".

⁵⁹⁸ Roslof, op. cit., p. 196.

Archbishop Luke did not agree with this violation of the conciliar norms⁵⁹⁹, he was, through the efforts of Protopriest Nicholas Kolchitsky and Metropolitan Alexis, not admitted to the council and took no part in it.”⁶⁰⁰

And so, as Sergius Firsov writes, “this Council, like that of 1943, did not have the possibility of restoring the traditions laid down in 1917-18. The new situation forced, not the restoration of the former church order, but the creation of a new one.”⁶⁰¹

The council consisted of four Russian metropolitans, 41 bishops and 141 representatives of the clergy and laity. Also present were the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Georgia, and representatives of the Constantinopolitan, Romanian, Bulgarian, Serbian and other Churches. In all there were 204 participants.

“A significant amount of money,” writes Shumilo, “was set apart by Stalin for its preparation. The best hotels of the capital, the “Metropole” and “National” were placed at the disposal of the participants of the council *gratis*, as well as Kremlin government food reserves, government “ZIS” automobiles, a large government house with all modern conveniences and much else. Stalin was also concerned about the arrival in the USSR of representatives of foreign churches, so as to give an international significance to the given action. As V. Alexeev notes: ‘... By having a local council Stalin forestalled possible new accusations of the council’s lack of competency and representativeness, etc. for the election of a patriarch from the foreign part of the Orthodoxy clergy... So that the very fact of the election of a new patriarch should not elicit doubts, the patriarchs of the Orthodox churches and their representatives from Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia and the Middle East were invited for the first time to Moscow.’ And although in the actual council only three patriarchs – those of Georgia, Alexandria and Antioch – took part, representatives from other local churches also arrived; they were specially brought to Moscow by Soviet military aeroplanes.

“The council opened on January 31, 1945 with a speech of welcome in the name of the Soviet Stalinist regime by the president of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, NKVD Major-General G. Karpov. He noted that the council ‘was an outstanding event in the life of the Church’, whose activity was directed ‘towards helping the Soviet people to secure the great historical aims set before it’, that is, the construction of ‘communist society’.

“In its turn the council did not miss the opportunity yet again to express its gratitude and assure the communist party, the government and Stalin personally of its sincere devotion. As the address put it: ‘The Council profoundly appreciates the

⁵⁹⁹ However, in other respects, Luke was a fervent sergianist. Thus in the Crimea he betrayed a Catacomb priest, Ippolit, to the Soviets.

⁶⁰⁰ Shumilo, *op. cit.*; Fr. Sergius Gordun, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Svyateishikh Patriarkhakh Sergii i Aleksii" (The Russian Orthodox Church under their Holinesses Patriarchs Sergius and Alexis), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), N 158, I-1990, p. 92.

⁶⁰¹ Firsov, *Russkaia Tserkov' Nakanune Peremen* (The Russian Church on the Eve of the Changes), Moscow, 2002, p. 568.

trusting, and to the highest degree benevolent and attentive attitude towards all church undertakings on the part of the state authorities... and expresses to our Government our sincerely grateful feelings’.

“As was planned, the sole candidate as the new Soviet patriarch was unanimously confirmed at the council – Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky). Besides this, a new ‘Temporary Statute for the Administration of the Russian Orthodox Church’, composed by workers at the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church and the chancellor of the MP, Protopriest Nicholas Kolchitsky, was accepted at the council. This Statute radically contradicted the canonical principles of Orthodoxy. ‘This Statute turned the Moscow patriarchate into a certain likeness of a totalitarian structure, in which three people at the head with the so-called “patriarch of Moscow and all Rus” received greater power than a local council, and the right to administer the Church in a still more dictatorial fashion than Peter’s synod. But if the emperors up to 1917 were nevertheless considered to be Orthodox Christians, now the official structures of the Church were absolutely subject to the will of the leaders of the God-fighting regime. Church history has not seen such a fall in 2000 years of Christianity!’ By accepting in 1945 the new Statute on the administration of the Russian Orthodox Church that contradicted from the first to the last letter the conciliar-canonical principles of the administration of the Church confirmed at the All-Russian Local Church Council of 1917-1918, the Moscow patriarchate once more confirmed its own Soviet path of origin and development, and also the absence of any kind of link or descent from the canonical ‘Tikhonite’ Church, which legally existed in the country until 1927.”⁶⁰²

After the enthronement of Alexis, Stalin ordered the Council to congratulate him and give him “a commemorative present. The value of the gift was determined at 25-30,000 rubles. Stalin loved to give valuable presents. It was also decided to ‘show gratitude’ to the foreign bishops for their participation in the Council. The commissariat was told to hand over 42 objects from the Moscow museums and 28 from the Zagorsk state museum – mainly objects used in Orthodox worship – which were used as gifts for the Eastern Patriarchs. Thus, for example, Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria was given a golden *panagia* with valuable stones...

The patriarchs were expected to reciprocate, and they hastened to express the main thing – praise... Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria said: ‘Marshal Stalin,... under whose leadership the military operations have been conducted on an unprecedented scale, has for this purpose an abundance of divine grace and blessing.’”⁶⁰³ The other Eastern Patriarchs also recognised the canonicity of the election, “hastening,” as Shumilo says, “to assure themselves of the support of the head of the biggest and wealthiest patriarchate, which now, moreover, had acquired ‘the clemency [appropriate to] a great power’”.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰² Shumilo, op. cit.

⁶⁰³ Alexeyev, “Marshal Stalin doveriaet Tserkvi” (Marshal Stalin trusts the Church), *Agitator*, N 10, 1989, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁰⁴ Shumilo, op. cit.

The price they paid for the favour of this “great power” was an agreement to break communion with ROCOR. As Karpov reported: “The Council was a clear proof of the absence of religion in the USSR [!] and also had a certain political significance. The Moscow Patriarchate in particular agreed with Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria and with the representatives of the Constantinople and Jerusalem patriarchates to break links with Metropolitan Anastasy, and on the necessity of a joint struggle against the Vatican.”⁶⁰⁵

The MP, having meekly submitted to the rule of the totalitarian dictator Stalin, was now in effect a totalitarian organization itself. All major decisions in the Church depended on the single will of the patriarch, and through him, of Stalin. And this critical dependence on the atheist state continued throughout the Soviet period (and after).

For, as Fr. Sergius Gordun writes: “For decades the position of the Church was such that the voice of the clergy and laity could not be heard. In accordance with the document accepted by the Local Council of 1945, in questions requiring the agreement of the government of the USSR, the patriarch would confer with the Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church attached to the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR. The Statute did not even sketchily outline the range of questions in which the patriarch was bound to agree with the Council, which gave the latter the ability to exert unlimited control over church life.”⁶⁰⁶

The power over the Church that the 1945 council gave to the atheists was revealed in the secret 1974 Furov report of the Council for Religious Affairs to the Central Committee: “The Synod is under the control of the Council for Religious Affairs. The question of the selection and placing of its permanent members was and remains completely in the hands of the Council, and the candidature of the non-permanent members is also agreed beforehand with responsible members of the Council. All issues which are to be discussed at the Synod are first discussed by Patriarch Pimen and the permanent members of the Synod with the leaders of the Council and in its departments, and the final ‘Decisions of the Holy Synod’ are also agreed.”⁶⁰⁷

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Soon after the council, on April 10, 1945, Stalin personally met Patriarch Alexis. “At the meeting, besides Stalin, there took part the people’s commissar for foreign affairs V.M. Molotov, and from the MP Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), who soon became president of the newly created Department of External (i.e. international) Church Affairs (OVTsS), and Protopriest N. Kolchitsky – chancellor of the MP, in charge of questions of international relations. This is how Patriarch Alexis later recalled this meeting: ‘... Full of happiness at seeing face to face him whose name alone is pronounced with love not only in every corner of our country, but also in all the freedom-loving and peace-loving countries, we expressed our gratitude to Joseph

⁶⁰⁵ RTsKhIDNI.F.17.Op.132.D.111.L.27; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 81.

⁶⁰⁶ Gordun, op. cit., p. 94.

⁶⁰⁷ Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, London: Croom Helm, 1986, p. 215.

Vissarionovich... The discussion was a completely unforced conversation of a father with his children.' As V. Alexeev affirms, citing the correspondence between [Patriarch Alexis] Simansky and G. Karpov, at the meeting 'besides discussing intra-ecclesiastical problems, the conversation first of all concerned the tasks of the Russian Orthodox Church in the field of international relations... The Church, according to Stalin's conception, had to play a significant role in facilitating the international contacts of the USSR, using its own channels'. Soon after this meeting, on May 28, 1945, Patriarch Alexis unexpectedly set off on a 'pilgrimage' to the Middle East, where he met not only prominent religious personalities, but also the heads of governments and other influential politicians..."⁶⁰⁸

This foreign trip was to have important consequences for the Russian Church Abroad (ROCOR), which now represented the last public, organized, canonical voice of Russian Orthodoxy and Russian anti-communism. During the Second World War, ROCOR had had its headquarters in Belgrade. However, the approach of the Red Army forced its leadership to flee to Munich. ROCOR Archbishop Seraphim (Ivanov) of Chicago recalled: "The Second World War came to an end. Germany was in dust and ashes. The USSR was at the height of its glory and might. After all, nobody judges the victors. The West was frightened and servile. Europe, you could say, was at the feet of the Bolsheviks. If they had only wanted it, they could have seized Europe within a few weeks. However, something incomprehensible held them back. Chekist bloodhounds were roving around everywhere. All the more prominent anti-communists were being liquidated or seized (the handover of Vlasov and Lienz), while the rest were terrified and in fear and trembling. It was a terrible time.

"ROCOR was going through a terrible crisis. There had been no news about the Synod for many months. At the same time Bolshevik agents were spreading rumours that the President of the Synod, Metropolitan Anastasy, had been killed during a bombing raid, or that he had been taken to Moscow, where he had recognized the Soviet patriarch.

"Many began to believe in the evolution of Soviet power. After all, there were marshals, generals and colonels with almost tsarist epaulettes, orders of Alexander Nevsky, Suvorov and Kutuzov, and finally, by the will of Stalin... 'his All-Holiness the Patriarch of All Russia'. The unification of the whole Slavic world under the aegis of Moscow. While for the émigrés there was, supposedly, a complete amnesty and calls to return to the Homeland, which was opening her motherly embrace to her erring children. It was enough to make your head spin.

"In Russian émigré circles there was great disturbance. With rare exceptions, the anti-communists were in hiding, fearing to speak out. The disturbance also penetrated Russian church circles. Metropolitan Evlogy recognized the Moscow patriarch, and left his Greek jurisdiction. He took a Soviet passport and publicly declared his intention to return to Russia. After him, alas, there followed our Parish metropolitan Seraphim, who previously had spoken out sharply against the communists. Soviet

⁶⁰⁸ Shumilo, op. cit.

agents gave him to understand that he did not recognize the Moscow patriarch, he would put on trial as a war criminal.

“Having surrendered to the communists, Metropolitan Seraphim sent orders to the abroad churches that were subject to him, and also to those that were not subject to him, informing them of his submission to Moscow and demanding that they follow him in commemorating the Soviet patriarch during Divine services. In North America Metropolitan Theophilus also issue an order on the commemoration of the patriarch. Something similar took place also in South America and the Far East.

“At this time our Vladimirovo monastic brotherhood in the name of St. Job of Pochaev succeeded in extracting ourselves from Germany and settling in Geneva. Already as we were approaching the Swiss border we were fortunate enough to receive the news that Metropolitan Anastasy was alive and was with the Kursk wonderworking icon in the German town of Füssen...

“On arriving in Geneva, we immediately wrote to all the Russian ecclesiastical centres that Metropolitan Anastasy was alive and in Germany. This news encouraged and delighted many. In particular, after receiving our happy news, Archimandrite Anthony [in the future archbishop of Los Angeles], the head of our spiritual mission in Palestine, found the strength in himself to push away the patriarch of Jerusalem and the Soviet patriarch who arrived there, and who promised the archimandrite the title of metropolitan if his mission moved into the jurisdiction of Moscow.

“The same thing happened in Shanghai. There they had already begun to commemorate the patriarch, because Bolshevik agents had managed to convince the Orthodox clergy that Metropolitan Anastasy was in Moscow and recognized the patriarch. But immediately our news came from Geneva, they reversed course.

“Together with the rector of the Geneva church, the present Bishop Leonty, we began to make urgent representations for an entry visa for Metropolitan Anastasy into Switzerland. With God’s help, all obstacles were overcome, and two years before the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in 1945, to our great joy Vladyka arrived in Geneva with the Kursk wonderworking icon.

“Vladyka used his time in Switzerland, that is, about six months, to consolidate the position of the Russian Church Abroad. From Geneva it was easy and convenient for him to communicate with the whole of the free world, which it was impossible to do from Germany at that time.

“Vladyka sent telegrams and letters to all the bishops of our Church Abroad, informing them that the Hierarchical Synod existed and was in Germany and that it had been joined by hierarchs of the Ukrainian Autonomous Church led by Archbishop Panteleimon and the Belorussian Church led by Metropolitan Panteleimon. The communications also said that the Synod did not recognize the Soviet patriarch, and for that reason there could be no thought of submitting to him

or of commemorating him in Divine services. All this had a sobering effect on many."⁶⁰⁹

A telegram from Metropolitan Anastasy confirmed the great wonderworker, St. John, Bishop of Shanghai, in his loyalty to ROCOR. But within a few years he was organizing the evacuation of his flock – thousands in number – from China to the small Philippine island of Tubabao in order to escape Mao's communists. From there (after praying for a change in the law on the steps of the Capitol) he managed to get most of them transferred to the United States.⁶¹⁰

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In 1945 it was not only the Red Army and the Soviet Communist Party that triumphed. On their backs the Moscow Patriarchate – already completely controlled by the KGB – was proving its value to its masters, both inside and outside Russia. Ivan Andreev writes: "The Underground or Catacomb Church in Soviet Russia underwent her hardest trials after February 4th, 1945, that is, after the enthronement of the Soviet Patriarch Alexis. Those who did not recognize him were sentenced to new terms of imprisonment and were sometimes shot. Those who did recognize him and gave their signature to that effect were often liberated before their terms expired and received appointments... All secret priests detected in the Soviet zone of Germany were shot."⁶¹¹ "This fact," comments M.V. Shkarovsky, "is partly confirmed by documents in the archives of the security police. In 1944-45 in the camps a whole series of cases on counter-revolutionary organizations was fabricated. In these, many clergymen were sentenced to an increase in their sentence or were shot."⁶¹²

The NKVD GULAG administration made the following decisions: "1. To enrol qualified agents from among the prisoners who are churchmen and sectarians, ordering them to uncover the facts concerning the anti-Soviet activity of these prisoners. 2. In the process of the agents' work on the prisoners, to uncover their illegal links with those in freedom and coordinate the work of these links with the corresponding organs of the NKVD." As a result of these instructions, many catacomb organizations among the prisoners were liquidated. For example, "in the Ukhtoizhensky ITL an anti-Soviet group of churchmen prisoners was liquidated. One of the leaders of this group, the priest Ushakov, composed prayers and distributed them among the prisoners. It turned out that he had illegal links with a [Catacomb] Bishop [Anthony] Galynsky."⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁹ Bishop Seraphim, in Count A.A. Sollogub (ed.), *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' Zagranitsej. 1918-1968* (The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, 1918-1968), Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, New York: Rausen Language Division. 1968. vol. 1, pp. 200-205.

⁶¹⁰ Ajay Kamalakara, "When the Philippines Welcomed Russian Refugees", *Russia Beyond the Headlines*, July 7, 2015.

http://rbth.com/arts/2015/07/07/when_the_philippines_welcomed_russian_refugees_47513.html.

⁶¹¹ I.M. Andreev (Andreevsky), "The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land".

⁶¹² Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, p. 205.

⁶¹³ Irina Osipova, *Khotelos' by vsiekh poimennenno nazvat'* (I would like to call all of them by name), Moscow: Fond "Mir i Chelovek", 1993, pp. 161, 193.

Vitaly Shumilo writes: "An internal result of the Moscow council of 1945 that was positive for the Soviet regime was the fact that, thanks to the participation in it of the Eastern Patriarchs, the appearance of 'legitimacy' and 'canonicity' had been given to this Stalin-inspired undertaking, which led into error not only a part of the Orthodox clergy and hierarchy in the emigration, but also many of the True Orthodox Catacomb pastors in the USSR, who naively did not suspect that there might have been any anti-canonical crimes."⁶¹⁴

"And again, as in the 30s, repressions were renewed against the clergy who did not accept the 'Soviet church'. Thus in Moscow province alone, where there had been more than ten Catacomb pastors in 1941, none were left at liberty by the beginning of 1945."⁶¹⁵

"As was to be expected," continues Shumilo, "thanks to the massive arrests of priest and active parishioners of the Catacomb Church and the opening of churches for the Moscow Patriarchate (MP), the government succeeded in obtaining a reduction in the number of 'headless underground groups', the passive members of which began to turn to the legal clergy, while the 'stubborn fanatics' 'isolated themselves' from the external world. Besides this, for the more successful ferreting out of the illegal communities of the Catacomb Church the MP, too, was drawn in, beginning a 'struggle with sectarianism' with the cooperation of the MGB and the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church. Many instances are known in which monks or priests of the MP, recruited by the MGB, were sent into catacomb communities and informed against their members, in connection with which the most active among them were arrested. The creation of such a system of informing was not slow in producing the results that the regime needed: already by the middle of the 50s Soviet state security had succeeded in revealing and 'dissolving' more than 50% of the Catacomb communities and monasteries in the USSR, thereby stopping both the growth in numbers and the influence of the Catacomb Church on the population."⁶¹⁶

Stalin treated the Catholics much as he did the Catacomb Church - as enemies of the state that had to be exterminated. For Pope Pius XII was a fervent anti-communist, and led the attack on the Yalta agreements in the West. Undoubtedly the MP's "international obligations" included cooperation in the suppression of the Roman Catholics, especially the Ukrainian uniates; and so the NKVD arrested Metropolitan Iosif Slipy of the Ukrainian uniate church in Lvov, together with all his bishops; very few survived their imprisonment in the Gulag. Meanwhile, their flocks were forced to join the Moscow Patriarchate.⁶¹⁷ Those who refused went underground. Similar

⁶¹⁴ Shumilo, "Sovietskij Rezhim i 'Sovietskaia Tserkov'" v 40-e-50-e gody XX stoletia" (The Soviet Regime and the 'Soviet Church' in the 40s and 50s of the 20th Century),

<http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=678>

⁶¹⁵ Shumilo, op. cit.

⁶¹⁶ Shumilo, op. cit.

⁶¹⁷ Raphael Lemkin wrote in 1953: "Only two weeks before the San Francisco conference [of the United Nations], on 11 April 1945, a detachment of NKVD troops surrounded the St. George Cathedral in Lviv and arrested Metropolitan Slipyj, two bishops, two prelates and several priests. All the students in the city's theological seminary were driven from the school, while their professors were told that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church had ceased to exist, that its Metropolitan was arrested and his place was to be taken by a Soviet-appointed bishop. These acts were repeated all

persecution of the Uniates took place in Romania and Czechoslovakia. However, towards the end of the Cold War, in 1989, the Uniates took advantage of the more liberal atmosphere, emerged from the underground and seized most of the MP churches in Western Ukraine.

In this connection his words on the Catacomb Church to the American Polish Catholic priest, Fr. Stanislav Orlemanski, are interesting: "We are not cannibals," he told the priest. "We Bolsheviks have a point in our program that provides for freedom of religious convictions. From the first days of the existence of Soviet power, we set ourselves the goal of implementing this point. But the rebellious conduct of activists of the Orthodox Church deprived us of the possibility of implementing that point, and the government had to accept battle after the church laid a curse of Soviet power [in 1918]. Misunderstandings arose on that basis between representatives of religion and the Soviet government. That was before the war with the Germans. After the beginning of the war with the Germans, people and circumstances changed. War eliminated the differences between church and state, the faithful renounced their rebellious attitude, and the Soviet government renounced its militant attitude with regard to religion."⁶¹⁸

The penetration of the patriarchate by "red priests" - both former renovationists and new recruits to the KGB - meant that the new, post-war generation of clergy was quite different from the pre-war generation. The former renovationists had, of course, already proved their heretical cast of mind, and now returned to the neo-renovationist Moscow Patriarchate (MP) like a dog to his vomit (II Peter 2.22), forming a heretical core that controlled the patriarchate while being in complete obedience to the atheists. Their obedience was illustrated a few years later, when the MP sharply reversed its attitude towards ecumenism, from strictly anti-ecumenist in 1948 to pro-ecumenist only ten years later.

A still clearer sign of their total submission to the atheists was the cult of Stalin that had begun to take root during the 1930s. Thus Fr. Gleb Yakunin writes: "From the beginning of the war and the church 'renaissance' that followed it, the feeling became stronger in the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate that a wonderful act of Divine Providence in the historical process had happened in Russia. God's instrument in this

over Western Ukraine and across the Curzon Line in Poland. At least seven bishops were arrested or were never heard from again. There is no Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church still free in the area. Five hundred clergy who met to protest the action of the Soviets, were shot or arrested.

"Throughout the entire region, clergy and laity were killed by hundreds, while the number sent to forced labour camps ran into the thousands. Whole villages were depopulated. In the deportation, families were deliberately separated, fathers to Siberia, mothers to the brickworks of Turkestan and the children to Communist homes to be 'educated'. For the crime of being Ukrainian, the Church itself was declared a society detrimental to the welfare of the Soviet state, its members were marked down in the Soviet police files as potential 'enemies of the people'. As a matter of fact, with the exception of 150,000 members in Slovakia, the Ukrainian Catholic Church has been officially liquidated, its hierarchy imprisoned, its clergy dispersed and deported." ("Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine", in L.Y. Luciuk (ed), *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008)

⁶¹⁸ S.M. Plokhyy, *Yalta: The Price of Peace*, London: Penguin, 2010, pp. 374-375.

process was, in their opinion, the 'wise, God-established', 'God-given Supreme Leader'."⁶¹⁹

And yet Stalin never changed his basic hostility to the Church, in spite of an elaborately created myth about his meeting with a blind Catacomb eldress Matrona (unknown to the Catacomb Church). In 1947 he wrote to Suslov: "Do not forget about atheistic propaganda among the people". And the murder of True Orthodox Christians, uniates and others in the camps continued...⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁹ Yakunin, op. cit, p. 190.

⁶²⁰ Nikolai Savchenko, in *Vertograd-Inform*, September, 1998, Bibliography, pp. 1, 2.

40. THE TRUE CHURCH AFTER THE WAR

The only real resistance to Stalin's rule in the 20s and 30s had come from the Church. From 1927 his task in destroying and/or subduing the Church had been made much easier when the senior hierarch, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) of Nizhni-Novgorod, who became Patriarch of Moscow in 1944, more or less surrendered the freedom of the Church into the hands of the Bolsheviks in his notoriously pro-Soviet "Declaration". However, the battle was not over; for many hierarchs and priests, and several hundreds of thousands of believers fled into the catacombs to form the so-called Catacomb or True Orthodox Church. After very severe persecutions their numbers had been decimated; but in 1945 the Church still survived, living in the conditions of the greatest secrecy. Moreover, they were supported by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), with its headquarters in Munich and then New York, which became a beacon of anti-communist resistance for Orthodox Christians in the free world and a lodestone of hope for all true believers inside the Union.

ROCOR, writes Serhii Shumilo, "publicly declared its spiritual unity with the Catacomb Church in the USSR not only in frequent articles, but also through official conciliar church statements both under Metropolitan Anastasii (Gribanovskii) and his successor Metropolitan Filaret (Voznesenskii). This can be clearly seen in the encyclicals of the ROCOR Synod and Councils both from the 1950s and from later years.

"In an encyclical from 1965, the First Hierarch of the ROCOR Metropolitan Filaret emphasises that the ROCOR 'has never broken its spiritual and prayerful connection to the Catacomb Church in the motherland.' At the same time he draws attention to the fact that after the Second World War, among the new wave of *émigrés* from the USSR were quite a number of former parishioners of the Catacomb Church who had joined the ROCOR. In this way, in his words, 'the link between these two churches has been further strengthened.' This is precisely the explanation for the fact that, after the Second World War, the catacomb church began to be spoken about more actively within the ROCOR. Moreover, the Metropolitan underlines that this link between the ROCOR and the catacombers behind the Iron Curtain 'is maintained to this very day.'"⁶²¹

The lot of the True Russian Church was even more difficult in the post-war years than before the war. Pastors were now even rarer, and they had to hide even deeper in the underground. As Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko) said: "The catacomb believers feared the Moscow Patriarchate priests even more than the police. Whenever a priest came for some reason or other, he was met by a feeling of dread. The catacomb people would say, 'A red detective has come.' He was sent deliberately, and he was obliged to report everything to the authorities. Not infrequently, hierarchs and priests told the people outright, directly from the ambon, 'Look around, Orthodox people.

⁶²¹ Shumilo, "Clandestine Connections between the ROCOR and Catacomb Communities in the USSR from the 1960s to the 1980s", *ROCOR Studies*, October, 2021, <https://www.rocorstudies.org/2021/11/03/9405/>

There are those who do not come to church. Find out who they are and report to us; these are enemies of the Soviet regime who stand in the way of the building of Socialism.' We were very much afraid of these sergianist-oriented priests."⁶²²

Only in the central regions of Tambov, Lipetsk, Tula, Ryazan and Voronezh was there an increase in catacomb activity. Many young people took leading positions in the movement.⁶²³ And in the 1950s there were still quite a few wandering catacomb priests and a few holy bishops, such as Anthony (Galynsky), Peter (Ladygin) and Barnabas (Belyaev).

But if there were few priests, there were many lay confessors. For example, in November, 1950, three nuns arrived at the dreaded Arctic camp of Vorkuta. They were assigned to a plant which bricks for construction work throughout the Russian Arctic. Some have said that these nuns came from Shamordino, since it is known that in the 1930s some Shamordino nuns adopted a similarly uncompromising attitude towards Soviet power.

However, the author of the following account, the American John Noble, indicates that he does not know where they came from. He simply says: "At Vorkuta these women were referred to as *veruiushchie* or believers, the term applied to the Christians in Russia who still carry on personal devotions in secret, not unlike the Christians who met underground in the catacombs and defied the persecutions of Nero.

"When the nuns were first taken to the brick factory, they told the foreman that they regarded doing any work for the communist regime as working for the devil, and, since they were the servants of God and not of Satan, they did not propose to bow to the orders of their foreman despite any threats he might make.

"Stripped of their religious garb, the nuns' faith was their armour. They were ready to face anything and everything to keep their vow and they did face their punishment, a living testimony of great courage. They were put on punishment rations, consisting of black bread and rancid soup, day after day. But each morning when they were ordered to go out to the brick factory, into the clay pits, or to any other back-breaking assignment, they refused. This refusal meant, of course, that they were destined to go through worse ordeals. Angered by their obstinacy and fearing the effect upon the other slave labourers, the commandant ordered that they be placed in strait jackets. Their hands were tied in back of them and then the rope with which their wrists were bound was passed down around their ankles and drawn up tight. In this manner, their feet were pulled up behind them and their shoulders wrenched backward and downward into a position of excruciating pain.

"The nuns writhed in agony but not a sound of protest escaped them. And when the commandant ordered water poured over them so that the cotton material in the

⁶²² Lazarus, "Out from the Catacombs", *Orthodox America*, June, 1990, pp. 5-6.

⁶²³ Shkarovsky, *Iosiflianstvo: techenie v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi*, St. Petersburg: "Memorial", 1999, pp. 192-197.

strait jackets would shrink, he expected them to scream from the pressure on their tortured bodies but all that happened was that they moaned softly and lapsed into unconsciousness. Their bonds were then loosed and they were revived; in due course, they were trussed up again, and once more the blessed relief of unconsciousness swept over. They were kept in this state for more than two hours, but the guards did not dare let the torture go on any longer, for their circulation was being cut off and the women were near death. The communist regime wanted slaves, not skeletons. They did not transport people all the way to Vorkuta in order to kill them. The Soviet government wanted coal mined. Slave labourers were expendable, of course, but only after years of labour had been dragged out of them. Thus the commandant's aim was to torture these nuns until they would agree to work.

"Finally, however, the commandant decided that he was through trying. The nuns were either going to work or he was going to have to kill them in the attempt. He directed that they again be assigned to the outdoor work detail and, if they still refused, that they be taken to a hummock in the bitter wind of the early Arctic winter, and left to stand there immobile all day long to watch the other women work. They were treated to this torture, too. When the pale light of the short Arctic day at last dawned, they were seen kneeling there and the guards went over expecting to find them freezing, but they seemed relaxed and warm.

"At this, the commandant ordered that their gloves and caps be removed so that they would be exposed to the full fury of the wind. All through the eight-hour working day they knelt on that windy hilltop in prayer. Below them, the women who were chipping mud for the brick ovens were suffering intensely from the cold. Many complained that their feet were freezing despite the supposedly warm boots they wore. When in the evening other guards went to the hill to get the nuns and take them back to the barracks, they expected to find them with frostbitten ears, hands and limbs. But they did not appear to have suffered any injury at all. Again the next day they knelt for eight hours in the wind, wearing neither hats nor gloves in temperatures far below zero. That night they still had not suffered any serious frostbite and were still resolute in their refusal to work. Yet a third day they were taken out and this time their scarves too were taken away from them.

"By this time, news of what was happening had spread throughout all the camps in the Vorkuta region. When at the end of the third day, a day far colder than any we had yet experienced that winter season, the bareheaded nuns were brought in still without the slightest trace of frostbite, everyone murmured that indeed God had brought a miracle to pass. There was no other topic of conversation in the whole of Vorkuta. Even hardened MVD men from other compounds found excuses to come by the brick factory and take a furtive look at three figures on the hill. The women working in the pits down below crossed themselves and nervously mumbled prayers. Even the commandant was sorely disturbed. If not a religious man, he was at the least a somewhat superstitious one and he knew well enough when he was witnessing the hand of a Power that was not of this earth!

"By the fourth day, the guards themselves were afraid of the unearthly power which these women seemed to possess, and they flatly refused to touch them or have

anything more to do with them. The commandant himself was afraid to go and order them out onto the hill. And so they were not disturbed in their prayers, and were taken off punishment rations. When I left Vorkuta four years later, those nuns were still at the brick factory compound and none of them had done a day's work productive for the communist regime. They were regarded with awe and respect. The guards were under instructions not to touch them or disturb them. They were preparing their own food and even making their own clothes. Their devotions were carried on in their own way and they seemed at peace and contented. Though prisoners, they were spiritually free. No one in the Soviet Union had such freedom of worship as they.

"What their example did to instil religious faith in thousands of prisoners and guards there at Vorkuta, I cannot begin to describe. Later on, when I had the opportunity as a locker-room attendant for the MVD men to talk with some of the more hardened Russian communists about religion, not one of them failed to mention the Miracle of the Nuns. With a puzzled expression, each would ask my opinion of it. How could such a thing happen, they would say. How could God have saved these women from freezing on that hill!

"I could not answer, except in terms of my own experience with prayer and with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. I told them how I was saved from starvation and said that evidently the nuns had found the same strength through prayer. They were visibly moved by this additional demonstration of the fact that God's power exists.

"The rationalist looks in vain for an explanation of such an event. God showed His hand in a miracle on that hill in the Arctic wastes of Russia and by that miracle brought faith to Vorkuta. Thousands of prisoners were buoyed up in their resistance to Communism. Many communists themselves were touched and an unadmitted hunger in their hearts for religious faith was thereby brought to light..."⁶²⁴

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After the war, ROCOR entered a very difficult period of her existence as bishops and communities left the Church to join Moscow in the throes of a pseudo-patriotic passion for "the Soviet motherland". One of those who resisted this temptation was Archimandrite Philaret, later first-hierarch of ROCOR, who had already suffered torture at the hands of the Japanese conquerors of Manchuria. In 1945 the Soviet armies defeated the Japanese army; later the Chinese communists took control of Manchuria. In the first days of the "Soviet coup" the Soviets began to offer Russian émigrés the opportunity to take Soviet passports. Their agitation was conducted in a skilful manner, very subtly and cleverly, and the deceived Russian people, exhausted from the hard years of the Japanese occupation during which everything Russian had been suppressed, believed that in the USSR there had now come "complete freedom of religion", and they began to take passports en masse. Among those was Fr. Philaret's father, Bishop Dmitri of Hailar...

⁶²⁴ Noble, *I Found God in Soviet Russia*, London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1960, pp. 113- 117, 174-176.

But the son did not love his father more than Christ and the Truth. At this time he was the rector of the church of the holy Iveron icon in Harbin. There came to him a reporter from a Harbin newspaper asking his opinion on the “mercifulness” of the Soviet government in offering the émigrés Soviet passports. He expected to hear words of gratitude and admiration from Fr. Philaret, too. “But I replied that I categorically refused to take a passport, since I knew of no ‘ideological’ changes in the Soviet Union, and, in particular, I did not know how Church life was proceeding there. However, I knew a lot about the destruction of churches and the persecution of the clergy and believing laypeople. The person who was questioning me hastened to interrupt the conversation and leave...”

Soon Fr. Philaret read in *the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* that Lenin was the supreme genius and benefactor of mankind. He could not stand this lie and from the ambon of the church he indicated to the believers the whole unrighteousness of this disgraceful affirmation in an ecclesiastical organ, emphasising that Patriarch Alexis (Simansky), as the editor of the JMP, was responsible for this lie. Fr. Philaret’s voice sounded alone: none of the clergy supported him, and from the diocesan authorities there came a ban on his preaching from the church ambon, under which ban he remained for quite a long time. Thus, while still a priest, he was forced to struggle for church righteousness on his own, without finding any understanding amidst his brothers. Practically the whole of the Far Eastern episcopate of the Russian Church Abroad at that time recognised the Moscow Patriarchate, and so Fr. Philaret found himself involuntarily in the jurisdiction of the MP, as a cleric of the Harbin diocese. This was for him exceptionally painful. He never, in whatever parish he served, permitted the commemoration of the atheist authorities during the Divine services, and he never served molebens or pannikhidas on the order of, or to please, the Soviet authorities. But even with such an insistent walling-off from the false church, his canonical dependence on the MP weighed on him “as a heavy burden, as an inescapable woe”, and he remained in it only for the sake of his flock. When the famous campaign for “the opening up of the virgin lands” was declared in the USSR, the former émigrés were presented with the opportunity to depart for the Union. To Fr. Philaret’s sorrow, in 1947 his own father, Archbishop Demetrius of Hailar, together with several other Bishops, were repatriated to the USSR. But Fr. Philaret, on his own as before, tirelessly spoke in his flaming sermons about the lie implanted in the MP and in “the country of the soviets” as a whole. Not only in private conversations, but also from the ambon, he explained that going voluntarily to work in a country where communism was being built and religion was being persecuted, was a betrayal of God and the Church. He refused outright to serve molebens for those departing on a journey for those departing for the USSR, insofar as at the foundation of such a prayer lay a prayer for the blessing of a good intention, while the intention to go to the Union was not considered by Fr. Philaret to be good, and he could not lie to God and men. That is how he spoke and acted during his life in China.

Such a firm and irreconcilable position in relation to the MP and the Soviet authorities could not remain unnoticed. Fr. Philaret was often summoned by the Chinese authorities for interrogations, at one of which he was beaten. In October, 1960 they even tried to kill him...

As he himself recounted the story, at two o'clock on a Sunday morning Fr. Philaret got up from bed because of a strange smell in his house. He went to the living-room, in the corner of which was a larder. From under the doors of the larder there was coming out smoke with a sharp, corrosive smell. Then he went to the lavatory, poured water into a bowl, returned to the larder and, opening the doors, threw the water in the direction of the smoke. Suddenly there was an explosion and a flash. The fire burned him, while the wave of the explosion lifted him up and hurled him with enormous force across the whole length of the living-room and against the door leading out. Fortunately, the door opened outwards: from the force of his flying body the bolts were broken, and he fell on the ground deafened but alive. On coming to, he saw the whole of his house on fire like a torch. He understood that the explosion had been caused by a thermal bomb set to go off and burn down the house at a precise time.

During this night, at about midnight, a certain Zinaida Lvovna, one of the sisters of the church of the House of Mercy, came out of her house, which was situated opposite the church across the street, and saw some fire engines in the street near the church – but there was no fire. This unusual concourse of fire engines surprised her. About two hours later, when the sound of the bomb awoke her, she immediately went out into the street and saw the fire, which the fire-fighters had already managed to put out. Fr. Philaret was standing on the threshold of the church shaking from the cold and suffering from burns and concussion. Zinaida Lvovna immediately understood that the fire had been started by the communists with the purpose of killing Fr. Philaret. She quickly crossed the street and invited him to enter her house.

But the Chinese firemen, on seeing Archimandrite Philaret alive, accused him of starting the fire and wanted to arrest him. However, the quick-witted Zinaida Lvovna quickly turned to the chief fireman and said: "It looks like you put your fire engines here in advance, knowing that a fire was about to begin. Who told you beforehand that about the fire?" The fire chief was at a loss for words and could not immediately reply. Meanwhile, Zinaida Lvovna and Fr. Philaret went into her house. She put him in a room without windows because she knew that the communists might enter through a window and kill him.

The next day, some young people came early to the Sunday service, but the church was closed, and the house in which Fr. Philaret lived was burned to the ground. The twenty-year-old future pastor, Fr. Alexis Mikrikov came and learned from Zinaida Lvovna what had happened during the night. He asked to see Fr. Philaret. Immediately he saw that the saint was extremely exhausted and ill. His burned cheek was dark brown in colour. But the look in his eyes was full of firm submission to the will of God and joyful service to God and men. Suddenly Fr. Alexis heard him say: "Congratulations on the feast!" as he would say "Christ is risen!" Tears poured down the face of Fr. Alexis in reply. He had not wept since his childhood, and here he was, a twenty-year-old man, on his knees before the confessor, weeping and kissing his hand.

41. THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

In July, 1948 a Pan-Orthodox council was convened in Moscow by the Moscow Patriarchate (in reality, by the KGB, which now had complete domination over all its actions). This was preceded by a celebration of the 450th anniversary of the foundation of the Moscow Patriarchate that was attended by representatives of the Ecumenical, Antiochian, Alexandrian, Greek, Serbian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, Polish and Georgian Churches. (The Georgian Church had been granted autocephaly by Moscow shortly after the Stalin-Sergius pact in 1943. This act was not recognised by Constantinople until the 1990s.) Only Jerusalem, ROCOR and the True Orthodox Churches of Russia, Greece and Romania – that is, the Catacomb and Old Calendarist Churches – were not represented.

When Karpov, head of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Church, learned that Metropolitan Germanus of Thyateira and Great Britain was not arriving in Moscow until after the working days of the Council, he said that “he is well-known to be an English spy”. And about Patriarch Maximus, who had given Metropolitan Germanus this order, he said: “he has long been ill with schizophrenia and must in the near future go into retirement”.⁶²⁵

At the council that took place after the celebrations, only the Churches within Moscow’s orbit and Antioch attended; the others boycotted it, ostensibly on the grounds that only Constantinople had the right to call such a conference, but more probably because they did not wish to involve themselves in the inevitable adulations of Stalin.⁶²⁶

On July 15, 1948 a feast in honour of the participants in the council was laid on by the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church. About 200 people were present. The representative of the Bulgarian Church proposed a toast to Stalin from the communist Prime Minister of Bulgaria. Karpov declared that the guests had become personally convinced in Moscow that the Russian Church was completely free and independent of the State. Metropolitan Germanos of Thyateira praised Stalin and called Karpov a minister who “aids the strengthening and flourishing of Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union”. Metropolitan Elias of the Lebanon said that it was only thanks to Stalin that the flourishing of the Russian Church had been guaranteed throughout the world.⁶²⁷

The council, in line with Stalin’s foreign policy, denounced the West and the Vatican and condemned the ecumenical movement, which was about to receive a new lease of life at the First General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in August-September.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁵ RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 8, l. 30; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, vol. 3, p. 128.

⁶²⁶ Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, November 5, 2005.

⁶²⁷ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 133.

⁶²⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 128-131.

Moscow's hostility to the Vatican was determined especially by its determination to eliminate uniatism in Eastern Europe – that is, churches serving according to the Eastern Orthodox rite but commemorating the Pope. A start had been made already towards the end of the war, when it was suggested to the uniate episcopate in Western Ukraine that it simply “liquidate itself”. When all five uniate bishops refused, in April, 1945, they were arrested.

Within a month a clearly Soviet-inspired “initiative movement” for unification with the MP headed by Protopresbyter G. Kostelnikov appeared.⁶²⁹ By the spring of 1946 997 out of 1270 uniate priests in Western Ukraine had joined this movement, on March 8-10 a uniate council of clergy and laity voted to join the Orthodox church and annul the Brest unia with the Roman Catholic Church of 1596. Central Committee documents show that the whole procedure was controlled by the first secretary of the Ukrainian party, Nikita Khrushchev, who in all significant details sought the sanction of Stalin.⁶³⁰

In October, 1948 the 1,250,000 uniates of Romania (The Romanian unia had taken place at Blaj in Transylvania in 1697) were united with the Romanian Patriarchate.⁶³¹ And in April, 1950, a council took place at Prešov in Slovakia attended by 820 delegates, at which it was agreed to revoke the Uzghorod unia of 1649 and return to Orthodoxy. The “converted” uniates formed a new, East Slovakian diocese of the Czech Orthodox Church.⁶³²

However, as Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia writes, the merger of the uniates infected the MP, which drew a large proportion of its clergy from the Western Ukraine, with the false asceticism and mysticism of the Catholics. And the uniates, “on being merged into the unorthodox patriarchate, did not come to know the grace-filled ‘taste of True Orthodoxy’. The fruits of this ‘union’ are well known to all today.”⁶³³

It is now known that all the decisions of the Moscow council of 1948 were planned a year and a half before by the Central Committee of the Communist Party.⁶³⁴ Consequently it is not surprising to see from the hierarchs’ special epistle that their motives were purely political: “The world is going through a stormy time in which the irreconcilable differences between the Catholic and rationalist-Protestant West, on the one hand, and the Orthodox East, on the other, are clearly manifest... We servants of the Orthodox Church have been painfully impressed by the fact that those who are

⁶²⁹ M.V. Shkarovsky; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 81.

⁶³⁰ Documents in M.V. Shkarovskij, *Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' i Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo s 1943 po 1964 gg.* (*The Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet State from 1943 to 1964*). Cf. Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 105-106.

⁶³¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 137-138.

⁶³² K.E. Skurat, *Istoria Pomestnykh Pravoslavnykh Tserkvej* (*A History of the Local Orthodox Churches*); Monk Benjamin, “Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij” (*Chronicle of Church Events*) <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis4.htm>, part 4, p. 2.

⁶³³ Archbishop Tikhon, “Tiazhkij Iudin grekh pered vsem Russkim narodom” (*The terrible sin of Judas before the whole Russian people*),

<http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=779>.

⁶³⁴ Shkarovskij, *op. cit.*

stirring up a new war are children of the Christian Catholic and Protestant world. We are deeply grieved that from the stronghold of Catholicism, the Vatican, and the nest of Protestantism, America, instead of the voice of peace and Christian love we hear blessing of a new war and hymns in praise of atomic bombs and such-like inventions, which are designed for the destruction of human life. All Christians, regardless of nation and creed, cannot help blaming the Vatican for this policy. We fervently beseech the Chief Pastor, our Lord Jesus Christ, that He enlighten the Catholic hierarchy with the light of His Divine teaching and help it to realize the abyss of its sinful fall."⁶³⁵

The most theological contribution to this council came from Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) of Boguchar (Bulgaria), formerly of ROCOR. He prepared three reports: against the ecumenical movement, on the old and new calendars, and on the Anglican hierarchy. Seraphim expressed a "particular opinion" on the calendar question, considering the council's resolution on this question to have been inadequate. In his report against Ecumenism he stressed that the presence of Orthodox representatives at ecumenical conferences, even as observers, constituted apostasy from Holy Orthodoxy. "According to the teaching of the Holy Fathers," he said, "the Grace of the Holy Spirit is manifest in two forms: firstly, as an external, providential Grace, which acts in and throughout the lives of everybody, enabling anyone to accept the True Faith; and, secondly, as an internal, salvific Grace, which revivifies, redeems, and functions solely in the Orthodox Church."⁶³⁶ "...From this, it is obvious who really stands behind the ecumenical movement: Freemasons, longtime foes of the Orthodox Church. It is also clear to what end the ecumenical movement, at all of its gatherings since its inception, has striven: not a dogmatic union of all so-called "Christian churches" with the Orthodox Church, but a commixture of both, achieved by means of the falling away of the Orthodox from their Faith through an ecumenical familiarity with heretics, especially with Protestants. This commixture is equivalent to the destruction of Orthodoxy. Ultimately, when dealing with the ecumenical question, we must recognize that, going back to the very origin of ecumenism, there stands before us, not only the age-old enemies of our Orthodox Church, but the father of lies and ruin himself—the Devil. In former centuries, he sought to destroy the Holy Church by assaulting Her with all sorts of heresies, specifically, by trying to mix Orthodox with heretics. And he is doing this now by using ecumenism and its inexhaustible Masonic capital."⁶³⁷

⁶³⁵ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate)*, 1948, N 12, p. 6; cited in Yakunin, "V sluzhenii k kul'tu (Moskovskaia Patriarkhia i kul't lichnosti Stalina)" (In the Service of the Cult (the Moscow Patriarchate and Stalin's Cult of Personality), in Furman, D.E., Fr. Mark Smirnov (eds.), *Na puti k svobode sovesti (On the Path to Freedom of Conscience)*, Moscow: Progress, 1989, p. 197.

⁶³⁶ Archbishop Seraphim, in Schemanun Seraphima, *Saint Seraphim of Sophia*, Etna, Ca., 2008, pp. 96-97.

⁶³⁷ <http://www.dep.church/downloads/StSeraphimEcumenism.pdf>. Protopriest G. Razumovsky also spoke well: "The Russian Orthodox Church," he said, "had always taught and still teaches that Pentecost, or the descent of the Holy Spirit, has already taken place and that the Christians do not have to wait for a new appearance of the Holy Spirit, but the glorious Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The diminution of the significance of the single sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the prophecy of a future 'third hour', in which the expected Kingdom of the Holy Spirit will be revealed is characteristic of the teaching of the Masons and the heretics; while the newly revealed prophecy of the expected

All this was said in anticipation and condemnation of the First General Assembly of the World Council of Churches that came together in August, 1948 in Amsterdam. In it two ecumenical movements, "Faith and Order" and "Life and Work", were united into a new organization, the World Council of Churches, the ecclesiastical equivalent of the United Nations. Being the only Orthodox Church that had not participated in the council of Moscow that condemned ecumenism in the same year, Constantinople was the only Orthodox jurisdiction besides the Cypriot Church present at this essentially Protestant assembly.⁶³⁸ Moscow was invited, but declined, seeing in the WCC a plot by the Vatican and the western imperialists. Metropolitan (and MGB agent) Nicholas of Krutitsa berated his ecclesiastical opponents, expressing the hope that the World Council of Churches would not count as representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church either those Russian Orthodox believers who were under the *omophorion* of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, or the Russian "schismatic" groups led by Metropolitan Theodosius in America and Metropolitan Anastasy in Munich, who had nothing in common with the true Russian Orthodox Church.⁶³⁹ In view of this, it is not surprising that ROCOR, too, was not invited. She would in any case have declined because "we do not participate in the ecumenical movement".⁶⁴⁰ This decision was in line with a gradual disillusion by ROCOR with the ecumenical movement experienced in the inter-war years, culminating in the words of the Second All-Diaspora Council in 1938: "Resolutions of ecumenical conferences often suffer from vagueness, diffusiveness, reticence and a nuance of compromise..."⁶⁴¹

Ecumenical Pentecost can be nothing other than an old echo of the false teaching of these deceived heretics."

⁶³⁸ Fr. George Macris, *The Orthodox Church and the Ecumenical Movement*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 1986, pp. 12-14.

⁶³⁹ "The Moscow Patriarchate and the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches", *The Ecumenical Review*, 12, Winter, 1949, pp. 188-189; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 133-134.

⁶⁴⁰ Archive of the Hierarchical Synod, delo 5-48; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 133. This remark was made by the Synod of Bishops on February 21, 1948 in response to a request from Professor M.V. Zyzykin that they participate in the Amsterdam Congress (Andrew Psarev, "The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia's Attitude Toward Other Local Orthodox Churches", http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 6).

⁶⁴¹ Quoted in Ludmilla Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism - A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 13. Cf. Archimandrite Kiprian (Kern) in 1947: "The state of 'ecumenical' meetings today is deplorable, noisy gatherings of all manner of activists lacking in theological authority, who meet without any common language of tradition or criteria, or any single plan or program. Attendees are people who are totally diverse in every way, placed on the same level—a Greek metropolitan, a liberalizing professor with a priestly title or simply a layman, an amateur church publicist lacking any claim to theological training, young students from Anglican colleges, young girls from nameless and mysterious world organizations, and official reviewers from the Intelligence Service. And all of them traveling at someone's expense in sleeping cars and airplanes, staying in the best hotels, and announced by posters, brochures, speeches, meetings, etc. These meetings conclude with resolutions of some sort, premature recognitions of hierarchy and ordinations on the part of the Romanian Church or a liberalizing theologian from the Balkans—and all this in an atmosphere of international tension, a desire to guarantee one's own boundaries and hastily acquired territories, a lust for oil and markets, and so on and so on."

A.V. Soldatov has chronicled the progressive weakening in the Orthodox position: "At the conference [of Faith and Order] in Geneva in 1920 the spirit of extreme Protestant liberalism gained the upper hand. It came to the point that when the Orthodox Metropolitan Stephen of Sophia noted in his report: 'The Church is only there where the hierarchy has apostolic succession, and without such a hierarchy there are only religious communities', the majority of the delegates of the conference left the hall as a sign of protest. At the next conference on Faith and Order [in Lausanne] in 1927, victory again went to the extreme left Protestants. The Orthodox delegation, experiencing psychological pressure at this conference, was forced to issue the following declaration: 'in accordance with the views of the Orthodox Church, no compromises in relation to the teaching of the faith and religious convictions can be permitted. No Orthodox can hope that a reunion based on disputed formulae can be strong and positive... The Orthodox Church considers that any union must be based exclusively on the teaching of the faith and confession of the ancient undivided Church, on the seven Ecumenical Councils and other decisions of the first eight centuries.' But the numerous speeches of the Orthodox explaining the teaching of the Church on the unity of the Church seemed only to still further increase the incomprehension or unwillingness to comprehend them on the part of the Protestant leaders of Ecumenism. This tendency was consistently pursued by the Protestants at the conferences in 1937 in Oxford and Edinburgh. Summing up this 'dialogue' at the beginning of the century, Fr. Metrophanes Znosko-Borovsky remarks: 'The Orthodox delegates at Edinburgh were forced with sorrow to accept the existence of basic, irreconcilable differences in viewpoint on many subjects of faith between the Orthodox East and the Protestant West.'

"After the Second World War, the World Council of Churches was created. It is necessary to point out that the movements 'Faith and Order' and 'the Christian Council of Life and Work' were viewed by their organizers as preparatory stages in the seeking of possible modes of integration of 'the Christian world'. The World Council of Churches differed from them in principle. It set out on the path of 'practical Ecumenism' for the first time in world history, declaring that it was the embryo of a new type of universal church. The first, so to speak founding conference of the WCC in Amsterdam chose as its motto the words: 'Human disorder and God's house-building'. At it, as Archbishop Vitaly remarks, 'every effort was made to destroy the teaching on the One, True, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'. The leading theological minds of the Protestant world made a series of reports at the Amsterdam conference, in which they focused with particular clarity the whole depth of the dogmatic and theological disintegration of the Protestant faith and, in particular, ecclesiology. The conclusion of the report of Gustav Aulen became the basic, single dogma of the organization being created: 'The Church is as it were a synthesis of all churches.' Another speaker, Clarence Craig, somewhat deepened the arguments of his colleague with the help of a suggested variant translation of the word 'catholic' (or 'conciliar' in the Slavonic translation of the Symbol of Faith) as 'integral'. But of particular interest for us was the speech at this conference of the Orthodox priest, noted theologian and Church historian [of the Ecumenical Patriarchate], Fr. Georges Florovsky. Having noted that 'the Bible, dogmatics, catechesis, Church discipline, Liturgy, preaching and sacrament have become museum exhibits', Fr. Georges concluded: 'the only salvation in the work of reviving the Church is in the ecumenical

movement'. He affirmed that 'the Church has not yet defined herself, has not worked out her own theological school definition, does not have her own definition, has not yet recognized herself.'"

According to the rules agreed in Amsterdam, an applicant to the WCC must "recognize the essential interdependence of the churches, particularly those of the same confession, and must practise constructive ecumenical relations with other churches within its country or region. This will normally mean that the church is a member of the national council of churches or similar body and of the regional ecumenical organisation." (*Rules of the WCC*) And article I of the WCC Constitution reads: "The World Council of Churches is a *fellowship of churches* which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures (*sic*) and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."⁶⁴²

The Constitution also declares that the primary purpose of the fellowship of churches in the World Council of Churches is to call one another to "visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe".

Further, according to Section II of the WCC Rules, entitled *Responsibilities of Membership*, "Membership in the World Council of Churches signifies faithfulness to the Basis of the Council, fellowship in the Council, participation in the life and work of the Council and commitment to the ecumenical movement as integral to the mission of the church."

Acceptance of these terms clearly entailed a Protestant ecclesiology that includes in the "Church" almost every conceivable variety of "Christian" belief. In fact, as time went on, the WCC became the home of almost every heresy and religion. In 1968, before inter-Christian ecumenism had graduated to inter-religious ecumenism, the famous Serbian theologian and Archimandrite Justin Popovich counted 263 heresies confessed by the WCC!⁶⁴³

Therefore the struggle between the truly universal Church and the ecumenist World Council of Churches became the most important struggle on the planet in the second half of the twentieth century. For, as Fr. Justin Popovich put it, bewailing the Serbian Church's participation in the World Council of Churches: "We are renouncing the Orthodox Faith of the God-Man Christ, and organic ties with the God-Man and His Most Holy Body: we are repudiating the Orthodox Church of the holy apostles, the Fathers, and the Ecumenical Councils – and we wish to become 'organic members' of a heretical, humanistic, humanized and man-worshipping club, which consists of 263 heresies – every one of which is a spiritual death.

⁶⁴² Soldatov, "Pravoslavie i Ekumenizm" (Orthodoxy and Ecumenism), *Mirianin* (Layman), July-August, 1992, p. 8.

⁶⁴³ *A Time to Choose*, Libertyville, Ind.: Free Serbian Orthodox Diocese, 1981, p. 53.

“As Orthodox Christians we are ‘members of Christ.’ ‘Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute?’ (I Corinthians 6.15). We are doing this by our organic union with the World Council of Churches, which is nothing other than the rebirth of atheistic man, of pagan idolatry.

“The time has finally come for the patristic Orthodox Church of Saint Sabbas, the Church of the holy apostles and Fathers, of the holy confessors, martyrs and new-martyrs, to stop mingling ecclesiastically and hierarchically with the so-called ‘World Council of Churches’, and to cast off forever any participation in joint prayer or services, and to renounce general participation in any ecclesiastical dealings whatsoever, which are not self-contained and do not express the unique and unchangeable character of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church – the Orthodox Church – the only true Church that has ever existed.”⁶⁴⁴

Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky writes: "If one combines the various Christian confessions which are weak in faith, weak in spirit, and weak in their influence on social life, then, in our age of religious scepticism, a power will be created, a power which would be able to oppose the anti-Christian powers of the world ... In terms of ecumenism, what does ‘the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth’ mean? It means the social erection of the future world on earth. The new world must replace the former, old, decrepit, and supposedly destined-for-wreckage, social structure on earth. Now all attention, all strivings of Christianity, must be directed towards the idea, not of the personal salvation of each person, not concerning one's soul, not about the future eternal life, but of building a society on new foundations. From this it is determined that the church of our time is the ‘serving church,’ dienende Kirche, i.e., is to serve social aims. Even before the formation of ecumenical organizations these ideas were born in the minds of those active in Protestantism ... There can be no doubt but that the ecumenical movement is being joined and supported by, if not directed by, secret and overt world organizations who are alien to religious tasks, and perhaps even inimical to them. Finally, while there is expressed a hope that ecumenism may help to oppose the advance of godlessness and anti-Christian forces in the world struggle, the USSR sends its own people to the ecumenical council and the World Council of Churches, as if in the name of the Soviet Church. A permanent representative from this church has been dispatched to Geneva as a member of the secretariat of the World Council of Churches (Archpriest Borovoy). In such a manner the Soviets will control all the activities of the World Council of Churches. It is evident that participation of representatives from the Soviet Church was expressed at the ecumenical assemblage at New Delhi, and likewise at the Orthodox gathering on the island of Rhodes, in that no one had the right to raise a voice concerning a struggle with atheism. Red Moscow, according to the directives of Lenin, utilizes such doubtful coalitions until it sees benefit for itself, in the conviction that such a doubtful ally can easily be discredited, discarded, and destroyed at the opportune time ... What a difference in interpretation of the Kingdom of God in the above understanding, and there in modern Christianity! Well, well! - they interrupt us - to hand over the earth to blind and evil forces, and think only for the salvation of one's own soul! This is what you continue to call for... - No, we answer. We continue merely by indicating

⁶⁴⁴ Popovich, in *A Time to Choose*, op. cit., p. 53.

the words of Christ: Seek ye first of all the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you, seek the heavenly and the earthly will be added. For Christians the heavenly kingdom begins already here, bright and blessed, a pledge of the future eternal life. It blesses earthly life, not only individual life, but also the life of Christian communities. It orders it, lightens it, makes it blessed. It introduces brotherly relations into society and transforms the most difficult experiences in life into light ones, as it already has been tested through numerous examples in the history of Christianity ... This earthly reflection of heaven may indeed take on broader dimensions, spreading to the life of the society and the state. But for this there must be faith and prayer in the first place. Nothing of this sort will be attained if we turn our gaze away from heaven and towards the earth. Without faith and prayer, let life even be happy and without sorrow, yet it will not be the Kingdom of God. Why does ecumenism, for the sake of the idea of building the Kingdom of God on earth, abandon Christian teaching concerning the salvation of the soul? For the reason that faith in external life has completely weakened it, if not caused it to be lost altogether, because their total view of reality is limited to earthly life."

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Nevertheless, until the late 1950s, the participation of the Orthodox Churches in the ecumenical movement was hesitant and strained. Thus even Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, himself an extreme ecumenist, put restrictions on Orthodox participation in his 1952 encyclical: "Orthodox clergy must refrain from joint concelebrations with non-Orthodox, since this is contrary to the canons, and blunts consciousness of the Orthodox confession of faith."⁶⁴⁵ Again, at the Second General Assembly at Evanston (1954) the Orthodox delegates declared: "We are bound to declare our profound conviction that the Holy Orthodox Church alone has preserved in full and intact the Faith once delivered to the saints."⁶⁴⁶

Again, at the Faith and Order conference at Oberlin (1957), which was centred on the theme, "The Unity we Seek", the Orthodox declared: "'The Unity we Seek' is for us a given Unity which has never been lost, and, as a Divine gift and an essential mark of Christian existence, could not have been lost... For us, this Unity is embodied in the Orthodox Church."⁶⁴⁷

The Orthodox Churches were restrained especially by the fear that the Western Christians would use the ecumenical movement to achieve by peaceful means what they had failed to achieve by force (for example, in the Catholic genocide of the Serbs of Croatia in 1941). In the case of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the fear of losing the holy places to the Catholics and Protestants played an important role. And so widespread and whole-hearted participation of the Orthodox in the ecumenical movement had to wait until, on the one hand, the KGB masters of the East European Churches decided that their vassals' participation in the movement was in the interests of world communism, and on the other, the Catholics themselves began to

⁶⁴⁵ Macris, op. cit., pp. 8-9; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, p. 15.

⁶⁴⁶ Macris, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶⁴⁷ Macris, op. cit., p. 11.

recognize the Orthodox as “equal partners” in the Second Vatican Council (1959-1964).⁶⁴⁸

Athenagoras, however, probably in response to pressure from his fellow Freemasons, began to make feelers towards Rome. Thus on March 17, 1959, at the request of Athenagoras, Archbishop Iakovos of North America, a Freemason of the 33rd degree, met Pope John XXIII, the first such meeting for 350 years. The archbishop said: “Your All-Holiness, my patriarch had entrusted me to inform you that the sixth verse of the first chapter of the Gospel of John speaks about you. He is convinced that the man sent from God is precisely you, and the seventh verse explains the meaning of his embassy – ‘he came for a witness, to witness about the light, that all should believe through him’. And so you were elected for this end, although in your essence you are not the light, but you were raised to the Roman see ‘to witness to the light’.”⁶⁴⁹

In April, 1961, Iakovos began to develop a new theology of ecumenism, declaring: “We have tried to rend the seamless robe of the Lord – and then we cast ‘arguments’ and ‘pseudo-documents’ to prove – that ours is the Christ, and ours is the Church... Living together and praying together without any walls of partition raised, either by racial or religious prejudices, is the only way that can lead surely to unity.”⁶⁵⁰

In April, 1963, Iakovos said: “It would be utterly foolish for the true believer to pretend or to insist that the whole truth has been revealed only to them, and they alone possess it. Such a claim would be both unbiblical and untheological... Christ did not specify the date nor the place that the Church would suddenly take full possession of the truth.”

This statement, which more or less denied that the Church is, as the Apostle Paul said, “the pillar and ground of the Truth” (I Timothy. 3.15), caused uproar in Greece and on Mount Athos.

However, Athenagoras supported Iakovos, calling his position “Orthodox”.⁶⁵¹ “Let the dogmas be placed in the store-room,” he said. “The age of Dogma has passed.”⁶⁵² From this time on, the two Masons went steadily ahead making ever more flagrantly anti-Orthodox statements. There was some opposition from more conservative elements in the autocephalous Churches. But the opposition was never large or determined enough to stop them...

At a meeting of the Faith and Order movement in Montreal in 1963, a memorandum on “Councils of Churches in the Purpose of God” declared: “The Council [WCC] has provided a new sense of the fullness of the Church in its unity,

⁶⁴⁸ The ground for this was being prepared already in 1952, when Pope Pius XII issued an Apostolic Epistle declaring (falsely) that before the council of Florence in 1439 there had been no break between the Russian Church and the Papacy (Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, p. 15).

⁶⁴⁹ *Information*, N 1, 1994 (Vatican); Monk Benjamin, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis4.htm>, part 4, p. 33.

⁶⁵⁰ “The Unity of Christian Churches”, cited in Macris, op. cit., p. 23.

⁶⁵¹ Macris, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

⁶⁵² Hieromonk Damascene, op. cit., p. 395.

holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. These marks of the Church can no longer be simply applied to our divided churches, therefore." Although this memorandum was not accepted in the end because of Fr. Georges Florovsky's objections, it showed how the WCC was encroaching on the Orthodox Church's understanding of herself as the One Church.

Indeed, it could be argued that the Orthodox participants had already abandoned this dogma. For as early as 1950 in Toronto, 1950 the WCC's Central Committee had agreed that an underlying assumption of the WCC was that the member-churches "believe that the Church of Christ is more inclusive than the membership of their own body".⁶⁵³

At the Second Pan-Orthodox Conference in Rhodes in 1963, the sending of observers to the Second Vatican Council was discussed. There was much disagreement, and eventually a compromise was reached: every Local Church should make the decision independently.⁶⁵⁴ It was unanimously agreed that the Orthodox should enter into dialogue with the Catholics, provided it was "on equal terms". In practice, this meant that the Catholics should abandon their eastern-rite missions in Orthodox territories. The Catholics have never shown much signs of wishing to oblige in this, but they did help to make a dialogue easier by redefining the Orthodox, in Vatican II's decree on Ecumenism, as "separated brethren" rather than "schismatics".

By this time the Orthodox had ceased to issue separate statements at ecumenical meetings outlining the ways in which the Orthodox disagreed with the majority Protestant view. "As Father Georges [Florovsky] put it, American Protestants were not alone in seeking within the World Council to stress common elements and to discount the issues that divide. There were also respected Orthodox leaders under the sway of the spirit of adjustment. Certainly on the Russian side there were roots for another approach. As Alexander Schmemmann has said of the development of Russian theology in the emigration, in the 1920s and 1930s there had arisen two different approaches to the very phenomenon of the Ecumenical Movement and to the nature of Orthodox participation in it. On the one hand we find theologians who acknowledge the Ecumenical Movement as, in a way, an ontologically new phenomenon in Christian history requiring a deep rethinking and re-examination of Orthodox ecclesiology as shaped during the "non-ecumenical" era. Representative names here are those of Sergei Bulgakov, Leo Zander, Nicholas Zernov, and Pavel Evdokimov. This tendency is opposed by those who, without denying the need for ecumenical dialogue and defending the necessity of Orthodox participation in the Ecumenical Movement, reject the very possibility of any ecclesiastical revision or adjustment and who view the Ecumenical Movement mainly as a possibility for an Orthodox witness to the West. This tendency finds its most articulate expression in the writing of Florovsky."⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵³ Ulrich Duckrow, *Conflict over the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 1981, pp. 31, 310.

⁶⁵⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 13.

⁶⁵⁵ Andrew Blane, *Georges Florovsky*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993, pp. 124-125.

42. THE ECCLESIASTICAL GLORIFICATION OF STALIN

Meanwhile, as it continued to chastise the West for its supposed political sins, and opposing the WCC as a capitalist conspiracy (which, in a sense, it was – a by no means secret conspiracy against God and the Orthodox faith), the MP did not cease to glorify Stalin in the most shameful way, having truly become “the Soviet church”, the State Church of the Bolshevik regime. Already during the war, the cult of Stalin, probably the greatest persecutor in the history of the Church, reached idolatrous proportions. He was “the protector of the Church”, “the new Constantine”. The first issues of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, as we have seen, were filled with oleaginous tributes to the “God-given Supreme Leader”. And yet Stalin never changed his basic hostility to the Church. In 1947 he wrote to Suslov: “Do not forget about atheistic propaganda among the people”. And the bloodletting in the camps continued...⁶⁵⁶

Together with the cult of Stalin went the enthusiastic acceptance of communist ideology and studied refusal to contemplate the vast scale of its blasphemies and cruelties. Thus just after the war the MP expressed itself as follows concerning the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: “On this day in all the cathedrals, churches and monasteries of our country there will be offered the bloodless Sacrifice, whose beginning was laid by Him Who brought into the world the ideas of love, justice and equality. Deeply moved church-servers will come out onto the ambons and bless their children to hurry from the churches to the voting urns. They will bless them to cast their votes for the candidates of the bloc of communists... They themselves will cast their votes... The ideal of such a person is – Stalin...”⁶⁵⁷

However, the apotheosis of the Moscow Patriarchate’s cult of Stalin came on the occasion of his birthday in 1949, when a “Greeting to the Leader of the peoples of the USSR” was addressed to him in the name of the whole Church.⁶⁵⁸

“Without the slightest hesitation,” write Fr. Gleb Yakunin and a group of Orthodox Christians, “we can call this address the most shameful document ever composed in the name of the Church in the whole history of the existence of Christianity and still more in the thousand-year history of Christianity in Rus’.”⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁶ Nikolai Savchenko, in *Vertograd-Inform*, September, 1998, Bibliography, pp. 1, 2.

⁶⁵⁷ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), N 1, 1946; quoted in *Obnovlentsy i Moskovskaia Patriarkhia: preemstvo ili evoliutisia?* (The Renovationists and the Moscow Patriarchate: Succession or Evolution?), Suzdal, 1997, p. 13.

⁶⁵⁸ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), N 12, 1949.

⁶⁵⁹ Cited in Potapov, *What is False is also Corrupt*, p. 223. Cf. *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii*, 1949, N 12, pp. 5-11; Babkin, op. cit., pp. 3-5; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 144-145. No less odious was the letter of congratulation sent by Catholicos Kallistrat of Georgia to Stalin: “On the day of your seventieth birthday, we, the believers and clergy of the Georgian Catholicosate, send you, our near and dear Joseph Vissarionovich, our ardent and heart-felt congratulations and wishes that your health remain unbroken and that you have a long life for the good of the whole of humanity. In the course of the first seventy years of your life, through unceasing activity and that immortal creation, your Constitution, you have strengthened in the hearts of the workers of the whole world the evangelical behests of brotherhood, unity and freedom, which elicits disagreement in those who consider themselves guides of the blind, light for those in darkness and instructors of the ignorant, and who try to suppress the consciousness that has awakened in men of their lofty human dignity.

Again, in *Izvestia* on March 10, 1953, there appeared Patriarch Alexis' letter to the USSR Council of Ministers: "In my own name and in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church I express my deepest and sincerest condolences on the death of the unforgettable Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the great builder of the people's happiness. His death is a heavy grief for our Fatherland and all the peoples who dwell in it. His death has been taken with deep grief by the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church, which will never forget his benevolent attitude towards the needs of the Church. His radiant memory will never be erased from our hearts. Our Church intones 'eternal memory' to him with a special feeling of unceasing love."⁶⁶⁰ And in 1955 he declared: "The Russian Orthodox Church supports the totally peaceful foreign policy of our government, not because the Church allegedly lacks freedom, but because Soviet policy is just and corresponds to the Christian ideals which the Church preaches."⁶⁶¹

Both ROCOR and the Catacomb Church condemned the MP's cult of Stalin.⁶⁶²

Thus in response to the MP's description of Stalin as "the chosen one of the Lord, who leads our fatherland to prosperity and glory", Metropolitan Anastasy, first-hierarchy of ROCOR, wrote that this was the point "where the subservience of man borders already on *blasphemy*. Really - can one tolerate that a person stained with blood from head to foot, covered with crimes like leprosy and poisoned deeply with the poison of godlessness, should be named 'the chosen of the Lord', could be destined to lead our homeland 'to prosperity and glory'? Does this not amount to casting slander and abuse on God the Most High Himself, Who, in such a case, would be responsible for all the evil that has been going on already for many years in our

"Knowing firmly that it is difficult to kick against the pricks, we hope that in the first years of your second seventy years, the opponents of truth and justice will recover their sight and say: you are right, Joseph Vissarionovich most wise, and righteous are your judgements..." (*Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii*, N 1, 1950.

⁶⁶⁰ The text of the patriarch's speech at the burial of Stalin the previous day can be found here: <http://leontjev-danila.livejournal.com/10723.html>.

⁶⁶¹ Quoted in Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1999, p. 635.

⁶⁶² According to Bishop Ambrose von Sievers (admittedly, a dubious source), it was anathematized by a Council of the Catacomb Church in Chirchik, near Tashkent, in the autumn of 1948. It also anathematized the patriarchate's 1948 council, and declared the canonical leader of the Russian Church to be Metropolitan Anastasy, first-hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad. This Council, which confirmed the decisions of the supposed "Nomadic Council" of 1928, was attended by thirteen bishops or their representatives, and was organized by Fr. Peter Pervushin, who had also played a major role in the 1928 Council ("Katakombnaia Tserkov': Tainij Sobor 1948g." (The Catacomb Church: Secret Council of 1948), *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, N 5 (9), 1997, pp. 12-27). In response to the increase in the infiltration of spies and provocateurs into the ranks of the True Church, the Chirchik Council passed the following canon: "We used to accept sergianist 'priests' and on the basis of the 19th canon of the Council of Nicaea we even ordained some of them with the true ordination. But now we see that they all turned out to be agents of the antichristian power or traitors who destroyed a multitude of Christians. From now on we forbid this; whoever dares to violate our decision - let him be anathema." (*ibid.*, pp. 17-18). This decision was confirmed by a larger Catacomb Council at the Nikolsky Council in Bashkiria in 1961 (Bishop Ambrose (von Sievers), "Katakombnaia Tserkov': Tainie Sobory 1961-81gg." (The Catacomb Church: Secret Councils, 1961-1981), *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, 1998, N 1 (10), pp. 25-26).

land ruled by the Bolsheviks headed by Stalin? The atom bomb, and all the other destructive means invented by modern technology, are indeed less dangerous than the *moral disintegration* which the highest representatives of the civil and church authorities have put into the Russian soul by their example. The breaking of the atom brings with it only physical devastation and destruction, whereas the *corruption of the mind, heart and will* entails the *spiritual death* of a whole nation, after which there is *no resurrection*.”⁶⁶³

The MP's response to this was to denounce ROCOR as being “unpatriotic”: the only true Russian patriots were those who applauded Stalin's destruction of the Russian people. Thus Archbishop Luke of the Crimea (later canonized by the MP) wrote: “More than six years has passed since the first bestowal on his Holiness Patriarch Alexis of the order of the Workers' Red Banner, and now the Government has again bestowed this award on him. For what? For his patriotic activity... Those archpastors and pastors who left the Homeland and their flocks in the years of the greatest upheavals and sufferings, and caused church schisms in Sremsky Karltovttsy, in Paris, in Munich and in North America, have been deprived of patriotism... But we hope our Great Lord and Father Alexis will firmly hold in his hands the rudder of the administration of the Church, paying no attention to the spiteful hissing of the foreign schismatics who call themselves ‘true Orthodox’.”⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶³ I.M Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God present in the Soviet Church?* Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, pp. 32-33 (with some changes in the translation).

⁶⁶⁴ Archbishop Luke (Voyno-Yasenetsky), *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii*, №12, 1952.

IV. ECUCOMMUNISM (1953-1991)

43. ROCOR AT THE CROSSROADS

After the war, ROCOR had to face a difficult problem of self-definition. In her founding Statute or *Polozhenie* she had defined herself as that part of the Russian Church which was outside Russia while still remaining in communion with the "Mother Church" in the Homeland. Thus in 1945 Metropolitan Anastasy declared that the members of ROCOR "have never considered and do not consider themselves to be outside the enclosure of the Orthodox Russian Church, for we have never broken canonical, prayerful and spiritual unity with our Mother Church... We do not cease to thank God for judging that we should remain the free part of the Russian Church. Our duty is to preserve this freedom until we return to the Mother Church the precious pledge entrusted by her to us. A completely competent judge between the bishops abroad and the present head of the Russian Church could be only a freely and lawfully convened All-Russian Council that is completely independent in its decisions, and in which as far as possible all bishops abroad and especially those now in prison will participate. We are ready to give an account before them of all our actions during our sojourn abroad."⁶⁶⁵

In this statement there was no official clarification of what ROCOR's relations with other Local Orthodox Churches in the West were to be, nor precisely who or what constituted the "Mother Church" of Russia, nor who was to be admitted to this All-Russian Council or in what capacity. Nor did any of the ROCOR Councils of the next ten years clarify these matters⁶⁶⁶, in spite of the fact that clarification was becoming

⁶⁶⁵ *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'*, N 6, 1976; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 100.

⁶⁶⁶ The 1946 Council declared that the election of Patriarch Alexis was uncanonical, and on May 10, it decreed: "The Higher Church Administration in Russia in the person of the current Head of the Russian Church Patriarch Alexis has more than once already addressed the bishops abroad with an exhortation to enter into canonical submission to the patriarchate, but, listening to the directions of our pastoral conscience, we do not find it morally possible to acquiesce to these appeals as long as the Higher Church Administration in Russia is found in an unnatural union with the atheistic power and as long as the whole Russian Church is deprived of true freedom, which is inherent in it by its Divine nature."

The November, 1950 Council, after profusely thanking the Americans for the protection they afforded to refugees from religious persecution, and lambasting the "red dragon" of communism, continued: "Insofar as the present Moscow Patriarch, and the other senior hierarchs of the Church in Russia remain closely bound with the atheist Soviet power and are its helpers in its criminal activity, which is directed to the destruction of the Kingdom of God on earth, our Church Abroad remains as before out of all communion with them, praying the Lord only that He enlighten their spiritual eyes and turn them from that disastrous path on which they themselves have started and on which they are dragging their flock.

"At the same time we, her humble servants, kiss the confessing exploit of the Secret or so-called Catacomb Church, whether she is in the dens of the earth or conceals herself in the depths of the Russian people itself, preserving the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience and struggling with the lies spread by the Bolshevik authorities and by the Russian bishops and clergy who have betrayed her.

"The Russian Church Abroad is in unity, love and prayer with all the other Orthodox Churches which have preserved fidelity to the apostolic tradition, to whatever people their members may belong. Still more would she want to preserve unity of spirit in the bond of peace with the children of our one mother, the Russian Church Abroad, trying to overcome the temporary jurisdictional divisions that exist between them."

more and more necessary in view of the ever-increasing deviation of the Local Churches from Orthodoxy.

In view of these ambiguities, it is not surprising that some Catacomb Christians who had fled to the West felt that a different spirit was reigning in ROCOR. Thus Professor I.M. Andreyev wrote: "Not only were we ready to die, but many did die, confident that somewhere *there*, outside the reach of the Soviet authorities, where there is freedom – *there* the Truth was shining in all its purity. *There* people were living by it and submitting to it. *There* people did not bow down to Antichrist. And what terror overwhelmed me when, fairly recently, I managed to come abroad and found out that some people here 'spiritually' recognise the Soviet Church. *Spiritually!* Many of us there fell, 'for fear of the Jews', or giving in to the temptation of outward cooperation with the authorities. I knew priests of the official Church who, at home, tore their hair out, who smashed their heads making prostrations, begging forgiveness for their apostasy, calling themselves Cain – but nonetheless they did not recognise the Red Church. But these others abroad – it is precisely *spiritually* that they submit to it. What good fortune that our priest-martyrs, in dying, did not find out about this betrayal!"⁶⁶⁷

Before the war ROCOR had had no conflicts with any other Local Church with the exception of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with which there was conflict, not so much over the question of the new calendar as over the EP's relations with the Russian renovationists and its "annexation" of large territories formerly belonging to the Russian Church. Although, from a strictly canonical point of view, the Russian refugees should have sought admission into the Local Orthodox Churches on whose canonical territory they lived, these Churches (primarily the Serbian, but also the Bulgarian, the Romanian and the Eastern Patriarchates, especially Jerusalem) did not insist on this, respecting the particular needs of the refugees to stick together in one ecclesiastical organization, and taking into account the desire of the refugees to return eventually to Russia (which most believed would be soon).⁶⁶⁸

However, the triumph of the Soviets in the war dashed the hopes of an early return to Russia. So the refugees had to decide how they were to establish themselves in the

The 1956 Council declared that "the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad is an unsevered part of the Local Russian Orthodox Church, being temporarily self-governing on synodal bases, until the abolition of atheist rule in Russia, in accordance with the resolution of the Holy Patriarch, the Holy Synod and the Higher Russian Church Council of November 7/20, 1920, N 362".

⁶⁶⁷ Andreyev, in *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982, p. 49.

⁶⁶⁸ As late as October 25, 1952, Patriarchs Christopher of Alexandria and Alexander of Antioch made a point of telling ROCOR's Bishop Seraphim (Ivanov) of Chicago that they recognized both the MP and ROCOR, since, as Patriarch Alexander said, "we do not consider ourselves to have the right to be judges in your Russian ecclesiastical quarrel. We have both been in Russia and have seen that Patriarch Alexis has a flock, and quite a numerous one. But we love all the Russians, and for that reason relate with equal benevolence to you, too. A proof of this is the permission [I have given] for the existence in Beirut of two parishes: yours and Moscow's. If you want, serve anywhere you like with us in the confines of my patriarchate." Patriarch Christopher said approximately the same, only asking Seraphim to convey to Metropolitan Anastasy his desire that when appointing hierarchs for Africa, he confer with him about it and saw to it that his name was commemorated in the Russian churches in Africa (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 16).

West on a more permanent basis. This was made more difficult by the fact that the previously friendly attitude of the Local Churches was beginning to change, partly because they were coming under pressure from the MP to break links with ROCOR, and partly because they themselves, as we have seen, were losing the salt of True Orthodoxy and therefore had less sympathy for the True Orthodox Russians in their midst. But in any case, ROCOR showed no sign of wanting to disband its organization and merge with the Local Churches. Thus in 1947 Archbishop Tikhon, the head of the Paris Exarchate, suggested to Metropolitan Anastasy that his Synod come under the Ecumenical Patriarchate, after which he, Tikhon, would enter into submission to ROCOR. Anastasy refused...⁶⁶⁹

However, this suspension of normal canonical rules could not continue forever. In fact, there was only one completely canonical way for ROCOR to re-establish her canonical status while preserving the integrity of her flock under Russian bishops: to declare herself the *only* truly Orthodox jurisdiction in the West in view of the falling away of the Local Churches into the heresies of ecumenism and sergianism. However, the bishops of ROCOR were not prepared to make such a bold step.

The first reason for this was that they did not appreciate how far the new calendarist churches had departed from True Orthodoxy (they had no contact with the Greek Old Calendarists, who could have told them), and they still hoped for support from them and cooperation with them in matters that were of common concern. And secondly, they feared to repel the tide of Orthodox Christians fleeing from the communist nightmare in Russia and Eastern Europe by a too-strict attitude towards the status of the official churches there, to which most of the new wave of refugees had belonged. Instead, while continuing to berate (but not too strongly) the shortcomings of the MP, ROCOR positioned itself, not as the sole representative of True Orthodoxy in the West, but as the “anti-communist church”, that part of the Russian Church which was in freedom and able to tell the truth about the situation in Russia.

This was not a dishonourable position, but it did not resolve the canonical status of ROCOR, and it bore the not inconsiderable danger of exposing its flock to the winds of false doctrine. Anti-communism was part of a truly viable Orthodox ideology, but only a part. If it was allowed to assume a more important role than the struggle against heresy in general, then ROCOR could well find herself dissolving into the modernist jurisdictions around it, and even, eventually, into the MP if the fall of communism in Russia was not followed by a real repentance in the Russian people.

This problem of self-definition was only partly eased by the transfer of the administration of ROCOR to New York in 1950. America was not, and is not now, the “canonical territory” of any single Local Church, so the anomalous position of ROCOR in America (and other western territories, such as Western Europe and

⁶⁶⁹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 121-122. However, ROCOR’s Archbishop Nathanael of Western Europe concelebrated with Archbishop Tikhon in May, 1947 (Archbishop Seraphim of Brussels, “Vospominania” (Reminiscences), *Russkij Pastyr* (Russian Pastor), N 36, 2000; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 122).

Australia) was less prominent there in view of the anomalous position of *all* jurisdictions in the New World. For it is a fundamental tenet of Orthodox canon law that there should be only one bishop for one territory – the division of the Orthodox flock in one place into various jurisdictions along ethnic lines is forbidden, and was even anathematised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the heresy of “phyletism” in 1872.

As we have seen, at ROCOR’s first Council of Bishops in America in 1950, a relatively firm stand against ecumenism was adopted, and ROCOR sanctified its own chrism for the first time. Logically, this should have led to a stricter attitude towards the Orthodox Churches that took part in the ecumenical movement. But under Metropolitan Anastasy this did not take place...

It was at the Hierarchical Council of October, 1953 that the beginning of a real debate on this subject began to surface. Metropolitan Anastasy said: “Archbishop John [Maximovich] says that we have not deviated from the right path pointed out to us by Metropolitan Anthony. We are a part of the Russian Church and breathe with the spirit of the Russian Church of all ages. But it is dangerous to draw from this the extreme conclusion that we are the only Church, and that we need pay no attention to the others or reckon with them. We are going along the right path, and the others have declined from it, but we must not proudly despise the others, for there are Orthodox hierarchs and priests everywhere. The words of Maximus the Confessor are often cited: ‘if the whole universe were to communicate, I alone would not.’ But he said: ‘if’. And when the Prophet Elijah thought that he alone kept the faith, the Lord revealed to him that there were still 7000 others...”

However, Archbishop Averky, supported by Archbishop Leonty, suggested a sharper, more aggressive posture towards the MP, relating to them as to renovationists. Archbishop John replied that the Synod had recently decided to accept Archimandrite Anthony (Bartoshevich) from the MP in his existing rank.⁶⁷⁰ And he recalled, according to protocol № 5 for October 3/16, “that the question of concelebrating with clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate had been discussed at the 1938 Council, and it had been accepted that only Metropolitan Sergius was out of communion.” When Archbishop Averky called the MP “the church of the evil-doers”, Archbishop John replied “that it was important to clarify whether this concerns all those in this Church. Among the rank-and-file hierarchs there are very good men, while a strict examination must be applied to those at the head.”⁶⁷¹

⁶⁷⁰ Archimandrite Anthony later became Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, and the main supporter of the supposedly grace-filled nature of the MP in the 70s and 80s. This is likely to have had something to do with his own career. In 1945, when the ROCOR Synod and chancellery fled from Yugoslavia to Germany, he remained behind and joined the MP. Then, in 1949, having failed to obtain a visa to the USSR he went to Switzerland and was received back into the True Church by his brother, Bishop Leonty of Geneva.

⁶⁷¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 21. Archbishop John continued to retain this “liberal” attitude toward the MP to the end of his life. Thus in a letter dated September 13, 1963 he wrote: “... When under Metropolitan Anastasy they began to speak about ‘the incorrect actions of the Church’, he used to stop them, pointing out that one must not ascribe the actions of the hierarchy to the Church, since the hierarchy is not the whole Church, even if it speaks in her name. On the see of Constantinople there were Paul the Confessor, Macedonius, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Nestorius,

It has been the argument of this book that in this point Archbishop Averky was right and Archbishop John, great saint though he was, was wrong. By 1945 the great majority of the MP hierarchs were ex-renovationists, and “very good” hierarchs must have been very few and far between; and even if they were “good” in a moral sense, their submission to the MP’s submission to the Bolshevik authorities could in no way be counted as good. Moreover, the great majority of the confessing hierarchs of the Catacomb Church, who were in a better position to judge about the MP than the hierarchs abroad, considered the MP to be indeed “the church of the evil-doers”.

As for the necessity of applying a strict examination to those coming from the MP, this had been dramatically proved by the large number of traitors who had infiltrated ROCOR since the war. Already during the war, the renovationist “Bishops” Ignatius (Zhebrovsky) and Nicholas (Avtonomov) had been received, it appears, with the minimum of formalities, and appointed to the sees of Vienna and Munich, respectively, before being removed at the insistence of zealous laymen.⁶⁷² Again, the former renovationist and leading ROCOR hierarch in Western Europe during the war, Metropolitan Seraphim (Lyade) of Berlin, secretly petitioned to be received into the MP “in his existing rank” before his death in 1950 – but was refused.⁶⁷³ Again,

Proclus, Flavian and Germanus. Some of them shone in sanctity and Orthodoxy, but others were the leaders of heresies. But the Church remained Orthodox. During iconoclasm after the expulsion of Severin, Nicephorus and other, not only their sees, but also the majority of Episcopal sees were occupied by Arians. The other Churches did not even have communion with it [the see of Constantinople], according to the witness of St. Paul, who abandoned the heresy and his see, since they did not wish to have communion via the iconoclasts. Nevertheless, the Church of Constantinople remained Orthodox, although part of the people, and especially the guards and the bureaucrats, were drawn into iconoclasm. So now it is understandable when people who are not familiar with the language of the Church use the expression ‘Soviet church’, but it is not fitting for responsible and theological discussions. When the whole hierarchy of South-Western Rus’ passed into uniatism, the Church continued to exist in the person of the believing Orthodox people, which after many sufferings restored its hierarchy. For that reason it is more correct to speak, not of the ‘Soviet church’, which is impossible in the correct understanding of the word ‘Church’, but of the hierarchy, which serves Soviet power. Our relationship to it can be the same as to other representatives of this power. Their rank gives them the opportunity to act with great authority and to substitute the voice of the suffering Russian Church, and it is leading into error those who think to learn from them the true position of the Church in Russia. Of course, among them there are both conscious traitors, and those who simply do not find in themselves the strength to fight with their environment and who go with the current – that is a question of their personal responsibility. But as a whole it is the apparatus of Soviet power, the God-fighting power. Being on the one hand a hierarchy in the sphere of Divine services, for grace works independently of personal worthiness, in the social-political sphere it is a cover for the Soviet God-fighting activity. For that reason those who are abroad and have entered its ranks have become conscious helpers of this power...” (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 13)

⁶⁷² See Chernov, "Proniknovenie Obnovlenchestva v Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi" (The Penetration of Renovationism into the Russian Orthodox Church) (MS); letter of Archbishop Averky to Metropolitan Philaret, September 14/27, 1966.

⁶⁷³ Chernov, "Proniknovenie Obnovlenchestva..." (The Penetration of Renovationism), *op. cit.*, p. 3. However, Archbishop Ambrose (von Sievers), following Chernov, asserts that in July-August, 1950 Metropolitan Seraphim was *secretly* received into the MP. This was followed by his mysterious death at the hands of bandits on August 15, 1950. Archbishop Ambrose explains this by the fact that ROCOR, being a “public-legal corporation” in German law, was the only organization that guaranteed Russian emigrants freedom from deportation back to the USSR. The news that

Metropolitan Seraphim (Lukyanov) of Paris joined the MP, was received back into ROCOR in his existing orders, and then returned to the MP in 1954. Again, among the twelve Belorussian and Ukrainian bishops who were received “in their existing rank” by ROCOR in 1946, at least one proved to be a Judas – Archbishop Panteleimon (Rudyk), whose immorality left a trail of destruction in various countries before he, too, joined the MP.

Stung by these betrayals, on October 14/27, 1953, the Hierarchical Council decreed that “in cases where it is revealed that those who have received their rank from the hierarchy of the MP by the Communists with the intention of preaching in holy orders the Communist principles of atheism, such an ordination is recognized as neither grace-bearing nor legal.”

Again, on November 9, 1959 the Council decreed that “from now on, if clergy of the MP want to enter into the ranks of our Church Abroad: (1) They must be carefully checked to see whether they are conscious agents of the atheist authorities, and if this is discovered, the Hierarchical Synod must be informed. It may not recognize the validity of the ordination of such a person to the sacred rank; (2) in cases where no such doubts arise, he who is petitioning to be received into the clergy of the Church Abroad is to be received through public repentance. Moreover, a penance may be imposed on him as the Diocesan Hierarchy sees fit; (3) such clergy must give a written declaration on their reception in accordance with the form established by the Hierarchical Synod; (4) when laypeople from the flock of the MP are received into the Russian Church Abroad, spiritual fathers must try their conscience with regard to the manner of their actions while they were under the atheist authorities.”

The Council confirmed the following text to be signed by those clergy being received into the communion: “I, the undersigned, a former clergyman of the Moscow Patriarchate, ordained to the rank of deacon (by such-and-such a bishop in such-and-such a place at such-and-such a time) and ordained to the rank of presbyter (by such-and-such a bishop in such-and-such a place at such-and-such a time) and having passed through my service (in such-and-such parishes), petition that I be received into the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. I am sincerely sorry that I was among the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, which is in union with the God-fighting authorities. I sweep aside all the lawless acts of the Moscow hierarchy in connection with its support of the God-fighting authorities and I promise from now on to be faithful and obedient to the lawful hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad.)”⁶⁷⁴

These measures constituted important steps in the direction of greater strictness towards the MP. And at the 1954 Council of the North American and Canadian dioceses Metropolitan Anastasy declared: “[The MP] does not educate the Russian people, but corrupts it, introducing hypocrisy and lies. Historical trials have visited

Metropolitan Seraphim had secretly defected to the MP threatened all these emigrants (Bezobrazniki: K sobytiam v RPTsZ 1945-55gg.” (Hooligans: On Events in ROCOR from 1945 to 1955), *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), N 2 (16), 1999, p. 17).

⁶⁷⁴ Letter of Protopresbyter George Grabbe to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, May 6/19, 1969, in Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Moscow, 1998, pp. 14-15.

us, and from them there is no other exit than by way of repentance. But the corrupt authorities do not allow us to set out on this path, but inspire pride and lead to the path of destruction. And responsibility is shared with this corrupt authority by the Soviet Church.

“Let us keep away from her! We do not confuse her with the Mother Church...”⁶⁷⁵

However, in relation to the American Metropolia Metropolitan Anastasy said at the 1953 Council: “They do not have the fullness of truth, they deviate, but this does not mean that they are without grace. We must maintain objective calm with regard to them. We must strive for such unity on the same fundamental concepts of the Temporary Regulations upon which we stand today. Yet it is fair to say that all unity begins with personal contact: Let us love one another that with one mind we may confess. But we seem to regret that the keenness of jurisdictional quarreling has been dulled. But our goal is unity. Certain boundaries were needed as for disciplinary purposes. Now, when many extremes were abandoned in the American Metropolia, we still sharpen the question and speak of them as heretics with whom we can have no contact. Bishop Nikon said that we are very weak. This is not quite true. But externally, we are weaker than our opponents, who have money and the press on their side. The battlefield is not even. If we elevate the conflict, a very difficult situation will arise.”⁶⁷⁶

So the metropolitan was advocating retaining contacts and not “elevating the conflict” because the position of ROCOR from an external point of view was weak. This policy could be justified at the time in view of the fact that the Metropolia had not yet been absorbed into the MP. However, ROCOR later abandoned it – when the Metropolia was absorbed into the MP in 1970.

With regard to the Eulogians, Metropolitan Anastasy was also lenient. Thus on October 19, 1956, in response to a statement by Bishop Leontius of Chile that ROCOR should treat the Eulogians as renovationists and not permit any concelebrations, the metropolitan said that the Eulogians were different, since they were not heretics.⁶⁷⁷ And yet ROCOR had herself condemned the Eulogians’ teaching on Sophianism as heresy!⁶⁷⁸

Metropolitan Anastasy also said: “Metropolitan Anthony [Khrapovitsky] was guided by this rule of St Basil the Great when he said that he was prepared to accept through the third rite both Catholics and Anglicans. He was of the view that as soon

⁶⁷⁵ *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 10, 1954, pp. 5-6; <http://rocormoscow.livejournal.com/3507.html>, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁶ Quoted in Nun Vassa (Larin), “The Ecclesiastical Principle of *oikonomia* and ROCOR under Metropolitan Anastasy”, a report to the Conference on the History of the Russian Church in November, 2002.

⁶⁷⁷ Fr. Alexander Lebedev, “1956 ROCOR Sobor on Eulogian Jurisdiction”, orthodox-synod@yahoo.com. November 30, 2002.

⁶⁷⁸ True the Eulogian jurisdiction had obtained a retraction of his views from the leading Sophianist, Fr. Sergei Bulgakov. However, the Eulogians did not clearly condemn the heresy, and their jurisdiction continued to be a hothouse of heresy for decades. See Andrew Blane (ed.), *Georges Florovsky*, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

as organic ties to heresy are torn and Orthodoxy is accepted, grace is received, as if an empty vessel were filled with grace. We hold to the principle that we can accept those through the third rite whose thread of succession has not been torn. Even the Armenians, who confess a definite heresy, are accepted in their existing rank. Concerning the Anglicans, the question arose because they themselves are not certain that they have succession. If we accept those who depart from heresy, *how can we not accept our own* [emphasis mine – NV]? They say that Patriarch Alexy sinned more than his predecessor. Whether he sinned more or less, we cannot deny his ordination. Much is said of their apostasy. But we must be cautious. We can hardly make an outright accusation of apostasy. In no place do they affirm atheism. In their published sermons they attempt to hold to the Orthodox line. They took and continue to take very strict measures with regard to the *obnovlentsy*, and did not tear their ties with Patriarch Tikhon. The false policy belongs to the church authority and the responsibility for it falls on its leaders. Only heresy adopted by the whole Church tarnishes the whole Church. In this case, the people are not responsible for the behavior of the leaders, and the Church, as such, remains unblemished. No one has the audacity to say that the whole Church is without grace, but insofar as priests had contact with the devious hierarchy, acted against their conscience, repentance is necessary. There can be no discussion of ‘chekists in cassocks.’ They are worse than Simon the Sorcerer. In this regard, in every individual case, one must make a special determination, and, if there is suspicion that a chekist is asking to come to us, we must not accept him.”⁶⁷⁹

Metropolitan Anastasy’s extremely liberal attitude towards the reception of Catholics, Anglicans and Armenians is perhaps excusable in that it reflects the extremely liberal attitude of the Russian Church as a whole just before the revolution. However, it disagreed not only with prior Russian practice, but also with the practice of the Greek Church, and with the holy canons themselves (for example: the canons decree that Armenians should be received by Chrismation). Fortunately, this illegitimate practice of “*oikonomia*” was officially rescinded by the ROCOR Synod under Metropolitan Philaret in September, 1971, when it was decreed that Catholics and Protestants should henceforth be received by baptism. And when the Copts were once allowed to conduct a service in Jordanville, Metropolitan Philaret ordered that the church be cleansed from the defilement of heresy by holy water!

As regards the Metropolitan Anastasy’s assertion that the MP took “very strict measures with regard to the *obnovlentsy*”, this, unfortunately, was not true. As is well-known, both the first “patriarchs” of the MP, Sergius and Alexis, were former renovationists (*obnovlentsy*), and, far from repenting of their renovationism, they transformed the MP into an institution that was “renovationist in essence” (St. Cyril of Kazan’s words). Still more seriously, as we have seen, it received into the episcopate a whole series of renovationist protopriests with the minimum of formalities.

In his assertion that “the false policy [of the MP] belongs to the church authority and the responsibility for it falls [only] on its leaders”, Metropolitan Anastasy was unfortunately contradicting the teaching of the Orthodox Church, which considers

⁶⁷⁹ Nun Vassa, *op. cit.*

that lay Christians are rational sheep who can and must separate from heretical leaders. Similarly, his assertion that “only heresy adopted by the whole Church tarnishes the whole Church” would not have been accepted by the hierarchs of the Ecumenical Councils. If the hierarchy of a Church adopts a heretical or antichristian policy, then it is the responsibility of all the lower ranks to rebuke their leaders, and if the rebukes fail, to separate from them because they are no longer true bishops (15th canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople).

The OCA Archbishop John (Shahovskoj) tried to argue that the position of ROCOR towards the MP in this period was hypocritical insofar as it simultaneously called the MP apostate and sorrowed over the persecutions in the USSR and the closure of churches, although, according to its logic, it should have rejoiced over the closure of apostate churches. In reply, the secretary of the ROCOR Synod, Fr. George Grabbe, replied that while calling the MP “apostate” and even, in some cases, using the word “gracelessness”, ROCOR never, at any of its Synodal sessions, expressed any doubt that the pastors and laymen belonging to the MP who were faithful to God were true pastors. Then, citing examples of the infiltration of agents into the hierarchy of the MP, Fr. George continued: “That is the gracelessness we are talking about! We are talking about those Judases, and not about the few suffering people who are vainly trying to save something, the unfortunate, truly believing pastors”.⁶⁸⁰

Of course, this answer raised more questions than it answered. If all or most of the hierarchy were KGB agents, and therefore graceless, how could the priests whom they ordained and who commemorated them be true priests? And how could the laymen be true laymen if they communicated from false bishops and priests? Is it possible in general to speak about faithful priests and laity commemorating a faithless and apostate bishop? These questions never received satisfactory answers and continued to give ROCOR’s witness in relation to the MP an ambiguous character for decades to come. Only on one question was ROCOR clear: that it had no communion with the MP Synod. And so it left SCOBA (the Council of Orthodox Bishops of America) in 1956 when the MP became one of its members.⁶⁸¹

With regard to the other Churches of World Orthodoxy, a liberal policy was pursued until the retirement of Metropolitan Anastasy in 1964, and ROCOR hierarchs continued to concelebrate intermittently with both the Greek new calendarists and with the Serbian and Jerusalem patriarchates. Thus in 1948 Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) concelebrated at the consecration of Bishop Michael Konstantinidas of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a friend of Metropolitan Anastasy from the days when the latter lived in Constantinople in the 1920s. Again, Bishop Leontius of Geneva concelebrated with Patriarch Timothy of Jerusalem at the Convent on the Mount of Olives in 1954. Jerusalem had promised Moscow that it would break with ROCOR, and Patriarch Timothy explained to Bishop Seraphim of Mahopac in 1952 that he could not serve at the Holy Sepulchre because the Jerusalem Patriarchate recognized

⁶⁸⁰ Quoted by Deacon Nicholas Savchenko, “Pis’mo otkolovshikhsia” (A Letter of Those Who Have Fallen Away), *Otkliki na deiania Arkhierejskogo Sobora RPTsZ 2000 goda i na prochie posleduiuschie za nim sobytia* (Reactions to the Acts of the Hierarchical Council of the ROCOR in 2000 and to Other Events that Followed it), Paris, 2001, p. 9.

⁶⁸¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 28.

the MP. On the other hand, all heads of ROCOR's Ecclesiastical Mission, as well as the abbesses of the monasteries, were confirmed by official letters issued by the Jerusalem Patriarchate.⁶⁸²

Archbishop John (Maximovich) of Western Europe consecrated several new-calendarist bishops, all of whom left ROCOR for "World Orthodoxy" after his death: Bishop Theophilus (Ionescu) of Detroit and his Romanian new calendarists to the Romanian patriarchate (ROCOR defrocked him in 1972), Bishop John-Nectarius (Kovalevsky) of Saint-Denis and his French mission (following the Gallican rite) to the Romanian new calendar church, Bishop Cyril (Ionev), who had ordained for the Bulgarian new calendarists in North America, to the OCA in 1976, and Bishop Jacob (Akkerduik) of the Hague to the MP in 1971 (he complained that ROCOR wanted to "russify" his flock).⁶⁸³

There was a moment, according to Fr. Roman Pavlov, when the Synod of ROCOR and Metropolitan Anastasy told Archbishop John that he was not right to receive into communion people who used the new Paschalia. Bishop Gregory Grabbe wrote: "The reposed Archbishop John received already organized groups of Frenchmen and Dutchmen who life was conducted according to the new calendar and with the new Paschalia. However, the Council did not agree with this and obtained his renunciation of the latter."⁶⁸⁴

Thus ROCOR was neither in official communion with World Orthodoxy nor clearly separated from it: it existed in a kind of canonical limbo, a Church that consecrated her own chrism but did not claim to be autocephalous, a Church of almost global jurisdiction but claiming to be part of the Russian Church *inside* Russia. The question was: which Russian Church *inside* Russia was it part of – the MP or the Catacomb Church?

The answer to this question was left deliberately vague. On the one hand, there was clearly no communion with the *hierarchy* of the MP, which was seen to have compromised itself with communism. On the other hand, it was said that communion had never to have been broken with the suffering *people* of Russia. But which people

⁶⁸² Andrei Psarev, "The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia's Attitude Towards Other Local Orthodox Churches",

http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 3.

⁶⁸³ See the letter of Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, in Senina, *op. cit.*, pp. 442-443

⁶⁸⁴ "After the death of Vladyka John, in September, 1966 the ROCOR Hierarchical Synod entrusted the leadership of the affairs of the French Orthodox Catholic Church to Archbishop Vitaly (Ustinov). On October 9 Archbishop Vitaly was present at a General Assembly of the FOCC, where he declared that it was necessary to stop celebrating the liturgy according to the western rite and insisted on the complete acceptance of the Byzantine rite. As a mark of protest, on October 19 Bishop John (Kovalevsky) declared that the FOCC was leaving ROCOR. Part of the communities of the FOCC refused to leave ROCOR, but the Gallican rite was preserved among them on condition that the Byzantine rite was used as the main rite (later most of these parishes left ROCOR and joined one of the Greek Old Calendarist Churches). At the end of the same year Bishop John (Kovalevsky) addressed the heads of the Local Orthodox Churches with a request that they receive the FOCC with the keeping of the Gallican rite" (lesolub, <http://www.livejournal.com/users/dodododo/601987.html>, December 12, 2005).

were being talked about? Those who considered themselves citizens of the Soviet state, or those who rejected such citizenship?

In spite of his lack of communion with the MP, Metropolitan Anastasy appears to have considered it to be the “Mother Church”. Thus he wrote to Metropolitan Theophilus of New York: “Your proposed union with the Patriarchate has not only a spiritual, but a canonical character, and binds you with the consequences. Such a union would be possible only if the Mother Church were completely free...”⁶⁸⁵

In 1957, however, in his last will and testament, Metropolitan Anastasy clearly drew the boundaries as follows: “As regards the Moscow Patriarchate and its hierarchs, then, so long as they continue in close, active and benevolent cooperation with the Soviet Government, which openly professes its complete godlessness and strives to implant atheism in the entire Russian nation, then the Church Abroad, maintaining her purity, must not have any canonical, liturgical, or even simply external communion with them whatsoever, leaving each one of them at the same time to the final judgement of the Sobor of the future free Russian Church...”⁶⁸⁶

Again, on October 18, 1959, in his address at the opening of the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR, he said: “We must not only teach others, but ourselves also fulfil [that which we teach], following the examples of the Moscow saints whom we have commemorated today. They stand before us as Orthodox zealots, and we must follow their example, turning aside completely from the dishonesty of those who have now occupied their throne. Oh if they could but arise, they not only would not recognise any of their successors, but rather would turn against them with severe condemnation. With what zeal would St. Philip be set aflame against the weak-in-faith representatives of the Church, who look with indifference at the flowing of the innocent blood of their flock, and yet do not condemn the enemies of the Church, but try in every way to flatter the atheistic authority. How the great adamant St. Hermogen would have arisen in righteous indignation, seeing the hierarchy remaining deceitfully silent at a time when atheist propaganda is being widely disseminated, forgetting that by their silence they are betraying God. Let us in every way turn aside from them, but at the same time let us arm ourselves with apostolic zeal. We must avoid every kind of contact with them like the plague. You know that these people with their thoroughly burned consciences will never cease to wage war against us, although they constantly change their methods of warfare.”⁶⁸⁷

In 1961, moreover, he showed that he had not forgotten the Catacomb Church, declaring in the name of ROCOR: “We consider ourselves to be in spiritual unity precisely with the Secret Church, but not with the official administration of the Moscow Patriarchate led by Patriarch Alexis, which is permitted by the atheist government and carries out all its commands...”⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸⁵ Metropolitan Anastasy, in Fr. Alexis Young, *The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia*, San Bernardino, CA: the Borgo Press, 1993, p. 47.

⁶⁸⁶ Metropolitan Anastasy, in Young, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

⁶⁸⁷ Quoted by Irina Pahlen, “Metropolitane Anastasy” (Metropolitan Anastasy), orthodox-synod@yahoo.com. December 3, 2002.

⁶⁸⁸ Metropolitan Anastasy, in *Nashi Vesti (Our News)*, 1991, no. 4.

Noteworthy, however, is the fact that he said that ROCOR was not in communion only with “the official administration of the MP”, not with the rank-and-file believers. And the Epistle of the Hierarchical Council of 1962, while rebuking the atheists, expressed sympathy for the simple believers and even for the simple priests, while the Great-Martyr Great Russian Church was identified with the whole of the church people, *including those in the Moscow Patriarchate*, but excluding “the small group of clergy having the right to a legal existence”.⁶⁸⁹ But how could the priests be inside the Church and the people they served outside it? This was ecclesiological nonsense!

This kind of ambiguity in relation to the Church in Russia was displayed also by Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of Jordanville, who had once served the liturgy on his own breast in a Polish prison. He could, in one and the same article, fiercely criticise Sergius’ policies as leading to the destruction of the Church and express “profound reverence before the exploit of Patriarch Sergius”.⁶⁹⁰ However, his final verdict is negative, being fully in the spirit of the Catacomb Church: “They say: the patriarchate has changed nothing, in dogmas, services or rites. No, we reply, the patriarchate has destroyed the essential dogma of the Church of Christ, and has rejected Her essential mission – to serve the regeneration of men, and has replaced it by the service of the godless aims of communism, which is unnatural for the Church. This falling away is more bitter than all the previous Arianisms, Nestorianisms, Iconoclasms, etc. And this is not the personal sin of one or another hierarch, but the root sin of the Moscow Patriarchate, confirmed, proclaimed and bound by an oath in front of the world. It is, so to speak, *dogmatized apostasy*...”⁶⁹¹

This was an inspired definition: *dogmatized apostasy*. Not simply apostasy “for fear of the Jews”, but *dogmatized apostasy* – that is, apostasy raised to the level of a dogma. When apostasy is justified in this way, it becomes deeper, more serious and more difficult to cure. It becomes an error of the mind as well as a disease of the will. For it is one thing for a churchman out of weakness to submit himself and his church to the power of the world and of the Antichrist. That is his personal tragedy, and the tragedy of those who follow him, but it is not *heresy*. It is quite another thing for the same churchman to make the same submission “not for wrath, but for conscience’s sake” (Romans 13.5) – to use the words of the apostle as perverted by Sergius in his declaration. This is both heresy and apostasy – *dogmatized apostasy*.

However, at another time Archbishop Vitaly said that the Providence of God had placed before ROCOR the duty “of not tearing herself away from the basic massif, the body, the root of the Mother Church: in the depths of this massif, which is now only suffocated by the weight of Bolshevism, the spiritual treasures of Her millennial

⁶⁸⁹ A.A. Sollogub (ed.), *Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’ za granitsej* (The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), vol. I, 1958, pp. 306-307; quoted in Protopresbyter Victor Melehov, “O Polozhenii Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi v Sovremennom Mire” (On the Position of the Russian Church Abroad in the Contemporary World), 2002, MS.

⁶⁹⁰ Maximenko, *Motivy moej zhizni* (Motifs of my life), Jordanville, 1955, p. 77.

⁶⁹¹ Maximenko, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

exploit are even now preserved. But we must not recognise Her contemporary official leaders, who have become the obedient instrument of the godless authorities.”⁶⁹²

As V.K. justly comments: “In these words is contained a manifest incongruity. How did Archbishop Vitaly want, without recognising the official leadership of the MP, at the same time not to be torn away from its body? Is it possible ‘to preserve the spiritual treasures’ in a body whose head has become ‘the obedient instrument of the godless authorities’ (that is, the servants of satan and the antichrist), as he justly writes of the sergianist leaders?... The Holy Scriptures say: ‘If the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches’ (Romans 11.16). And on the other hand: ‘A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit’ (Matthew 7.18).”⁶⁹³

⁶⁹² Maximenko, op. cit., p. 45.

⁶⁹³ V.K. *Russkaia Zarubezhnaia Tserkov' na Steziakh Otstupnichestva* (The Russian Church Abroad on the Path of Apostasy), St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 48.

44. THE COMMUNISTS BECOME ECUMENISTS

So far it had been the Ecumenical Patriarchate that had made the running in Orthodox ecumenism. However, in 1959 the MP sent its representative, Metropolitan Nicholas of Krutitsa, to the Orthodox consultation proposed by the Faith and Order Committee near Athens, which indicated that the communists had changed their minds about ecumenism, and decided that the Russian Church's participation in it would further their cause. This change of mind was partly the result of the fact that, as Fr. Georges Florovsky lamented, from the time of the Evanston conference a progressive takeover took place of the "Faith and Order" concerns by the "Life and Work" concerns.⁶⁹⁴ That is, of the two strands of ecumenical activity that had existed before the war – the resolving of dogmatic differences among Christians, and "concern for the world and its problems" – it was the latter that was becoming dominant. And this was of great interest to the communists...

We have seen that, as late as the Moscow council of 1948, the MP, in obedience to its communist masters, had adopted an anti-western and anti-ecumenical position. However, this position began to change in the late 1950s, when the MP began to be pushed into joining the WCC by the Council for Religious Affairs. Thus on January 16, 1958, Metropolitan Nicholas asked the Council how he was to reply to the suggestion of the WCC general secretary that he meet representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. Comrade Karpov, head of the Council for Religious Affairs, said that he should reply that they in principle agreed to a meeting in June-July of that year.

And so on May 13 Metropolitan Nicholas asserted that "in the last ten years, thanks to the participation of some Orthodox Churches and the non-participation of others in the ecumenical movement, significant changes have taken place witnessing to its evolution towards churchness [*tserkovnosti*]. Very indicative in this respect have been huge movements in the sphere of German Protestant theology revealing the mystical depths of Orthodoxy and overcoming its traditional rationalism... On coming into contact with our ecclesiastical life, many actors in the ecumenical movement have completely changed their idea of Orthodoxy... Evidently approving of the declaration of the Orthodox participants in the Evanston assembly, we agree to a meeting with the leaders of the World Council of Churches exclusively in the name of our Pan-Orthodox duty – to serve the reunification of all Christians in the bosom of the Church of Christ."⁶⁹⁵

In 1959, as a sign of the changing times, the MP joined the European Conference of Churches... Then, on June 15, 1960 the new head of the Council for Religious Affairs, Kuroyedov met Patriarch Alexis. As Fr. Sergius Gordun writes, "Kuroyedov declared that he had carefully studied the external activities of the Patriarchate and he had come to conclusion that the situation was quite unsatisfactory. 'In recent years the Patriarchate has not undertaken a single major initiative for the unification of the

⁶⁹⁴ Andrew Blane (ed.), *Georges Florovsky*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993, p. 122.

⁶⁹⁵ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1958, N 6; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 30.

Orthodox Churches around the Russian Orthodox Church headed by the Moscow Patriarchate – initiatives, that is, aimed at exposing the reactionary activities of the Pope of Rome and the intensification of the struggle for peace. The Patriarchate is not using those huge opportunities which she enjoys; she has not undertaken a single major action abroad... The Russian Orthodox Church is not emerging as a unifying centre for the Orthodox Churches of the world, usually she adopts a passive stance and only weakly exposes the slanderous propaganda concerning the position of religion and the Church in our country... The Council recommended to Metropolitan Nicholas that he work out suggestions for intensifying external work. However, Metropolitan Nicholas has not fulfilled this request of the Council and has put forward suggestions which in no way correspond to the requirements discussed with the metropolitan in this regard.’ Then Kuroyedov suggested that Metropolitan Nicholas be released from his duties as president of the Department of Foreign Relations and that they be imposed on another, more fitting person.”

The “suggestion” was accepted, and Metropolitan Nicholas was retired on June 21. In July, he asked Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) of Brussels to tell the world that a new persecution was beginning, and in August repeated this message to western church leaders. In August, Kuroyedov suggested to the patriarch that he retire Metropolitan Nicholas from the Moscow diocese. The patriarch suggested to the metropolitan that he accept the Leningrad diocese, but the latter sharply rejected the offer. On September 9, Metropolitan Nicholas sent a letter to Khrushchev. On September 19, the MP Synod retired him. On December 13 he died in suspicious circumstances; many believe he was murdered.⁶⁹⁶ Some believe that Metropolitan Nicholas was removed because in 1959 KGB defector Major Peter Deriabin had exposed him before a U.S. Senate Subcommittee as a KGB agent.⁶⁹⁷ There is no doubt that he was an agent, as we have seen; but it also appears likely that he sincerely wanted to protect the Church. In any case, his career is yet another illustration of the Lord’s words that one cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon...

The new foreign relations supremo turned out to be Bishop Nikodem (Rotov), who was born in 1929, made priest at the extraordinarily young age of 20, and Bishop of Podolsk on July 10, 1960, at the age of 31.

His arrival on the scene marks a new advance in the apostasy of the MP. For his personality, as Fr. Sergius continues, was “linked with the change in the position of the Moscow Patriarchate in relation to the ecumenical movement. As is well known, the Conference of the heads and representatives of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches, which took place in Moscow in 1948, accepted a resolution declaring that ‘the aims of the ecumenical movement... do not correspond to the ideals of

⁶⁹⁶ "Nekotorie Stranitsy Biografii Mitropolita Nikolaia (Yarushevicha)" (Some Pages from the Biography of Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), *Vertograd-Inform*, NN 7-9 (16-18), 1996, pp. 16-17; Andrew and Mitrokhin, *op. cit.*, p. 636.

⁶⁹⁷ Deriabin, who served in the Kremlin Guard Directorate and then as Rezident in charge of espionage in Vienna, testified that “every priest is an agent of the secret police. Even the second ranking official in the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow [Metropolitan Nicholas] is an agent” (*Chronicle-Telegraph* of Elyria, Ohio, July 20, 1961; in Vladimir Kozyreff, “Re: [paradosis] Happiness and successes – and Bishop Meletieff”, orthodox-tradition@yahogroups.com, January 19, 2006.

Christianity and the tasks of the Church of Christ as those are understood by the Orthodox Church'. In this connection particular mention was made of the ecumenical movement's turn towards involvement in social and political life, which was not acceptable for Orthodoxy. This position was maintained by the Moscow Patriarchate until 1960. In a conversation which took place on April 2, 1959, his Holiness Patriarch Alexis informed the Council about the attitude of the Russian Church to the ecumenical movement, and declared that she intended gradually to increase her links with the World Council of Churches and to send her observers to its most important conferences, but would not become a member of this organization. However, a year and a half later this position changed. In the notes of a conversation which took place between Patriarch Alexis and V.A. Kuroyedov on September 15, 1960, there is the following phrase: 'The Patriarch accepted the recommendation of the Council concerning the entry of the Russian Orthodox Church into the membership of the World Council of Churches and evaluated this as a major action of the Russian Orthodox Church in its activities abroad.' What was the aim of the Council for the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church in recommending that the Russian Church enter the World Council of Churches? To conceal, it would seem, the anti-ecclesiastical policy of the Soviet government. Having cornered the Church, the Council wanted to create the image of a free and active Russian Church abroad..."⁶⁹⁸

In November-December, 1960 Patriarchs Alexis and Athenagoras met in Constantinople, and discussed questions related to the Second Vatican Council. After their meeting Bishop Nikodem, now president of the MP's Department of External Relations, gave a press conference at which he said: "The Russian Church has no intention of taking part in the Council, since the union between Orthodoxy and Catholicism cannot take place unless the Vatican renounces from the beginning certain principles - for example, the infallibility of the Pope."⁶⁹⁹

On March 30, 1961 the MP Synod resolved "to consider the entry of the Russian Orthodox Church into the World Council of Churches to be timely, and to ask his Holiness the Patriarch to send a letter to the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches declaring the desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to become a member of the World Council of Churches."⁷⁰⁰

From September 24 to October 1 the Orthodox Churches in the WCC met on Rhodes under the presidency of Metropolitan Chrysostom of Athens. One of its participants, Archbishop Basil of Brussels, recalls that "the relations of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world were reviewed in detail. With regard to the Catholic Church, the majority of participants in the conference expressed themselves 'for the development of relations in the spirit of the love of Christ, with

⁶⁹⁸ Gordun, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Sviateishikh Patriarkhakh Sergii i Aleksii" (The Russian Orthodox Church under their Holinesses Patriarchs Sergius and Alexis), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), vol. 158, I-1990, pp. 120, 133, 134.

⁶⁹⁹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 42.

⁷⁰⁰ Monk Benjamin, "Letopis' Tserkovnoj Istorii (1961-1971)" (A Chronicle of Church History (1961-1971)), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis5.htm>, p. 1.

particular reference to the points envisaged by the 1920 encyclical of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate."⁷⁰¹

Also discussed was a catalogue of topics for a future Pan-Orthodox Council. The MP tried hard to ensure that no topic that might prove embarrassing to the Soviet government was included. For, as Gordienko and Novikov write, "in the course of the debate on the catalogue, the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation [led by Nikodem] suggested the removal of some of the subjects (The Development of Internal and External Missionary Work, The Methods of Fighting Atheism and False Doctrines Like Theosophy, Spiritism, Freemasonry, etc.) and the addition of some others (Cooperation between the Local Orthodox Churches in the Realisation of the Christian Ideas of Peace, Fraternity and Love among Peoples, Orthodoxy and Racial Discrimination, Orthodoxy and the Tasks of Christians in Regions of Rapid Social Change)... Besides working out the topics for the future Pre-Council, the First Conference passed the decision 'On the Study of Ways for Achieving Closer Contacts and Unity of Churches in a Pan-Orthodox Perspective', envisaging the search for contacts with Ancient Eastern (non-Chalcedonian) Churches (Monophysites), the Old Catholic, Anglican, Catholic, and Protestant Churches, as well as the World Council of Churches."⁷⁰² In other words, the Orthodox were to abandon the struggle against Atheism, Freemasonry and other false religions, and were to engage in dialogue towards union with all the Christian heretics - while at the same time persecuting the True Orthodox and using ecumenical forums to further the ends of Soviet foreign policy in its struggle with the Capitalist West!⁷⁰³

The argument used by Nikodem for removing atheism from the agenda was that discussion of this question might elicit persecution against the Church in Russia. As for Masonry, "it does not exist in contemporary Russia, we don't know it, Masonry exists only in the West. Consequently, this question is not of general, but only of local Orthodox interest, and for that reason it should not be included in the programme of a general Orthodox Council..."⁷⁰⁴ He omitted to mention that the February revolution had been created by 300 Russian Masons...

In November, 1961 Archbishop Nikodem, accompanied by Bishop Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh, the future Patriarch Alexis (Ridiger) and "a Russian government courier who is responsible for their comfort and all their expenses"⁷⁰⁵, went to New Delhi for the Third General Assembly of the WCC. On December 6-7, the MP was accepted as an official member of the WCC. 142 churches voted for, 4 abstained and 3 voted against.

⁷⁰¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 3.

⁷⁰² "The Russian Orthodox Church in the System of Contemporary Christianity", in A. Preobrazhensky (ed.), *The Russian Orthodox Church*, Moscow: Progress, 1988, p. 387.

⁷⁰³ See William C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1970*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, chapter 9.

⁷⁰⁴ Archbishop Basil of Brussels, *Vospominania* (Reminiscences); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁰⁵ *The Daily Telegraph* (London), November 22, 1961.

The Vatican immediately warned that the MP's membership was aimed "at the fulfilling of plans hatched in the Kremlin, which are bound to assist the triumph of Soviet propaganda through ecumenical Christianity". And sure enough: when an attempt was made to condemn communism, Archbishop Nikodem immediately proposed a resolution listing the vices of capitalism, as a result of which both resolutions were withdrawn.⁷⁰⁶

The KGB-enforced entry of the MP into the WCC, which was followed by the entry of the Romanian Church (in 1961) and of the Georgian Church (in 1962), had a devastating effect on the Orthodox position. For the Soviets not only constituted numerically by far the largest single Church in the WCC; they also controlled, through the KGB, all the other delegates from behind the iron curtain. Communism and Ecumenism therefore met in an unholy union which has been called "Ecucommunism".⁷⁰⁷ As Deacon Andrew Kuraiev writes: "Sergianism and Ecumenism intertwined. It was precisely on the instructions of the authorities that our hierarchy conducted its ecumenical activity, and it was precisely in the course of their work abroad that clergy who had been enrolled into the KGB were checked out for loyalty."⁷⁰⁸

The Orthodox delegates at New Delhi signed a summary statement which declared, among other things: "We consider that the work of creating the One, Universal Church must unfailingly be accompanied by the destruction and disappearance of certain outmoded, traditional forms of worship". The idea of "creating" the One Church was blasphemous, and the idea of destroying certain "outmoded" forms of worship - an outright challenge to the Holy Tradition of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church! And, having delivered it, the Orthodox delegates seemed to lose all restraint; for within a decade or two of the New Delhi congress, the ecumenical movement had climbed into the realm of "Super-ecumenism" - relations with non-Christian religions. It was therefore the Congress of the WCC in New Delhi that marked the decisive dogmatic break between "World Orthodoxy" and True Orthodoxy. If, until then, it could be argued, albeit unconvincingly, that the "World Orthodox" had not apostasised, and that only a few of their leaders were ecumenist heretics, this could no longer be maintained after New Delhi.

The General Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi was closely followed by the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, an event as important for ecumenism in the West as had been the founding of the WCC. Vatican II opened the floodgates to Ecumenism in the western world. For, as Malachi Martin writes: "Before the end of the fourth and final session of Vatican II - presided over by Pope John's successor, Paul VI - some bishops and Vatican personnel had already adopted entirely new and innovative meanings for the idea of ecumenism. The powerful Augustin Cardinal Bea, for example, was a leading figure at the Council and a close adviser to Paul VI, as he

⁷⁰⁶ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 5.

⁷⁰⁷ V. Moss, "Ecucommunism", *Living Orthodoxy*, September-October, 1989, vol. XI, N 5, pp. 13-18.

⁷⁰⁸ Kuraiev, "Vo dni pechal'nie Velikago posta" (During the Sad Days of the Great Fast), *Den' (Day)*, N 13, March 29 / April 4, 1992.

had been to Pope John. Bea was seen as the Vatican's own spearhead in what came to be nothing less than an ecumenical revolution. The Cardinal organized 'ecumenical gatherings' that included not only Roman Catholics and Protestants as usual, but Jews and Muslims as well. In time, as was only logical, Buddhists, Shintoists, animist and a host of other non-Christian and even non-religious groups would find a place in the poorly and broadly defined new 'ecumenism'.⁷⁰⁹

During the New Delhi Assembly, Nikodem announced that the Vatican had invited the MP to send observers to the Second Vatican Council; but that the MP had laid it down as a condition that there should be "no declarations hostile to our beloved country". So for most of the next year, the MP chose to emphasise, albeit in a gentle way, the dogmatic differences between the two Churches.⁷¹⁰ However, in September-October, at the Second Pan-Orthodox Conference on Rhodes, it was decided to begin a theological dialogue with the Catholic Church. Moreover, - still more importantly, - at the beginning of October the Council for Religious Affairs told the Central Committee that the participation of observers at the Second Vatican Council would assist the establishment of useful contacts with the Vatican and would bind the Vatican in its promotion of hostile activity against the USSR. This official address of the Council to the Central Committee completed a process of change in attitude towards the Catholic Church and the question of the presence of observers at the Vatican Council from originally negative to a positive recognition of benefit for the Soviet government and for the MP of an improvement in their relations to the Vatican. The decision to allow the sending of observers to the Second Vatican Council was taken at the highest level of Soviet power, the Politburo, on October 10, 1962 (N 58/30).⁷¹¹

The arrival of Russian Orthodox observers at the Council produced consternation in French Catholic circles, which accused the Vatican of "selling out" to communism. But the French communist press was delighted: "Since the world socialist system shows its superiority indisputably and enjoys the approval of many hundreds of millions of men, the Church can no longer rest content with crude anti-communism. She has even given an undertaking, on the occasion of her dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church, that there should be no direct attack on the communist regime at the Council."⁷¹²

Why did the Vatican accept this condition, which so damaged her standing in the anti-communist West? Probably for the same reason that the MP-KGB agreed to send

⁷⁰⁹ Martin, *The Keys of this Blood*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990, pp. 258-59.

⁷¹⁰ Thus in September, 1962 Patriarch Alexis in an interview with a French journalist said the following on the participation of MP representatives at the Second Vatican Council: "The Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches are close to each other in the spheres of faith and liturgics, and we believe that those differences that divide them can, with the help of God and mutual good-will, can be overcome in time. In respect of dogmatics, the main points dividing us are the infallibility of the pope and his headship in the Church, some questions of Mariology, the question of the *Filioque* and some other particularities." (*Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1962, N 9, pp. 14-16; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 6).

⁷¹¹ Protopresbyter Vitaly Borovoj, "I on byl veren do smerti" (He, too, was faithful unto death); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 6-7.

⁷¹² *France Nouvelle* (New France), January 16-22, 1963, p. 15.

observers – *to infiltrate the camp of the enemy*. And the possibility exists that their main agent of infiltration was precisely the MP's Metropolitan Nikodem...

This at first sight unlikely hypothesis gains credibility from the career of Fr. Michael Havryliv, a Russian priest who was secretly received into the Catholic Church in 1973. Fr. Serge Keleher writes: "The Capuchin priest told Havryliv that Metropolitan Nikodem [of Leningrad] was secretly a Catholic bishop, recognized by Rome with jurisdiction from Pope Paul VI throughout Russia. This assertion is not impossible – but neither is it entirely proved.

"On September 6 1975 Havryliv made a sacramental general Confession before Metropolitan Nikodem, who then accepted Havryliv's monastic vows and profession of Faith to the Apostolic See and the Pope of Rome. Kyr Nikodem commanded Havryliv to order his monastic life according to the Jesuit Constitutions, and presented him with a copy of this document in Russian. This was all done privately; four days later the Metropolitan tonsured Havryliv a monk. On 9 October Kyr Nikodem ordained Havryliv to the priesthood, without requiring the oaths customary for Russian Orthodox candidates to Holy Orders.

"In 1977 Havryliv was reassigned to the Moscow Patriarchate's archdiocese of L'viv and Ternopil... In Havryliv's final interview with Kyr Nikodem, the Metropolitan of Leningrad 'blessed me and gave me instructions to keep my Catholic convictions and do everything possible for the growth of the Catholic cause, not only in Ukraine, but in Russia. The Metropolitan spoke of the practice of his predecessors – and also asked me to be prudent."⁷¹³

These words indicate the truth behind the mask of the Vatican's ecumenism; and the fact that Havryliv was reordained by Nikodem show that Rome accepted the sacraments of the Orthodox for only as long as it suited her. The Orthodox were, from Vatican II, not heretics, but "separated brethren". However, the "separated brethren" still had to return in repentance to their father, the Pope...

The Vatican also decided to invite ROCOR to send observers to the Council. This decision, writes Andrew Psarev, "was a precursor to a lively discussion of the [ROCOR] council session in 1962, where the so-called defensive point of view collided

⁷¹³ Serge Keleher, *Passion and Resurrection – the Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine, 1939-1989*, Stauropegion, L'viv, 1993, pp. 101-102. Cf. *The Tablet*, March 20, 1993. Recently, writes Ludmilla Perepiolkina, "the Catholic Journal *Truth and Life* published the memoirs of Miguel Arranz, in which this Jesuit, who in Nikodem's time taught at the Leningrad Theological Academy, told, among other things, that with Nikodem's blessing he celebrated 'the Eastern Rite Liturgy' in Nikodem's house church at the Leningrad Theological Academy." (*Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 276, note). Again, Hieromonk Tikhon (Kazushin) writes: "In 1989 dsuring a reception at the French embassy an elderly man, Czech by nationality, came up to me and introduced himself as head of the Jesuit pension for Russian youth in Medon near Parish and as a high-ranking officer of the [Jesuit] order. Thus he said that Nikodem was their man and also a high-ranking officer in the Order close to the General. It is know that in his cell Nikodem almost everyday performed a so-called 'spoken mass'" (communication on Facebook, 24 January, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/lregelson/posts/981429488551934?comment_id=983137605047789&offset=0&total_comments=96¬if_t=feed_comment_reply).

with the 'missionary' point of view. An ardent advocate of the 'defensive' point of view was Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery, who saw the Second Vatican Council as a step in the direction of global apostasy. An opposite point of view was expressed by Bishop Savva of Edmonton, who saw declining the invitation as a loss of an opportunity to bear witness to the truth using a forum provided an opportunity to talk about Orthodoxy, the situation in the Orthodox world, and about the persecuted Russian Church. The support given by Metropolitan Anastasii to the missionary point of view regarding the sending of representatives to the Vatican was the last major influence he had on relations between ROCOR and the non-Orthodox world during the period of his service as the first hierarch."⁷¹⁴

And so when the Second Vatican Council opened on October 12, 1962, the only Orthodox present were the MP delegation headed by Metropolitan Nikodem, and the ROCOR delegation headed by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva...

⁷¹⁴ Psarev, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

45. THE KHRUSHCHEVIAN PERSECUTION

The ultimate intention of the Soviet authorities – the complete destruction of the Orthodox Church – remained unchanged in the post-war period; but their tactics showed some flexibility. The Khrushchev persecution (1959-64) demonstrated how fragile and one-sided was the State-Church accord, and how easily the State's concessions could be retracted without compunction or compensation.⁷¹⁵

Until the death of Stalin, while True Orthodoxy was persecuted as violently as ever, "Soviet Orthodoxy" enjoyed a comparatively peaceful period. However, on July 7, 1954 the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party issued a document entitled "On Major Inadequacies in Scientific-Atheist Propaganda and Measures for its Improvement", which called for a return to the pre-war course of "attacking religious survivals". That summer some parishioners were persecuted and some churches closed. Public criticisms of this new course were issued by Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad and Archbishop Luke of Simferopol.

However, in November the Central Committee began to change course again. In 1955 the number of registered churches began to rise, and in 1956 a print-run of 50,000 Bibles was permitted.⁷¹⁶ Then came Khrushchev's famous speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party in 1956, at which the cult of the personality of Stalin was condemned. Soon thousands of people who had been condemned for their religious or political beliefs were returning from the camps, including 293 clergy of the MP and unknown number from the Catacomb Church. In July G. Karpov informed Patriarch Alexis that he did not need to worry about the question of the opening of churches, since this process would now be uninterrupted...⁷¹⁷

However, on October 4, 1958 the Central Committee sent a secret letter to the Union Republics called "On the inadequacies of scientific-atheist propaganda". All party and public organizations and state organs were required to attack the Church. There followed the Khrushchev persecution, when most of the seminaries and monasteries and 12-15,000 of the parish churches, together with other "religious survivals", were destroyed. In accordance with the instructions of the Central Committee and of Khrushchev personally, on October 16 the Council of Ministers accept the first anti-ecclesiastical resolutions: "On Monasteries in the USSR" and "On Taxing the Income of Enterprises of Diocesan Administrations, and also the Income of Monasteries". In the first of these the monasteries were forbidden to take on hired labour, and a significant diminution of land holdings was envisaged, as also of the numbers of communities. Moreover, the 1945 tax on building and land rent was re-introduced, and the tax rate on plots of land was sharply increased. A heavy blow was dealt to the material base of the patriarchate. Raising the tax on the income from candle factories touched every parish. The factories were forced to raise their output prices, but at the same time it was forbidden to change the old prices in the churches. An absurd

⁷¹⁵ Pospelovsky, *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), N 3698, 5 November, 1987.

⁷¹⁶ A.B. Vinnikov, *Ottepel' 1943-1960* (The Thaw of 1943-1960); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, pp. 22-23, 24.

⁷¹⁷ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 27.

situation was the result – the parishes, on acquiring the candles, were forced to sell them to themselves at a loss. To make up for this, in many parishes they began to disband the paid choirs and economize on repairs and the upkeep of the churches. The clergy fell into poverty. The patriarchate was flooded by desperate pleas for help from the hierarchs. As a result of the new regulations, all the dioceses found themselves in debt to the state and on the edge of complete insolvency. An appeal was made to the Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church, but it was firmly rejected. An appeal to put off the introduction of the new taxes until January 1, 1959 was also rejected.⁷¹⁸

In November and December a massive purge of Church libraries was carried out; many books were removed, and all foreign literature was placed under censorship. On November 28, the Central Committee accepted a resolution “On Measures to stop pilgrimages to so-called ‘holy places’.” Various methods were used to stop pilgrims visiting 700 such places. In 1958 91 church communities were deprived of registration; the tolling of bells was forbidden; hierarchs were deprived of their telephones, churches were cut off from the water system, repairs were forbidden. In January, 1959, at a closed session of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, the president, G. Karpov was attacked by I. Sivenkov for having been “too soft” in relation to the Church. In March Karpov, having recovered from illness, counter-attacked. He declared: “Out of the 14 autocephalous Orthodox Churches in the world 9 completely support the initiatives of the Moscow Patriarchate... Now there is a suggestion to prepare and convene, in the course of one or two years, an Ecumenical Council or congress of all the Orthodox Churches in the world... How shall we carry out this work... if we encourage crude administrative methods in relation to the Church and do not react to the distortions in scientific-atheist propaganda?... I consider such actions as the blowing up of church buildings to be inadmissible.” Karpov went on to speak of the mass discontent of the clergy, and of the fact that the patriarch was thinking of retiring; and even suggested making some concessions to the Church. As a result, he kept his post for another year, and a temporary departure from extreme forms of anti-religious aggression was observed in the country.⁷¹⁹

Nevertheless, by November, thirteen monasteries had been closed, and another seventeen by January, 1960. In spite of a prior agreement between the patriarch and the Council for Religious Affairs, some communities were closed, not gradually, but almost immediately – sometimes within 24 hours. In this period about 200 clergy were compelled by various means to renounce their rank.⁷²⁰

Another aspect of the Khrushchev persecution (so called because he was the chief inspirer and strategist of it) was the infiltration of agents into the ranks of the Church. Anatoly Golitsyn, who defected from the KGB in 1961, writes: “As part of the programme to destroy religion from within, the KGB, in the late 1950s, started sending dedicated young Communists to ecclesiastical academies and seminaries to train them as future church leaders. These young Communists joined the Church, *not* at the

⁷¹⁸ Vinnikov, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, pp. 30-31.

⁷¹⁹ Vinnikov, op. cit.; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, pp. 32-33.

⁷²⁰ Vinnikov, op. cit.

call of their consciences to serve God, but at the call of the Communist Party in order to serve that Party and to implement its general in the struggle against religion.”⁷²¹ As regards the ordinary priests, Fr. Alexander Borisov writes: “Almost everyone was recruited into the KGB. I myself was recruited, and I know that our other priest, Fr. Vladimir, was also recruited. I think those who say they were not recruited are deceiving us... After all, in earlier times one could not become a bishop without making some compromise, it was simply impossible...”⁷²²

Schema-Monk Epiphanius (Chernov) recounts the following story about a communist party member and his wife, who was secretly a member of the Catacomb Church. When their son was born, she wanted to have him baptised – but not in the Moscow patriarchate. He then “tried to convince his wife of a truth which she was well aware. But in the given case the husband’s words were very convincing and concrete:

“So you have firmly decided to baptise the child?’

“Yes, of course!’

“Well, that’s your affair. Only I would like to introduce into this matter a certain correction or rationalisation.’

“Please, I’m listening.’

“Well, here it is. Tell me, please, have you saved an extra seven rubles which you’re intending to give our ‘pope’ or ‘priest’? If they are extra, give them to me, and I will drink them away, and I’ll baptise the child for you... Tell me, what’s the difference: either he’ll drink them away, or I will. He and I are absolutely the same. And we sit next to each other at party gatherings.... Whether you give the child to him to be baptised or to me, we are both atheists. So it would be better and more humane for you to give the seven rubles to your atheist husband than to an atheist stranger. And listen: your husband is more righteous and decent than that atheist. After all, he pretends to be a believer. But he’s an atheist! Moreover, he pretends so much that he’s even become a priest! While I, honourably and in the sight of all, am an atheist! But I can baptise our child with the same effect as he...

“Well, tell me, have I convinced you?”⁷²³

While Patriarch Alexis and Metropolitan Nicholas protested against the persecution, they remained completely loyal to Soviet power. Thus in January, 1960, Karpov wrote to the Central Committee: “The patriarch is completely loyal with regards to the authorities, always and not only in official declarations, but also in his entourage he speaks sincerely and with exaltation about the government and

⁷²¹ Golitsyn, *The Perestroika Deception*, London and New York: Edward Harle, 1998, p. 116.

⁷²² Krasikov, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁷²³ Chernov, *op. cit.*

Comrade Khrushchev. The patriarch does not pay enough attention to work abroad, but even here he accepts all our recommendations...⁷²⁴

Meanwhile, the pressure on the MP was increasing. On March 16, 1961 the Council of Ministers passed a resolution "On the strengthening of control for the fulfilment of the legislation on churches", which gave power to the local authorities to close churches and remove registrations. On April 18, 1961 the MP Synod decided to present the resolution "On Measures to Improve the Existing Order of Parish Life" for discussion at the Council in July. This measure, which had been imposed on the Church by the Council for Religious Affairs, deprived the priest of all financial and administrative control of his parish, passing it instead to councils of twenty (the *dvadtsatky*), which were easily controllable by the authorities. As Victor Aksyuchits writes, this "reform" "presented them with new possibilities for destroying the organism of the Church from within. The priests were completely separated from the economic and financial administration of the parishes, and were only hired by agreement as 'servants of the cult' for 'the satisfaction of religious needs'. The diocesan organs of administration of the life of the parishes were suspended... Now the atheist authorities not only carried out the 'registration' of the priests and 'the executive organs', but also took complete control of the economy and finances of the parishes, appointing the wardens and treasurers, and using all their rights, naturally, to promote the atheists' aim of destroying the Church."⁷²⁵

Fearing that the July Council might oppose this "reform", the authorities did not invite to the Council three hierarchs who had expressed themselves against it. Most of the hierarchs were invited, not to a Council, but to a celebration in honour of St. Sergius, and were amazed to learn that a Council was about to be conducted.⁷²⁶ Archbishop Hermogen of Kaluga, who appeared without an invitation, was not allowed at the session on the grounds that he was not a ruling hierarch. In the absence of all potential opponents, the parish reform was passed. It was also decided that all clergy should be banned from becoming members of the *dvadtsatky* or the parish councils. Patriarch Alexis cooperated with the parish statute and with other measures harmful to the Church during the Khrushchev persecution.⁷²⁷

Meanwhile, in the single year of 1961, 1500 churches were closed in the Soviet Union. In 1963 the Kiev-Caves Lavra was closed. Attempts were made to close the Pochaev Lavra, too, but determined action by the monks and the local inhabitants, some of whom were imprisoned or exiled, saved the day.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 37.

⁷²⁵ Aksyuchits, "70 let Vavilonskogo pleniya" (70 Years of Babylonian Captivity), *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniya* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), 1988, N 152.

⁷²⁶ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 1-2.

⁷²⁷ G. Pankov, "O politike Sovetskogo gosudarstva v otnoshenii Russkoj pravoslavnoj tserkvi na rubezhe 50-60-x godov" (On the Politics of the Soviet State in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church on the border of the 50s and 60s), in Bessmertny, A.R. & Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, pp. 217-31.

⁷²⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 15-16.

On October 14, 1964, Khrushchev was forced into retirement, and the persecution against the MP ceased. The main party ideologist and secretary of the Central Committee, Suslov, thought that it necessary to continue a decisive “struggle against religion”, but in such a way as not to turn the West against them and “not to give rein to all kinds of extremists”. Illegalities, it was agreed, had been committed, and several people were freed from the prisons and camps.⁷²⁹

The years 1959-64 were years of persecution throughout Eastern Europe. We shall see how the True Orthodox suffered in Romania. In Bulgaria many priests and monks were held in the approximately 30 death camps, where prisoners were brought up one by one to be slaughtered.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 19.

⁷³⁰ Ivan Marchevsky, personal communication.

46. THE PASSPORTLESS MOVEMENT

After Khrushchev's 1956 speech against Stalin, and especially by the beginning of the 1960s, the pressure on the Catacomb Church was beginning to wane. Thus "when, in 1961," writes Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko), "the priests' rights were taken away from them and given to the church council, they quieted down and it was easier for us; at least we could get to our priests and priests began more freely to come to us, to confess and commune us. From 1961 the Moscow Patriarchate calmed down in its attitude towards us. Of course, when foreigners asked representatives of the MP, 'Does a catacomb church exist?' the answer was always 'No'. That was a lie. There were catacomb believers all over Russia, just as there are today..."⁷³¹

The relaxation of pressure from the patriarchate was almost certainly a result of the fact that the patriarchate was now the object of persecution itself. Although the numbers of believers killed and imprisoned was only a fraction of the numbers in earlier persecutions, the Khrushchev persecution closed some thousands of patriarchal churches and forced many patriarchal priests to serve illegally. These "pseudo-catacombs" did not merge with the True Church and continued to commemorate the Soviet patriarch.⁷³² However, in 1961 new legislation against secret Christians was passed, of which the most important was the legislation on passports.⁷³³ This measure paradoxically served to swell the numbers of the True Orthodox...

Now passportisation had been introduced into the Soviet Union only in 1932, and only for the most urbanized areas. Already then it was used as a means of winking out Catacomb Christians. Thus M.V. Shkarovsky writes: "Completing their liquidation of the Josephites, there was a meeting of regional inspectors for cultic matters on March 16, 1933, at a time when passportisation was being introduced. The meeting decided, on the orders of the OGPU, 'not to give passports to servants of the cult of the Josephite confession of faith', which meant automatic expulsion from Leningrad. Similar things happened in other major cities of the USSR."⁷³⁴

Most Catacomb hierarchs did not bless their spiritual children to take passports because in filling in the forms information making them liable to persecution.⁷³⁵ Some leaders, such as Schema-Abbess Michaela of Kiev, sent her nuns out to convince people that the passport was the seal of the Antichrist. Many Catacomb Christians

⁷³¹ "Out of the Catacombs", *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁷³² See Danilushkin, *op. cit.*, chapter 18.

⁷³³ Mervyn Matthews, *The Passport Society*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1993, chapter 3.

⁷³⁴ Shkarovsky, *Iosiflyanstvo* (Josephitism), *op. cit.*, p. 171. Cf. Edward Roslof: "Passport offices were prohibited from issuing documents to clergy; that duty belonged to a *troika* from the regional soviet. Passports would not be issued to men with degrees from theological seminaries or academies, to priests associated with the Josephite schism, or to conductors of church choirs (even if they were amateurs)" (*Red Priests: Renovatism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 182).

⁷³⁵ Danilushkin, *op. cit.*, p. 535; M.V. Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve* (The Russian Orthodox Church under Stalin and Khrushchev), Moscow, 2005, p. 246.

refused passports, not wishing to declare themselves citizens of the antichristian kingdom.⁷³⁶

In the 1930s the peasants had not been given passports but were chained to the land which they worked. They were herded into the collective farms and forced to do various things against their conscience, such as vote for the communist officials who had destroyed their way of life and their churches. Those who refused to do this – refusals were particularly common in the Lipetsk, Tambov and Voronezh areas – were rigorously persecuted, and often left to die of hunger. Thus passportisation in the cities and collectivisation in the countryside constituted two forms of the Bolsheviks' struggle to force everyone in the country to accept the Soviet ideology.

On May 4, 1961, however, the Soviet government issued a decree on "parasitism" and introduced a campaign for general passportisation. In local papers throughout the country it was announced that, in order to receive a Soviet passport, a citizen of the USSR would have to recognize all the laws of Soviet power, past and present, beginning from Lenin's decrees. Since this involved, in effect, a recognition of all the crimes of Soviet power, a movement arose to reject Soviet passports, a movement which was centred mainly in the country areas.

E.A. Petrova writes: "Protests against general passportisation arose among Christians throughout the vast country. A huge number of secret Christians who had passports began to reject, destroy and burn them and loudly, for all to hear, renounce Soviet citizenship. Many Christians from the patriarchal church also gave in their passports. There were cases in which as many as 200 people at one time went up to the local soviet and gave in their passports. In one day the whole of a Christian community near Tashkent gave in 100 passports at once. Communities in Kemerovo and Novosibirsk provinces gave in their passports, and Christians in the Altai area burned their passports... Protests against general passportisation broke out in Belorussia, in the Ukraine, and in the Voronezh, Tambov and Ryazan provinces..."

"Christians who renounced their Soviet passports began to be seized, imprisoned and exiled. But in spite of these repressions the movement of the passportless Christians grew and became stronger. It was precisely in these years that the Catacomb Church received a major influx from Christians of the patriarchal church who renounced Soviet passports and returned into the bosom of the True Orthodox Church."⁷³⁷

However, not all Catacomb Christians refused to have passports – to be consistently and completely outside Soviet society was, after all, exceedingly difficult. Some Catacomb leaders considered it permissible to be a Soviet citizen with a passport so long as one did not sympathize with Soviet power or help it, and criticized those

⁷³⁶ A. Smirnov, "Ugashhie nepominaiushchie v bege vremeni" (Extinguished Non-Commemorators in the Flow of Time), *Simvol* (Symbol), N 40, 1998, p. 254.

⁷³⁷ Petrova, "Perestroika Vavilonskoj Bashni" (The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel), Moscow, 1991, pp. 5-6 (MS).

who rejected Soviet citizenship as sinful but accepted its (admittedly very meagre) benefits.

Thus in 1960 Archimandrite Hilarion (Andrievsky), leader of the Catacomb Church in Voronezh, wrote to a “hardline” nun as follows: “To call oneself ‘a citizen of the Soviet state’ by no means signifies recognizing oneself to be ‘a Soviet person’. It does not signify agreement with the communists, it does not signify going together with them, it does not signify working in concert with them and sympathizing with all their undertakings... ‘A citizen of the Soviet state’ and ‘a Soviet person’ are by no means identical concepts: the first is recognition and submission to Soviet power, and the second – is an inner content, a feeling in the soul of man. There is a huge difference between these concepts. I experienced this myself in 1928, thirty-two years ago. When, after a long convoy, I was waiting for a decision on my fate together with other prisoners in Samarkand prison, I was told that I had been left to serve my term of exile in the city of Samarkand itself. Several people in the prison envied me because this, being the former capital of Central Asia, was a large, cultured, interesting city with ancient sites. But then, when I was summoned to the GPU to fill in a questionnaire, my position suddenly changed sharply – it appeared that my replies did not please them. To the question: ‘What is your relationship to the authorities?’, I replied: ‘I recognize it and submit to it in civil matters’. Then they said that ‘this is not much’. But when I asked: ‘What more do you need?’ they replied with another question: ‘But do you sympathize with it?’ I replied directly: ‘No, I do not sympathize with it, and as a believer I cannot sympathize with it in general. Moreover, how can I sympathize with it personally, when they brought me here completely against my will, tearing me away from my relatives and friends!...’ To this they said: ‘You probably need the Tsar’s authority?’ I replied: ‘No, you are mistaken. Read history, and you will see that there were times when the Tsars also fiercely persecuted the Christians.’ All these replies of mine were written down and signed. A little later I was told that there would be a sharp change in my place of exile: from the big beautiful city that I had been assigned to before I was sent to the remote steppe, whence after a five-year stay I was despatched to another exile – in distant Siberia. Thus it became clearly evident from this questionnaire that Soviet power makes a profound distinction between ‘citizenship’ and ‘sympathy’ and does not necessarily merge and confuse these two concepts into one. Otherwise, after my reply about recognizing and submitting to Soviet power, they would not have gone on to ask me about my ‘sympathy’, if this ‘sympathy’ was truly linked with ‘citizenship’. After all, they not only asked me about ‘sympathy’, but punished me for my negative reply, and changed the place of my exile from Samarkand to the remote steppe four hundred kilometres away from it.

“So a ‘citizen’ is not always and necessarily a ‘sympathizer’ with all the communist undertakings, for the concept of ‘citizen’ in itself does not contain this ‘sympathy’; and for that reason there was absolutely no sin in taking part in the census and giving a positive reply to the question about ‘citizenship’ in the Soviet state, in which, as you well know, there are citizen-communists who are completely devoted and sympathetic to it, and there are simply citizens in the sense only of subjects – and the latter are the absolute majority, in whose number are you and I, which is clearly witnessed by your passport, which you yourself took, and you live through it with the rights of ‘citizenship’ in necessary cases (reception of pension, etc.). It is more than

strange to say that to take advantage of the rights of a citizen here is not a sin, but to call oneself a 'citizen' is, in your opinion, such a terrible sin that you have even excluded all those who took part in the census from Orthodoxy! What amazing light-mindedness! It is this that has engendered such a profound error, which even contradicts simple common logic, not to speak of the greater error that I wrote to you about earlier and which I will not repeat. I will only add that such a spiritual double-mindedness is not pleasing to God. If, in your opinion, it is sinful merely to call yourself a 'citizen' of the Soviet state in a census, then to take advantage, as you do, of this citizenship is a still more bitter and responsible act, although you don't recognize it. (Your passport, your pension, etc. They reproach you!) What use is this?! And how much is said in the Divine services of the December Menaion concerning the participation of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the census of Herod, which proves the sinlessness of our participation in the census that has taken place. And in the Menaion for January 5 it is said of Christ: 'He was registered, but did not work, obeying the commands of Caesar.' As you can see, here 'registration' was in no way bound up with 'work' for Caesar. Thus our participation in the census does not necessarily oblige us to work for Soviet power, the more so in that we do not sympathize with communism, as you mistakenly think. In conclusion I want to cite one more argument in favour of our positive reply to the question on 'citizenship'. We Russians received our holy Orthodox faith from the Greeks, from Constantinople, while the Greeks were in a condition of civil subjection to the Turks - Muslims. However, this Turkish citizenship did not hinder the Greeks from preserving the Orthodox Faith in the course of many centuries. Constantinople is considered to this day to be a cradle of Holy Orthodoxy, a Centre of the Universal Church of Christ. And this historical example clearly shows that Turkish citizenship did not necessarily contain within itself sympathy with the Muslims, just as Soviet citizenship does not necessarily contain within itself sympathy with Communism - which is sinful...."⁷³⁸

Fr. Hilarion's point is well taken. Nevertheless, he erred in seeing no essential difference between the regimes of Pagan Imperial Rome and the Turkish sultanate, on the one hand, and Soviet power, on the other. Perhaps one could indeed be a Soviet citizen without sympathizing with, or helping, Soviet power in any way. But it was extremely difficult; and if "recognition" involved accepting the *legitimacy* of the Soviet regime, then this in itself helped Soviet power to a certain degree. Moreover, any kind of recognition or submission was in direct contradiction with Patriarch Tikhon's anathema of 1918, which called on the Orthodox to obey the Soviet *in no way whatsoever*...

In the 1970s the detailed questionnaires required in order to receive passports were abandoned, but in 1974 it was made obligatory for all Soviet citizens to have a passport, and a new, red passport differing significantly from the old, green one was issued for everyone except prisoners and the hospitalized. Its cover had the words: "Passport of a citizen of the Soviet Socialist Republics", together with a hammer and sickle, which was still unacceptable to the passportless, who therefore continued to be subject to prison, exile and hunger. Those who joined the Catacomb Church at this

⁷³⁸ Priest Alexis, "Sv. Otsy-Ispovedniki ob otnoshenii k vlastiam", <http://priestalexei.livejournal.com/2197.html>.

time often erased the word "citizen", replacing it with the word "Christian", so that they had a "Passport of a Christian of the Soviet Socialist Republics".⁷³⁹

The issue of passports came down to the question whether the Soviet State should be considered to be "Caesar", to which "the things of Caesar" are due (payment of taxes, army service), or "the collective Antichrist", obedience to whom involves compromises unacceptable for the Christian conscience. Although the majority of members of the True Russian Church in this century have not made an issue of this, it remains debatable whether obedience to the 1918 anathema against the Bolsheviks does not in fact require rejection of the Soviet State, Soviet passports, Soviet army service, etc., in a way that only the passportless demonstrated. Certainly, experience demonstrated without a doubt that all attempts of Christians to cooperate in any way with the Soviet regime were worse than useless and only led to compromises in the faith... Since the fall of communism in 1991, as we shall see, the possession of passports has ceased to be such a burning issue. However, the question whether the Soviet Union was a state "established by God" (Romans 13.1), or, on the contrary, an anti-state established by Satan (Revelation 13.2), remains a critical one. The True Orthodox position is that since the Soviet State has been anathematised by the Church, neither it, nor any modern state claiming continuity from it, can command the allegiance of Orthodox Christians. To this day the Russian True Orthodox Church does not commemorate the authorities of the post-Soviet Russian Federation...

Among those who rejected Soviet passports was Schema-Bishop Michael (Yershov), whose flock in the Kazan and Ufa regions remains in existence to this day.

Michael Vasilyevich Yershov was born in 1911 into a poor family. His father became a Bolshevik and persecuted and beat his son, but was later converted by him and repented. In 1931, at the age of twenty, Michael was imprisoned for the first time for his rejection of the Sovietized Moscow Patriarchate. Apart from a short period in the early 1940s, he remained in the camps for the rest of his life, being transported from one end of the GULAG to the other and dying, still in prison, on June 4, 1974. He presented an astounding image of patience and suffering that converted many to the Faith. He was a wonderworker and had the gifts of healing and prophecy. But perhaps his most astounding miracle was worked in the Mordovian camps in 1962, together with his fellow inmate and secret bishop, Basil Vasilyevich Kalinin (+1995).

"It was August, 1962. The Cuban crisis! The attention of the world was glued to it, and it affected even the special section hidden in the Mordovian forests. 'It has to be...! Khrushchev has penetrated into the bosom of the Americans!' That was how the zeks [criminal inmates] interpreted it. People living beyond the barbed wire admitted the possibility that in time of war the local authorities would annihilate them, as the most dangerous politicals, first of all." "At the special section the zeks insisted that Moscow had issued an order that in time of war the politicals and recidivists would be annihilated first of all. The Cuban crisis was soon resolved, and our camp calmed down. Many years later I heard that the fears of the zeks in 1962 had not been without foundation. They had really been threatened with annihilation at that time." "In 1964,

⁷³⁹ Bishop Ambrose, "Gosudarstvo i 'katakomby'", op. cit., p. 104.

soon after the fall of Khrushchev, a colonel from the Georgian KGB came to our camp. And he said, among other things: 'Khrushchev adopted the policy of the complete physical annihilation of the politicals, and first of all the recidivists. During the Cuban crisis everything was prepared for your shooting – even a pit was dug'." [Bishop] Basil Vasilyevich Kalinin remembered that the holy hierarch [Michael] once unexpectedly aroused him from sleep with the words: "Six minutes are remaining. Get up, Basil, and pray! The world is in danger!" And then he learned that this was the critical moment in the Cuban crisis...⁷⁴⁰

Truly, "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5.16). For "when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched" (Numbers 11.2), and when Elijah prayed to the Lord the heavens were closed and again opened (James 5.17). And when the two True Orthodox bishops Michael and Basil prayed to the Lord, the world was saved from nuclear holocaust...

"Let the world mock us," wrote Bishop Michael, "but we, poor people, must give all our strength and desire in prayer to God". "We must strictly watch over ourselves, that we do not fall under the condemnation and wrath of God. We must pour out the balsam of our strength and purity of heart whatever happens, our simple, true and holy prayer to God, which is bound by nothing except simplicity and belief in our eternal inheritance. For the Lord looks on the righteous and on their holy appeals, so that the prayer offered may be the earnest of our strength and the balsam of purification, by which the world might be preserved and the catastrophe which cannot even be expressed in words – God forbid! – might be averted."

"You yourselves know that a city is preserved if a righteous man is praying in it. Once the righteous man has left the city, the elements rule in the city. And so, dear ones, remember this one thing, that now is not that day on which the universe was created, and everything was brought into being, but now is the day on which danger menaces the creation..."⁷⁴¹

Besides this pure, simple, burning prayer of a righteous man, Bishop Michael insisted on the pure confession of the True Orthodox Faith. "Between the Church of the Tikhonite orientation [the True Orthodox Church] and the legal church [the Moscow Patriarchate] there is the following difference. The Church of the Tikhonite orientation zealously fulfils all the laws and rules that are prescribed by the Holy Fathers, while the legal church tolerates atheism, does not struggle against iniquity, but is reconciled with it. I recognize the One Apostolic Church. The legal church recognizes Lenin and Stalin, and serves Soviet power and carries out the orders of the atheist antichrists."⁷⁴²

"Do not believe any sects: this is a cunning contemporary politics that has come out from the West. There are even some that are like the Orthodox faith. But you, my

⁷⁴⁰ I.V. Ilichev, *Voin Khristov Vernij i Istinnij: Tajnij Episkop IPTs Mikhail (Yershov)* (Faithful and True Warrior of Christ: Secret Bishop Michael (Yershov), Moscow: Bratonezh, 2011, pp. 499-500.

⁷⁴¹ Ilichev, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

⁷⁴² Ilichev, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

brothers and dear ones, must not go anywhere – may the Lord keep you! There are also many enemies of our Orthodox Christian faith, we have many enemies. The first is Catholicism, our most cunning and evil enemy, and the Lutherans, and all the sects, which came out of America and now, like dirt, have spread through the whole earth. It is difficult for us poor people now, we have no defence from men, everyone wants to offend us. But we are faithful. We are the most true patriots of our Mother, the Holy Orthodox Christian Eastern Apostolic Church. We are patriots of Holy Rus' and we know the tricks of all kinds of people, and we will not deviate in any direction: for Holy Rus' is sanctified by the sufferings of her own people. Every foot is creeping into Russia and wanting to defile her. No, Russia will preserve all the holy mysteries, even if through small, simple people, but she will show the whole world light, and strength, and greatness. Dear ones, the Orthodox Church will conquer the whole universe. Fear not, my dear ones, the Lord will conquer evil. Amen."⁷⁴³

Bishop Michael was a simple, uneducated man. But he attained the spiritual heights. "In my lifetime I have not studied the sciences, but I have come to know the keys of the universe and have reached the depths of the abyss. It is hard and difficult without the Supreme Creator. With the Creator and His Life-giving Spirit and the righteousness of Christ I have passed through the arena of an indescribable life..."⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴³ Ilichev, *op. cit.*, p. 459.

⁷⁴⁴ Ilichev, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

47. A NEW ROCOR METROPOLITAN

On May 14/27, 1964, Metropolitan Anastasy retired (he died in 1965). Known as “most wise” already from the time of the 1917-18 Council, his period as first hierarch represents a “holding operation”, a preservation of the *status quo* in a very difficult period interrupted by the chaos of the Second World War. It left certain important questions unanswered – questions that would have to be answered unambiguously sooner or later. But it at any rate kept the voice of opposition to the MP alive in the West.

Deacon Andrei Psarev writes: “Since Byzantine times, conciliarity was maintained in the Orthodox Church by the confrontation between the “diplomats” and “zealots.” At the time of the Council of Bishops in 1964 there was a sharp confrontation between these two episcopal parties. The leader of “zealots” was St. John (Maximovitch) of Shanghai and San Francisco, and the leader of the “diplomats” was Archbishop Nikon (Rklitskii) of Washington and Florida. The election of a First Hierarch from either of these two factions would have made it extremely difficult for the other party to work with this person. To resolve this crisis, St. John offered to withdraw his candidacy, if Archbishop Nikon would follow suit. The result was that Bishop Philaret (Voznesenskii) became the Primate of the Russian Church Abroad. This opened a new period in ROCOR history. Bishop Philaret had been consecrated only a year earlier, and represented a new generation of leaders.”⁷⁴⁵

There was such animosity between the supporters of the two candidates for the vacant post, Archbishops Nikon and John Maximovich, that to avoid a schism Archbishop John withdrew his own candidature and put forward in his place the youngest bishop, Philaret (Voznesensky) of Brisbane.⁷⁴⁶ In fact, Fr. Christopher Birchall writes that Philaret’s election was “entirely due to the prompting and influence of Archbishop John”.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴⁵ Psarev, “May 1964: A Radical Change in the History of the Russian Church Abroad”, *Orthodox History*, August 27, 2012.

⁷⁴⁶ Fr. Alexey Young has a slightly different version of events: “I have learned that at the time Met. Anastasy retired, Vladika John was about to be elected Metropolitan, when Vladika Vitaly threatened the Synod that he would ‘make a schism’ if John was elected (apparently coveting the office himself). Rather than risk schism in such a small jurisdiction, Vladika John bowed out in favor of Philaret, whom Vitaly also found acceptable. It was a measure of the kind of man Bl. John was” (private communication to writer, May 16, 1983).

⁷⁴⁷ Birchall, *Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen. The Three-Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Publications, 2014, p. 425.

According to one source, Archbishop John’s candidature was especially opposed by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva. The two men had never been friends... For the life of Metropolitan Philaret, see Nun Cassia (Tatiana Senina, “‘And his lot is among the saints...’”, *Vertograd-Inform* (English edition), № 15, January, 2000, pp. 6-24; *Fiery Pillar. Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) of New York and Eastern America and the Russian Church Abroad (1964-1985)*; Monk Vsevolod (Filipiev), “Mitropolit Filaret: k dvadtsatiletiu co dnia konchiny, 1985-2005”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, № 22 (1786), November 15/28, 2005, pp. 1-3; *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, June 14, 1981; Bishop Gregory Grabbe, *Pis’ma (Letters)*, Moscow, 1998, pp. 14-15; *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’*, №1, 1962; Protopriest Alexis Mikrikov, “Unia s MP privedet k dukhovnoj karastrofe” (The Unia with the MP will lead to a spiritual catastrophe), <http://metanthonymemorial.org/VernostNo34.html>; Monk Benjamin (Gomarteli), “Letopis’ Tserkovnykh Sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda” (A Chronicle of Church Events of

The suggestion was then universally accepted, and Bishop Philaret was enthroned by Metropolitan Anastasy himself in a service that used the ancient text for the enthroning of a metropolitan of Moscow for the first time in centuries.

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Archimandrite Philaret had left China in 1961, only after almost the whole of his flock had left Harbin. "While striving to guard my flock from Soviet falsehood and lies," he recounted, "I myself sometimes felt inexpressibly oppressed – to the point that I several times came close to the decision to leave altogether – to cease serving. And I was stopped only by the thought of my flock: how could I leave these little ones? If I went and stopped serving, that would mean that they would have to enter into service to the Soviets and hear prayers for the forerunners of the Antichrist – 'Lord, preserve them for many years,' etc. This stopped me and forced me to carry out my duty to the end.

the Orthodox Church beginning from 1917), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm>; Metropolitan Valentine of Suzdal, Nativity Epistle, 2000/2001; Ivan Ostroumoff, *The History of the Council of Florence*, pp. 193-199; Archbishop Averky, *Sovremennost' v svete Slova Bozhia. Slova i Rechi (1969-1973)* (Contemporary Life in the Light of the Word of God: Sermons and Speeches), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1975, vol. III, p. 216; Archbishop Vitaly, in *Orthodox Life*, vol. 34, no. 4, July-August, 1984; Fr. Alexey Young, *The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia: A History and Chronology*, San Bernardino: The Borgo Press, 1993, pp. 117-118; Nun Vassa (Larin) "'Glory be to God, Who did not Abandon His Church', The Self-Awareness of ROCOR at the 1974 Third All-Diaspora Council", <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/01newstructure/pagesen/articles/svassasobor.htm>; A. Golitsyn, *The Perestroika Deception*, London and New York: Edward Harle, 1995, p. 175; Protodeacon Basil Yakimov, "Re: Fundamental Question", orthodox-synod@yahoo.groups.com, 4 June, 2003; *Vertograd-Inform*, № 11 (68), November, 2000, pp. 52-53; *Vertograd-Inform*, № 11 (44), November, 1998, pp. 24-27, 28-32; "A Letter from Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) to a Priest of the Church Abroad concerning Father Dimitry Dudko and the Moscow Patriarchate", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 4, February, 1999, pp. 16-20; *Vestnik Zapadno-Evropskoj Eparkhii (Herald of the Western European Diocese)*, 1979, № 14; *Tserkovnie Novosti (Church News)*, № 4 (95), June-July, 2001, p. 9; "A Contemporary Patristic Document", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, November 14/27, 1983, p. 3; "Encyclical Letter of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, № 6, November-December, 1983, p. 13; Protopresbyter Valery Lukianov, "The Transfer of the Blessed Remains of Metropolitan Philaret", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 48, no. 6, November-December, 1998, pp. 33-36; "Miraculous Occurrences Associated with Metropolitan Philaret", *Orthodox Life*, November-December, 1998, pp. 37-38; "An Important Anniversary", *Orthodox Life*, July-December, 2010, pp. 60-65; Hieroschemamonk Akakije, personal communication, March, 2006; Matushka Tatiana Fyodorov, personal communication, April, 2006; Nun Xenia (Mitrenina), personal communication, April, 2006; K. Preobrazhensky, "Otravlenia v Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi", *Nasha Strana*, № 2816, March 23, 2007, p. 8; Bishop Agathangelus of Odessa, August 21, 2007, <http://guest-2.livejournal.com/294723.html>; *Vernost*, no. 104, March, 2008, <http://metanthonymemorial.org/VernostNo104a.html>; Nun Euphrosyne (Molchanova), "Doklad Osviaschennomu Soboru RIPTs o podvige sviatitel'skogo sluzhenia Mitropolita Philareta (Voznesenskogo)", http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_pagelid=1441; Milivoje Miljkovic, personal communication; "An Important Anniversary", *Orthodox Life*, July-December, 2010, pp. 60-65; Nikolai Smolentsev-Sobol', "K Biografiju Sviatitelia Filareta (Voznesenskogo)", <http://m-Idelamballe.livejournal.com/28963.html>; www.monasterypress.com/mphilaret.html; <http://www.homb.org/calendar-and-daily-readings/docs/28-st-philaret-feast-day.pdf?PHPSESSID=b6bedde089e1addfb19c855658265a03>

“And when, finally, with the help of God I managed to extract myself from red China, the first thing I did was turn to the First Hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anastasy, with a request that he consider me again to be in the jurisdiction of the Russian Church Abroad. Vladyka Metropolitan replied with mercy and love, and immediately blessed me to serve in Hong Kong already as a priest of the Synodal jurisdiction, and pointed out that every church server passing into this jurisdiction from the jurisdiction of Moscow must give a special penitential declaration to the effect that he is sorry about his (albeit involuntary) stay in the Moscow jurisdiction. I did this immediately.”

Soon Fr. Philaret flew to Australia and arrived in Sydney. The ruling Archbishop of Australia accepted him with joy and love, and already in the first weeks of Fr. Philaret’s stay in Australia began to speak about the possibility of ordaining him as a Bishop. In 1963 he was ordained Bishop of Brisbane, a vicariate of the Australian diocese. In his sermon at his nomination as Bishop Archimandrite Philaret said to the Archpastors who were present:

“Holy Hierarchs of God! I have thought and felt much in these last days, I have reviewed and examined the whole of my life – and... I see, on the one hand, a chain of innumerable benefactions from God, and on the other – the countless number of my sins... And so raise your hierarchical prayers for my wretchedness in this truly terrible hour of my ordination, that the Lord, the First of Pastors, Who through your holiness is calling me to the height of this service, may not deprive me, the sinful and wretched one, of a place and lot among His chosen ones...”

“One hierarch-elder, on placing the hierarchical staff in the hands of a newly appointed bishop, said to him: ‘Do not be like a milestone on the way, that points out for others the road ahead, but itself remains in its place...’ Pray also for this, Fathers and Archpastors, that in preaching to others, I myself may not turn out to be an idle slave.”

The new metropolitan faced a daunting task. For he had, on the one hand, to lead his Church in decisively denouncing the apostasy of World Orthodoxy, communion with which could no longer be tolerated. And on the other, he had to preserve unity among the members of his own Synod, some of whom were in spirit closer to “World Orthodoxy” than True Orthodoxy...

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The first Official Epistle of a Hierarchical Council of ROCOR under her new metropolitan was dated June 4/17, 1964, and appeared to continue the line adopted by Metropolitan Anastasy in relation to the MP: "They [the God-opposing Communists] have contrived a new, truly diabolical plan in their war against the faithful: it is now forbidden by the godless government of the USSR for children and young men and women from the ages of 3 to 18 to be allowed into God's churches and to be communed with the Body and Blood of Christ. And in order to mock the Church even more, this directive by the authorities has to be enforced by the

clergymen themselves – they are the ones who must prohibit youth from approaching the Chalice of Christ and demand the removal of children and youth from the churches"....

"But the true situation is this: not many clergymen are left in the USSR, not many open churches are left, the faithful rarely can attend services And now even at these rare services, which Christians, if they are not extremely old men and women, attend at the risk of being tagged by the active Soviet "watchers" and thus lose their jobs--parents cannot bring their young children, who, in their tender childhood and youth, so need graceful communion to the Fountain of life--to Christ the Savior, just as young little saplings need the light and the warmth of the sun."

This Epistle appeared to accept the MP as a grace-bearing institution – nearly thirty years after the leading hierarchs of the Catacomb Church had rejected that position. However, in his 1965 Epistle “to Orthodox Bishops and all who hold dear the Fate of the Russian Church”, Metropolitan Philaret gave the first signs that he was going to adopt a more uncompromising approach that attributed a more prominent role to the Catacomb Church than during the time of his predecessor:

“In recent days the Soviet Government in Moscow and various parts of the world celebrated a new anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917 which brought it to power.

“We, on the other hand, call to mind in these days the beginning of the way of the cross for the Russian Orthodox Church, upon which from that time, as it were, all the powers of hell have fallen.

“Meeting resistance on the part of Archpastors, pastors, and laymen strong in spirit, the Communist power, in its fight with religion, began from the very first days the attempt to weaken the Church not only by killing those of her leaders who were strongest in spirit, but also by means of the artificial creation of schisms.

Thus arose the so-called "Living Church" and the renovationist movement, which had the character of a Church tied to a Protestant-Communist reformation. Notwithstanding the support of the Government, this schism was crushed by the inner power of the Church. It was too clear to believers that the ‘Renovated Church’ was uncanonical and altered Orthodoxy. For this reason people did not follow it.

“The second attempt, after the death of Patriarch Tikhon and the rest of the locum tenentes of the patriarchal throne, Metropolitan Peter, had greater success. The Soviet power succeeded in 1927 in sundering in part the inner unity of the Church. By confinement in prison, torture, and special methods it broke the will of the vicar of the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Sergius, and secured from him the proclamation of a declaration of the complete loyalty of the Church to the Soviet power, even to the point where the joys and successes of the Soviet Union were declared by the Metropolitan to the joys and successes of the Church, and its failures to be her failures. What can be more blasphemous than such an idea, which was justly

appraised by many at that time as an attempt to unite light with darkness, and Christ with Belial. Both Patriarch Tikhon and Metropolitan Peter, as well as others who served as locum tenens of the Patriarchal throne, had earlier refused to sign a similar declaration, for which they were subjected to arrest, imprisonment, and banishment.

“Protesting against this declaration—which was proclaimed by Metropolitan Sergius by himself alone, without the agreement of the suppressed majority of the episcopate of the Russian Church, violating thus the 34th Apostolic Canon—many bishops who were then in the death camp at Solovki wrote to the Metropolitan: ‘Any government can sometimes make decisions that are foolish, unjust, cruel, to which the Church is forced to submit, but which she cannot rejoice over or approve. One of the aims of the Soviet Government is the extirpation of religion, but the Church cannot acknowledge its successes in this direction as her own successes’ (Open Letter from Solovki, September 27, 1927).

“The courageous majority of the sons of the Russian Church did not accept the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, considering that a union of the Church with the godless Soviet State, which had set itself the goal of annihilating Christianity in general, could not exist on principle.

“But a schism nonetheless occurred. The minority, accepting the declaration, formed a central administration, the so-called ‘Moscow Patriarchate,’ which, while being supposedly officially recognized by the authorities, in actual fact received no legal rights whatever from them; for they continued, now without hindrance, a most cruel persecution of the Church. In the words of Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd, Metropolitan Sergius, having proclaimed the declaration, entered upon the path of ‘monstrous arbitrariness, flattery, and betrayal of the Church to the interests of atheism and the destruction of the Church.’

“The majority, renouncing the declaration, began an illegal ecclesiastical existence. Almost all the bishops were tortured and killed in death camps, among them the locum tenentes Metropolitan Peter and Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, who was respected by all, and Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, who was shot to death at the end of 1938, as well as many other bishops and thousands of priests, monks, nuns, and courageous laymen. Those bishops and clergy who miraculously remained alive began to live illegally and to serve Divine services secretly, hiding themselves from the authorities and originating in this fashion the Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union.

“Little news of this Church has come to the free world. The Soviet press long kept silent about her, wishing to give the impression that all believers in the USSR stood behind the Moscow Patriarchate. They even attempted to deny entirely the existence of the Catacomb Church.

“But then, after the death of Stalin and the exposure of his activity, and especially after the fall of Khrushchev, the Soviet press has begun to write more and more often on the secret Church in the USSR, calling it the ‘sect’ of True-Orthodox Christians. It

was apparently impossible to keep silence about it any longer; its numbers are too great and it causes the authorities too much alarm.

“Unexpectedly in the *Atheist Dictionary* (Moscow, 1964), on pages 123 and 124 the Catacomb Church is openly discussed. ‘True-Orthodox Christians,’ we read in the *Dictionary*, ‘an Orthodox sect, originating in the years 1922-24. It was organized in 1927, when Metropolitan Sergius proclaimed the principle of loyalty to the Soviet power.’ ‘Monarchist’ (we would say ecclesiastical) ‘elements, having united around Metropolitan Joseph (Petrovykh) of Leningrad’ (Petrograd) – the Josephites,’ or, as the same *Dictionary* says, the Tikhonites, formed in 1928 a guiding centre, the True-Orthodox Church, and united all groups and elements which came out against the Soviet order’ (we may add from ourselves, ‘atheist’ order). ‘The True-Orthodox Church directed unto the villages a multitude of monks and nuns,’ for the most part of course priests, we add again from ourselves, who celebrated Divine services and rites secretly and ‘conducted propaganda against the leadership of the Orthodox Church,’ i.e., against the Moscow Patriarchate which had given in to the Soviet power, ‘appealing to people not to submit to Soviet laws,’ which are directed, quite apparently, against the Church of Christ and faith. By the testimony of the *Atheist Dictionary*, the True-Orthodox Christians organized and continue to organize house, i.e., secret, catacomb churches and monasteries... preserving in full the doctrine and rites of Orthodoxy.’ They ‘do not acknowledge the authority of the Orthodox Patriarch,’ i.e., the successor of Metropolitan Sergius, Patriarch Alexis.

“‘Striving to fence off’ the True-Orthodox Christians ‘from the influence of Soviet reality,’ chiefly of course from atheist propaganda, ‘their leaders... make use of the myth of Antichrist, who has supposedly been ruling in the world since 1917.’ The anti-Christian nature of the Soviet power is undoubted for any sound-thinking person, and all the more for a Christian.

“True Orthodox Christians ‘usually refuse to participate in elections,’ which in the Soviet Union, a country deprived of freedom, are simply a comedy, ‘and other public functions; they do not accept pensions, do not allow their children to go to school beyond the fourth class...’ Here is an unexpected Soviet testimony of the truth, to which nothing need be added.

“Honour and praise to the True-Orthodox Christians, heroes of the spirit and confessors, who have not bowed before the terrible power, which can stand only by terror and force and has become accustomed to the abject flattery of its subjects. The Soviet rulers fall into a rage over the fact that there exist people who fear God more than men. They are powerless before the millions of True-Orthodox Christians.

“However, besides the True Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union and the Moscow Patriarchate, which have communion neither of prayer nor of any other kind with each other, there exists yet a part of the Russian Church—free from oppression and persecution by the atheists the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. She has never broken the spiritual and prayerful bonds with the Catacomb Church in the home land. After the last war many members of this Church appeared abroad and

entered into the Russian Church Outside Russia, and thus the bond between these two Churches was strengthened yet more – a bond which has been sustained illegally up to the present time. As time goes on, it becomes all the stronger and better established.

“The part of the Russian Church that is abroad and free is called upon to speak in the free world in the name of the persecuted Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union; she reveals to all the truly tragic condition of believers in the USSR, which the atheist power so carefully hushes up, with the aid of the Moscow Patriarchate, she calls on those who have not lost shame and conscience to help the persecuted.

“This is why it is our sacred duty to watch over the existence of the Russian Church Outside of Russia. The Lord, the searcher of hearts, having permitted His Church to be subjected to oppression, persecution, and deprivation of all rights in the godless Soviet State, has given us, Russian exiles, in the free world the talent of freedom, and He expects from us the increase of this talent and a skilful use of it. And we have not the right to hide it in the earth. Let no one dare to say to us that we should do this, let no one push us to a mortal sin. For the fate of our Russian Church we, Russian bishops, are responsible before God, and no one in the world can free us from this sacred obligation. No one can understand better than we what is happening in our homeland, of which no one can have any doubt. Many times foreigners, even Orthodox people and those vested with high ecclesiastical rank, have made gross errors in connection with the Russian Church and false conclusions concerning her present condition. May God forgive them this, since they do not know what they are doing.

“We shall not cease to accuse the godless persecutors of faith and those who evilly cooperate with them under the exterior of supposed representatives of the Church. In this the Russian Church Outside of Russia has always seen one of her important tasks. Knowing this, the Soviet power through its agents wages with her a stubborn battle, not hesitating to use any means: lies, bribes, gifts, and intimidation. We, however, shall not suspend our accusation.

“Declaring this before the face of the whole world, I appeal to all our brothers in Christ—Orthodox bishops—and to all people who hold dear the fate of the persecuted Russian Church as a part of the Universal Church of Christ, for understanding, support, and their holy prayers. As for our spiritual children, we call on them to hold firmly to the truth of Orthodoxy, witnessing of her both by one's word and especially by a prayerful, devout Christian life.”

The prominence given to the Catacomb Church by Metropolitan Philaret was timely. True Orthodox bishops were exceedingly few: Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin) of Nizhegorod died in Glazov in 1957, leaving no successor, as did Bishop Barnabas (Belyaev) of Pechersk in Kiev in 1963 and Bishop Michael (Yershov) of Chistopol in the Mordovian camps in 1974. Catacomb priests served their widely scattered flocks in the greatest secrecy without any archpastoral support. Many now began to commemorate the first-hierarchs of the Russian Church Abroad...

48. THE LIFTING OF THE ANATHEMAS

Since the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the leader of the ecumenical movement on the Orthodox side had been the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras. The key figure on the Catholic side was Pope John XXIII, who early in the 1960s convened the three-year Vatican II Council, which thrust forward an ecumenist agenda. "One of the council's key documents, Unitatis Redintegratio (Restoration of Unity), issued in 1964, identified "restoration of unity among all Christians" as a key long-term goal. The document described baptized Christians who profess faith in another church as "separated brethren", not as "heretics", the term commonly used for centuries prior."⁷⁴⁸

Olga Chetverikova writes: "Setting as one of its central aims the leadership of Catholicism in the movement for Christian unity, the Council formulated its own ecumenical conception, as an alternative to the way of the Protestants, which allowed it to open itself out to dialogue to other religions, while keeping untouched its position on the power of the pontiff. In the dogmatic constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium), it was affirmed that the Church of Christ, 'established and constructed in this world as a community remains in the Catholic Church ruled by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him', but now it was added that 'even outside her membership there exist many principles of sanctification and truth, which, being gifts, are proper to the Church of Christ, and propel towards Catholic unity'. Thus the Council defined two basic points in its relations with other churches. It affirmed that it was possible to receive 'the whole fullness of means of salvation' only through the Catholic Church, but at the same time it recognized that other ecclesiastical communities, linked to her by virtue of baptism, 'can, in different ways, corresponding to the particular situation of each church or community, truly engender the life of grace', and 'they are capable of opening access to saving communion'. Although the latter 'suffer from certain faults, nevertheless they are endowed with significance and weight in the mystery of salvation'. The main reversal in ecumenical consciousness consisted in the conclusion that 'those who believe in Christ and have been baptized in the right manner are in definite communion with the Catholic Church, albeit not complete, while full communion is possible only with the recognition of the power of the successor of Peter, that is, the Pontiff of Rome.'"⁷⁴⁹

The new ecumenist course was sealed on January 5 and 6, 1964, when Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople met in Jerusalem and prayed together. This was a clear transgression of Apostolic canon 45 concerning relations with heretics. Archbishop Chrysostom of Athens said: "While the Pope is going to the Holy Land to kneel before the Saviour's sepulchre, you (Athenagoras) are going to kneel before the Pope and bury Orthodoxy."⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁸ Victor Gaetan, "The Church Undivided", *Foreign Affairs*, May-June, 2013, p. 118.

⁷⁴⁹ Chetverikova, *Izmena v Vatikane ili Zagovor Pap protiv Khristianstva* (Betrayal in the Vatican, or the Conspiracy of the Popes against Christianity), Moscow, 2011, p. 35.

⁷⁵⁰ Ulrich Duckrow, *Conflict over the Ecumenical Movement*, Geneva: The World Council of Churches, 1981, p. 53.

On January 23 / February 5, 1964 a large number of Athonite monks, including the abbots of four monasteries, protested against this ecumenical activity: "the undersigned Fathers of the Holy Mountain, abbots, priest-monks and monks, learning of the recent machinations and plots against our blameless Orthodox Faith by the Papal insurrection and of the pro-uniatic actions and statements of the Ecumenical Patriarch and his co-workers, do proclaim with a stentorian voice that we denounce these uniatic tendencies and leanings, and remains steadfast and unshaken in our Orthodox Faith..."⁷⁵¹ Unfortunately, however, this "stentorian voice" became more and more muted, until only the Monastery of Esphigmenou remained out of communion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate...

The calendar question again reared its head during this period. Thus during the Second Pan-Orthodox Conference, the Church of Greece had threatened to boycott the meeting if the calendar question were raised. "But the representatives of the Jerusalem Patriarchate," writes Bishop Ephraim, "insisted that the calendar be placed upon the agenda for discussion, and with good reason. The Jerusalem Patriarchate is especially interested in settling the calendar issue because of its position as a place of pilgrimage. When Athenagoras met Pope Paul in Jerusalem, he went afterwards to Bethlehem to attend the service for Christmas (which, of course, is celebrated there according to the Old Calendar). In the meantime, the new calendarists were celebrating Epiphany in Constantinople. By the time Athenagoras returned to Istanbul, Epiphany had already been celebrated. In other words, Athenagoras himself, because of this calendar confusion, celebrated two Christmases but did not celebrate Epiphany that year. Also, many pious pilgrims came from Greece to celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem, not knowing that the Jerusalem Patriarchate follows the Old Calendar... They arrive in Bethlehem and discover that it is only St. Spyridon's day and that Christmas is two weeks away. They have only arranged to stay for a few days, and few are those who have made the provisions or have the money to wait for two weeks. In their dismay, they beg the priests there to chant a few Christmas troparia and, of course, the priests refuse, because not only is it not Christmas according to their reckoning, but they are also in the midst of the fast. The pilgrims return to Greece confused and disheartened since they did not get to celebrate Christmas, even in Bethlehem, and Christmas has already been celebrated in Greece. Therefore, that year they do not celebrate Christmas anywhere. This happens annually there - hence Jerusalem's concern."⁷⁵²

"Immediately after the Holy Land meeting," writes Fr. George Macris, "a proclamation of the whole monastic community of Mount Athos to 'the pious Orthodox Greek people and the whole of the Orthodox Church' denounced the 'pro-uniatic actions and statements' of the Patriarch and his co-workers."⁷⁵³

⁷⁵¹ Proclamation of the Holy Mountain, in Alexander Kalomiros, *Against False Union*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 2000, p. 101.

⁷⁵² Monk (now Metropolitan) Ephraim, *Letter on the Calendar Issue*, Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston. The present writer remembers meeting the head of an Athonite monastery in a convent of which he was the spiritual father in the north of Greece. He admitted that he celebrated Christmas twice - first on the Greek mainland according to the new calendar, and then on Mount Athos according to the Julian calendar.

⁷⁵³ Monk Ephraim, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

In 1964 several parishes in the USA, Canada and Australia under Archbishop Photius, formerly of Paphos (Cyprus), left the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Their basic reasons were the dependence of the patriarchate on the Turks, the rapprochement with the Catholics, and the dictatorial behaviour of Archbishop James. In this year the Turks increased their harassment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople. Much property was confiscated, and 15,000 Greeks were deported.

This led some to speculate that the Patriarch's rapprochement with the Pope was elicited by his need to find powerful friends to support him in the West – just as in 1274 and 1439. Thus in April, 1965, Archbishop James pleaded with the Pope to help the Patriarch. The Pope promised his support, whereupon the two hierarchs prayed together.⁷⁵⁴

Further intense activity led, on December 7, 1965, to the “lifting of the anathemas” of 1054 between Orthodoxy and the Papacy. The announcement was made simultaneously in Rome and Constantinople. It included the following words: “Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I with his synod, in common agreement, declare that: a) They regret the offensive words, the reproaches without foundation, and the reprehensible gestures which, on both sides, have marked or accompanied the sad events of this period [viz. in the 11th century]. b) They likewise regret and remove both from memory and from the midst of the Church the sentences of excommunication which followed these events, the memory of which has influenced actions up to our day and has hindered closer relations in charity; and they commit these excommunications to oblivion. We must recognize that the sentences were directed at particular persons and not at the Churches, and did not aim to break ecclesiastical communion between the sees of Rome and Constantinople.”⁷⁵⁵

“In short,” writes Peter Hebblethwaite in his biography of Paul VI, “1054 had been an accident, much ado about nothing very much, frozen into permanent schism only by later ‘non-theological’ events.”⁷⁵⁶

The Tomos was historically inaccurate: both sees recognized in 1054 that a break in ecclesiastical communion had taken place between them. Moreover, in saying that the schism of 1054 was based on “reproaches without foundation”, the Patriarch was in effect saying that the Papacy was not, or never had been, heretical – although the Papacy had renounced none of its heresies, and Pope Paul VI had reasserted papal infallibility as recently as Vatican II. While relations with excommunicated individuals or Churches can be restored if those individuals or Churches repent, anathemas against heresies cannot be removed insofar as a heresy remains a heresy forever. And yet in December of 1968 Athenagoras announced that he had inserted Pope Paul VI's name into the Diptychs, thereby signifying that the Pope was not a heretic and was in communion with the Orthodox Church. And he made the

⁷⁵⁴ Monk Ephraim, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

⁷⁵⁵ Full text in *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. I, № 1, Spring, 1966, pp. 49-50.

⁷⁵⁶ Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope*, 1993; in Fr. Alexey Young, *The Rush to Embrace*, Richfield Springs: Nikodemos Orthodox Publication Society, 1996, p. 63.

following formal renunciation of True Christianity and welcome to the coming Antichrist: "We must pray and struggle that Jerusalem becomes a place of dialogue and peace. So that together we may prepare the way for the return of Jesus, the Mahdi of Islam, the Moshiach [Messiah] of Israel, our Lord".

Archbishop Chrysostom of Athens denied that the Patriarch had the authority to act independently of the other Orthodox Churches. And he said: "I am convinced that no other Orthodox Church will copy the Ecumenical Patriarch's action."⁷⁵⁷ Unfortunately, he was wrong: in March, 1966 the Synod of the new calendarist Church of Cyprus approved the lifting of anathemas.⁷⁵⁸

ROCOR had three observers at the Vatican Council who witnessed the ceremony of the "lifting of the anathemas". One of them, Archimandrite Ambrose (Pogodin), after describing the ceremony with evident sympathy, wrote: "The Russian Church Abroad did not recognize the actions of Patriarch Athenagoras, considering that the patriarch was obliged to do this only with the agreement of all the Orthodox Churches, because the matter of the schism between the Eastern and Western Churches concerned all the Orthodox Churches - it was not only the personal relations between the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople. We, observers from the Russian Church Abroad, received by telephone the order from our ecclesiastical authorities not to be present at the ceremony of the mutual lifting of the anathemas between the Constantinopolitan and Roman Churches. But we, having taken counsel amongst ourselves, thought that such a demonstration would have been harmful for our Church, which we represented with dignity. However, our demonstration would have remained unnoticed: what would the absence of three people in a mass of tens of thousands of people signify?!"⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁷ *Ekklesia*, quoted in *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. I, № 1, Spring, 1966, p. 50.

⁷⁵⁸ Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij* (Chronicle of Church Events), part 5, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis5.htm>, p. 29.

⁷⁵⁹ Pogodin, "O Chine Priniatia v Pravoslavnuuiu Tserkov'" (On the Rite of Reception into the Orthodox Church); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 24-25.

49. "THE HERESY OF HERESIES"

At this critical moment, on December 15, 1965, Metropolitan Philaret issued the first of a series of "Sorrowful Epistles" designed to warn the Orthodox against ecumenism.⁷⁶⁰

First, he wrote to Patriarch Athenagoras protesting against his action: "The organic belonging of the Orthodox to the union of the contemporary heretics does not sanctify the latter, while it tears away the Orthodox entering into it from Catholic Orthodox Unity... Your gesture puts a sign of equality between error and truth. For centuries all the Orthodox Churches believed with good reasons that it has violated no doctrine of the Holy Ecumenical Councils; whereas the Church of Rome has introduced a number of innovations in its dogmatic teaching. The more such innovations were introduced, the deeper was to become the separation between the East and the West. The doctrinal deviations of Rome in the eleventh century did not yet contain the errors that were added later. Therefore the cancellation of the mutual excommunication of 1054 could have been of meaning at that time, but now it is only evidence of indifference in regard to the most important errors, namely new doctrines foreign to the ancient Church, of which some, having been exposed by St. Mark of Ephesus, were the reason why the Church rejected the Union of Florence... No union of the Roman Church with us is possible until it renounces its new doctrines, and no communion in prayer can be restored with it without a decision of all the Churches, which, however, can hardly be possible before the liberation of the Church of Russia which at present has to live in the catacombs... A true dialogue implies an exchange of views with a possibility of persuading the participants to attain an agreement. As one can perceive from the Encyclical Ecclesiam Suam, Pope Paul VI understands the dialogue as a plan for our union with Rome with the help of some formula which would, however, leave unaltered its doctrines, and particularly its dogmatic doctrine about the position of the Pope in the Church. However, any compromise with error is foreign to the history of the Orthodox Church and to the essence of the Church. It could not bring a harmony in the confessions of the Faith, but only an illusory outward unity similar to the conciliation of dissident Protestant communities in the ecumenical movement."⁷⁶¹

Tatiana (now Nun Cassia) Senina writes: "Metropolitan Philaret sent a similar address to another leader of the ecumenical movement - the American Archbishop James. However, the apostate hierarchs paid no attention to his exhortations. The ecumenical movement continued to gather speed. The holy Hierarch Philaret looked with sorrow on the falling away from the faith of the once Orthodox Churches. And he called the epistles which he sent to all the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church just that - 'Sorrowful Epistles'. In his first Epistle, written in 1969, St. Philaret says that he has decided to turn to all the hierarchs, 'some of whom occupy the oldest and most

⁷⁶⁰ It was claimed by Matushka Anastasia Shatilova that the Sorrowful Epistles were in fact written by her father, Protospesbyter George (later Bishop Gregory) Grabbe. See Andrei Psarev, "The Development of Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia's Attitude Toward Other Local Orthodox Churches", http://www.sobor2006.com/printerfriendly2.php?id=119_0_3_0, p. 8.

⁷⁶¹ Full text in Ivan Ostroumoff, *The History of the Council of Florence*, Boston, pp. 193-199.

glorious sees', because, in the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, 'the truth is betrayed by silence', and it is impossible to keep silent when you see a deviation from the purity of Orthodoxy – after all, every bishop at his ordination gives a promise to keep the Faith and the canons of the holy fathers and defend Orthodoxy from heresies. Vladyka quotes various ecumenist declarations of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and clearly shows, on the basis of the patristic teaching and the canons, that the position of the WCC has nothing in common with Orthodoxy, and consequently the Orthodox Churches must not participate in the work of this council. The holy Hierarch Philaret also emphasises that the voice of the MP is not the voice of the True Russian Church, which in the homeland is persecuted and hides in the catacombs. Vladyka calls on all the Orthodox hierarchs to stand up in defence of the purity of Orthodoxy.

“Vladyka Philaret wrote his second ‘Sorrowful Epistle’ on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1972. In it he noted that although in the last two years hierarchs had made declarations about the heterodoxy of the ecumenical movement, not one Orthodox Church had declared that it was leaving the WCC. Vladyka placed as the aim of his Second Epistle ‘to show that abyss of heresy against the very concept of the Church into which all the participants in the ecumenical movement are being drawn’. He recalled the threatening prophecy of the Apostle Paul that to those who will not receive ‘the love of the truth for salvation’ the Lord will send ‘strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness’ (II Thessalonians 2.10-12). St. Philaret’s third Epistle was devoted to the so-called ‘Thyateira Confession’ of Metropolitan Athenagoras [of Thyateira and Great Britain], the exarch of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in Europe – a document written in a completely heretical spirit, but which did not elicit any reaction from the leaders of the ‘official churches’. Evidently Vladyka Philaret hoped at the beginning that at any rate one of the bishops of ‘World Orthodoxy’ might listen to his words, which is why he addressed them in his epistles as true Archpastors of the Church. Besides, attempts at exhortation corresponded to the apostolic command: ‘A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself’ (Titus 3. 10-11). It was fitting, before accepting an anathema against the apostates, to try and convert them from their error.

“Alas, no conversion took place, and the ecumenical impiety continued to pour out. Vladyka addressed his word not only to bishops, but also to their flock, untiringly explaining the danger of the new heresy. While telling about the zeal of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, who slapped the face of Arius when he blasphemed against the Son of God, Vladyka said: ‘O how often we do not have enough of such zeal when it is really necessary to speak for the insulted and trodden-on truth! I want to tell you about one incident that took place not long ago and which it would have been difficult even to imagine several years ago – and now we are going further and further downhill all the time. One man came from Paris and said that the following incident had taken place at a so-called “ecumenical meeting’. Of course, you know what ecumenism is; it is *the heresy of heresies*. It wants to completely wipe out the concept of the Orthodox Church as the guardian of the Truth, and to create some kind of new, strange church. And so there took place this ‘ecumenical meeting’. Present were a so-

called Orthodox protopriest from the Paris Theological (more exactly, heretical) Institute, a Jewish rabbi, a pastor and a Catholic priest. At first they sort of prayed, and then began the speeches. And then (forgive me for saying such things from the holy ambon, but I want to show you what we have come to) the Jewish rabbi said that the Lord Jesus Christ was the illegitimate son of a dissolute woman...

“But that’s not the main horror. The Jewish people has opposed God for a long time... - so there’s nothing surprising in this. But the horror was that when he said this *everyone* was silent. Later, a man who had heard this terrible blasphemy asked the ‘Orthodox’ protopriest: ‘How could you keep silent?’ He replied: ‘I didn’t want to offend this Jew.’ It’s wrong to offend a Jew, but to insult the All-Pure Virgin Mary is permitted! Look at the state we have come to! How often does it happen to us all now that we do not have the zeal to stand up, when necessary, in defence of our holy things! The Orthodox cleric must zealously stand up against blasphemy, just as the holy Hierarch Nicholas stopped the mouth of the heretic... But now, unfortunately, we have become, as the saying goes, ‘shamefully indifferent to both the evil and the good’. And it is precisely in the soil of this indifference, of a kind of feeling of self-preservation, that the heresy of ecumenism has established itself – as also apostasy, that falling away which is becoming more and more evident... Let us remember, brethren, that Christian love embraces all in itself, is compassionate to all, wishes that all be saved and is sorry for, and merciful to, and love every creature of God; but where it sees a conscious assault on the truth it turns into fiery zeal which cannot bear any such blasphemy... And so must it always be, because every Orthodox Christian must always be zealous for God.”⁷⁶²

As Basil Lourié wrote: “Athenagoras ... did not consider [the Latins] to be heretics. But his denial of their hereticalness was not the manifestation of a special love for them: Athenagoras did not recognise the existence of heresy in general! On hearing of a certain man who saw heresy everywhere, Athenagoras said: ‘I don’t see them anywhere! I see only truths, partial truths, reduced truths, truths that are sometimes out of place...’

“The teaching of the Church, of the Holy Fathers, is based on the rock of the confession of the fullness of the Truth incarnate in Christ, which is organically incapable of being mixed with lies. The ecumenists consciously choose the sand of ‘partial truths’ cemented by the lie of the denial of Christ as the true Son and Word of God.

“Why can Athenagoras and people like him, who are characterised by their own kind of deep faith, asceticism and even capacity for sacrifice, completely consciously go against, not simply individual Fathers, but even all of them taken together? Why have they come to the decision that certain decrees of the Fathers in relation to the Church and the dogmas may supposedly have lost their force in our time? There can only be one answer: their Orthodox faith was been mixed with certain tares, which have grown up and suffocated the shoots of Truth. The tares are faith in something about which the Lord did not announce to the Church. This is what we read in this

⁷⁶² Senina, “And his lot is among the saints...”, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 15, January, 2000, pp. 15-17.

connection in Athenagoras himself: 'Palestine has again become the centre of the world... We must pray and struggle that Jerusalem may again become a place of dialogue and peace. So that we may together prepare the way for the return of Jesus, the Mahdi of Islam, the Messiah of Israel, our Lord.' 'In Jerusalem Abraham met Melchizedek, a priest of the Most High God, a mystical foreshadowing of the Word which is present in all peoples and in all religions.' (This is how Athenagoras explains why he and the Roman Pope Paul VI decided to meet in Jerusalem.) The union with the Latins was seen by Athenagoras in connection with this coming advent of the person he called Jesus: 'Unity may be attained unexpectedly, as is the case with everything great. As can happen with the return of Christ, Who, as He said, will come as a thief. Catholicism is now in a vortex. Everything is possible.' Neither Athenagoras nor the other ecumenists refer to any other positions based on Church Tradition. And not surprisingly. The teaching of the Church foresees the union of all peoples, not around Christ, but around him whom the Jews call the Messiah, and the Muslims Mahdi [the Antichrist]. 'When the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth?' (Luke 18.8).

"But this Tradition of the Church has ceased to be of interest to them because they have accepted another: faith that some special age has dawned precisely now. If all the people of this age understand its content, they will turn out to be much more closely united with each other than with their co-religionists of previous ages. The people of this age are united by certain 'pan-human', as they put it, values of their own, values which are much more important to them than the heritage of the past, which disunites them. This is that age of which the bearers of the so-called 'Russian religious philosophy' (particularly Soloviev, Berdyaev, Florensky and Bulgakov) became the heralds throughout the world. These people expressed in a pseudo-Christian language the idea of the coming of a 'new age' - the age of some new, post-New Testament 'revelation of the Holy Spirit', which would be given in the last times, and which they borrowed from occult teachings. (See, for example, the letter on the Holy Spirit in Florensky's *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*.) For these people there exists some kind of special 'age of the Fathers', which is already completely past. With it have also gone into the past the canons of the Fathers. In our time, instead of the Fathers there are those who have received the new revelation of the new age. And so for the Orthodox Church today ecumenism is not a particular problem which might pass some countries by. But at the same time it is only a particular case of a more widespread phenomenon - the placing of the whole of contemporary civilisation on a new principle of unity. It is on this principle that the universal religion which Hieromonk Seraphim Rose of blessed memory (+1982) called 'the religion of the future', the religion of the Antichrist, is being created at the present time.

"This principle is much more clearly formulated in various movements of the 'New Age' and Masonry type, while ecumenism is called to carry out only one particular task: force the entry into this new unity of such people as would wish to preserve their unity with traditional forms of religion. The Antichrist will have to satisfy everyone..."⁷⁶³

⁷⁶³ Lourié, "The Ecclesiology of a Retreating Army", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 3, January, 1999, pp. 24-25 (English edition).

Hieromonk Seraphim wrote with regard to an article written by Archbishop James entitled "A New Epoch?": "I suddenly felt that I had found an insight into the 'essence of Iakovism'. Is it not, indeed, the basic heresy of *chiliasm*? What else, indeed, could justify such immense changes and monstrous perversions in Orthodoxy except the concept that we are entering entirely new historical circumstances, an entirely new *kind* of time, in which the concepts of the past are no longer relevant, but we must be guided by the voices of the new time? Does not Fr. Patrinos, in past issues of the *Orthodox Observer*, justify Patriarch Athenagoras – not as a theologian, not as a traditionalist, but precisely as a *prophet*, as one whose heresies cannot be condemned because he already lives in the 'new time', ahead of his own times? Patriarch Athenagoras himself has been quoted as speaking of the coming of the 'Third Age of the Holy Spirit' – a clearly chiliastic idea which has its chief recent champion in N. Berdyaev, and can be traced back directly to Joachim of Fiore, and indirectly to the Montanists. The whole idea of a 'new age', of course, penetrates every fiber of the last two centuries with their preoccupation with 'progress', and is *the* key idea of the very concept of Revolution (from French to Bolshevik), is the central idea of modern occultism (visible on the popular level in today's talk of the 'age of Aquarius', the astrological post-Christian age), and has owed its spread probably chiefly to Freemasonry (there's a Scottish Rite publication in America called 'New Age'). (I regret to say that the whole philosophy is also present in the American dollar bill with its masonic heritage, with its novus ordo saeculorum and its unfinished pyramid, awaiting the thirteenth stone on top!) In Christian terms, it is the philosophy of Antichrist, the one who will turn the world upside down and 'change the times and seasons.'... And the whole concept of ecumenism is, of course, permeated with this heresy and the 'refounding of the Church'."⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶⁴ Fr. Seraphim Rose, in Hieromonk Damascene (Christensen), *Father Seraphim Rose: His Life and Works*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 2003, p. 397.

50. MOSCOW AND THE METROPOLIA

During the 1960s opposition to Ecumenism in the Local Orthodox Churches was gradually suppressed, even among the Slavic Churches. Thus the MP joined in 1961 at the New Delhi General Assembly. (led by Bishop Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh and Bishop Nikodem (Rotov) of Leningrad). In 1965 the Serbian Church joined, and at the Fourth General Assembly of the WCC in Uppsala, Patriarch German of Serbia was one of the six presidents, and remained in that post for the next ten years. Uppsala considerably furthered the ecumenical movement. The Orthodox, as the new general secretary Carson Blake joyfully pointed out, were now taking full part in all the sections and committees and not, as often in the past, issuing separate statements disagreeing with the majority Protestant view.

Now only ROCOR, the Russian Catacomb Church and the Greek and Romanian Old Calendarists stood in the way of the complete triumph of Ecumenism. It was time for this last remnant of the True Church of Christ to renounce all hesitations, all false hopes, all temptations to compromise in the face of the completely unambiguous apostasy of the official churches of "World Orthodoxy". It was time to declare that Ecumenism was not simply uncanonical, but heresy, and not simply heresy, but "the heresy of heresies".

This definition came in a report that Archbishop Vitaly (Ustinov) of Canada gave to the Synod of ROCOR on the Uppsala Assembly of the WCC: "At the opening of the Assembly an ecumenical prayer was read in the name of all those assemblies: 'O God our Father, You can create everything anew. We entrust ourselves to You, help us to live for others, for Your love extends over all people, and to search for the Truth, which we have not known...' How could the Orthodox listen to these last words? It would have been interesting to look at that moment at the faces of the Orthodox hierarchs who had declared for all to hear that they, too, did not know the Truth. Every batyushka of ours in the remotest little village knows the Truth by experience, as he stands before the throne of God and prays to God in spirit and in truth. Even *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, which is completely subject to the censorship of the communist party, in citing the words of the prayer in its account of this conference, did not dare to translate the English 'truth' by the word 'istina', but translated it as 'pravda' ['righteousness']. Of course, everyone very well understood that in the given case the text of the prayer was speaking without the slightest ambiguity about the Truth. Perhaps the Orthodox hierarchs have resorted, in the conference, to the old Jesuit practice of reservatio mentalis, but in that case if all these delegates do not repent of the sin of communion in prayer with heretics, then we must consider them to be on the completely false path of apostasy from the Truth of Orthodoxy... Ecumenism is the heresy of heresies because until now each heresy in the history of the Church has striven to take the place of the true Church, but the ecumenical movement, in uniting all the heresies, invites all of them together to consider themselves the one true Church."⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁵ Vitaly, "Ekumenizm" (Ecumenism), *Pravoslavnij Vestnik* (Orthodox Herald), June, 1969, pp. 14-30; *Moskva* (Moscow), 1991, № 9, p. 149.

On December 16, 1969, the MP Synod resolved to allow Catholics and Old Ritualists to receive communion from Orthodox priests if they asked for it.⁷⁶⁶ The MP's Archbishop Basil of Brussels recalled: "It fell to me to defend the good name and Orthodoxy of the Russian Church at the Pan-Orthodox conferences (those like the Pan-Orthodox commission for dialogue with the Anglicans) with the following argumentation: 'This resolution of the Synod was elicited by a completely special situation of believers, and in particular of Catholics in the Soviet Union. Where there is not one Catholic church of priest for thousands of kilometres. Such a resolution was made by the Synod of Constantinople and Patriarch Joachim II in 1878 in relation to the Armenians. Theologically, it is difficult for me to justify such *oekonomia*, but I cannot judge the Russian hierarchs who live in contemporary Russia in difficult conditions. They know better than we what they are doing.' This argumentation satisfied everyone, even on Athos, but everything was destroyed by Metropolitan Nikodem giving communion [to Catholic students] in Rome. 'What '*pastoral oikonomia*' forced him to commune Catholics where there are so many Catholic churches?' they asked me. The only reply that I could give was: 'Your hierarchs even worse when they give to communion to everyone indiscriminately.' 'Our hierarchs, like Archbishop James of America or Athenagoras of London, are traitors to Orthodoxy, we have known that for a long time (replied to me Abbot George of the monastery of Grigoriou on Athos). But that the Moscow Patriarchate, the Russian Orthodox Church, which we respect for her firmness in Orthodoxy, should act in this way in the person of Metropolitan Nikodem, shocks us and deeply saddens us.' I recounted this reaction to Metropolitan Nikodem. He even became angry: 'It's not important what they say on Athos. Athos is not an Autocephalous Church.'"⁷⁶⁷

Neither side in this argument seemed to understand that the giving of communion to a heretic *in any circumstances* is harmful for that heretic so long as he remains in his heresy. More Orthodox, therefore, was the robust response of the ROCOR Synod, which on March 31, 1970 condemned the MP resolution as follows: "The decision of the Moscow Patriarchate to give access to Roman Catholics to all the sacraments of the Orthodox Church... both violates the sacred canons and is contrary to the dogmatic teaching of Orthodoxy. By entering into communion with the heterodox, the Moscow Patriarchate alienates itself from unity with the Holy Fathers and Teachers of the Church. By this action it does not sanctify the heretics to whom it gives sacraments, but itself becomes a partaker of their heresy."

Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Jordanville commented: "Now, even if some entertained some sort of doubts about how we should regard the contemporary Moscow Patriarchate, and whether we can consider it Orthodox after its intimate union with the enemies of God, the persecutors of the Faith and Christ's Church, these doubts must now be completely dismissed: by the very fact that it has entered into liturgical communion with the Papists, it has *fallen away from Orthodoxy* and can no longer be considered Orthodox."⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁶ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1970, № 1, p. 5.

⁷⁶⁷ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 40.

⁷⁶⁸ Averky, *Contemporary Life in the Light of the Word of God: Sermons and Speeches (1969-1973)*, volume III, Jordanville, p. 216.

This stronger attitude to the MP was paralleled by a reiteration of the Russian Church's originally very uncompromising attitude towards the revolution. Thus on January 1, 1970 the ROCOR Synod confirmed Patriarch Tikhon's 1918 anathema against the Bolsheviks, adding one of its own against "Vladimir Lenin and the other persecutors of the Church of Christ, dishonourable apostates who have raised their hands against the Anointed of God, killing clergymen, trampling on holy things, destroying the churches of God, tormenting our brothers and defiling our Fatherland."⁷⁶⁹

It should be pointed out that at this time of rapprochement between the MP and the Vatican, the KGB had managed to penetrate the Vatican. As I.I. Maslova writes, in August, 1970, "the KGB informed the Central Committee that 'in the course of carrying out the given undertakings the agents of the organs of state security succeeded in making personal approaches to Pope Paul VI and his immediate entourage'. "Useful influence" was exerted, and specially prepared materials were "put forward" in which the thought was emphasized that hostile actions on the part of the Vatican and its centres (especially in the emigration) against the USSR would complicate the position of believers and clergy in the country and, in particular, hinder the establishment of closer relations between the ROC and the Catholic Church."⁷⁷⁰

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On the very same day that ROCOR condemned the MP for "partaking in heresy" through its relationship with the Vatican, Metropolitan Irenaeus of All America and Canada and Metropolitan Nikodem (Rotov) of Leningrad signed an Agreement giving autocephaly to the American Metropolia - a deal which was accepted by no other Autocephalous Orthodox Church. On April 2, a delegation of the Japanese Orthodox Church set off for Moscow, where on April 10 it received from Patriarch Alexis a *Tomos* of Autonomy. On the same day Archbishop Nicholas (Kasatkin) of Japan was canonised.⁷⁷¹ In this way, as part of the deal with the Metropolia, the Japanese Church, which formerly had been under the Metropolia, came under Moscow's jurisdiction. However, the MP's parishes in North America, which were supposed to come under the Metropolia - or the Orthodox Church of America, as it was now called - did not do so.

On June 24 Patriarch Athenagoras in a letter to Patriarch Alexis touched on two important questions: the authority competent to grant autocephaly, and the factors and conditions necessary for a correct proclamation of autocephaly. With regard to the first question he declared that "the granting of it is within the competence of the whole Church." But to a Local Church "is proper only the right to receive the first petitions for independence from those concerned and to express whether the bases

⁷⁶⁹ http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=1775.

⁷⁷⁰ Maslova, "Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' i KGB (1960-1980-e gody)" (The Russian Orthodox Church and the KGB (1960s-1980s), in <http://elmager.livejournal.com/217784.html>.

⁷⁷¹ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 5, p. 43.

suggested for it are worthy of justification". With regard to the second question, Patriarch Athenagoras expressed the opinion that in order to announce an ecclesiastical autocephaly that aims to satisfy purely ecclesiastical needs, the opinion of the clergy and laity, the judgement of the Mother Church and the expressed will of the whole Church is required. Considering that these conditions had not been fulfilled in the giving of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America, the patriarch called on the Russian Church to apply "efforts to annul the canonical confusion that has been created". Otherwise, he threatened to regard the action "as if it had never taken place".⁷⁷²

Of course, the patriarch had a point. But since his own patriarchate, by creating a whole series of unlawful autocephalies since the 1920s, was the first sinner in this respect, it is not surprising that his voice was not heeded...

Hieromonk Seraphim Rose wrote of the union of the Metropolia with Moscow: "The American Metropolia doubtless fell into this trap out of naiveté, and already its hierarchs are demonstrating that its so-called 'independence' conceals a subtle form of psychological dependence." Newspaper articles showing that Metropolitan clergy and bishops had begun to apologize, not only for the Soviet domination of the church organization, but even for the Soviet system itself. One priest "admits some Soviet bishops are Soviet agents, that the whole autocephaly follows political trends set forth by the Soviet government; Bishop ____ is quoted as saying that he found the Soviet people to be happy and well dressed, and if some complain about the Government, well, so do Americans." Elsewhere Fr. Seraphim quoted the same bishop as saying, "As Americans we have to reassess our ideas of life in the Soviet Union." Such statements, Fr. Seraphim wrote, "reveal the 'autocephaly' as an important tool for Moscow in politically 'neutralizing' public opinion in the West."

Asserting that it was far worse to capitulate to a nihilist state in freedom than under compulsion, Fr. Seraphim wrote to a priest of the Metropolia: "You will find in our midst great sympathy and pity for all but the leading hierarchs of Moscow - and even for some of them you will find fellow-feeling owing to the inhuman circumstances under which they have been forced to betray Orthodoxy... But this fellow-feeling cannot allow us who are free to... place ourselves in the same trap she [the MP] was *forced* into! And this the Metropolia has done... With every fiber of our being and every feeling of our soul we are repulsed by this *free* act of betrayal... Do you not grasp the immensity of your spiritual bondage?"

"Is 'stepping out onto the world Orthodox scene' really so important to the Metropolia that it must do it at the expense of the suffering Russian Orthodox faithful? To give one small example: Metropolitan Nikodem is the Metropolia's great 'benefactor', and no one can doubt that his success with the Metropolia has strengthened his position with the Moscow Patriarchate. On the other hand, the layman Boris Talantov in the USSR has openly called Metropolitan Nikodem a betrayer of the Church, a liar, and an agent of world anti-Christianity, for which statements (among others) he was imprisoned by the Soviets; Metropolitan Nikodem

⁷⁷² K.E. Skurat; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 5, p. 44.

tells the West that he was in prison for 'anti-governmental activities'. On January 4 of this year Boris Talantov died in prison, undoubtedly the victim of Metropolitan Nikodem (among others). Can the Metropolia feel itself to be on the side of this confessor? I don't see how it can."⁷⁷³

In March, 1969, the Great Council of the Metropolia made a last Orthodox statement on Ecumenism before succumbing to the heresy: "The basic goal of the ecumenical movement... is the unity of all Christians in one single body of grace. And here the Orthodox Church firmly confesses that such a genuine unity is founded, above all, on the unity of faith, on the unanimous acceptance by all of the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Traditions as they are wholly and integrally preserved by the Church. Real love for brothers separated from us [sic - a misleading description of heretics, who are not our brothers in Christ] consists therefore not in silencing all that divides us, but in a courageous witness to the Truth, which alone can unite us all, and also in a common search for the ways to make that Truth evident to all. Only in this way did the Orthodox Church always understand her participation in the ecumenical movement...

"However, within the ecumenical movement there has always existed another understanding of unity. This other understanding seems to become more popular today. It recognizes virtually no importance at all in agreement in faith and doctrine, and is based on relativism, i.e., on the affirmation that the doctrinal or canonical teachings of the Church, being 'relative', are not obligatory for all. Unity is viewed as already existing, and nothing remains to be done except to express it and strengthen it through ecumenical manifestations or services. Such an approach is totally incompatible with the Orthodox concept of the ecumenical movement.

"The differences between these two approaches is best illustrated by the attitudes towards concelebration and intercommunion among divided Christians. According to the Orthodox doctrine, the prayers and the sacraments of the Church, especially the Divine Eucharist, are expressions of full unity - in faith, in life, in service of God and man - as given by God. This unity with other Christians we seek, but we have not reached it yet. Therefore in the Orthodox understanding, no form of concelebration, i.e., no joint participation in liturgical prayer or the sacraments, with those who do not belong to the Orthodox Church can be permitted, for it would imply a unity which in reality does not exist. It would imply deceiving ourselves, deceiving others, and creating the impression that the Orthodox Church acknowledges that which in fact she does not acknowledge."⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷³ Fr. Seraphim, in Hieromonk Damascene, *op. cit.*, pp. 400-401.

⁷⁷⁴ *The Orthodox Church*, May, 1969; *Eastern Churches Review*, Autumn, 1969, pp. 425-26. "It is natural to surmise," writes Andrew Psarev, "that this epistle, to a certain degree, appeared as a result of the private meetings held at the time between Metropolitans Philaret and Irinei, first hierarch of the North American Metropolia" (*op. cit.*, p. 7)

51. THE THEOLOGY OF PEACE

Paralleling the development of ecumenism was the so-called “movement for peace” and “theology of peace”, whose origins can be traced to the founding of NATO to defend Europe against Soviet aggression on April 4, 1949. From the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism, NATO was not a defensive organization but a threat to world peace.

In July, 1951 the heads of the Churches of Antioch, Russia, Georgia, Romania and Bulgaria gathered in Zagorsk and issued a purely political statement in favour of “peace” and against the USA.⁷⁷⁵ The “theology of peace” – that is, the removal of all obstacles to the communist domination of the world – was becoming the major content of top-level ecclesiastical meetings in the eastern bloc. For the moment pro-communism was combined with anti-ecumenism (since the initiators of the ecumenical movement were the Anglo-Saxons); but the time would shortly come when the communist masters of the East European Churches would compel the patriarchs to change course and embrace ecumenism – for the sake of giving their pro-communist message a wider audience and deeper penetration...

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To this end, the MP organized a series of ecumenical conferences “in defence of peace” with representatives not only of the Christian confessions, but also of Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Shintoism and Sikhism. Insofar as these religious “fighters for peace” worshipped completely different gods or (in the case of Buddhism) no god at all, there was no place at these conferences for the specifically *Christian* understanding of peace. Thus there was no mention of the fact that peace on earth is possible only if there is peace with God, which is obtained only through faith in the redeeming work of Christ, Who “is our peace” (Ephesians 2.14), and through a constant struggle with evil in all its forms, including atheism and communism. Moreover, as Kurochkin writes, “on the pages of the ecclesiastical press and on the lips of those speaking before the believers, the similarity and closeness of the communist and Christian social and moral ideals was proclaimed more and more often.” And so the cult of Stalin was transformed into the cult of communism; for “the patriarchal church, having conquered the renovationists, was forced to assimilate the heritage of the conquered not only in the field of political re-orientation, but also in the sphere of ideological reconstruction.”⁷⁷⁶

The gospel of “Communist Christianity” appeared in an encyclical of the patriarchate “in connection with the Great October Socialist Revolution”, which supposedly “turned into reality the dreams of many generations of people. It made all the natural riches of the land and means of production into the inheritance of the people. It *changed the very essence of human relations*, making all our citizens equal and

⁷⁷⁵ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), N 8, 1951; Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 4, pp. 12-13.

⁷⁷⁶ P.K. Kurochkin, *Evolutsia sovremennogo russkogo pravoslavia* (The Evolution of Contemporary Russian Orthodoxy), Moscow, 1971, pp. 81, 82.

excluding from our society any possibility of enmity between peoples of different races and nationalities, of different persuasions, faiths and social conditions."⁷⁷⁷

Insofar as the MP confessed that the revolution "changed the very essence of human relations" for the better, it renounced the Christian Faith for that of the faith of the Antichrist. This aspect of the MP's apostasy is often forgotten. And of course now, since the fall of communism, the MP no longer talks about its enthusiasm for the antichristian creed of communism. But by any normal definition of words, the hierarchs of the MP ceased to be, not only Orthodox in any meaningful sense, but also Christian at this time...

"The so-called 'theology of peace'," wrote Protopresbyter George Grabbe, "is in essence the chiliastic preaching of the Kingdom of God on earth, with the help of the planting of communist socialism. In their address to the Moscow council before the election of the patriarch in 1971 the Priest Nicholas Gainov and three laymen raised questions in relation to the speeches of Metropolitan Nikodem [of Leningrad] and his co-workers. They cited his words on the union of people amongst themselves in 'the service of reconciliation' with the aim thereby of 'seizing the Kingdom of God that is coming in strength'. *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* wrote: 'For the Christian religion there can be no indifferent or neutral spheres of activity. The changes that are taking place in the world are viewed by Christianity as the action of the Providence of God, the manifestation of the power of God with the aim of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth' (1962, № 12, p. 12).

"The peace which the Moscow patriarchate is clamouring for is not spiritual peace, but political peace, and moreover, a false peace, for the so-called 'theology of peace' is linked with the deceptive propaganda of the Soviets. In trying to echo communist propaganda, the patriarchate is involuntarily falling into the preaching of a certain kind of chiliasm, that is, the attainment of a golden age and general peace by human means of a political character. If the Saviour said: 'Seek first of all the Kingdom of God, and all the rest will be added to you,' the Moscow patriarchate puts the question in the reverse order: the Kingdom of God must be attained through the external means of the communist social order.

"That is why, in his report 'Peace and Freedom' at the local conference of the movement for peace in Holland in 1963, Metropolitan Nicodem called for the Church to come closer to this world. 'From ancient times,' he said, 'the apologists of the unchangeability of social relations have begun to incline the thoughts of Christians to complete alienation from the world with the aim of drawing them away from burning social problems, for the struggle for the reconstruction of society on the principles of justice. Under the long influence of this pseudo-Christian preaching whole generations of narrow fanatics have been educated and grown up with distorted ideas about Christianity' (*J.M.P.*, 1963, № 1, p. 40).

"What is Metropolitan Nikodem renouncing in these words? He is renouncing the

⁷⁷⁷ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1967; translated in *Orthodox Life*, № 110, March-April, 1968, p. 25.

patristic and ascetic past, he is trying to turn the Church from striving for heaven to the path of earthly social tasks. His Kingdom of God on earth is the communist order.

“He is echoed by Protopriest V.M. Borovoj, who expressed himself still more vividly: ‘Systematic theology and the historical churches have never been on the side of the revolution for the simple reason that they were prisoners of the cosmo-centric understanding of reality, prisoners of the static understanding of an order established once and for all on earth. Only in the last decades, when profound changes, a kind of revolution, have taken place in philosophical, theological and scientific thought as the result of an anthropocentric view of the cosmos, an evolutionary conception of the universe and a new rethinking of the whole history of humanity – only after all this has there appeared the possibility of working out a theology of development and revolution’ (*J.M.P.*, 1966, № 9, p. 78)...

“By moving in this apostatic direction the Moscow patriarchate has already lost Christianity itself, replacing it with the religion of this world. Contrary to the word of the Saviour (Matthew 6.24), it is trying to serve two masters, and, as the Saviour warned, it has arrived at the point where it is careless with regard to Christianity but ardent in serving atheist communism.”⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁸ Grabbe, *Dogmat o Tserkvi v sovreemennom mire* (The Dogma of the Church in the Contemporary World), report to the Third All-Diaspora Council, 1974.

52. THE COUNCILS OF 1971

In May-June, 1971 there was a council of the MP attended by 75 hierarchs, 85 clergy and 78 laymen, representatives of many other Orthodox Churches and the general secretary of the WCC. It confirmed all the previous decisions made by the MP since 1945. Only one candidate for the patriarchate (Patriarch Alexis had died in April) was put forward: the weak Metropolitan Pimen, who was elected unanimously in an open ballot (a secret ballot was not allowed by the all-powerful Metropolitan Nicodemus). The former KGB Lieutenant-Colonel Constantine Preobrazhensky writes: "They say that the first Communist within the church was Patriarch Pimen. He was a Senior Officer of the Red Army, and joined the Communist Party at the front. There could not have been any officers who believed in God, nor officers who were not Communist Party members. More than that, they were all forced to fight religion. That means that the future patriarch of the MP renounced his faith" ⁷⁷⁹

The Council also confirmed the 1961 statute taking control of the parishes away from the bishops and clergy⁷⁸⁰, as well as Metropolitan Nicodem's report on the decision to give communion to Catholics, in which he said that the measure was justified "insofar as we have a common of faith with them in relation to the sacraments" ⁷⁸¹

The MP council also resolved: "to entrust to the higher ecclesiastical authority of the Russian Orthodox Church to continue efforts to reunite with the Mother Church the so-called Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (the Karlovtsy schism), the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church Abroad and other scattered children of hers... In view of the fact that the activity of supporters of the so-called Russian Orthodox Church Abroad... against the Mother Russian Orthodox Church and against the Holy Orthodox Church as a whole is harming Holy Orthodoxy, the higher ecclesiastical authority of the Moscow Patriarchate is entrusted with realizing in the nearest future the necessary canonical sanctions in relation to the apostate assembly..., the Karlovtsy schism and its unrepentant followers." ⁷⁸²

ROCOR's Hierarchical Council reacted to the MP council by passing two resolutions. The first, dated September 1/14, 1971 declared: "The free part of the Russian Church, which is beyond the frontiers of the USSR, is heart and soul with the confessors of the faith who... are called 'the True Orthodox Christians', and who often go by the name of 'the Catacomb Church'... The Council of Bishops recognizes its spiritual unity with them..."

⁷⁷⁹ Preobrazhensky, "Putin's Espionage Church", <http://portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=english&id=281>. In the same article Preobrazhensky points out not only that all MP bishops were KGB agents, but also that they engaged in espionage. Thus in 1969 Metropolitan Irenaeus of Vienna and Austria recruited the American military intelligence officer George Trofimov, who served a sentence in the United States.

⁷⁸⁰ In his *Memoirs* Archbishop Basil of Brussels recalls asking the formerly Catacomb Archbishop Benjamin (Novitsky) of Irkutsk why he had not spoken against this measure. Benjamin replied: "You know, I did 12 years forced labour in Kolyma. I don't have the strength at my age to start that again. Forgive me!" (Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 47).

⁷⁸¹ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1971, № 7, p. 31, № 8, pp. 23-24; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 47-49.

⁷⁸² Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 49.

The second, of the same date, is called "Resolution of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia Concerning the Election of Pimen (Izvekov) as Patriarch of Moscow": "All of the elections of Patriarchs in Moscow, beginning in 1943, are invalid on the basis of the 30th Canon of the Holy Apostles and the 3rd Canon of the 7th Ecumenical Council, according to which, 'if any bishop, having made use of secular rulers, should receive through them Episcopal authority in the Church, let him be defrocked and excommunicated along with all those in communion with him'. The significance that the Fathers of the 7th Council gave to such an offence is obvious from the very fact of a double punishment for it, that is, not only deposition but excommunication as well, something unusual for ecclesiastical law. The famous commentator on Canon Law, Bishop Nicodemus of Dalmatia, gives the following explanation of the 30th Canon of the Holy Apostles: 'If the Church condemned unlawful influence by the secular authorities in the ordination of bishops at a time when the rulers were Christians, then it follows that She should condemn such action all the more when the latter are pagans and place even heavier penalties on the guilty parties, who were not ashamed of asking for help from pagan rulers and the authorities subordinated to them, in order to gain the episcopate. This (30th) Canon has such cases in view'. If in defence of this position examples are given of the Patriarchs of Constantinople who were placed on the Throne at the caprice of the Turkish Sultans, one can reply that no anomaly can be regarded as a norm and that one breach of Canon Law cannot justify another.

"The election of Pimen (Izvekov) as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia at the gathering calling itself an All-Russian Church Council in Moscow the 2nd of June of this year, on the authority of the 3rd Canon of the 7th Ecumenical Council and other reasons set forth in this decision, is to be regarded as unlawful and void, and all of his acts and directions as having no strength."

However, in 1974 ROCOR did confirm one measure adopted by the MP's 1971 Council: the removal of the curses on the old rites and those who observed them.⁷⁸³ This did not by itself make the Old Ritualists Orthodox; but it removed the main obstacle to their rejoining the Orthodox Church, taking to its logical conclusion Tsar Paul's introduction of the yedinerie in 1801, which allowed Old Ritualists who joined the Orthodox Church to retain their use of the Old Rites.

On September 28, 1971, ROCOR's Hierarchical Council decreed: "The lack of accord of the decree of the Moscow Patriarchate, concerning the granting of communion to Roman Catholics, with Orthodox dogmatic teaching and the Church canons is completely clear to any person even slightly informed in theology. It was justly condemned by a decree of the Synod of the Church of Greece. The holy canons do permit the communication of a great sinner who is under penance (epitimia) when he is about to die (I Ecumenical 13, Carthage 6, Gregory of Nyssa 2 and 5), but there is not a single canon which would extend this to include persons foreign to the Orthodox Church, as long as they have not renounced their false doctrines. No matter what explanation Metropolitan Nicodemus and the other Moscow hierarchs might try to give of this act, it is completely clear that by this decision, even though with certain limitations, communion has been established

⁷⁸³ Monk Benjamin, op. cit., part 5, pp. 49-50.

between the Moscow Patriarchate and Roman Catholics. Furthermore, the latter have already made the decision to permit members of the Orthodox Church to receive communion from them. All this was particularly clearly demonstrated in the service held on December 14, 1970, in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, when Metropolitan Nicodemus gave communion to Catholic clerics. It is perfectly clear that this act could not be justified by any need. By this act the Moscow Patriarchate has betrayed Orthodoxy. If the 45th Canon of the Holy Apostles excommunicates from the Church an Orthodox bishop or cleric who has 'only prayed together with heretics', and the 10th Apostolic Canon forbids even prayer together with those who are excommunicated, what can we say about a bishop who dares to offer the Holy Mysteries to them? If catechumens must leave the church before the sanctification of the Gifts and are not permitted even at point of death to receive communion until they are united to the Church, how can one justify the communicating of persons who, being members of heretical communities, are much farther away from the Church than a catechumen, who is preparing to unite with her? The act of the Moscow Synod, which was confirmed by the recent Council of the Moscow Patriarchate in Moscow, extends the responsibility for this un-Orthodox decision to all participants of the Moscow Council and to their entire Church organization. The decision to admit Catholics to communion is an act that is not only anticanonical, but heretical as well, as inflicting harm on the Orthodox doctrine of the Church, since only true members of the Church are called to communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. The Moscow decree, logically considered, recognizes as her members those who, through their doctrinal errors, in both heart and mind are far from her."

By calling the MP's decision "heretical", as Archbishop Averky pointed out, ROCOR in effect declared that the MP was outside the Church, bringing it back into line with the decision made by the ROCOR Synod under Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) in 1928...

On the same day the Council issued an important statement on the reception of heretics, considerably "tightening up" its practice: "The Holy Church has from antiquity believed that there can be only one true baptism, namely that which is accomplished in her bosom: 'One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism' (Ephesians 4.5). In the Symbol of Faith "one baptism" is also confessed, while the 46th canon of the Holy Apostles indicates: 'We order that a bishop or priest who has accepted (that is, recognized) the baptism or sacrifice of heretics should be deposed.'

"However, when the zeal of any heretics in their struggle against the Church weakened, and when there was a question of their mass conversion to Orthodoxy, the Church, to ease their union, accepted them into her bosom by another rite. [There follows a discussion of St. Basil the Great's first canonical epistle.]

"And so St. Basil the Great, and through his words the Ecumenical Council, in establishing the principle that outside the Holy Orthodox Church there is no true baptism, allowed out of pastoral condescension, so-called oikonomia, the acceptance of certain heretics and schismatics without a new baptism. And in accordance with this principle, the Ecumenical Councils allowed the reception of heretics by various rites, taking account of the weakening of their fierceness against the Orthodox Church....

“In relation to the Roman Catholics and Protestants who claim to preserve baptism as a sacrament (for example, the Lutherans), the practice was introduced from the time of Peter the First of receiving them without baptism, through the renunciation of heresy and chrismation of Protestants and unconfirmed Catholics. Before Peter Catholics were baptised in Russia. In Greece the practice also changed, but for almost three hundred years, after a certain break, the practice of baptising those who came from Catholicism and Protestantism was again introduced. Those who are received by another rite are not recognized as Orthodox in Greece. In many cases also such children of our Russian Church were not even allowed to receive Holy Communion.

“Bearing in mind this circumstance, and the present growth of the ecumenical heresy, which tries completely to wipe out the difference between Orthodoxy and every heresy, so that the Moscow Patriarchate, in spite of the sacred canons, has issued a resolution allowing Roman Catholics to be communed in certain cases, the Hierarchical Council has recognized the introduction of a stricter practice to be necessary, that is, that all heretics coming to the Church should be baptized, and that only insofar as it is necessary and with the permission of the bishop, from considerations of *oikonomia*, should another practice be allowed in relation to certain people, that is, the reception into the Church of Roman Catholics and Protestants who have been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity through renunciation of heresy and chrismation.”⁷⁸⁴

This decision brought the practice of ROCOR back into line with the practice of the Russian Church under Patriarch Philaret in the early seventeenth century, and of the Greek Church since 1756.

“It should be noted,” writes Psarev, “that, within the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, it was Bishop James of Manhattan, who led the American Orthodox Mission for a period of time, who first began the reception of Catholics by baptism, regarding which he informed the Council of Bishops in 1953.”⁷⁸⁵ Now the Russian bishops followed the lead taken by their “convert” colleague...

⁷⁸⁴ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), July-December, 1971, pp. 52-54; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 52-53.

⁷⁸⁵ Psarev, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

53. THE THIRD ALL-EMIGRATION COUNCIL

In 1974 the Third All-Emigration Council of ROCOR took place in the monastery of the Holy Trinity in Jordanville, New York. Just as the First Council, held at Karlovtsy in 1921, had defined the relationship of ROCOR to the Bolshevik regime and the Romanov dynasty; and the Second Council, held in Belgrade in 1938, defined her relationship to the Church inside Russia; so the Third Council tried to define her relationship to the ecumenical and dissident movements. As Metropolitan Philaret, president of the Council, said in his keynote address: "First of all, the Council must declare not only for the Russian flock, but for the entire Church, its concept of the Church; to reveal the dogma of the Church... The Council must determine the place our Church Abroad holds within contemporary Orthodoxy, among the other 'so-called' churches. We say 'so-called' for though now they often speak of many 'churches', the Church of Christ is single and One."⁷⁸⁶

By this time, many non-Russians, impressed by the metropolitan's zealot stance, had sought refuge in ROCOR; and in 1969-71 this movement was strengthened by the entrance of two Greek Old Calendarist Synods into communion with her. Thus ROCOR was no longer an exclusively Russian jurisdiction in the make-up of her members, and she could no longer be seen as simply an outpost of Russian Orthodox anti-communism. She was a multi-ethnic, global, missionary Church fighting the pan-heresy of ecumenism on a number of fronts throughout the world.

However, such a vision of ROCOR was shared by only a minority of her hierarchs. Among the "zealots" who did were Archbishops Averky of Syracuse, Anthony of Los Angeles and Nikodem of Great Britain⁷⁸⁷, and Protopresbyter George (later Bishop Gregory) Grabbe.⁷⁸⁸ However, most of the other hierarchs were less interested in the struggle against ecumenism than in saw the struggle to preserve *Russianness* among the Russian émigrés.

This created a problem for a Church that was rapidly filling up with non-Russian converts who were either "born Orthodox" of other Orthodox nations (Greece, Serbia, Romania, etc.) or converts from Catholicism or Protestantism. In either case they had

⁷⁸⁶ Third All-Diaspora Council, 1974, Protocol 1, August 26 / September 8, Synodal Archives, p. 2; quoted in Nun Vassa (Larin) "'Glory be to God, Who did not Abandon His Church', The Self-Awareness of ROCOR at the Third All-Diaspora Council of 1974", <http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/01newstructure/pagesen/articles/svassasobor.htm>, p. 2.

⁷⁸⁷ For example, in 1971 Archbishop Nikodem wrote to the Bishops' Council: "The clergy under my jurisdiction are fully aware that the ecumenical movement constitutes a violation (narushenie) of the Dogma of the Church" (in Protodeacon Christopher Birchall, *Embassy, Emigrants, and Englishmen: The Three Hundred Year History of a Russian Orthodox Church in London*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Publications, 2014, p. 469).

⁷⁸⁸ "In his report to Metropolitan Philaret on 7 December of 1972, Archpriest George Grabbe, who then headed the Synod's External Affairs Department, protested against Bishops Nikon and Laurus having united in prayer with Archbishop Iakovos during the visit of the relics of St. Nicholas to the Greek Church in Flushing, NY. His protest was motivated on the basis of determinations of the ROCOR Councils of Bishops of 1967 and 1971 that its clergy must by all means avoid prayerful communion with hierarchs who were ecumenists, and even more so because ROCOR had accepted clerics who had left these other churches for 'dogmatic reasons'." (Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4).

joined ROCOR, not because of its Russianness, but because of its stance against ecumenism (and communism). It was not that the preservation of Russianness as such was not an undoubted good. The problem arose when it hindered the missionary witness of the Church to non-Russians.

Such phyletistic tendencies inevitably led to a loss of Church consciousness in relation to ecumenism, and to a feeling that ROCOR was closer to Russians of the MP, ecumenist though they might be, than to True Orthodox Christians of Greek or French or American origin. Tensions began to rise between the Russians and the non-Russians in ROCOR. In the middle, trying to keep the peace, was the Metropolitan, Archbishop Averky, Archbishop Andrew of Rockland (a disciple of St. Nektary of Optina and the metropolitan's confessor), Bishop Nektary of Seattle, Fr. George Grabbe, and some outstanding converts such as the Californian Hieromonk Seraphim Rose.

The unofficial leader of the lukewarm group of bishops was Archbishop Anthony of Geneva. He was supported by Archbishop Philotheus of Hamburg, Bishop Paul of Stuttgart⁷⁸⁹ and Bishop Laurus of Manhattan – the hierarch who as metropolitan was to lead ROCOR into the Moscow Patriarchate in 2007. Later the group was joined by Bishop Mark of Germany...

This group of hierarchs had passively acquiesced in Metropolitan Philaret's "Sorrowful Epistles", and in the union with the Greek Old Calendarists. But they began to stir when the consequences of this were spelled out by the "zealots" in ROCOR: no further communion with the new calendarists and the patriarchates of Serbia and Jerusalem. Thus they were irritated when the leader of one of the Greek Old Calendarist parishes within ROCOR, Fr. Panagiotis Carras, sent an appeal to the Synod of Bishops on August 24, 1974 on behalf of all "non-Russian monasteries, parishes, and laity of ROCOR", in which he called on the ecumenists to be labelled as heretics who had lost the Holy Spirit and who should be subjected to the canonical sanctions that apply to heretics and schismatics. In response, Metropolitan Philaret moved for an official statement that the MP was graceless. According to the witness of a seminarian present at the Council, the majority of bishops and delegates would have supported such a motion. However, at the last minute the metropolitan was persuaded not to proceed with the motion on the grounds that it would have caused a schism.⁷⁹⁰

Archbishop Anthony was a powerful hierarch who had already once apostasized to the Moscow Patriarchate.⁷⁹¹ He continually proclaimed that the MP was a true

⁷⁸⁹ Nun Vassa, *op. cit.*

⁷⁹⁰ Fr. Basil Yakimov, "Re: Fundamental Question", orthodox-synod@yahoo.groups.com, 4 June, 2003.

⁷⁹¹ "In 1945, being in Serbia, he went over to the MP and waited for a Soviet passport so as to go to the USSR, but the Soviet authorities took their time with the passport, bestowing on him in the meantime the rank of archimandrite [through Patriarch Alexis I]. But, fed up with waiting for permission to return, [in 1949] the future bishop left for Switzerland to his brother Bishop Leontius, where he was reunited with ROCOR, having received a penance for his joining the MP." (Vladimir Kirillov, May 15, 2006 <http://elmager.livejournal.com/66190.html?thread=283278>; Bernard le Caro, "A Short Biography of Archbishop Antony (Bartoshevich) of Geneva and Western Europe (+1993)",

Church. And in his address to the 1974 Council, entitled "Our Church in the Modern World", he declared: "By the example of our First Hierarchs [Anthony and Anastasy] we must carefully preserve those fine threads which bind us with the Orthodox world. Under no circumstances must we isolate ourselves, seeing around us, often imagined, heretics and schismatics. Through gradual self-isolation we will fall into the extremism which our metropolitans wisely avoided, we will reject that middle, royal path which until now our Church has travelled... By isolating ourselves, we will embark upon the path of sectarianism, fearing everyone and everything, we will become possessed with paranoia."⁷⁹²

This somewhat hysterical appeal not to show "paranoia" and separate from the World Orthodox at just the point when they were embarking upon "super-ecumenism" was criticized by Fr. George Grabbe: "The report does not mention to the degree necessary, maybe, that life goes on, and the sickness of ecumenism deepens and widens more and more. Condescension, *oikonomia*, must under different circumstances be applied differently, and to different degrees. In doses too great it can betray the Truth." Then Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles recalled that "we have many Greek [Old Calendarist] parishes. Our concelebration with the new calendarists was very bitter for them."

Archbishop Anthony particularly resented the influence of the Greek Old Calendarists and the Greeks within ROCOR. As he wrote to Fr. George Grabbe after the Council: "To trail along behind the Greek Old Calendarists, taking Fr. Panteleimon [Abbot of the Greek-American monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Boston] for a prophet - this I cannot do. From my point, I am deeply convinced that this would be a betrayal of the Church. For you and me who used to have such universal teachers as Metropolitan Anthony and Archbishop Gavriil... Now even though we see the absurdities committed by the Greek Old Calendarists, we are still trying to accommodate and placate them, though we ourselves are slipping into a sect, cutting ourselves off from universal unity"⁷⁹³

The struggle for the true faith between the zealots and their opponents in ROCOR continued with increasing intensity into the 1980s. It exposed more than the heretics of World Orthodoxy: it also exposed a rottenness at the heart of ROCOR. For too long ROCOR had occupied a kind of indeterminate, neutral position in relation to the heretics of World Orthodoxy. On the one hand, ROCOR never officially accepted sergianism or ecumenism or the new calendar. But on the other hand, she refused to issue definitive condemnations of these heretical phenomena, allowing the opinion to gain hold that sergianists, ecumenists and new calendarists, while in error, were not outside the True Church, and still had the grace of sacraments.

Fr. Steven Allen writes: "From the start, one needs to recognize that the ROCOR never formally broke communion with any jurisdiction of World Orthodoxy except

http://www.orthodoxengland.org.uk/v1_antony_b.pdf.

⁷⁹² Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁷⁹³ Protocol No 4 of the All-Diaspora Council, August 29 / September 11, 1974; *Synodal Archives*, p. 4; Nun Vassa, *op. cit.*

the Moscow Patriarchate, the Evlogian Parisian schism, and the North American Metropolia/OCA schism, i.e., the other Russian groups.

“Many in the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece, used to decades of detailed, agonizing, and careful articulations of, and impassioned arguments about, ecclesiology, find it hard to realize that for most of its history, most of ROCOR's bishops and clergy did not think carefully about such questions, except perhaps in regard to the Moscow Patriarchate and the other Russian groups. There were outstanding individuals in the ROCOR, such as the Holy Confessor Metropolitan Philaret, who saw clearly how ROCOR should deal with the apostasy of global ‘World Orthodoxy,’ but most of the ROCOR bishops and clergy simply had an instinctive (albeit healthy) distaste for modernism and ecumenism that never led them further - to undertake the process of rational discussion necessary to make clear decisions about these problems.

“The ROCOR's official policies regarding concelebration with jurisdictions other than those mentioned above, were never consistent, and the policy as it developed in the 1960's and onward, of mostly not concelebrating, was unwritten and de facto, not de jure. The ROCOR synod allowed the diocesan bishops almost complete discretion in this matter, and therefore the practice varied from one diocese to another. The most obvious contrast was between the North American dioceses, which were generally strict, and the European diocese, most of whose clergy, following the lead of their ‘abba,’ Abp. Anthony of Geneva, always saw themselves as part of ‘World’ Orthodoxy and were willing to concelebrate with anyone other than the Soviets and the Evlogians, including the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

“Thus ROCOR had completely pro-World Orthodox bishops and clergy who denied that the ecumenism of ‘World’ Orthodoxy was an impediment to concelebration and naturally objected loudly to anathematizing the ecumenists.”⁷⁹⁴

Of particular importance in view of ROCOR's official communion with the Greek Old Calendarists since 1969-71 was its liberal attitude to the new calendarists. Thus on September 12/25, 1974 the Synod declared: “Concerning the question of the presence or absence of grace among the new calendarists the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad does not consider herself or any other Local Church to have the right to make a conclusive decision, since a categorical evaluation in this question can be undertaken only by a properly convened, competent Ecumenical Council, with the obligatory participation of the free Church of Russia.” (This was quoted by Metropolitan Philaret in his letter to Archbishop Andreas dated October 5, 1974 (ref. no. 3/50/760)). Again on September 18 / October 1, 1974 the ROCOR Council of Bishops declared: “Manifesting good will [towards the Orthodox Greeks], the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has called and addressed separate groups of the Church of the Old Calendarists to find the path to make peace and attain fraternal unity. However, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has no canonical power over the Church jurisdictions in Greece and therefore cannot interfere in their life with

⁷⁹⁴ Allen, “The Demise of ROCOR, the Synod of Metropolitan Agathangel, and the Ecclesiology of the Cyprianite ‘Synod in Resistance’” (2010), www.roacusa.org.

decisions that would be obligatory in questions of their disagreements.”

Although ROCOR officially refused to call the new calendarists graceless, there is evidence that Metropolitan Philaret’s personal views were stricter and closer to those of the Greeks. Thus on September 20, 1975, he wrote to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, the leader of the Old Calendarist Church of Cyprus, with whom he continued to have friendly relations even after the Matthewite Synod to which Epiphanius belonged had broken communion with ROCOR: “From the beginning our Russian Church has known that the calendar innovation was unacceptable, and has not dared to move this boundary set by patristic tradition, for the Ecclesiastical Calendar is a support of the life of the Church and as such is fortified by decrees of Holy Tradition.

“However, it is obvious to all that the calendar innovation caused a schism in the Greek Church in 1924, and the responsibility for the schism weighs exclusively on the innovators. This is the conclusion that will be reached by anyone studying the Patriarchal *Tomoi* (as that of 1583) and taking into account the wretched and self-evident fact of the schism and the frightful punishments, persecutions and blasphemies which those who have cleaved to the patristic piety of Holy Tradition have undergone.

“Thinking in this way, our Holy Synod has decreed that we ‘flee’ concelebrations with the new calendarist modernists. We do not concelebrate with them, nor do we give permission or a blessing to our clergy for such a concelebration. In order to assure you of the truth of what we say, we inform you that whenever a community in the diaspora is received into our Church, they are required to follow the patristic Calendar of the Orthodox Church...”⁷⁹⁵

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Also discussed at the Council was the so-called “dissident movement” in the Soviet Union. This arose in the second half of the 1960s, as détente developed between the Communist and Capitalist superpowers. It affected both the political sphere (the works of such figures as Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn) and the religious sphere (Solzhenitsyn again, Bishop Hermogen of Kaluga, the priests Yeshliman, Yakunin and Dudko, the layman Boris Talantov). Since many of the dissidents were members of the MP, their existence gave the less zealous hierarchs of ROCOR the excuse to declare that the MP still had the grace of sacraments.

Two main streams were discernible in the dissident movement, which may be called, recalling the debates of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia, the Westernisers and the Slavophiles.⁷⁹⁶

⁷⁹⁵ From the archives of the True Orthodox Church of Greece.

⁷⁹⁶ See Roman Redlikh, “Rossia, Evropa i Real'nij Sotsializm” (Russia, Europe and Real Socialism), *Grani* (Edges), 1986, pp. 265-289; Alexander Yanov, *The Russian Challenge*, Oxford: Blackwells, 1987, chs. 2-4; Victor Aksiuchits, “Zapadniki i Pochvenniki Segodnia” (Westernisers and Traditionalists Today), *Vestnik Khristianskogo Informatsionnogo Tsentra* (Herald of the Christian Information Centre), № 30, September 22, 1989.

The Westernisers were mainly concerned to correct abuses within the Church, to re-establish freedom of conscience and freedom of expression. They sought and received much support in the West, and were in turn much influenced by modern western modes of thought, especially - and in this they departed from traditionally Orthodox modes of thought - Ecumenism. The Slavophiles were less well received and understood in the West. Their main emphasis was on the restoration of traditional Russianness - Russian religion, Russian art and architecture, Russian culture in all its forms, which Soviet culture had so damaged and distorted.

The two streams were not always sharply differentiated and could fuse together in the thought and activity of a single man. Thus Alexander Solzhenitsyn, though usually considered to be a Slavophile, nevertheless shared many of the characteristics of the westernizing dissidents, not only in his human rights activity, but also in his Ecumenism. And, purified of their heterodox elements, both streams could be said to tend (unconsciously as yet) towards the True Orthodox Church, which remained more radical and still more courageous in Her confession than the dissidents and more truly representative of the best of Old Russia than the Slavophiles.

The dissident movement within the Church began, among the clergy, with the 1965 open letter of the Priests Nicholas Yeshliman and Gleb Yakunin to President Podgorny, in which they protested against the subservience of the Church to the State, particularly in not resisting the Khrushchev persecution, in giving control of the parishes to the State-controlled dvadsatsky, in the handing over of lists of those baptized to the local authorities, in not letting children and adolescents under 18 participate in church life, and in ordaining only those candidates to the episcopate and priesthood who were pleasing to the Council for Religious Affairs. This letter was ignored by the patriarchate, and in 1966 both priests were forbidden from serving... Among the laity, the most significant dissident, as we have seen, was the philosopher Boris Talantov, who was imprisoned for exposing the activities of the Kirov Bishop John in the closing of churches and suppression of believers. He was slandered publicly on the BBC by Metropolitan Nicodemus of Leningrad, and was eventually sent to prison in Kirov, where he died in 1971.

In an article entitled "Sergianism, or adaptation to atheism", which had the subtitle "The Leaven of Herod", Talantov denounced Metropolitan Sergius' 1927 declaration as a betrayal of the Church, and the MP as "a secret agent of worldwide antichristianity". Sergianism had not only not "saved" the Church, but, on the contrary, had assisted the loss of true ecclesiastical freedom and turned the Church administration into the obedient tool of the atheist authorities. "Metropolitan Sergius," he wrote, "by his adaptation and lies saved nobody and nothing except himself."

In another samizdat article entitled "The Secret Participation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the struggle of the CPSS against the Orthodox Christian Church" Talantov wrote: "The Moscow Patriarchate and the majority of bishops participate in organized activities of the atheist authorities directed to the closing of churches, the limitation of the spreading of the faith and its undermining in our country... In truth the atheist leaders of the Russian people and the princes of the Church have gathered

together against the Lord and His Christ".⁷⁹⁷

In 1972, Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote an open "Lenten Letter" to Patriarch Pimen, describing the patriarchate as being "ruled dictatorially by atheists – a sight never before seen in two millenia!" "The Russian Church," he wrote, "expresses its concern about any evil in distant Africa, while it never has anything at all to say about things which are wrong here at home." And he went on: "By what reasoning is it possible to convince oneself that the planned destruction of the spirit and body of the church under the guidance of atheists is the best way of preserving it? Preserving it for whom? Certainly not for Christ. Preserving it by what means? By falsehood? But after the falsehood by whose hands are the holy sacraments to be celebrated?"⁷⁹⁸

Solzhenitsyn's appeal "not to live by the lie" was seen by some to lead logically to the adoption of a catacomb existence for the Church. Thus Fr. Sergius Zheludkov replied: "What are we to do in such a situation? Should we say: all or nothing? Should we try to go underground, which in the present system is unthinkable? Or should we try somehow to accept the system and for the present use those opportunities that are permitted?"⁷⁹⁹ However, Solzhenitsyn himself neither belonged to the Catacomb Church nor even believed in Her existence.

This position eminently suited those hierarchs of ROCOR, such as Anthony of Geneva, whose attitude to events in Russia was dictated as much by political as by spiritual or ecclesiological considerations.⁸⁰⁰ They were sincere anti-communists and despised the kow-towing of the MP hierarchs to communism. On the other hand, they would not have dreamed of denying that the MP was a true Church. The position of these hierarchs was threatened by the anti-ecumenist zeal of Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Averky and the Boston monastery of Old Calendarists (in ROCOR since 1965). But the expulsion of Solzhenitsyn to the West in 1974 presented them with an opportunity. Archbishop Anthony promptly brought Solzhenitsyn to the Council in Jordanville, where he created a sensation by his rejection of the zealot view.

Then Anthony himself read a report calling on ROCOR to support the dissidents, in spite of the fact that they were ecumenists and in the MP. He was countered by Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, who, while respecting the courage of the dissidents, objected to a recognition that would devalue the witness of the true catacomb confessors.

Another important dissident was the Moscow priest Fr. Demetrius Dudko, who conducted open meetings in his church that attracted many and influenced many more. Unlike Solzhenitsyn, he knew of the Catacomb Church, and wrote of it in relatively flattering terms: "We all recognize Patriarch Tikhon and we look on Patriarch Sergius' [acts] as a betrayal of the Church's interests to please the

⁷⁹⁷ Talantov, in "Tserkov' Katakombnaia na zemle Rossijskoj (III)" (The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land (III), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), № 12 (635), December, 2002, pp. 10-11.

⁷⁹⁸ Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, London: Allen Croom, 1986, p. 304.

⁷⁹⁹ Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

⁸⁰⁰ Many West European members of ROCOR belonged to the NTS, a secret anti-communist political party which was infiltrated by both the KGB and the CIA.

authorities. The following (Patriarchs) – Alexis and the present Pimen – only go on the road already opened. We have no other hierarchy. The Catacomb Church would be good – but where is it? The True Orthodox Church – these are good people, morally steadfast; but they have almost no priesthood, and you simply can't find them, while there are many who are thirsting. And one has to be ministered to by the hierarchy we do have. Immediately the question arises: are they ministering to us? Basically, they are the puppets of the atheists. And another question: at least, are they believers? Who will answer this question? I fear to answer..."⁸⁰¹

Such sentiments were close to the truth, and naturally elicited sympathy from members of ROCOR.

Less well known – because edited out of his books as published in the West⁸⁰² – was Fr. Demetrius' ecumenism. The right attitude to him would have been to applaud his courage and the correct opinions he expressed, while gently seeking to correct his liberalism and ecumenism. In no way was it right to treat him as if he were a true priest in the True Church, and an example to be followed that was no less praiseworthy than those of the true confessors in the catacombs.

But that is precisely what many in ROCOR now began to do. And even the 1974 Council was tempted, declaring: "The boundary between preservation of the Church and seductive self-preservation was drawn by his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, his lawful locum tenens Metropolitan Peter, Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd and the Solovki confessors headed by Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky). In recent years, this boundary has again been clearly drawn by Archbishop Hermogenes, several priests, among them Nicholas Gainov and Demetrius Dudko, the laypeople of Vyatka led by Boris Talantov, the defenders of the Pochaev Lavra such as Theodosia Kuzminichna Varavva, and many others. This boundary has also been drawn by Solzhenitsyn in his appeal 'Do not live by the lie!' Not to live by the lie and to honour the memory of the holy martyrs and confessors of our Church – this is the boundary separating the true Tikhonites from 'the sergianist leaven of Herod', as wrote Boris Talantov, the rebukers of the present leaders of the patriarchate who died in prison. In our unceasing prayers for each other, in our love for the Lord Jesus, in our faithfulness to the ideal of the past and future Orthodox Russia, the faithful archpastors, pastors, monks and laymen on both sides of the iron curtain are united. Together they constitute the Holy Church of Russia, which is indivisible just as the seamless robe of Christ is indivisible."⁸⁰³

This was a serious distortion: to place the confessors of the Catacomb Church on the same level as sergianist dissidents. A case could be made for considering that Boris Talantov was a true martyr, since he denounced the MP in terms identical to those employed by the Catacomb Church and may well have died out of communion with the MP. But Dudko and Solzhenitsyn did not share the faith of the True Church,

⁸⁰¹ *Posev*, July, 197; translated in *The Orthodox Word*, September-October, 1979.

⁸⁰² Personal communication from Monks of Monastery Press, Montreal, January, 1977.

⁸⁰³ *Poslanie Tret'ego Vsezarubezhnogo Sobora Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsei Pravoslavnomu russkomu narodu na rodine* (Epistle of the Third All-Emigration Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to the Russian People in the Homeland), September 8/21, 1974.

and did not join it even after the fall of communism...⁸⁰⁴

Fr. Seraphim Rose criticized Solzhenitsyn as follows: "Let us return to the belief of Solzhenitsyn and all the defenders of the Moscow Patriarchate that the betrayal of her hierarchs does not affect the Church's faithful. This view is based on an entirely false view of the nature of the Church which artificially separates the hierarchs from the believing people and allows 'church life as normal' to go on no matter what happens to the Church leaders. On the contrary, the whole history of the Church of Christ persuades us of the exact opposite. Who else was it but the Bishops of Rome who led the Church of the West into apostasy and schism and heresy? Is it the fault of ordinary believing Roman Catholics that they, the largest group of 'Christians' in the world, are today outside the Church of Christ, and that in order to return to the true Church they must not only reject the false doctrines of Rome, but also completely reform their religious mentality and unlearn the false piety which has been transmitted to them precisely by their bishops? Today, it is true, the Moscow Patriarchate allows Roman Catholics to receive its Sacraments and implicitly already teaches the ecumenist doctrine that these Catholics too are 'part of the Church'. But this fact only shows how far the Moscow Patriarchate has departed from the universal Orthodox tradition of the Church into an erroneous ecclesiology, and how correct the True Orthodox Church is in refusing to have communion with an ecclesiastical body which not only allows its policies to be dictated by atheists, but openly preaches the modern heresies of ecumenism and chiliasm."⁸⁰⁵

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Unknown at the time was the adoption of a new long-range global strategy by the Soviet leadership, in which the dissident movement was planned to play an important role.

Thus in a memo to the CIA dated 1978 the former KGB agent Anatoliy Golitsyn wrote: "At the time of the adoption of the long-range strategy in the period 1958 to 1960, there was strong internal opposition to the Soviet régime from dissatisfied workers, collective farmers, intellectuals, clergy, Ukrainian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Jewish nationalists, etc. These oppositionists did not call themselves 'dissidents' and nor did the KGB call them 'dissidents'.

"On the contrary, the KGB and the Party referred to them as 'enemies of the régime'... The KGB was instructed to adopt new methods to deal with this opposition, based on the experience of the GPU (the Soviet political police) under

⁸⁰⁴ In fact, before his death in 2004 Dudko became an open advocate of Stalinism and Putin's neo-Stalinism: "I hope so much for Vladimir Putin now. It seems to me that he is like Joseph Stalin. I treat Stalin with respect, and I think that he was a very wise leader. It is Stalin who established such a powerful country. Russia has never been that powerful since, and there was no tsar in Russia who was able to accomplish the things that Stalin did. He managed to overcome and sacrifice so much for the sake of the country's greatness. I hope that Putin will follow in Stalin's path..." (<http://english.pravda.ru/politics/2002/11/13/39433>; quoted by Nicholas Candela, "[paradosis] the wisdom of an MP priest", orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com, January 22, 2004).

⁸⁰⁵ Rose, "The Catacomb Tikhonite Church 1974", *The Orthodox Word*, 1974, pp. 241-242.

Dzerzhinsky in the 1920s...

“This entailed the creation of a false opposition in the USSR and other countries... The current ‘dissident movement’ is just such a false opposition designed and created by the KGB...

“The main objectives which the Soviet rulers are trying to achieve through the ‘dissident movement’ are as follows:

“(a) To confuse, neutralise and dissolve the *true* internal political opposition in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;

“(b) To prevent the West from reaching the genuine internal opposition in the USSR by introducing to the West a false KGB-controlled opposition. This explains the easy access of the Western media to the alleged ‘dissidents’;

“(c) To influence the foreign policy of the United States through the ‘dissidents’ in the interests of the Communist long-term strategy and exploit this issue in the strategy’s final phase.”⁸⁰⁶

Golitsyn was talking mainly about political dissidents. Nevertheless, it may be that some of the church dissidents, too, were, if not signed-up agents, at any rate naïve and unwitting tools in the hands of the enemies of the faith, who permitted all their contacts with the ROCOR because they foresaw the corrosive effect such contacts would have.

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Voices were heard at the 1974 Council arguing for union between ROCOR and the schismatic Paris and American Metropolia jurisdictions. Love, they said, should unite us, and we should not emphasize our differences. Metropolitan Philaret, however, pointed out that love which does not wish to disturb our neighbour by pointing out his errors is not love but hatred!⁸⁰⁷

The divisions that were beginning to emerge between Metropolitan Philaret and the majority of other hierarchs were expressed by him in a letter to one of his few allies, Protopresbyter George Grabbe, the Secretary of the Synod. Describing a meeting with the hierarchs, he wrote: “I saw how truly alone I am among our hierarchs with my views on matters of principle (although on a personal level I am on good terms with everyone). And I am in earnest when I say that I am considering retiring. Of course, I won’t leave all of a sudden, unexpectedly. But at the next Sobor

⁸⁰⁶ Golitsyn, *The Perestroika Deception*, London and New York: Edward Harle, 1995, p. 175.

⁸⁰⁷ See his letter to Fr. Victor Potapov published in *Vertograd-Info*, № 11 (44), November, 1998, pp. 28-32. He might have quoted St. Maximus the Confessor in this connection: “I want and pray you to be wholly harsh and implacable with the heretics only in regard to cooperating with them or in any way whatever supporting their deranged belief. For I reckon it misanthropy and a departure from Divine love to lend support to error, that those previously seized by it might be even more greatly corrupted.” (*P.G.* 91: 465C).

I intend to point out that too many things that are taking place in our church life do not sit well with me. And if the majority of the episcopacy agrees with me than I will not raise the matter of retiring. But if I see that I am alone or see myself in the minority then I will announce that I am retiring. For I cannot head, nor, therefore bear the responsibility for that with which I am not in agreement in principle. In particular, I do not agree with our practice of halfway relations with the American and Parisian schismatics. The Holy Fathers insistently state that long and obdurately continuing schism is close to being heresy, and that it is necessary to relate to stubborn schismatics as to heretics, not allowing any communion with them whatsoever (how Vladyka Anthony's hair would stand on end at such a pronouncement! But I remain unyielding)...

"There are very many other matters, too, in particular about Solzhenitsyn, concerning whom I continue to remain more than just cautious..."⁸⁰⁸

In January, 1975 Fr. Seraphim Rose wrote: "...our bishops are inclining dangerously now to the path of compromise – the last Sobor said nothing in support of the Zealots, even those suffering on Mt. Athos, and seems to want to be friends with everyone; Archbp. Anthony of Geneva especially is advocating "condescension" toward new calendar and everything that isn't "dogma." The letter of the Bishops to Metropolia was very weak and, as Archbp. Averky and Bp. Nektary told us, shouldn't have been sent in that form (without a call to return to the truth and step away from the world's ways). The sad thing is that our Synod has justification for separate existence only if it is zealot, gives an example to the other fallen or falling away "jurisdictions" – but to be wishy-washy and just dragging along behind the apostasy has no meaning at all."⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁸ Metropolitan Philaret to Fr. George Grabbe, July 12/25, 1975, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 11 (68), November, 2000, pp. 52-53.

⁸⁰⁹ Rose, Letter 167, to Brother Alexey Young, January 4/17, 1975.

54. THE FALL OF THE DISSIDENTS

In 1976 the ROCOR Synod issued an Epistle to the Russian people which, after declaring unity with the Catacomb Church, went on to say to dissident members of the MP: "We also kiss the cross that you have taken upon yourselves, O pastors who have found in yourselves the courage and strength of spirit to be open reproachers of the weakness of spirit of your hierarchs, who have surrendered before the atheists... We know of your exploit, we pray for you and ask your prayers for our flock that is in the diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!"⁸¹⁰

"Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!" are words that Orthodox priests exchange in the altar after the ordination of the Holy Gifts. Their use here implies the recognition of the dissidents as co-celebrants with ROCOR, members of the same Church. Clearly the influence of the dissidents was having a corrosive effect on the ecclesiology of ROCOR.

In February, 1976 the Matthewites broke communion with the Russians, claiming that the Russians had broken their promise to give them a written confession that the new calendarists were graceless, and that Archbishop Anthony of Geneva was continuing to have communion with the new calendarists.⁸¹¹ This was true; and his ecumenist activities continued even after the break with the Matthewites. Thus at Pascha, 1976, he asked permission for pastoral reasons to serve with Russian clerics of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Europe.⁸¹² In October he again concelebrated

⁸¹⁰ *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), 1976, № 20.

⁸¹¹ *Kyrix Gnision Orthodoxon* (Herald of the True Orthodox Christians), February, 1976, pp. 5-12.

⁸¹² Psarev, *op. cit.*, p. 4. The official statements of the ROCOR Synod were indeed weak from the Matthewite point of view, who regarded the matter as already decided long ago. Thus on September 12/25, 1974 the Synod declared: "Concerning the question of the presence or absence of grace among the new calendarists the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad does not consider herself or any other Local Church to have the right to make a conclusive decision, since a categorical evaluation in this question can be undertaken only by a properly convened, competent Ecumenical Council, with the obligatory participation of the free Church of Russia." (This was quoted by Metropolitan Philaret in his letter to Archbishop Andreas dated October 5, 1974 (ref. no. 3/50/760)). Again on September 18 / October 1, 1974 the ROCOR Council of Bishops declared: "Manifesting good will [towards the Orthodox Greeks], the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has called and addressed separate groups of the Church of the Old Calendarists to find the path to make peace and attain fraternal unity. However, the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad has no canonical power over the Church jurisdictions in Greece and therefore cannot interfere in their life with decisions that would be obligatory in questions of their disagreements."

Although ROCOR officially refused to call the new calendarists graceless, there is evidence that Metropolitan Philaret's personal views were stricter and closer to those of the Greeks. Thus on September 20, 1975, he wrote to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, the leader of the Old Calendarist Church of Cyprus, with whom he continued to have friendly relations even after the Matthewite Synod to which Epiphanius belonged had broken communion with ROCOR: "From the beginning our Russian Church has known that the calendar innovation was unacceptable, and has not dared to move this boundary set by patristic tradition, for the Ecclesiastical Calendar is a support of the life of the Church and as such is fortified by decrees of Holy Tradition.

"However, it is obvious to all that the calendar innovation caused a schism in the Greek Church in 1924, and the responsibility for the schism weighs exclusively on the innovators. This is the conclusion that will be reached by anyone studying the Patriarchal *Tomoi* (as that of 1583) and taking into account the wretched and self-evident fact of the schism and the frightful punishments,

with several heretics at the funeral of Archbishop Nicodemus of Great Britain. And in May, 1977 he travelled to Birmingham, England to concelebrate with the local Serbs.

Archbishop Anthony's ecumenist actions caused several priests and parishes to leave him for the Matthewites, including those of Fr. Basile Sakkas in Switzerland and of Hieromonk Cassian (Braun) in France, and a parish in England. Metropolitan Philaret expressed disapproval of Archbishop Anthony's canonical transgressions, but he was not in sufficient control of his Synod to obtain his repentance.⁸¹³

In the same critical year of 1976 the well-known Brotherhood of St. Herman of Alaska in Platina, California began to turn away from its previously zealot course to a markedly softer line in relation to the MP and World Orthodoxy.⁸¹⁴ They were influenced in this direction partly by the "dissident fever" that was now raging through most of the Russian part of ROCOR, and partly by the "moderate" ecclesiology of the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili. However, a still more important influence may have been a series of controversies - on evolution, on the soul after death, on Blessed Augustine of Hippo - conducted exclusively in the "convert" part of ROCOR between the Platina Brotherhood and the Greek-American monastery in Boston.

In all these controversies, in the present writer's opinion, Platina - and in particular, Platina's chief theologian, Hieromonk Seraphim Rose - was right as against Boston, led by Archimandrite Panteleimon. But the negative impression that the Platina monks formed of Boston as a result led them to error in the one area of controversy in which the Boston monastery was right - the canonical status of World Orthodoxy and the MP. Arguing that the Boston monastery's "super-correctness" was leading them to abandon the "Royal Way" as regards the status of the World

persecutions and blasphemies which those who have cleaved to the patristic piety of Holy Tradition have undergone.

"Thinking in this way, our Holy Synod has decreed that we 'flee' concelebrations with the new calendarist modernists. We do not concelebrate with them, nor do we give permission or a blessing to our clergy for such a concelebration. In order to assure you of the truth of what we say, we inform you that whenever a community in the diaspora is received into our Church, they are required to follow the patristic Calendar of the Orthodox Church..." (from the archives of the True Orthodox Church of Greece)

⁸¹³ As he told the present writer in January, 1977, he had a gun at his head. However, he was able to remove Britain, where Archbishop Anthony's ecumenism had elicited protests from the English Orthodox Parish of St. Michael, Guildford, to his own jurisdiction later that year.

⁸¹⁴ See especially Fr. Seraphim Rose's article, "The Royal Path" (*The Orthodox Word*, № 70, 1976), in which he wrote: "The Russian Church Outside of Russia has been placed, by God's Providence, in a very favourable position for preserving the 'royal path' amidst the confusion of so much of 20th century Orthodoxy. Living in exile and poverty in a world that has not understood the suffering of her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, and so quite naturally she finds herself a stranger to the whole ecumenical mentality, which is based on religious indifference and self-satisfaction, material affluence, and soulless internationalism. On the other hand, she has been preserved from falling into extremism on the 'right side' (such as might be a declaration that the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate are without grace)... If there seems to be a 'logical contradiction' here... it is a problem only for rationalists; those who approach church questions with the heart as well as the head have no trouble accepting this position..."

Orthodox, Platina came out strongly on the side of the liberal wing of ROCOR led by Archbishop Anthony and his idolisation of Fr. Demetrius and the other dissidents.

Another important issue was relations with the Serbian Church. The Serbs, as we have seen, had joined the WCC in 1965, their ecumenism extended to official acceptance of the canonicity of the Anglican Church⁸¹⁵, and they were as fully under the thumb of the communists as the MP. In spite of this, Archbishop Anthony, continued to serve with the Serbs, citing the pre-war hospitality of the Serbs to ROCOR in his justification.

In this connection Metropolitan Philaret wrote to him: "I consider it my duty to point out to you, Vladyka, that your assertion that we must thank the Serbian Church for her treatment of us, I fully accept, but only as regards her past – the glorious past of the Serbian Church. Yes, of course, we must keep the names of their Holinesses Patriarchs Demetrius and Barnabas in grateful memory for their precious support of the Church Abroad at that time when she had no place to lay her head.

"There is no denying that a certain honour is due the Serbian Church for her refusing to condemn our Church Abroad at the parasynagogue in Moscow in 1971, and also on later occasions when Moscow again raised the matter. But then, on the other hand, she did participate in the aforementioned parasynagogue, when it elected Pimen, and the Serbian hierarchs did not protest against this absolutely anti-canonical election, when he who had already been chosen and appointed by the God-hating regime was elected. Our Sobor of 1971 did not, and could not, recognize Pimen, whereas the Serbian Patriarchate recognized and does recognize him, addressing him as Patriarch, and is in full communion with him. And thus she opposes us directly, for we attempt at all times to explain to the "Free World" that the Soviet Patriarchate is not the genuine representative and head of the much-suffering Russian Church. But the Serbian Church recognizes her as such, and by so doing commits a grave sin against the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people.

"How can there be any talk here of a special gratitude to her? Oh, if the Serbian Church would, while recognizing our righteousness, likewise directly and openly, boldly recognize the unrighteousness of the Soviets! Well – then there would truly be something for us to thank her for! But now, as it is, while extending one hand to us, she extends her other hand to our opponents and the enemies of God and the Church. If it pleases you, having shut your eyes to this sad reality, to thank the Serbs for such 'podvigs' of theirs, then that is your affair, but I am not a participant in this expression of gratitude.

"How dangerous are compromises in matters of principle! They render people powerless in defence of the Truth. Why is it that the Serbian Patriarchate cannot resolve to sever communion with the Soviet hierarchy? Because she herself is travelling along the same dark and dangerous path of compromise with the God-

⁸¹⁵ Thus George Deretich writes: "In Waukegan, Illinois (Feb. 7, 1980),... the pro-Belgrade Bishop Firmilian stated openly in court under oath that Episcopalian clergy are canonical priests recognized by his Orthodox Church" (*Treacherous Unity*, Acel Officeworks, 1998, p. 68).

hating communists. True, she has not progressed along that path to the extent that the Soviet hierarchy has, and she attempts to preach and defend the faith, but if the shades and nuances here are quite different, yet, in principle, the matter stands on one and the same level.”⁸¹⁶

In 1979, in response to a series of protests by Fr. Demetrius against what he saw as excessive strictness on the part of ROCOR towards the MP, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, breaking the rule imposed by Metropolitan Anastasy (and reasserted by Metropolitan Philaret) that ROCOR members should have no contact, “even of an everyday nature”, with Soviet church clergy, wrote to Dudko: “I hasten to console you that the part of the Russian Church which lives in freedom beyond the bounds of the homeland, has never officially considered the Moscow Patriarchate, which is recognized in the USSR, as graceless.... We have never dared to deny the grace-filled nature of the official church, for we believe that the sacraments carried out by her clergy are sacraments. Therefore our bishops received your clergy into the Church Abroad in their existing rank... On the other hand, the representatives of the Catacomb Church in Russia accuse us of not wanting to recognize the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless.”⁸¹⁷

However, in 1980, Fr. Demetrius was arrested, which was closely followed by the arrest of his disciples Victor Kapitanchuk and Lev Regelson. Then Dudko issued a recantation on Soviet television in which he confessed that his “so-called struggle with godlessness” was in fact “a struggle with Soviet power”. Kapitanchuk and Regelson confessed to having “criminal ties” with foreign correspondents and of mixing religious activity with politics, while Kapitanchuk said that he had “inflicted damage on the Soviet state for which I am very sorry”. Both men implicated others in their “crimes”.

Metropolitan Philaret had been proved right – although many continued to justify Dudko and denounced those who “judged” him. But it was not a question of “judging”, but of the correct discerning of the boundaries of the Church and the correct attitude to those outside it. The metropolitan wrote that the tragedy had overtaken Dudko because his activity had taken place from within the MP – that is, “outside the True Church”. And he continued: “What is the ‘Soviet church’? Fr. Archimandrite Constantine has said often and insistently that the most terrible thing that the God-fighting authorities have done to Russia is the appearance of the ‘Soviet church’, which the Bolsheviks offered up to the people as the True Church, having driven the real Orthodox Church into the catacombs or the concentration camps. This false church has been twice anathematized. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the All-Russian Church Council anathematized the communists and all their co-workers. This terrible anathema has not been lifted to this day and preserves its power, since it can be lifted only by an All-Russian Church Council, as being the canonically higher Church authority. And a terrible thing happened in 1927, when the leader of the Church, Metropolitan Sergius, by his shameful apostate declaration submitted the

⁸¹⁶ Letter of Metropolitan Philaret to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, November 16/29, 1977.

⁸¹⁷ *Vestnik Zapadno-Evropskoj Eparkhii* (Herald of the Western European Diocese), 1979, № 14; *Posev* (Sowing), 1979, № 12.

Russian Church to the Bolsheviks and declared that he was cooperating with them. In the most exact sense the expression of the prayer before confession was fulfilled: 'fallen under his own anathema'! For in 1918 the Church anathematized all the co-workers of communism, and in 1927 she herself entered into the company of these co-workers and began to praise the red God-fighting authorities – to praise the red beast of which the Apocalypse speaks. And this is not all. When Metropolitan Sergius published his criminal declaration, the faithful children of the Church immediately separated from the Soviet church, and the Catacomb Church was created. And she in her turn anathematized the official church for her betrayal of Christ... We receive clergymen from Moscow not as ones possessing grace, but as ones receiving it by the very act of union. But to recognize the church of the evil-doers as the bearer and repository of grace – that we, of course, cannot do. For outside of Orthodoxy there is *no* grace; and the Soviet church has deprived itself of grace."⁸¹⁸

Looking at this tragedy from a psychological point of view, we can see that Dudko's vulnerability consisted, not so much in the fear of physical torture, as in the KGB's ability to induce in him a feeling of false guilt, guilt that he had objectively harmed the Soviet State. This tragedy exposed an inescapable dilemma facing all the dissidents: that action aimed to restore the freedom of the Church was necessarily anti-soviet, insofar as the Soviet State and the Orthodox Church represented incompatible aims and ideologies. Therefore every committed campaigner for Church freedom sooner or later had to admit that he was working against Soviet power – if not by physical, at any rate by spiritual, means, and that he had to work outside the political and ecclesiastical institutions of Soviet power. So the failure of the dissidents was the natural consequence of the refusal to obey the Apostle's command: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (II Corinthians 6.14). They refused to obey Patriarch Tikhon's adjuration to the faithful to have no communion at all with the communists, "the outcasts of humanity". They tried to do good from within an accursed evil - the pact between Metropolitan Sergius and the Communists which, in the words of a samizdat document dating from the early 1970s, "tied the Church hand and foot by imposing on her a loyalty not only to the State, *but mainly to the communist ideology.*"⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁸ "A Letter from Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) to a Priest of the Church Abroad concerning Father Dimitry Dudko and the Moscow Patriarchate", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 4, February, 1999, pp. 16-20. A few years earlier, on August 14/27, 1977, Metropolitan Philaret had told the present writer: "I advise you always to remain faithful to the anathema of the Catacomb Church against the Moscow Patriarchate." And the following is an extract from Protocol № 3 of the ROCOR Sobor, dated October 8/21, 1974: "Bishop Gregory says that to the question of the existence (of grace) it is not always possible to give a final reply immediately. The loss of grace is the consequence of spiritual death, which sometimes does not come immediately. Thus plants sometimes die gradually. In relation to the loss of grace in the Moscow Patriarchate, it would be interesting to make the comparison with the position of the iconoclasts, although the sin of the Patriarchate is deeper. The President [Metropolitan Philaret] says that we cannot now issue a resolution on grace in the Moscow Patriarchate, but we can be certain that grace lives only in the true Church, but the Moscow hierarchs have gone directly against Christ and His work. How can there be grace among them? The metropolitan personally considers that the Moscow Patriarchate is graceless." (*Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 4 (95), June-July, 2001, p. 9).

⁸¹⁹ *Archives* 12/92, № 8926 March 29, 1972, in *Orthodox Life*, September-October, 1974.

55. 'NIKODIMOVSHCHINA'

From the 1970s we see the ascendancy in the MP of a school of thought devoted to the interests of communism and ecumenism simultaneously, which has been called "Nikodimovshchina" from its first leader and originator, Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), KGB Agent "Sviatoslav". Nikodim's frenetic activity travelling all around world was soon bearing fruit as regards to turning the Western churchmen towards communism. "The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia recorded that by 1972 the WCC had been converted from a 'pro-Western' to a 'progressive' orientation in its policies on peace, disarmament and related matters. Assiduous advocacy by the Christian Peace Conference and others of the view that Christianity and communism were natural allies in support of the national liberation movement induced the WCC to provide funds for African guerilla movements..."⁸²⁰

As for ecumenism, and in particular Catholic-Orthodox ecumenism, Alexander Soldatov writes: "In the Moscow Patriarchate it is widely believed that [Nikodem] was a secret cardinal, and also the prophecy of Blessed Pelagia of Ryazan addressed to Nikodim: 'You will die like a dog at the feet of your pope'. The metropolitan really did die at the age of 48 during a reception by Pope John-Paul I [in Rome in 1978]. In spite of his young age by hierarchical standards, Nikodim did a great deal. He was the first in the history of the Russian Church to serve with the Catholics, absorbed the Catholic mass, practiced spiritual exercises according to the method of Ignatius Loyola, and idolized pontiffs, especially the 'red pope', John XXIII, to whom he devoted his master's dissertation. He went to the Vatican every year; from 1968 he began to take with him Volodya Gundiaev, the present patriarch. In 1969, when Patriarch Alexis I was dying, Nikodim was able to push through the Synod the decision to make it obligatory for Orthodox priests to give communion to Catholics 'in the case of mortal danger'. This decision was condemned even by the ecumenically-minded Greeks [and condemned as "heretical" by the Russian Church Abroad in 1971].

"The Russian émigré and well-known theologian Archbishop Basil (Krivoshein) explained this tendency as follows: 'Metropolitan Nikodim was drawn to Catholicism above all by the idea he had of it as a powerful, strictly disciplined, single Church. In vain did they tell him many times that such a picture did not correspond to contemporary reality... Metropolitan Nikodim was in no way willing to renounce his conviction! It was the external appearance that worked on him.'"⁸²¹

Ever since writing his master's thesis on Pope John XXIII, the man who led the Catholic Church onto the ecumenical scene at the Second Vatican Council, Nikodim had been trying to do the same for the MP. Hierodeacon (now Igumen) Theophanes (Areskin) writes: "Metropolitan Nikodim begins his exposition of his ecumenist faith with an Orthodox thesis on the unity of the whole human race in Adam: 'Mankind, the whole Adam (in the expression of St. Macarius the Great) is united by means of

⁸²⁰ Dr. Olga Ackerly, "High Treason in ROCOR: The Rapprochement with Moscow", http://stnicholascandles.com/High_Treason.htm, p. 32.

⁸²¹ Soldatov, "Sviateishij Posol" (His All-Holiness the Envoy), *Novaia Gazeta*, February 9, 2016.

the Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection of the last Adam (I Corinthians 14.45), the second Man, the Lord Who “for us men” came down from the heavens (I Corinthians 15.47), and, having tasted “death for us all by the grace of God” (Hebrews 2.9), “is the Saviour of all men” (I Timothy 4.10)... We all, in accordance with the ineffable wisdom of God, have been bound from the beginning with the bonds of unity and brotherhood’. But further on Metropolitan Nikodim reveals his understanding of this unity: ‘Christ died for all men, and, as the new Adam, he laid the beginning for a new humanity... The fullness of the grace-filled gifts is communicated to people by the Holy Spirit in the Church of Christ. However, it would be a dangerous error to consider that Christ, the Redeemer of the whole world, does not extend His saving influence on the whole of humanity.’ This saving influence consists, according to Metropolitan Nikodim, ‘in faith in Christ Jesus, acting through love in each separate person, as in the whole of humanity, with which we are united by our common human nature. God redeemed us into an undivided, indivisible, unchanging and unconfused union with this nature through the incarnation of the Only-Begotten Son.’ ‘By taking on and deifying our nature in the Divine Incarnation the Chief and Accomplisher of our faith (Hebrews 12.2) and of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5.9), our Lord Jesus Christ reconciled, united and related *the whole of humanity with God, and all people with each other*’. ‘The Church as the Kingdom of God is likened to leaven which penetrates into all the parts of the whole that is humanity, into the whole world, and acts with that measure of power which corresponds to the moral level of the bearers of Christ’s truth. And although far from all people actively and consciously abide in the Church, *the Church abides in all through the love of Christ*, for this love is not limited by any part of humanity, but is distributed to all people.’ Hence ‘the activity of the Spirit of God is not limited by confessional limits. His manifestation is completely and, above all, unconditionally revealed in the Church, but the traces of His presence are evident everywhere where there are the fruits of spiritual life: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness...’ Therefore all people, the whole Body of humanity (Adam), are invisibly united with God and is a certain ‘invisible Church’. The organization of the Church is understood by Nicodemus as ‘the visible Church’, in which ‘baptism defines the *visible* belonging to Christ’. Metropolitan Nikodim consciously confesses the ‘baptism’ of Protestants to be true, turning to his ‘brothers in Christ’, the Protestants, the members of the WCC: ‘Through the mystery of holy Baptism we are engrafted onto the saving Divine Vine...’ But the visible Church ‘is called to realize the fruits of the Incarnation and Redemption in the life of her *immediate* members.’

“And so, according to Metropolitan Nikodim, all people are ‘Christians’, it is true that the Church of Christ, the Body of Christ, the New Adam, is one, but it is not yet united into one ecclesiastical organization under one leader. The aim of the ecumenists is to create this *mediation*, that is, one single visible ecclesiastical organization for all. In this way the ecumenical Church and the world become indistinguishable from each other. It is not difficult to find the primary source of this faith. It is sergianism – a heretical teaching that the Church, the Body of Christ, is a simple ecclesiastical organization, just like ordinary secular organizations, political parties, communities, commercial structures, etc.”⁸²²

⁸²² Hierodeacon Theophan, “The Head of the Moscow Patriarchate”, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 20, October,

Nikodim's links with the Vatican went much further than an intellectual affinity. He was in fact a high-ranking Jesuit and secret Vatican bishop! This at first sight unlikely hypothesis gains credibility from two witnesses. The first is from the True Orthodox hieromonk Fr. Tikhon Kozushin: "In 1989 I and several other Orthodox 'informals' were invited to lunch at the French embassy. Among other guests there was an elderly man from France of Czech origin. He introduced himself as the director of a Catholic boarding-school in Medon, a suburb of Paris and a high-ranking officer of the Jesuit order. And then he said that Metropolitan Nikodim was also a secret-official officer of the order who was quite close to the Pope."⁸²³

The second witness is Fr. Michael Havryliv, a Russian priest secretly received into the Catholic Church in 1973. Fr. Serge Keleher writes: "The Capuchin priest told Havryliv that Metropolitan Nikodim was secretly a Catholic bishop, recognized by Rome with jurisdiction from Pope Paul VI throughout Russia. This assertion is not impossible – but neither is it entirely proved.

"On September 6 1975 Havryliv made a sacramental general Confession before Metropolitan Nicodemus, who then accepted Havryliv's monastic vows and profession of Faith to the Apostolic See and the Pope of Rome. Kyr Nicodemus commanded Havryliv to order his monastic life according to the Jesuit Constitutions, and presented him with a copy of this document in Russian. This was all done privately; four days later the Metropolitan tonsured Havryliv a monk. On 9 October Kyr Nicodemus ordained Havryliv to the priesthood, without requiring the oaths customary for Russian Orthodox candidates to Holy Orders.

"In 1977 Havryliv was reassigned to the Moscow Patriarchate's archdiocese of L'viv and Ternopil... In Havryliv's final interview with Kyr Nicodemus, the Metropolitan of Leningrad 'blessed me and gave me instructions to keep my Catholic convictions and do everything possible for the growth of the Catholic cause, not only in Ukraine, but in Russia. The Metropolitan spoke of the practice of his predecessors – and also asked me to be prudent.'"⁸²⁴

These words indicate the truth behind the mask of the Vatican's ecumenism; and the fact that Havryliv was re-ordained by Nikodim show that Rome accepted the sacraments of the Orthodox for only as long as it suited her. The Orthodox were, according to Vatican II, not heretics, but "separated brethren". However, the "separated brethren" still had to return in repentance to their father, the Pope...

The intriguing question is: which master was Nikodim really serving – the Soviets or the Vatican? His pro-Soviet statements on the international stage were notorious. But his love of Catholicism also seems to have been sincere.

2000, pp. 18-19.

⁸²³ Kozushin, Facebook, February 12, 2016.

⁸²⁴ S. Keleher, *Passion and resurrection – the Greek Catholic Church in Soviet Ukraine 1939 – 1989*, L'viv: Stauropegion, 1993, pp. 101-102.

In any case, the Catholics with their “liberation theology” were moving ever closer to communism, while Nikodim was rushing to meet them from the other direction. Thus Soldatov writes: “Nikodim’s sympathies with Catholicism were interwoven with a very specific ‘theology of communism’. He considered the Soviet socialist system to be the closest to Christianity and dreamed of a powerful Orthodox USSR.

“A group of church dissidents addressed the Local Council of the ROC of the MP in 1971, a which Nikodim was almost elected patriarch. Their lengthy address ‘On the newly-appeared false teaching of Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov)’ called this teaching ‘apocalyptic religious communism’.”

The death of Nikodim in 1978 in Rome at the feet of Pope John-Paul I, who read the prayers for the departing of the soul over him⁸²⁵, was a graphic symbol of the true direction of inter-Christian ecumenism – aided and abetted by the KGB – in a distinctly pro-Soviet direction. And, as Lev Regelson writes, “after Pope John-Paul I said of him ‘This is a person from whom I can learn how one must love the Church’, it was almost guaranteed that the following Pope would be pro-Soviet...” But then the famous dissident priest Fr. Gleb Yakunin “sat down to write a letter to the Vatican in which he exposed the antichristian activity of Metropolitan Nikodim. I know all this at first hand, because I helped him in his work on this letter. Finally it was read out at the Conclave for the election of the new Pope and produced such a strong impression And that is what would have happened if the same Fr. Gleb Yakunin had not intervened. I know all this at first hand because I help him work on this letter. Finally, it was read out at the Conclave for the election of the new Pope, and produced such a powerful impression – in the words of one of the cardinals passed on to Fr. Gleb – that the Polish cardinal Wojtila was elected as Pope. He was a convinced ‘anticommunist’, who knew of the methods of the Soviet secret service from personal experience. Many investigators had supposed, with good reason, that the 27-year pontificate of John-Paul II played a decisive role in the beginning of the weakening of Soviet global expansion, and thereby in the fall of the USSR, which without this expansion lost ‘the meaning of its existence’...”⁸²⁶

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Nikodim’s place both as chief ideologist of the MP, Metropolitan of Leningrad and leader of the “Nikodimovshina” school of theology, was taken by his pupil, the future “Patriarch” Alexis II (Ridiger). And when Pope John-Paul died a few days after Nikodim, Alexis celebrated a festive service for the repose of his soul in the Moscow Cathedral of the Epiphany, while another of his disciples, the present Patriarch Cyril (Gundyaev), celebrated a similar service in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in

⁸²⁵ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1978, № 11; *The Boston Globe*, September 6, 1978, p. 65; "On the Death of a Soviet Bishop", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, October 23 / November 5, 1978; Piers Compton, *The Broken Cross: The Hidden Hand in the Vatican*, Sudbury: Neville Spearman, 1983, pp. 158-159.

⁸²⁶ Regelson, personal communication on his Facebook page, January 24, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/lregelson/posts/981429488551934?comment_id=983137605047789&offset=0&total_comments=96¬if_t=feed_comment_reply.

Leningrad.⁸²⁷

Alexis, an Estonian by birth (he was bishop in Tallin before his transfer to Leningrad), had been a KGB agent with the codename “Drozdov” since 1958 and an active ecumenist for almost as long as his mentor.

Following the directions of the KGB, Alexis was sent as a delegate to the Third General Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961, with Metropolitan Nikodem and Archbishop Anthony (Bloom), an important agent of influence living in England. He became a member of the Central Committee of the WCC from 1961 to 1968, president of the World Conference, “The Church and Society” in Geneva in 1966, and a member of the Commission “Faith and Order” of the WCC from 1961 to 1968.

In the 1974 Furov report to the Central Committee of the USSR Alexis (together with his predecessor Patriarch Pimen) was placed in the category of those bishops who “affirm both in words and deeds not only loyalty but also patriotism towards the socialist society; strictly observe the laws on cults, and educate the parish clergy and believers in the same spirit; realistically understand that our state is not interested in proclaiming the role of religion and the church in society; and, realizing this, do not display any particular activeness in extending the influence of Orthodoxy among the population.”⁸²⁸

According to a KGB document of 1988, “An order was drafted by the USSR KGB chairman to award an honorary citation to agent DROZDOV” [i.e. Alexis] for unspecified services to state security.⁸²⁹

“Already in 1966,” writes Hierodeacon (now Igumen) Theophan, “in his speech before the delegation of the German Evangelical church at a conference in Moscow, the future head of the MP in the name of Christ Himself declared that ‘Jesus Christ considers His own, that is, as Christians, all those who believe in Him and obey Him, and this is more than the Orthodox Church.’ If we remember that, according to Orthodox teaching, Christ adopted people to Himself only in His Hypostasis, that is, in His Body which is the Orthodox Church, then it is obvious that the metropolitan is here confessing a christological heresy, considering as Christians those who are outside the Church – calling them ‘God’s’, that is, the Church’s.

“Alexis still more clearly confesses that all the non-Orthodox Christians are the Church of Christ in his report to the 8th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, published in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* in 1980 (№№ 1-3). Here, blasphemously mixing up and identifying the concepts of the presence of God in the world and His energies and presence in the Church, the metropolitan very distinctly reveals his heretical teaching on the “all-embracing and unconditional” Incarnation of Christ, which automatically turns the whole of humanity, all Christians, Muslims,

⁸²⁷ L. Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 129.

⁸²⁸ Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin File*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1999, pp. 639-640.

⁸²⁹ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *op. cit.*, p. 650.

pagans, and in general all 'men of good will' into members of the Body of Christ, that is, the Church! Metropolitan Alexis openly teaches that the same grace of the Holy Spirit acts in the non-Orthodox churches – the participants in the WCC – as in the Orthodox Church: 'We (the CEC) have learned to pray together, to understand the spirit and depth of prayer for each other, to feel the breath of the grace of the Holy Spirit in joint prayer to the Lord ... we must thank God for the joy of our communion in Christ, for the joy of the ever-increasing experience of brotherhood and sisterhood in Christ in our work.' Thus it was precisely in joint prayers with heretics that the archpastor felt the breath of 'the grace of the Holy Spirit'! We should note that 'ecumenical prayer' is a very important moment in the ecumenical dialogue, it not only witnesses to the presence among the ecumenists of some common 'god' to whom this prayer is raised, but it is also a practical recognition of the action of the Holy Spirit in heterodoxy, thereby aiding the aggiornamento of the churches. This is what the future head of the MP says on this subject: 'The aggiornamento of the churches is attained in the first place by prayer and brotherly love; joint prayers create a special atmosphere, a spiritual mood; (he goes on to cite A.S. Khomiakov) prayer is the life of the Church and the voice of her love, the eternal breathing of the Spirit of God. We believe that through joint prayers the breathing of the Spirit of God jointly enriches us all.'

"According to Orthodox teaching, it is precisely the Holy Spirit that makes a man a member of the Church of Christ, a Christian. But Metropolitan Alexis recognises that the Holy Spirit works in heretics just as in the Orthodox Church, and therefore heretics, like Orthodox Christians, are the Church of Christ: 'We believe that the Holy Spirit – visibly or invisibly – continues until now His saving activity in the world. You and I, dear brothers and sisters, representing various Churches and the human race, live by the same real and grace-filled power of Pentecost'. From this there follows an open admittance on the part of the metropolitan that the heretical communities are the Church and the Body of Christ: 'We, the Orthodox, are lovingly disposed to our non-Orthodox brothers, for we have all *been baptized in one Spirit*, and we have all *been made to drink into one Spirit* (I Corinthians 12.13).' Here the Apostle Paul's eucharistic (even liturgical) terminology has not been used in vain, so as once more to emphasise: Orthodox and heretics are not simply a divided Church, but the Body of Christ, organically one in the Holy Spirit.

"The source of this teaching of Metropolitan Alexis on the Holy Spirit is a heretical Christology, whose essence consists in the assertion that 'we all have been received into the nature of Jesus Christ the God-man as an integral nature. And this truth forces us to believe that every person striving towards goodness and righteousness does the work of Christ on earth, even if he intellectually has not known Christ or has even rejected Him. From the Godmanhood of Christ it follows that the path into the Kingdom of God has been opened to all men. Consequently, with the Incarnation of the Son of God the whole of humanity becomes His potential Church, and in this sense the boundaries of the Christian Ecumene (or the pan-human family) are far wider than the boundaries of the Christian world.' Hence Metropolitan Alexis' teaching becomes understandable: insofar as Christ has received into His Hypostasis the *common* nature of man, all people, that is, all human hypostases of all generations are saved and remain in Christ, that is, in the Church. In other words, Christ has saved

the whole nature of man, and consequently, according to the thought of Metropolitan Alexis, all people.

“However, according to the Orthodox teaching, ‘God the Word, on becoming incarnate, did not take on the nature viewed as an abstraction in pure thought,... nor the nature contemplated in species (that is, viewed in all the hypostases of the human race - H. Th.), for He did not take on all the hypostases, but He took on that which received its existence in His Hypostasis’. That is, it is impossible to say that since God the Word became Man, all people are saved by virtue of being men. But Metropolitan Alexis affirms that in the humanity of Christ is contained all men’s hypostases. Such a teaching was confessed in the 11th century by the Monk Nilus of Calabria, who taught that all human hypostases are present or are contained in the humanity taken on by the Lord and are ‘co-deified’ together with Him. The Orthodox Church anathematized Nilus and his heresy: ‘If anyone dogmatizes that all human hypostases are in the flesh taken on by the Lord and are co-deified with it, let him be anathema, for this is empty chatter, or, rather, manifest impiety.’ And although the metropolitan makes the qualification that humanity for him is only ‘the potential church’, nevertheless he later on unambiguously speaks of the whole of humanity as of the Church - the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit: ‘Christ redeemed, cleansed and recreated a common human nature for all, while the Holy Spirit morally transfigures each human personality, gives the Christian the fullness of grace, makes him a temple of God and dwells in him, raises the growth of spirituality in the mind and the heart, leads him to every truth and gives him spiritual gifts to his benefit: to one - the word of wisdom, to another - the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit... and other gifts (I Corinthians 12.7-11), so that human talents should be revealed more fully.’ In this way, insofar as God the Word has been incarnate in a common human nature, His Body is the divided Christian Church in the combination of all its separate parts. However, the saving action of the Holy Spirit is poured out even beyond the bounds of the Body of Christ, penetrating into and deifying the body of the whole of humanity: ‘The all-embracing and most powerful force of the Holy Spirit is spread out onto the whole life of our world, transforming it in the course of the historical process of the struggle between good and evil.’

“And so, thanks to a clever substitution of concepts, the real difference between the grace of the Holy Spirit, by which God providentially preserves the world in existence and leads people to the Church, and the deifying mystical presence of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ, the Church, is destroyed, which completely abolishes the difference between the Church and the world: now ‘the cultural efflorescence of European and world Christianity’ is declared to be an action of the Holy Spirit, and even the Salt-2 treaty between Brezhnev and Carter concerning the limiting of strategic offensive weapons is also ‘a manifestation of the invisible power of the Holy Spirit acting in the world for the good of the whole of humanity.’

“The consequences of this ‘pan-human Pentecost’ are expressed by the metropolitan mainly in the terms of humanism and peace-making: ‘Christian concern for questions of social justice’, ‘the elements of the movement for peace’, Christians’ service to people and their ‘involvement in all the complexity of the real life of the world’. In this way the life of grace in the Body of Christ is substituted by a humanistic

‘serving the affairs of the world’.

“It is understandable that this ‘theology of peace’ should be very convenient for the dialogue not only with any heretical Christian communities, but also with any religions, even with utopian teachings like communism.

“But how is such a faith compatible with the Orthodox teaching on the uniqueness and singleness of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church? Yes, admits Metropolitan Alexis, ‘the oneness and unity of the Church is an ecclesiological axiom’, but in actual fact ‘an invisible unity as the unity of Christ and the Holy Spirit lives in the visible multitude of Churches, each of which has its particular face’, affirms the metropolitan, citing his brother in ecumenism, Professor Archbishop Vladimir (Sabodan). Before us here is the classical ecumenist ecclesiology – ‘the branch theory’, which was invented by Archbishop Stylianos of Australia (Constantinopolitan patriarchate), or, using the language of Soviet theological thought, the ecclesiology of ‘the traumatized Body of Christ’, a fruit of the refined minds of the ‘ecumenist theologians’ of the MP – the main teacher and implanter of the ecumenist heresy in the MP was Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov).”⁸³⁰

However, just as the new phenomenon of Catholic-Orthodox ecumenism created problems for the Orthodox Church’s conception of herself as exclusively the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, so did it create problems for traditional Catholic believers, who not only believed that it was the Roman Church that was the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, but also that the Mother of God had promised at Fatima to “convert” Russia, calling on the Pope to “consecrate” her to her Immaculate Heart.

Thus one of the leaders of the “Blue Army” of Fatima believers, Fr. Nicholas Gruner, writes: “God asked for the consecration of a specific country – Russia. Now, centuries ago, Russia was known as Holy Mother Russia. It had been, so to speak, consecrated to God, but the Catholics of that country fell into schism not so much directly but through the bishops – between them and Rome. The Catholics of Constantinople fell into schism in 1054 and people from Russia followed suit over time. They have been separated from the True Church ever since. Also, Russia was, in a sense, ‘consecrated’ to the devil in 1917 to be the instrument of atheistic Communism and its worldwide war against God; to deny God’s existence, to fight God in every way.

“Thus God calls for a public reparation, a solemn ceremony by the Pope and the bishops of the world consecrating Russia to the Immaculate Heart – to call people back to the service of God.”

However, no Pope has yet specifically consecrated Russia. In fact, when Pope John Paul II consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1984 he specifically acknowledged that this was not the consecration of Russia.

⁸³⁰ Hierodeacon Theophan, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-18.

Another Fatima fanatic, Atila Sinke Guimaraes, writes: "From 1917 until today, the schismatic Russian Church has not changed any of its erroneous doctrines on the Holy Trinity, Papal infallibility, and the immaculate Conception of Mary. It also sustains the same spirit of arrogance towards Rome that it has held for the last 1,000 years". In this way does the modern, ecumenist Vatican coexist with the old-fashioned, pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism speaking, whose aim is not union with the Orthodox on the basis of equality, but the complete absorption of Orthodoxy under "the Holy Father"

56. ARCHBISHOP MARK OF BERLIN

The influence of the KGB on Church life extended well beyond the borders of the Soviet Union and beyond the ranks of the East European Churches. In 1979 a layman of ROCOR, Mark Arndt, was arrested at Leningrad airport for importing anti-Soviet material and then released. In view of the later importance of Mark as ROCOR's Archbishop of Berlin, the following words written about him in 2004 by a former KGB colonel who has repented of his service, Konstantin Preobrazhensky, acquire considerable importance:-

“In 1979 the future Archbishop Mark [of Berlin] was arrested at the Soviet border for importing anti-Soviet literature. Nobody knows on what date. Nor does anybody know how long Mark was detained by the KGB, whether for one day or several...

“At that time Mark Arndt was an activist of NTS, the People's Labour Union, which had once been a warlike anti-Soviet organisation but was then properly crammed with KGB agents.

“Some Russian émigrés today say: ‘What if the KGB simply frightened Mark and then let him go with God's blessing?’

“I assure you as a retired lieutenant-colonel of the KGB: this could not have happened. Because the import of anti-Soviet literature came under article 70 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, “Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda”. It was considered an especially dangerous state crime and promised a considerable jail sentence.

“And how then, after arresting Mark, would the chekists have given an account of their work? Explained that they had let him go? And where would the concrete result so valued by the KGB be? Or, as they say there, ‘the dry remains’?

“But nobody would have allowed him to be released!

“After all, every foreigner who fell for righteousness' or unrighteousness' sake into the hands of the KGB was considered to be a fat, tasty chicken. He could have been exchanged for a Soviet spy who had fallen into captivity, or used for communist propaganda.

“All this would have been considered to be a great success and promised rewards for the chekists. But if they released him, there would have been no bonus. After all, the KGB is a military system. Every step there has to be agreed with tens of bosses.

“The chekists could have released him only in exchange for a still greater bonus. And they give that for the recruitment of a foreigner. It is considered the greatest achievement in the work of a chekist. His career would have been on the up.

“They teach how to recruit foreigners who are arrested by them in the Minsk KGB school...

“They worked on Mark. He would even have had to spend the night in the KGB...

“Sergius Grigoryants [the founder of *Glasnost*] told me the following: ‘... The fact that the KGB let Mark go in such a “humane” fashion shows that a love match may have been set up between them.’...

“There are *agents of influence*, who act on the politics of their country in a spirit that is useful for Russia. But as a rule they do not break its laws.

“If Archbishop Mark is truly an agent of the KGB, then he belongs to this category. Does his activity correspond to the external political aims of the Putin administration? Undoubtedly yes. It helps submit the Church Abroad to Moscow, so as to take the Russian emigration under the control of the FSB [the new name for the KGB]...”⁸³¹

Archbishop Mark immediately and sharply responded to Preobrazhensky’s accusations: “I have never and nowhere been arrested, and I will not comment on every absurdity”.

More recently, Preobrazhensky has returned to the attack on Archbishop Mark, citing the witness of Bishop Irenaeus of Verney and Semirechiye of the Russian True Orthodox Church, who in 1990, as Protopriest Vladimir Klipenshtein, was appointed rector of the church of St. Symeon of the Wonderful Mountain in Dresden by Archbishop Mark. To his surprise he discovered that this church had formerly been in the MP, but that in that year the government of United Germany had decided to return all the Russian churches to ROCOR – and were prepared to enforce that decision by force if necessary. Fr. Vladimir joyfully phoned Archbishop Mark to tell him about this, but received the unexpected reply:

“I’m ready hang myself because of your actions!”

“But where then am I to serve?” said Fr. Vladimir in amazement.

“Rent a flat and serve at home!” shouted Archbishop Mark.

“It was strange: it was he who had appointed Fr. Vladimir as rector of the church, but now he was not allowing him to serve in it! Where was the logic in that?”

Fr. Vladimir later learned that, over ten years before a part of ROCOR was engulfed by the MP, Archbishop Mark served with his patriarchal “double”, Archbishop Theophan of Berlin and Germany. Moreover, although he visited the Dresden parish and served with its patriarchal rector, Fr. George Davidov, he never took the church from him. Then Fr. Vladimir found out from the German counter-espionage service that all the patriarchal priests in Germany were KGB agents!

⁸³¹ Preobrazhensky, “Dve Tajny Arkhiepiskopa Marka” (Two Mysteries of Archbishop Mark), Portal-credo.ru, 12 May, 2004, <http://cherksoft.narod.ru/mut59.htm>.

Fr. Vladimir's inquiries were extremely displeasing to Archbishop Mark, who recalled him to his monastery of St. Job in Munich, and then told him that he would not be serving in Germany, whereupon he returned to his homeland.

"Bishop Irenaeus noted in a conversation with me that if at that time, in 1999, Mark's work on the cadres in favour of Moscow had become widely known, this would have elicited such a scandal that last year's 'union of the Churches' could not have taken place. The more so in that at that time the leader of the Church Abroad was Metropolitan Vitaly, who was known for his categorical rejection of the Bolsheviks, the chekists and 'the Soviet patriarchate'.

"I am convinced that it was precisely Mark who led the conspiracy to remove Metropolitan Vitaly in 2000," noted Bishop Irenaeus.⁸³²

⁸³² Preobrazhensky, "Sviashchenniki i Razvedchiki", <http://elmager.livejournal.com/222404.html?reply>.

57. THE ANATHEMA AGAINST ECUMENISM

As the seventies progressed, the statements accepted by the World Council of Churches became more and more politicized and less and less compatible with Orthodoxy. Thus for example in 1975 the Orthodox delegates at the WCC General Assembly in Nairobi declared: "The Orthodox do not expect the other Christians to be converted to Orthodoxy in its historic and cultural reality of the past and the present and to become members of the Orthodox Church." This was an official renunciation of missionary work among the heretics...

Two ecumenical events in particular combined to elicit a powerful response from the True Orthodox Church. The first took place in 1982, when an inter-denominational eucharistic service was composed at a conference in Lima, Peru, in which the Protestant and Orthodox representatives to the WCC agreed that the baptism, eucharist and ordinations of *all* denominations were valid and acceptable.⁸³³

The second came in 1983, at the Vancouver General Assembly of the WCC, which began with a pagan rite performed by local Indians and contained prayer services in which Orthodox hierarchs as well as representatives of many non-Christian religions took part. Thus Orthodox hierarchs agreed to pass through the "cleansing smoke" of a Korean pagan priestess... The Vancouver Assembly unanimously approved a statement entitled "My Neighbor's Faith and Mine, Theological Discoveries Through Interfaith Dialogue: A Study Guide" (Geneva: WCC, 1986). After claiming the need "a more adequate theology of religions," the statement declared "that in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, the entire human family has been united to God in an irrevocable bond and covenant. The saving presence of God's activity in all creation and human history comes to its focal point in the event of Christ. . . because we have seen and experienced goodness, truth, and holiness among followers of other paths and ways than that of Jesus Christ..., we find ourselves recognizing a need to move beyond a theology which confines salvation to the explicit personal commitment to Jesus Christ."

When the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Gabriel of the Cyclades attempted to address the Vancouver Assembly, he was not allowed to speak by the ecumenists. The *New York Times*, however, published his report, which included the following words: "Modern ecumenism is the reflection of the latest radical, atheistic and anti-Christian anthropomorphism which has as its principle that God is as necessary to man as man is to God. This radical anthropomorphism continues to struggle through the WCC to make the salvific message of Christ simply a servile element of the socio-political and earthly needs of man Thus it struggles for the actualisation of the unity of the Christian world without Christ, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' of the Church and the faithful. Dogmatic and ethical minimalism, spiritual nihilism, humanistic pacifism and horizontal social activism lead to a union of the Christian world without Christ. So these attempts of the WCC constitute the modern blasphemy of the Holy Spirit par excellence and declare a deep crisis of faith in the

⁸³³ See Archbishop Vitaly, "The 1983 Sobor of Bishops", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, August 20 / September 2, 1984, p. 4.

Western Christian world..."⁸³⁴

The Synod of ROCOR, also meeting in Canada, condemned this latest and most extreme manifestation of ecumenism as follows: "In its decision of 28 July / 10 August, our Council explained that the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia does not participate in the World Council of Churches insofar as the latter attempts to represent those assembled in it, representatives of religions differing in their opinions, as though they had some sort of unity in faith. In reality, though, this very position is a lie, inasmuch as they, members of various confessions and sects, have not given up their points of disagreement with each other, much less with the Orthodox Church, in dogmas and in fundamental attitudes. In the name of unifying formulas, these differences of opinion are not destroyed, but are just set aside. Instead of the unshakable truths of the faith, they try to see only opinions, not obligatory for anyone. In reply to the confession of the one Orthodox Faith, they say together with Pilate: 'What is truth?' And the nominally Orthodox members of the Ecumenical Movement more and more deserve the reproach of the Angel of the Church of Laodicea: 'I know your works: you are neither hot nor cold: O if only you were hot or cold' (Revelation 3.15). A clear manifestation of such false union was the serving of the so-called Lima Liturgy..."

Then the Synod anathematised ecumenism, declaring: "To those who attack the Church of Christ by teaching that Christ's Church is divided into so-called 'branches' which differ in doctrine and way of life, or that the Church does not exist visibly, but will be formed in the future when all 'branches' or sects or denominations, and even religions will be united in one body; and who do not distinguish the priesthood and mysteries of the Church from those of the heretics, but say that the baptism and eucharist of heretics is effectual for salvation; therefore to those who have communion with these aforementioned heretics or advocate, disseminate, or defend their new heresy of Ecumenism under the pretext of brotherly love or the supposed unification of separated Christians, **Anathema**."⁸³⁵

The Anathema against Ecumenism was welcomed with joy by the True Orthodox not only in ROCOR, but also in Greece and on Mount Athos, and may be considered the single most important ecclesiastical act of the True Orthodox Church in the second half of the twentieth century. It and the 1918 anathema on communism and those who cooperate with it constitute the two pillars upon which Russian True Orthodoxy is founded in this period. For many who had been worried that ROCOR was not being firm and clear enough in her dealings with the ecumenists, it put an end to their doubts and reaffirmed their faith in her at a time when the Greek Old Calendarist Church was going through a very difficult period.

⁸³⁴ Metropolitan Gabriel, "Orthodox Reactions to the Aims of the World Council of Churches", *The New York Times*, August 16, 1983. Minor changes have been made in the wording of the article, which was obviously translated from the Greek by a non-native English speaker.

⁸³⁵ See "A Contemporary Patristic Document", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, November 14/27, 1983, p. 3; "Encyclical Letter of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 33, № 6, November-December, 1983, p. 13; Bishop Hilarion of Manhattan, "Answers to Questions Posed by the Faithful of the Orthodox Parish in Somerville, South Carolina", *Sunday of the Myrrhbearers*, 1992.

Some criticized the anathema for not spelling out precisely which bodies fell under it and were therefore outside the True Church – although many important anathemas in Church history have not mentioned names.⁸³⁶ Nevertheless, the implication of this anathema was clear: all Orthodox Churches that were fully participating members of the WCC fell under it.

As I.M. writes: “There is no heresy without heretics and their practical activity. The WCC in its declarations says: The Church confesses, the Church teaches, the Church does this, the Church does that. In this way the WCC witnesses that it does not recognize itself to be simply a council of churches, but the one church. And all who are members of the WCC are members of this one false church, this synagogue of Satan. And by this participation in the WCC all the local Orthodox churches fall under the ROCOR anathema of 1983 and fall away from the True Church. In their number is the Moscow Patriarchate...”⁸³⁷

However, ROCOR priest Alexander Lebedev attacked the validity of the anathema, calling the idea that the anathema strikes down all ecumenists “the heresy of universal jurisdiction”.

The present writer replied to Fr. Alexander: “... It seems to me that you confuse two things: the Church as an external organisation, and the Church as a mystical organism, to use the terminology of Hieromartyr Catacomb Bishop Mark (Novoselov) (+1938). It seems to me that you are right as regards the Church as an external organisation, but wrong as regards the Church as a mystical organism. Let me explain.

“An anathema excludes the person anathematized from the holy mysteries, from membership of the Holy Church. In the first place, of course, that applies to the local Church of which that person is a member. It applies to other Churches only to the extent that the leaders of those other Churches agree with the original anathema and “sign up to it”, as it were. Thus the heretic Arius was originally anathematized by the Bishop of Alexandria, which meant that he was excluded from receiving the sacraments throughout the Church of Alexandria. However, not all the bishops of neighbouring Churches agreed with this anathema, so Arius was able to receive communion in other Local Churches. To this extent the anathema was only of local significance. It required the convening of the First Ecumenical Council before Arius was anathematized “universally” - and even then, the anathema was not universally received, as the history of the Church in the next fifty years demonstrates.

“It is a different matter when we consider an anathema *sub specie aeternitatis*, in its mystical, super-terrestrial significance. From that point of view, the anathematization of a heretic begins in the heavens. Thus even before Arius had been

⁸³⁶ See “Epi Enos Anathematos” (On An Anathema), *Kirix Gnision Orthodoxon* (Herald of the True Orthodox Christians), February, 1984, pp. 47-56.

⁸³⁷ “Iskazhenie dogmata ‘O edinstve Tserkvi’ v ispovedaniakh very Sinodom i Soborom Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej” (Distortion of the Dogma ‘On the Unity of the Church’ in the Confessions of Faith of the Synod and Sobor of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) (MS).

"locally" anathematized by St. Alexander of Alexandria, the Lord appeared to his predecessor, St. Peter, with a torn cloak, and in answer to St. Peter's question: "O Creator, who has torn Thy tunic?", replied: "The mindless Arius; he has separated from Me people whom I had obtained with My Blood" (St. Demetrius of Rostov, *Lives of the Saints*, November 25). So not only Arius, but all those who followed him, had been separated from the Church by the anathema of Her First Bishop, the Lord Jesus Christ, years (or rather, aeons) before even the first "local" anathema had been uttered. All heresies and heretics are anathematized "from all eternity" by the eternal Lord, for just as every truth is approved by the Truth Himself from all eternity, so is every lie condemned by Him from all eternity, being condemned with "the father of lies" to the gehenna of fire (Revelation 22.15).

"The task of hierarchs on earth is to discern the decisions of the heavenly Church, and then apply these heavenly decisions on earth, in space and time. As St. Bede the Venerable (+735) writes: "The keys of the Kingdom designate the actual knowledge and power of discerning who are worthy to be received into the Kingdom, and who should be excluded from it as being unworthy" (Sermon on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, *P.L.* 94, col. 219). From this point of view, it matters not a jot whether a heretic is anathematized locally or universally, since he has already been anathematized by the heavenly Church. Or rather, it matters in this sense: that if the heretic has been anathematized locally, but this anathema is not accepted by the rest of the Church, then the rest of the Church is under the grave danger of falling under this same anathema. For the local anathema, if it is just, is the reflection of a heavenly anathema; and the anathema of the heavenly Church is universal....

"This explains why, when local Churches anathematized a heresy, they never qualified the anathema (as you, Fr. Alexander, would like to qualify ROCOR's anathema against ecumenism) by saying: "but of course, this applies only to the heretics in our local Church". On the contrary: history shows that local Churches freely anathematized heretics, not only in their own Churches, but also in others. Thus Nestorius, a heretic of the Church of Constantinople, was first condemned by a local Synod of the Church of Rome under St. Celestine; the Monothelite heretics were first condemned by a local Synod, again, of the Church of Rome; and the Papist heretics were first condemned by a local Synod of the Church of Constantinople.

"Consider what St. Maximus said of the Monothelites: "In addition to having excommunicated themselves from the Church, they have been deposed and deprived of the priesthood at the local council which took place recently in Rome. What Mysteries, then, can they perform? Or what spirit will descend upon those who are ordained by them?" Note that the saint says that the heretics have excommunicated themselves; for as the Apostle Paul writes, "he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3.11). But the heretics' self-condemnation and self-exclusion from the Church as a mystical organism must be followed by their exclusion from the Church as an external organization, lest others be infected with their heresy. Hence the need for councils of bishops to anathematize them, following the rule: "A heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (Titus 3.10), and: "If he refuses to listen to the Church, let him be unto you as a heathen and a publican" (Matthew 18.17). And clearly St. Maximus considered that the anathema of the local

Church of Rome had validity throughout the Ecumenical Church.

“Administrative matters and moral falls are the business of local Churches and councils. However, heresies of their very nature are of universal significance, having the potential to infect the whole Church. That is why the appearance of a heresy in one local Church is not the business only of that local Church, but of all the local Churches - and every local Church can and must anathematize it.

“Even the anathema of single bishopric has universal power and validity if it is uttered in the Holy Spirit, in accordance with the eternal Truth. Thus in 1069 the bishops of the metropolitanate of York, in the north of England, solemnly anathematized both the Pope of Rome and his stooge, William the conqueror, the first papist king of England. All the evidence is that they did not know that the Church of Constantinople had already anathematized Rome in 1054. So they were not simply confirming the word of a higher authority. They did not need a higher authority. They were successors of the apostles, with the power to bind and to loose. And they used that power, not for personal gain (on the contrary: they paid for their boldness with their lives), even against the most senior bishop in Christendom...

“In the same way, in 1983 the Sobor of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad, using the power to bind and to loose given them by the Bishop of bishops, the Lord Jesus Christ, translated onto earth, into space and time, the completely binding and universally applicable decision already arrived at from all eternity by the Council of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism is, was and always will be a heresy, indeed "the heresy of heresies", and the ecumenist heretics are, were and always will be outside the Church, the mystical Body of Christ. The decision of the ROCOR Sobor in 1983, confirmed with no change to its universal wording in 1998, expelled these already self-condemned and Divinely condemned heretics also from the external organization of the Church - and woe to any man, of whatever Church, who despises that decision, for he will then surely fall under the same anathema..."⁸³⁸

One ROCOR hierarch rejected the anathema - Archbishop Anthony of Geneva. Since 1974, as we have seen, he had been the leader of the faction opposing any hardening of ROCOR's attitude towards "World Orthodoxy". Now he ordered the Paris Mission of ROCOR, led by Archimandrite Ambroise Frontier, to concelebrate with new calendarists, and not with Old Calendarists, when in Greece - which caused the whole mission to leave ROCOR and join the Greek Old Calendarists. He was even accused of concelebrating with Roman Catholics.⁸³⁹ After the Paris mission left him,

⁸³⁸ V. Moss, "Re: [paradosis} The Heresy of Universal Jurisdiction", orthodoxtradition@egroups.com, October 12, 2000.

⁸³⁹ Thus Matushka Susanna Maklakov writes: "Although the majority of bishops in the Russian Synod [ROCOR] in the 80s were not in favor of ecumenism and ecumenistic policies (such as giving communion to RCs), Vladyka Anthony of Geneva persisted in this practice and practically ordered his priests to do so also. Fr. Andrew Maklakov was one of them. He of course got on the phone with Metropolitan Philaret and Bishop Gregory Grabbe, who assured him that this position was not correct and that he did not have to obey Archbishop Anthony. So Fr. Andrew defied AB Anthony of Geneva and refused to communicate RCs who asked for Holy Communion in the parishes that Fr.

Archbishop Anthony began to distribute epistles and “explanations” written by him with the aim of justifying the concelebrations with clergy of the “official churches” that were taking place in his diocese.⁸⁴⁰

Unfortunately, the ROCOR Synod was by now too weak to check his harmful influence... Metropolitan Philaret was the only hierarch willing and able to fight for the True Orthodox confession against Archbishop Anthony. However, he had very few allies in the Synod. Even a conservative such as Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) would

Andrew served in (which were Rome, Baden-Baden, Munich and Copenhagen). We were in Europe from April 1984 until June 1986. During that time, Fr. Andrew never communicated RCs and I am proud of him for his traditionalist Orthodox stance on that issue. Vladyka Anthony of Geneva is an ecumenist. Period. During that time, he was known to concelebrate with certain uniate groups in Rome, allowing seminarians and monastics on the kliros and into the altar freely. I know this firsthand and no one can convince me otherwise...” (personal communication to Fr. Daniel, November 9, 2005).

⁸⁴⁰ Thus on April 10, 1987 he wrote: “The Hierarchical Synod [of ROCOR] is obliged with sorrow to warn its flock and those pastors who make themselves out to be the only True Orthodox Christians that the path of arbitrary self-rule that they have embarked upon will lead them out of the Church and into a sect.

“... Alas, critics have also appeared in our diocese... They have demanded from us a reply to the question: do the clergy of the ‘Synodal’ Church concelebrate...with new calendarists and ecumenists? The aim of this question is to accuse us of the ‘sin’ of concelebration.

“...They were given the clear and definite reply that our Church has always had relations with, and continues to have relations with, the canonical Churches that have accepted the new calendar in the practice of the Divine services.

“Already in 1925, soon after the acceptance of the new calendar into ecclesiastical practice by five Orthodox Churches at the congress of 1925, the Romanian Church (one of the five) invited Metropolitan Anthony, the founder of our Church Abroad, to take part in the festivities of the enthronement of the Romanian Patriarch Miron [one of the main persecutors of True Orthodoxy in the 20th century!]

“... On September 27, 1961 our Hierarchical Synod addressed the Greek Old Calendarists in a letter... ‘Our Church keeps to the old calendar and considers the introduction of the new calendar to have been a great mistake. Nevertheless, her tactic was always to preserve spiritual communion with the Orthodox Churches who accepted the new calendar, insofar as they celebrate Pascha in agreement with the decision of the First Ecumenical Council.... We have never broken spiritual communion with the canonical Churches in which the new calendar was introduced.’...

“Our Hierarchical Councils and individual hierarchs have often repeated: the new calendar is not a heresy, but a great and crude mistake. On this basis, Metropolitan Philaret, on his frequent visits to France, has served Sunday Liturgies in the Romanian Church in Paris, praying with his new calendarist flock.

“Metropolitan Vitaly, faithful to his predecessors, writes in this year’s Christmas epistle [1986/87]: ‘At the given time the majority of local Churches have been shaken... by a double blow: the new calendar and ecumenism. However, even in their present wretched state, we do not dare, and God forbid that we should do this, to say that they have lost the Grace of God.’

“We permit clerics of the Orthodox Serbian Church to serve with us. Our metropolitans and bishops have done the same since they knew for certain that the Serbian Church, in the difficult conditions of the communist regime, has been able to preserve its inner freedom and, while being included officially in the ecumenical movement, has remained in essence outside it.

“... Archimandrite Justin [Popovich] often said with great firmness and wrote against ecumenism without separating from his patriarch [this is not true - Fr. Justin broke with the Serbian patriarch because of his ecumenism]. He had a huge influence on his flock, creating a whole movement of young monks who, in continuing his work, bring up young people in the spirit of Orthodoxy. It has been our lot to concelebrate with clergy of the Serbian Church very rarely, but each time we have done this with the joyful consciousness of our All-Orthodox unity...”

not go so far as him. As Bishop Gregory's daughter, Matushka Anastasia Shatilova, recalls: "[Metropolitan Philaret] had especially many quarrels with Archbishop Anthony of Geneva... mainly on ecumenist questions... with the Serbs, the Antiochians and all kinds... Unfortunately, Archbishop Anthony was distinguished for his very sharp character and wrote several very boorish letters, to which the Metropolitan replied a little sharply... Vladyka Gregory was distinguished by somewhat great diplomacy and was afraid that to speak in this way could create too great problems... [and] restrained the declarations of the Holy Hierarch Philaret concerning the lack of grace in the MP. For example, he used to say: '... tell 60 million Russian people that they are not chrismated, and have been baptized only according to the laymen's rite...' The Metropolitan was prepared to say this, but Vladyka Gregory thought that for the sake of Church construction it would be more correct not to put it so sharply..."⁸⁴¹

⁸⁴¹ Quoted by Fr. Roman Pavlov.

58. ROCOR AND THE CATACOMBS

For some years, the ROCOR Synod had continued to have contacts with Catacomb clergy, some of whom began to commemorate Metropolitan Philaret while others were actually received under his omophorion. Thus in 1977, after the death of their Catacomb archpastor, Archbishop Anthony (Galynsky-Mikhailovsky), fourteen clergy - Igumens Barsanuphius, Nicholas and Anthony, Hieromonks Michael, Michael, Raphael, Nicholas, Nicholas, Nathaniel, Epiphany, Basil, Prochorus and Sergius, and Priests Alexis and Michael - were received "at a distance" into ROCOR.⁸⁴²

The presence of a sizeable group of Catacomb clergy under the omophorion of ROCOR naturally led to the raising of the question of the consecration of a bishop for the Catacomb Church. Vitaly Shumilo writes: "The question of the reestablishment of the episcopate of the Catacomb Church was raised at the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR [in 1981]. It was decided secretly to tonsure and ordain to the episcopate a clergyman of the West European diocese whose sister lived in the USSR [Hieromonk Barnabas (Prokofiev)], thanks to which he could more easily obtain a visa. The Council entrusted this secretly ordained bishop to secretly ordain Fr. Lazarus to the episcopate in order that he should lead the catacomb clergy and their communities."⁸⁴³

According to Matushka Anastasia Shatilova, the daughter of Bishop Gregory Grabbe, the decision was made by Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Vitaly and Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, and she, as being the person who printed the documents, was the only other person who knew about it.⁸⁴⁴ In the next year, 1982, Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Mark of Berlin consecrated Hieromonk Barnabas as Bishop of Cannes.⁸⁴⁵ He then travelled secretly to Moscow and ordained Fr. Lazarus

⁸⁴² Metropolitan Epiphany (Kaminsky), personal communication, May, 1995. The text of the resolution of the ROCOR Synod was as follows: "There were discussions on the question of the fourteen clerics accepted into communion of prayer from the Catacomb Church who submitted their petitions to the Hierarchical Synod through Archimandrite Misael of the monastery of St. Panteleimon on the Holy Mountain, which were received on November 26 / December 7, 1977. At that time the Hierarchical Synod of the ROCOR in its session of November 26 / December 7, 1977 accepted the following resolution:

"Trusting the witness of the fourteen priests that their reposed leader, Archbishop Anthony (Galynsky) was correctly ordained to the episcopate, and carried out his service secretly from the civil authorities, it has been decided to accept them into communion of prayer, having informed them that they can carry out all those sacred actions which priests can carry out according to the Church canons, and also giving the monastic clerics the right to carry out monastic tonsures. They are to be informed of this in the same way as their address was received."

⁸⁴³ Shumilo, "Kratkaia Spravka o Istorii RIPTs" (A Short Note on the History of the Russian True Orthodox Church), 2008. "Godovschina vosstanovlenia apostol'skoj preemstvennosti v Russkoj Katakombnoj Istinno-Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi" (The Anniversary of the Restoration of Apostolic Succession in the Russian Catacomb True Orthodox Church), http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=677.

⁸⁴⁴ Shatilova, as quoted by Fr. Roman Pavlov.

⁸⁴⁵ The official ROCOR account was published on August 1/14, 1990: "In 1982 his Eminence Anthony, Archbishop of Geneva and Western Europe, together with his Eminence Mark, Bishop of Berlin and Germany, on the orders of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church

as Bishop of Tambov in his flat on May 10.⁸⁴⁶

In May, 1990, when Lazarus was able to travel to New York, cheirothesia was performed on him by ROCOR bishops in order to correct the irregularities in his previous ordinations.

“After Vladyka Lazarus’ secret ordination,” writes Shumilo, “many catacomb communities of the TOC in the Kuban, Ukraine, in the Central Black Earth region of Russia, the Northern Caucasus, Belorussia, Siberia, Kazakhstan, Bashkiria and other regions, united around him.

“From the moment of the reestablishment of a canonical hierarchy in the Catacomb Church in the Homeland there began its gradual regeneration and building up. The secret Bishop Lazarus in a self-sacrificing way, in spite of the great risk for his own life, tirelessly went round the catacomb communities of the TOC scattered throughout the whole boundless expanse of Holy Russia, which had been turned by the God-fighters into the atheist USSR, serving secretly at night, preaching, confessing, communing and ordaining new catacomb priests. In the period from 1982 to 1990 alone Bishop Lazarus ordained about 20 new catacomb clergy for the TOC. Many catacomb priests who accepted ordination from the uncanonical catacomb hierarchies of the ‘Sekachites’ and the ‘Alfeyevites’ were united to him through correction of their ordinations.”⁸⁴⁷

Abroad, secretly performed an Episcopal ordination on Hieromonk Barnabas (Prokofiev), so that through the cooperation of these archpastors the Church life of the Catacomb Orthodox Church in Russia might be regulated. Since external circumstances no longer compel either his Eminence Bishop Lazarus in Russia, or his Eminence Bishop Barnabas in France to remain as secret Hierarchs of our Russian Church Abroad, the Hierarchical Synod is now officially declaring this fact.” (“Zaiavlenie Arkhιεrejskago Sinoda Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej” (Declaration of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 18 (1423), September 15/28, 1990, p. 16.

The ordination papers were signed by Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Vitaly, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva and Bishop Gregory Grabbe (letter to the present writer from Matushka Anastasia Shatilova, October 3, 2000).

⁸⁴⁶ “In a Gramota of the ROCOR Synod dated May 3/16, 1990 the following was said about this: ‘Archimandrite Lazarus (Zhurbenko) is elected by the Russian Orthodox Church that is in the Catacombs and is confirmed and established as bishop of the God-saved city of Tambov by the Sacred Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in accordance with the rite of the Holy Apostolic Eastern Church, with the aid of the all-accomplishing and all-holy Spirit, in the year of the incarnation of God the Word 1982, on the 27th day of April, in the city of Moscow, being ordained by hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad by order of the Hierarchical Council of 1981. The ordination of his Grace Lazarus took place in the special circumstances elicited by the difficulties of the present time, which is why the ordination was carried out in secret.’

“In another Synodal document, no. II/35/R, it was confirmed: ‘Bishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko) has been ordained by order of the Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad as BISHOP for the regeneration and leadership of the Church in Russia.’ (Shumilo, op. cit.)

“Also, in the witness dated September 22 / October 5, 1989 signed by the First Deputy of the First-Hierarch of ROCOR it says: ‘His Grace Bishop Lazarus has been canonically ordained by the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and is appointed to serve the Orthodox Christians of the Russian Church Catacombs.’

⁸⁴⁷ Shumilo, “Kratkaia Spravka”, op. cit.

V. FALSE DAWN (1991-2000)

59. LIBERATION OR DECEPTION?

In November, 1981 a very important ecclesiastical act took place in New York: the canonization of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia, headed by Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II. News of this event seeped into the Soviet Union, and ROCOR's icon and service to the new martyrs became more and more widely used even among members of the MP. It was these prayers to the holy new martyrs, more than the support of the Pope for anti-communists in Poland, or any other political actors, that was the real catalyst for glasnost' and perestroika, and hence the fall of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a whole.

On November 8/21, 1985 Metropolitan Philaret died in unclear circumstances. Some say that he died a natural death from cancer; others – that he was poisoned. In the first ROCOR Council that took place after his death Archbishop Vitaly was elected metropolitan (he had polled an equal number of votes with Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, but was then elected by lot). The last elders of ROCOR, Fathers Ignaty of Hebron and Nektary of Jerusalem, prophesied the end of ROCOR...

The new metropolitan proceeded to remove the highly experienced and zealous Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) as Secretary of the Synod (although Archbishop Seraphim of Chicago protested strongly); Bishop Lavr became his replacement, with Bishop Hilarion as his deputy (both leading apostates to the MP in 2007). The head of the Orthodox Palestinian Society, Bishop Gregory's son, Archimandrite Anthony Grabbe, was removed from this post just as the Orthodox Palestine Society was about to launch a court case against the Soviet government, in which, it was thought, the Society was likely to win a hundred million dollars. A veritable revolution was taking place in the leadership of ROCOR – in favour of those who wanted the union of ROCOR with the Moscow Patriarchate, falsely assuming that glasnost' and perestroika portended the return of the Russian people to the truth...⁸⁴⁸

The effects were soon being felt in the administration of the Church. Bishop Gregory himself, writing to Metropolitan Vitaly in 1994, wrote: "For a very long time now in fact, since the first days of your leadership of our Church Abroad I have with great anxiety and turmoil of heart been tracing how quickly she has begun to slide into the abyss of administrative disorder and canonical chaos... Our woes began with the first Hierarchical Council to take place after the death of Metropolitan Philaret... On the disorganisation of our Chancellery I can judge from a series of signs. Thus I was sent from Russia copies of your letters to Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine. First, I very soon managed to find out that these documents were unknown to both Secretaries of the Synod, to whom I handed over these copies. Moreover, the very subject of these letters, by the delicacy of their content, demanded their presentation by you for discussion in the Hierarchical Synod. But it turned out that the letters were not only dispatched without the knowledge of the Secretaries, but also had a whole series of other defects which quite clearly demonstrated the

⁸⁴⁸ George Soldatov, "Razboijnichij Sobor RPZTs" (ROCOR's Robber Council), *Vernost'-Fidelity*, N 178, September 8, 2012.

bankruptcy of your personal Chancellery. Although Russian notepaper was available, the letters to Russia were sent on English notepaper; they not only had no numbers, but even no dates. In the letter to Archbishop Lazarus there was no indication of whom it was being sent to, while Bishop Valentine's title was incomplete. Finally, the very text of the letters was by no means brilliant grammatically and stylistically. Moreover, it also emerged (which is especially terrible) that at the bottom of both letters was not your signature in your own hand, but a facsimile! The Synodal House has ceased to exist as the centre of our administration. The sessions of the Synods and Councils were usually arranged in any place, only not in the Synodal House. Besides, you are rarely in New York, Vladyka Hilarion is often away, and the Chancellery in his absence does not function in our former centre there is often not a single responsible person capable of giving correct information, or of understanding what to do with information received from outside. Often the responsible person turns out to be the telephonist on duty at the time. There have been many complaints against your secretary...

"For all the years of the existence of the Church Abroad we have enjoyed respect and glory for nothing else than for our uncompromising faithfulness to the canons. They hated us, but they did not dare not to respect us. But now we have shown the whole Orthodox world that the canons are for us just an empty sound and we have become a laughing-stock in the eyes of all those who have any kind of relationship to Church questions. Look: you yourself, at the Council in Lesna, permitted yourself to say that for us, the participants in it, this was not now the time to examine canons, but we had to act quickly. You, holding the tiller of the ecclesiastical ship, triumphantly, in front of the whole Council, declared to us that now we had to hasten to sail without a rudder and without sails. At that time your words appalled me, but I, knowing of your irritation towards me because I insist that we have to live in accordance with the canons, still hoped that all was not lost and that our Bishops would somehow shake off the whole nightmare of these last years.

"Think, Vladyko, of the tens of thousands of Orthodox people we have deceived both abroad and in Russia. Don't calm yourself with the thought that if there is some guilt somewhere, then it lies equally on all our hierarchs. The main guilt will lie on you, as the leader of our Council. I have had to hear from some Bishops that sometimes the Synod decrees one thing, and then you, taking no account of previous resolutions, on your own initiative either change them or simply rescind them. And look now, as has already become quite well known, after the stormy March session of the Synod, it dispersed without making a single resolution. During it the question was discussed of banning the Russian Hierarchs from serving. Nevertheless, you demanded that the Secretariat that it send of an ukaz banning bishops who were not even under investigation. Both from the point of view of the 34th Apostolic canon, and from an ecclesiastical-administrative point of view, this is unprecedented lawlessness. Remember, Vladyko, your reproachful speech against Metropolitan Philaret, when in 1985 you for ten minutes non-stop fulminated against him for transgressing the 34th Apostolic canon. The crimes of Metropolitan Philaret seem to me to be miniscule by comparison with what is happening now."⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁹ Grabbe, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Moscow.

The transition from the leadership of St. Philaret to that of Metropolitan Vitaly in 1986 did indeed create a revolution in ROCOR.⁸⁵⁰ From 1986 a “purge of the cadres” began (which continued after 1994 and again after 2000), as leading opponents of the union with Moscow were removed and replaced by pro-Moscow ecumenists. The leaders of the pro-Moscow clique were Bishops Mark, Lavr and Hilarion.

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Back in the Homeland, believers attached great hope to the date of the millennium of the Baptism of Rus’ in 988, as if that would bring about a resurrection of Orthodoxy. However, in 1987, in relation to that event, Gorbachev’s chief ideologist, Alexander Yakovlev, said: “To God what is God’s, to the Church what is the Church’s, but to us, the Marxists, belongs the fullness of truth. And on the basis of these positions any attempts to represent Christianity as the ‘mother’ of Russian culture must be decisively rejected. And if the Russian Middle Ages merit the attention of historians, such cannot be said of the 1000-year date of Orthodoxy.”⁸⁵¹

However, Gorbachev’s need to pass from what Sir Geoffrey Hosking called “Mark 1” to “Mark 2” perestroika, dictated a change in policy towards the Church, too.⁸⁵² For the success of perestroika required the upholders of the new, more liberal order to include members of the Church, not just party hacks. The problem was: how could there be sincere Christians in the Soviet church as it had been created by Stalin and his successors?

In March, 1988 Constantine Mikhailovich Kharchev, the head of the Council for Religious Affairs, told representatives of the higher party school in Moscow: “We attained our greatest success in controlling religion and suppressing its initiative amidst the priests and bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church. At first this gave us joy, but now it threatens to bring unforeseen consequences in its train... Now a priest often has no connection with his parish, but he is born somewhere else, and is often even of a different nationality. He comes once a week to the parish in a car, serves the liturgy... and wants to know nothing more. Many even like this, after all they are not responsible for anything: neither for their flock, nor for the money, nor for the repair of the church. The official in giving him his licence warns him: take your 350 roubles, and don’t poke your nose into anything...”

“We, the party, have fallen into a trap of our own anti-ecclesiastical politics of bans and limitations, we have cut the pope off from the believers, but the believers have not begun as a result to trust the local organs more, while the party and the state is

⁸⁵⁰ Fr. Alexander Pavpertov writes: “Soon after his enthronement, having summoned Fr. Vladimir Shishkov on a certain matter, when the conversation touched his father-in-law [Bishop Gregory], [Metropolitan Vitaly] became enraged and said the following: ‘Your Philarets and Gregorys have destroyed the Church Abroad! But the Lord has brought me in to save it!’” (Facebook, March 20, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/portalcredo/permalink/929194507196718>)

⁸⁵¹ Yakovlev, *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR* (Herald of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR), 1987, № 6, p. 6.

⁸⁵² Hosking, *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*, London: Mandarin Paperbacks, 1991, p. 120.

increasingly losing control over the believers. And in addition, as a consequence, we witness the appearance of unspiritual believers, that is, those who carry out the ritual side [of Church life] and are indifferent to everything. And the main thing – are indifferent to communism... It is easier for the party to make a sincere believer into a believer also in communism. The task before us is: the education of a new type of priest; the selection and placing of a priest is the party's business."⁸⁵³

The critical point came in April, 1988, when Gorbachev met the patriarch and the senior metropolitans of the MP and staked out a new Church-State concordat reminiscent of the one between Stalin and Sergius in 1943. This concordat, combined with the underlying growth in religious feeling that had now been going on for several years, and the recovery of courage made easier by *glasnost'*, made the millennial celebrations in June a truly pivotal event. Moreover, the very wide publicity given to the celebrations in the media gave a powerful further impulse to the movement of religious regeneration.

The fruits were soon evident for all to see. Most religious and political prisoners were freed; permission was given for the reopening of many hundreds of churches (1,830 in the first nine months of 1990); and religious societies and cooperatives of almost all denominations sprang up all over the country. Programmes on Orthodox art and architecture, and sermons by bearded clergy in cassocks, became commonplace on state-run television; and commentators from right across the political spectrum began to praise the contribution of the Orthodox Church to Russian history and culture. There was openness, too, on the terrible cost to Russia of Leninism and Stalinism – one estimate, by the scientist D.I. Mendeleev, calculated that there had been 125 million innocent victims of the communist yoke.⁸⁵⁴

All this was necessary condition of repentance – but repentance on a large scale did not take place. Moreover, there were negative aspects to this process. The Catacomb True Orthodox Church remained outlawed; resistance to the opening of churches by local officials continued in the provinces; and religious activists objected to the adulterous mixing of religion and nationalism, and religion and humanist culture.⁸⁵⁵ The suspicion remained that the party's new-found respect for religion was simply a tactical ploy, a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. Such scepticism had some basis in reality. After all, no leading communist announced his conversion to Christianity.

Moreover, in April, 1988, the month in which Gorbachev met the patriarch, an unsigned article in *Kommunist* hinted that the real aim of Gorbachev's rapprochement

⁸⁵³ Kharchev, *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), May 20, 1988, № 3725. See also Bishop Valentine of Suzdal, "Put' nechestivyykh pogibnet" (The Way of the Impious Will Perish), *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 96-97.

⁸⁵⁴ Mendeleev, in I.F. Okhotin, "Velichie i blagodenstvie Rossii v Tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia II podtverzhdennoe v tsifrakh i faktakh" (The Greatness and Prosperity of Russia in the Reign of Emperor Nicholas II Confirmed in Figures and Facts), *Imperskij Vestnik* (Imperial Herald), October, 1989, № 8, p. 12.

⁸⁵⁵ Gleb Anishchenko, "Vrata ada" (The Gates of Hell), *Posev* (Sowing), № 3 (1395), May-June, 1990, p. 135.

with the Church was to communize the Church rather than Christianize the party.

And yet, if that was the party's aim, it must be judged to have backfired. For unlike the concordat of 1943, which did indeed have the effect of communising the Church, the concordat of 1988 seems to have helped to free Orthodox Christians from bondage to Communist ideology and coercion. For if the Church hierarchs continued to pay lip-service to "Leninist norms", this was emphatically not the case with many priests and laity, of whom Fr. Gleb Yakunin (liberated in 1987) was probably the most influential and best known.

This was most strikingly evident in March, 1990, when the elections returned 300 clerics of various faiths as deputies at various levels, including 190 Russian Orthodox, while the Communist Party candidates in the major cities were routed. In April, the Christian Democratic Movement, led by RSFSR deputies Fr. Gleb Yakunin, Fr. Vyacheslav Polosin and philosopher Victor Aksyuchits, held its founding congress. Then, on May 19, the birthday of Tsar Nicholas II, the Orthodox Monarchist Order met in Moscow, and called for the restoration of Grand-Duke Vladimir Kirillovich Romanov to the throne of all the Russias. Grand-Duke Vladimir was a member of ROCOR, so his recognition by the monarchists inside Russia would have meant an enormous increase in prestige for ROCOR at the expense of the patriarchate. However, the Grand-Duke spared the patriarchate this embarrassment by apostasizing to the patriarchate and then dying outside the True Church in November, 1991, just before the fall of the Soviet Union.⁸⁵⁶ It was a bad sign: if this was liberation, it was a superficial one, not the return of spiritual freedom, of Holy Rus'...

As communism began to collapse, rebellions broke out in the outlying republics. The most important of these was in the Western Ukraine, where the MP recruited many of its clergy. The MP's spiritual impotence was illustrated above all by its almost complete surrender of its western borderlands to the movement for Ukrainian ecclesiastical autocephaly. As we have seen, this movement began at the council of Lvov in 1946, when Stalin integrated the Uniates or Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), who are Catholic by faith, but Orthodox in ritual, into the MP, and forced those Uniates who did not want to become Orthodox to go underground. When Gorbachev came to power, the Uniates began agitating for the legalization of their Church.

They were supported, surprisingly, by the chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, Constantine Kharchev, who insisted that local authorities keep the law in their dealings with believers and suggested the legalization of the Uniates and the free election of bishops. This roused the MP and members of the Ideology department

⁸⁵⁶ Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, "Velikij Knyaz' Vladimir Kirillovich i ego poseschenie SSSR" (Great Prince Vladimir Kirillovich and his Visit to the USSR), *Pravoslavnij Vestnik* (Orthodox Herald), №№ 60-61, January-February, 1993. There are sharp differences of opinion on whether Grand Duke Vladimir Kirillovich was the true heir to the Russian throne. For the argument in favour, see Archpriest Lev Lebedev, "Kogo i chego nam nuzhno berech'sa?", *Dal'nevostochnij Monarkhicheskij Vestnik*, № 18, 2006, pp. 1-3. And for the argument against, see Mikhail Nazarov, *Kto Naslednik Rossijskogo Prestola?* (Who is the Heir of the Russian Throne?), Moscow, 1996.

of the Central Committee to complain about Kharchev to the Supreme Soviet. Kharchev was removed in June, 1989; but he made a telling comment about those who had removed him: "I suspect that some members of the Synod, from force of habit, have counted more on the support of the authorities than on their own authority in the Church."⁸⁵⁷

The UGCC finally achieved legalization in January, 1990, just after Gorbachev met the Pope in Rome. This represented the second major diplomatic triumph of the Vatican in the communist bloc (after the legalization of *Solidarnost'* in Poland) and the beginning of the re-establishment of Catholic power in Russia. However, even before they had recovered their freedom in law, the Uniates started taking over churches in Western Ukraine which they considered to be theirs by right. By December, 1991, 2167 nominally Orthodox parishes had joined the Uniates. Deprived of the help of the local authorities, who showed every sign of being on the side of the uniates, and discredited by its associations with communism, the MP seemed helpless to stop the rot.⁸⁵⁸ In October, 1989, a retired patriarchal bishop, Ioann Bondarchuk, announced the creation of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC). He was immediately placed under ban by the patriarchate. However, the patriarchate decided to make some concessions to Ukrainian nationalist feeling by creating, in January, 1990, a supposedly autonomous but pro-Moscow Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC-MP), led by Metropolitan Philaret (Denisenko) of Kiev. Later, Philaret was defrocked and anathematised by the MP, so he formed a third independent Orthodox Church in the Ukraine – the so-called "Kievan Patriarchate" (UOAC-KP).

Meanwhile, relations between the Orthodox and Catholics continued to deteriorate; and in March the Uniates withdrew from quadripartite discussions between Roman Catholics, Uniates, Russian Orthodox and the UOC-MP.

Then, in June, the UAOC convened its first All-Ukrainian Council in Kiev, at which Mstyslav (Skrypnyk), who had been the leader of the Ukrainian autocephalists in the USA, was enthroned as the first patriarch in Ukrainian history. The UAOC received a further significant boost after the Ukraine achieved independence at the end of 1991. In general the Russian Orthodox were opposed to the separation of Russia from Ukraine, regarding the Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians as essentially three parts of one Slavic race who should keep together on the basis of their closely related religion, culture and history. However, this was not the view of most Ukrainian believers – or, at any rate, of those living in the western regions where Catholic influence was strongest. "The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church," said Anatolius Krasikov, "is the expression of the resolute will of the Ukrainian people to finally liberate itself from the imperial [Russian] Orthodox Church which is an instrument of spiritual oppression against the Ukrainian people, aiming at its complete russification and enslavement."⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵⁷ *Ogonek* (Little Fire), № 44, October, 1989. Cf. *Keston News Service*, № 339, 30 November, 1989, pp. 16-18; № 341, 11 January, 1990, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁵⁸ One reason was that for years the MP had been teaching its seminarians, many of whom came from the Western Ukraine, that the Orthodox and the Catholics were "sister churches". 60% of those who joined the uniates graduated from Leningrad theological schools.

⁸⁵⁹ "The Exarch vs. the Patriarch", *Novoe Vremia* (New Times), № 26, July, 1992, p. 13; in Karen

Contrary to the hopes and expectations of many, the MP remained devoted to the ideology of the failing Soviet regime to the very last minute. And yet even the patriarchate began to show signs of change under the influence of *glasnost'*. The first sign was at the church council in June, 1988, when the 1961 statute making priests subordinate to their parish councils was repealed. Then came the canonisation of Patriarch Tikhon in October, 1989. And then, on April 3, 1990 the Synod issued a declaration in which it (i) declared its neutrality with regard to different political systems and ideologies, (ii) admitted the existence of persecutions and pressures on the Church in the past, and (iii) tacitly admitted the justice of some of the criticism directed against it by the dissidents.⁸⁶⁰ Finally, in May, Metropolitan Vladimir of Rostov, the head of a commission formed to gather material on priests and believers who had been persecuted, said that "up to now, the details of the repression of the Russian Orthodox Church have been ignored or falsified by official, state and even numerous Church figures in order to meet the accepted ideological stereotypes."⁸⁶¹

The climax to this process was reached in June, when the polls revealed that the Church had now passed the Party, the Army and the KGB in popularity.⁸⁶² Could this be the beginning of the end of sergianism? Was this the moment when the MP, freed at last from the yoke of communism, and under no obligation to pursue the communist-imposed policy of ecumenism, would finally repent of its past and return to the True Church?...

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The apparent fall of communism throughout most of the Soviet bloc in 1989-91 raised hopes of a restoration of True Orthodoxy in Russia, which, if they seem naïve in retrospect, were nevertheless very real at the time. In retrospect, we can see that the changes introduced by *glasnost'* and *perestroika* were less fundamental than at first appeared, and that the spirit and power of communism was far from dead when the red flag was pulled down from over the Kremlin on December 25, 1991. If some of the economic ideas of the revolution were discredited, its fundamental concepts – the replacement of the Church by the State, God by the people, Tradition by science, Spirit by matter – remained as firmly entrenched as ever.

Nevertheless, the changes were significant enough to indicate the beginning of a new era. If we seek for historical parallels, then perhaps the closest is that presented by the Edict of Milan in 313, when the Emperor St. Constantine the Great came to an agreement with the pagan emperor Licinius whereby the persecution of the Christians in the Roman empire was brought to an end. The problem for the Christians of the 1990s was: no Constantine was in sight, and what leadership there was squandered the opportunities presented to it.

Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, *Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 96.

⁸⁶⁰ *Moskovskij Tserkovnij Vestnik* (Moscow Ecclesiastical Herald), № 9 (27), April, 1990, pp. 1, 3.

⁸⁶¹ Oxana Antic, "The Russian Orthodox Church moves towards coming to terms with its past", *Report on the USSR*, March 8, 1991.

⁸⁶² *Moscow News*, June 3-10, 10-17, 1990.

Russian Orthodox Christians reacted to these changes in three different ways. The True Orthodox Christians of the Catacomb Church were cautious, fearing a deception. They were not convinced that the leopard had not changed its spots (Jeremiah 13.23), believing that the communists had merely assumed the mask of “democrats”, the wolves had simply put on sheep’s clothing while remaining inwardly as ravenous as before (Matthew 7.15). In general, therefore, they remained in the underground, not seeking to register their communities or acquire above-ground churches in which to worship. Outside Russia, on the other hand, most believers were displaying signs of “war weariness”; they wanted to believe that the Soviet Union had miraculously changed into a normal State overnight, that the KGB had disappeared, that the communists had repented, that the Moscow Patriarchate had been transformed from an adulteress into a pure virgin...

Meanwhile, the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) – or “Soviet church”, as it was known among True Orthodox Christians – was fearful that its monopoly position in church life under the Soviets would be lost in the new democracy. Nevertheless, it took the opportunity presented by the new legislation to receive all the money budgeted for church restoration by the Russian parliament and open many churches (1830 were opened in the first nine months of 1990 alone). The third force in Russian Orthodox life, ROCOR, which throughout the Soviet period had taken a public position against the MP and in support of the True Orthodox Church, decided to open parishes on Russian soil and thereby provide an alternative for believers who on the one hand did not want to join the MP, but on the other hand were not prepared for the rigours of catacomb life.

However, the first question that had to be answered by all sides was: how were the political changes to be evaluated? Was the collective Antichrist really dead? If so, then had the end times, paradoxically, come to an end? Or was this only a temporary “breathing space” in which the Antichrist was preparing a new, subtler, and more deadly onslaught?

There were certainly important benefits to be gained from democratization. Thus the fall of communism came not a moment too soon for the beleaguered Catacomb Church, which was scattered and divided and desperately short of bishops and priests of unquestioned Orthodoxy and apostolic succession. The fall of the iron curtain enabled ROCOR to enter Russia and regenerate the hierarchy of the True Church.

Again, the introduction of freedom of speech and the press enabled millions of Soviet citizens to learn the truth about their state and church for the first time. On the basis of this knowledge, they could now seek entrance into the True Church without the fear of being sent to prison or the camps. In the wave of disillusion with post-Soviet democracy that followed in the mid-1990s, it was pointed out – rightly – that freedom is a two-edged weapon, which can destroy as well as give life, and that “freedom” had brought Russia poverty and crime as well as interesting newspapers. However, for the soul thirsting for truth there is no more precious gift than the freedom to seek and find; and that opportunity was now, at last, presented to the

masses.

On the other hand, only a minority of Russians used this freedom to seek the truth that makes one truly, spiritually free. And so if the fall of communism in 1989-91 was a liberation, it was a liberation strangely lacking in joy. Orthodoxy was restored neither to the state nor to the official church, and the masses of the people remained unconverted. Ten years later, a priest of the MP could claim that “the regeneration of ecclesiastical life has become a clear manifestation of the miraculous transfiguration of Russia”.⁸⁶³ But behind the newly gilded cupolas reigned heresy and corruption on a frightening scale.

Thus Fr. Paul Adelheim, an MP priest who was killed in mysterious circumstances in the early 2000s, wrote: “Spiritual life is being destroyed and annihilated – moreover, it is being annihilated deliberately, of course, by the Moscow Patriarchate itself. It is destroying what it is possible to destroy in the Church... Our faith in the Church has been substituted by ideology. The Church has taken the place of the former Politburo of the USSR. That is what they call it now. They say that Russia is headed by chekists [KGB agents] and churchmen. It turns out in fact that there is no place in this Church for Christ.”

Moreover, surveys showed that although the numbers of those confessing themselves to be Orthodox Christians had risen⁸⁶⁴, the correctness and depth of belief of these new Christians was open to question⁸⁶⁵... More people called themselves “Orthodox” than confessed to believing in God! As time passed, the corrupting and divisive effects of Russian “democracy” became more and more evident. Pornography and crime of all kinds increased dramatically; and in the opinion of many it was now more difficult to bring up children in true Christian piety than it had been in the Soviet period. The general level of culture also declined; and the freedom given to religion turned out to be more to the advantage of all kinds of sects and false religions than to True Orthodoxy... In fact, it was not so much a real religious renaissance as what Bishop Theophan the Recluse had prophesied over a century before: “Although the Christian name will be heard everywhere, and everywhere will be visible churches and ecclesiastical ceremonies, all this will be just appearances, and within there will be true apostasy. On this soil the Antichrist will be born...”⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶³ Fr. Andrej Rumyantsev, “Kesariu – Kesarevo” (To Caesar what is Caesar’s), *Vecherniaia Moskva* (Evening Moscow), 21 September, 2000, p. 1.

⁸⁶⁴ However, according to Vladimir Rozanskij (“Rome and Moscow: a willing separation?” *Asia News*, 3 June, 2004), the “Moscow’ authorities confirmed that ‘for Easter [2004] less than 1% of the population attended any kind of religious service’. In the last ten years, there are twenty times more churches than there were under communism, with buildings being built or reopened. Yet in relation to the immediate post-communism years, only one third of people now attend the services”.

⁸⁶⁵ Kimmo Kaariainen, *Religion in Russia after the Collapse of Communism*, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998; Tatiana Senina, “Ty nosish’ imia, budto zhiv, no ty mertv” (You have the name of being alive, but you are dead), *Vertograd-Inform*, September-October, 2000, pp. 46-72.

⁸⁶⁶ Bishop Theophan, *Tolkovanie na Vtoroe Poslanie sv. Apostola Pavla k Soluniam* (Interpretation of the Second Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians), 2.3-5.

Of course, “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8.28). And however dispiriting the 1990s were, they did enable important lessons to be learned for those who wanted to learn them. Among the most important of these was the realization that “communism” and “democracy” were not simple opposites, the one evil and the other good. As long as Russians denounced communism but praised democracy, without seeing the close historical and philosophical kinship between these two western heresies, it was impossible for them to understand the real roots of the revolution and therefore return to True Orthodoxy. But already early in the 1990s Orthodox Russians were beginning to see the evil and antichristian nature, not only of the October Bolshevik, but also of the February Democratic revolution...

That the return of democracy would not bring with it a real cleansing of political life became evident when it none of the communist persecutors of the previous seventy years throughout Eastern Europe were brought to trial for their crimes. Consequently, one group of “repentant” communists, sensing the signs of the political times, seized power in 1991 in a “democratic” coup and immediately formed such close and dependent ties with its western allies that the formerly advanced (if inefficient) economy of Russia was transformed into a scrap-heap of obsolescent factories, on the one hand, and a source of cheap raw materials for the West, on the other.⁸⁶⁷ Another group, playing on the sense of betrayal felt by many, formed a nationalist opposition – but an opposition characterized by hatred, envy and negativism rather than a constructive understanding of the nation’s real spiritual needs and identity. Still others, using the contacts and dollars acquired in their communist days, went into “business” – that is, a mixture of crime, extortion and the worst practices of capitalism.

It is little wonder that in many churches the prayer to be delivered “from the bitter torment of atheist rule” continued to be chanted...

In the midst of this anarchy filled with crime and false religion, many began to long nostalgically for the “order” of the Soviet period, considering that the cheapness of Soviet sausages outweighed the destruction of tens of millions of souls through Soviet violence and atheist propaganda. Like the children of Israel who became disillusioned with the rigorous freedom of the desert, they began to long once more for the fleshpots of Egypt, for the slavery which had nevertheless guaranteed them a certain standard of living and to which they had become accustomed. But unlike the Israelites, the wanderers in the desert of post-Soviet Russia had no Moses to urge them ever onwards to the Promised Land.

True, they felt the need for such a leader; and if many still longed for the return of a Stalin, there were others who preferred the image of Tsar Nicholas II, whose increasing veneration among the people (if not among the hierarchs) was one of the most encouraging phenomena of the 1990s. But veneration for the pre-revolutionary tsars was not going to bring about the appearance of a post-revolutionary tsar unless that veneration was combined with *repentance*. Few understood that the people had to become worthy of such a tsar by a return to the True Church and a life based on

⁸⁶⁷ Mikhail Nazarov, *Tajna Rossii* (The Mystery of Russia), Moscow: “Russkaia Idea”, 1999.

the commandments of God. Otherwise, if they continued to worship the golden calf, the new Moses, if such a one appeared, would break the tablets of the new law before their eyes. And if they continued to follow the new Dathans and Abirams of the heretical MP, then under their feet, too, the earth would open up – or they would be condemned to wander another forty years in the desert...

60. MASONRY AND ECUMANIA

There were three major fruits of the fall of communism in the religious sphere – two good and one bad. The first good fruit was an increase of knowledge now that censorship had been removed. However, it must be remembered that knowledge is good only if it is broad and deep; otherwise Alexander Pope’s aphorism is applicable: “A little knowledge is a dangerous thing”. The second major good fruit was the entrance into Russia of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), which brought ordinary Russians the opportunity of receiving the truth faith and true sacraments without fear of repression for the first time in many decades. But the third consequence was undoubtedly evil: the return of Freemasonry to Russia.

Masonry had been banned at the Fourth Communist International in Moscow in 1922. This had the good effect of sheltering Russia from Ecumenism and the World Council of Churches – until the communists, for purely political reasons became ecumenists at the end of the 1950s, pushing the Moscow Patriarchate into the World Council of Churches in 1961. Then, thirty years later, almost immediately after the Fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Masons made a comeback to the country from which they had been so rudely ejected in 1922.

Thus the Masonic historian Richard Rhoda writes: “This writer has been advised in a letter of April 22, 1996 of the following by George Dergachev, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Russia. On January 14, 1992, the first regular Lodge ‘Harmony’ was constituted in Moscow by the Grand Lodge Nationale Française. This lodge now has 41 members.

“September 8, 1993 will be a memorable day in Russian Freemasonry, for three more lodges were constituted by the Grand Lodge Nationale Française: Lotus No. 2 in Moscow with 36 current members; New Astrea No. 3 in St. Petersburg with 19 current members; and Gamaïoun No. 4 in Voronezh with 13 current members...

“M.W. Bro. Dergachev writes: ‘Most of the Brothers have graduated from the Universities. Among them there are scientists, journalists, businessmen, bankers, officers of the Army, Navy, policemen, engineers, writers, producers and lawyers.’

“These four Regular Daughter Lodges of the Grand Lodge Nationale Française formed the Grand Lodge of Russia on June 24, 1995. In addition to their Mother Grand Lodge, they have been recognized by the Grand Lodges of Poland, Hungary and New York. The Grand Master and Bro. Vladimir Djanguirian, his Grand Secretary, attended by invitation the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge of New York this past May...”⁸⁶⁸

In this way was fulfilled the prophecy of the Catacomb Church Confessor Archimandrite Theodore (Rafanovsky) (+1975): “The communists have been hurled

⁸⁶⁸ Rhoda, “Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn”, paper read at Orient Lodge № 15 on June 29, 1996, <http://members.aol.com/houltonme/rus.htm>. It is known that Boris Yeltsin became a Freemason in 1992 (as announced in *Pravda*), and KGB Colonel Vladimir Putin became one in Germany.

at the Church like a crazy dog. Their Soviet emblem - the hammer and sickle - corresponds to their mission. With the hammer they beat people over the head, and with the sickle they mow down the churches. But then the Masons will remove the communists and take control of Russia..." St. Theodore went on to say: "Priests will come from the West who will both go to hell themselves and will drag you down with them..." Here he was probably referring to the entrance of ROCOR into Russia in 1990, and the falling away of most of its leadership in 2007, when it entered into union with the MP...

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Since 1961, The return of Masonry the Moscow Patriarchate had been very active in the World Council of Churches, cultivating close relations with the religious leaders of the western world, most of whom are Masons. This continued during perestroika, when, besides the activities of the hierarchs, Gorbachev himself had nourished relations with the Pope. A still further powerful impulse to ecumenism was provided by the return of Masonry to Russia, probably several years before its official return in 1992. Thus in September, 1990, at Chambésy, Switzerland, a Declaration was agreed between a Joint Commission of Orthodox (from all the Local Churches) and Monophysites (called "Oriental Orthodox" in the documents). The Orthodox and the Monophysites were called two "families of churches" (a phrase unknown to Orthodox ecclesiology). The point of the new expression was to draw a sign of equality between the right-believing Orthodox and the heretical Monophysites, who from now on were misleadingly called "Oriental Orthodox" in the Orthodox texts.

Paragraph Four of the Declaration said: "The two families accept that the two natures [of Christ] with their own energies and wills are united hypostatically and naturally without confusion, without change, without division and without separation and that they are distinguished only in thought (τη θεωρια μονη)."

This was already completely unacceptable from an Orthodox point of view, and represented a heretical, Monophysite formulation. The two natures and wills of Christ are not distinguishable "only in thought", but also in reality. Paragraph Seven also spoke of the two natures being distinguishable "only in thought", which implied, as Ludmilla Perepiolkina points out "an *absence of this distinction in reality*".⁸⁶⁹

Paragraph Five stated: "The two families accept that the One Who wills and acts is always the single Hypostasis of the incarnate Logos". However, as Perepiolkina again correctly points out, according to the teaching of St. Maximus the Confessor, "the concept of energy (activity) of nature is attributable only to nature as a whole, and not to the hypostasis. This teaching was affirmed at the Sixth Ecumenical Council. In the Chambésy Declaration, as it is evident from Paragraph Five, natural wills and energies in Jesus Christ are attributed to His Hypostasis. In other words, this Paragraph is a *purely Monothelite formula*."⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁹ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

⁸⁷⁰ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

Paragraph Eight stated: "The two families accept the first three Ecumenical Councils which form our common heritage. With regard to the four later Councils of the Orthodox Church, the Orthodox affirm that, for them, points one through seven are also the teaching of these four later Councils, whereas the oriental Orthodox consider this affirmation of the Orthodox like their own interpretation. In this sense the oriental Orthodox respond positively to this affirmation." An unclear statement, about which one thing, however, is clear: the Monophysites did *not* commit themselves to accepting the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Ecumenical Councils in the way the Orthodox did, but only "positively responded to their affirmation", which means *nothing* in dogmatic terms.

Paragraph Nine stated: "In the light of our joint declaration on Christology and the joint affirmations mentioned above, we now clearly realize and understand that our two families have always loyally guarded the same and authentic Christological Orthodox Faith, and have maintained uninterrupted the apostolic tradition although they may have used the Christological terms in a different manner. It is that common faith and that continual loyalty to the apostolic tradition which must be the basis of our unity and communion."

This was in flat contradiction to 1500 years of Orthodox Tradition. In this period all the Holy Fathers unambiguously affirmed that the Monophysites had *not* "loyally guarded the same and authentic Christological Orthodox Faith", and were in fact heretics. But the modern ecumenists claimed that all the six hundred and thirty holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, as well as all the Fathers of all the succeeding Councils that condemned Monophysitism, were wrong, and the whole controversy was simply based on some linguistic misunderstandings!

Paragraph Ten of the Declaration stated: "The two families accept that all the anathemas and the condemnations of the past which kept us divided must be lifted by the Churches so that the last obstacle to full unity and communion of our two families can be removed by the grace and power of God. The two families accept that the lifting of the anathemas and the condemnations will be based on the fact that the Councils and the father previously anathematised or condemned were not heretics."

So the Seven Ecumenical Councils, according to these "theologians", needed to be amended, and the anathemas against all the Monophysite councils and fathers, including the notorious heresiarchs Dioscurus, Timothy and Severus, should be lifted! This was a clear and explicit rejection of the Faith of the Seven Ecumenical Councils! Of course, the Orthodox Churches had already *implicitly* rejected the Councils and the Fathers by their frequent communion in prayer and the sacraments with all sorts of heretics, and even pagans, in recent decades. Nevertheless, it was a further and important stage to say *explicitly* that the Ecumenical Councils were *wrong*, that the Monophysites should not have been condemned, that they had been Orthodox all these centuries although the Holy Fathers and all the saints of the Orthodox Church considered them to be heretics. This was not simply a failure to come up to the standards of the Ecumenical Councils: *it was a renunciation of the standards themselves.*

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It was therefore with complete justification that the Holy Synod of the True Orthodox Church of Greece under Archbishop Chrysostom (Kiouisis) issued the following statement in July, 1991: "At Chambésy the Orthodox and the Monophysites agreed that 'now they have clearly understood that both families (i.e. the Orthodox and the Monophysites) have always loyally maintained the same authentic Orthodox Christological Faith and the unbroken continuity of the Apostolic tradition...'

"... How is it possible to accept as correct that which has now been understood by twenty-one representatives of the Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches – that is, that for fifteen hundred years the Orthodox and Monophysites had the same Christological Faith – when it is a fact that *four* Ecumenical Councils condemned the latter as heretical? Is it possible that the Holy Fathers who took part in them were mistaken, and were unjust towards the Monophysites? Was there not to be found even one of the 630 Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, of the 165 Fathers of the Fifth, of the 227 of the Sixth, or of the 367 of the Seventh, to understand this which the ecumenist Orthodox of Chambésy have now understood – that is, that the Monophysites are not heretics? So it is that 1,389 Holy Fathers are in error, and the twenty-one representatives of the innovative Orthodox are right? Are we to believe that the Holy Spirit did not enlighten the Holy Fathers? Are we to deny the divine inspiration of the Holy Councils? Heretical and blasphemous! Even more boldly, are we to assert that St. Euphemia, who sealed with a miracle the Definition of Faith of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, misunderstood the 'Orthodoxy' of the Monophysites because she did not understand the language? A fearsome thing!

"The Orthodox and the Monophysites agree that 'both families accept the first *three* Ecumenical Councils...' [But] the Orthodox Church accepts *seven* Ecumenical Councils. At Chambésy, at the demand of the Monophysites, the Orthodox delegates accepted the recognition of the first three; the rest are *put aside* and are considered a matter *only* for the Chalcedonian Orthodox. For the Monophysites, who are condemned as heretics and anathematised by them, it is appropriate to oppose these four other Ecumenical Councils. But is it permissible for men, however modernist they might be, who would be called Orthodox, and who declare themselves hierarchs and theologians, to limit the Ecumenical Councils to three? How do they dare? How did they sign such a grossly treasonous agreement? At least those who signed the false union of Florence-Ferrara [with Rome], when they returned to the capital and repented, declared 'Let our hands be cut off' and abjured the false union...

"One can only be horrified at the betrayal of those who signed the agreement at Chambésy. Those who were deposed and anathematised as heretics by four Ecumenical Councils are now recognized as 'saints' and 'Fathers' of the innovating Church... Who are they? There is Dioscorus, whom the Fourth Ecumenical Council anathematised as being of one mind with the heretic Eutyches... and the rest against whom the Orthodox Church cries out the Anathema which is read in the hearing of

all on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Now the modernist Orthodox would honor them in their churches, make icons of them and light candles to them, asking forgiveness because our Holy Fathers unjustly condemned them as heretics...

"Let all who signed the agreement at Chambésy know that they have ceased to be Orthodox, since they are communicants of the heresy of the Monophysites.

"Those who signed the agreement at Chambésy did not sign as individuals. Chiefly, they signed as representatives of their Churches, and their Churches accepted the agreement at Chambésy...

"Therefore we denounce this new false union which was signed at Chambésy by the representatives of the Autocephalous Churches and Patriarchates, who, after 1,500 years, have fallen into the heresy of Monophysitism... and... the New Calendarist State Church for all that has been stated, and declare it to be heretical henceforth. We call upon every faithful Orthodox person, following upon the treasonous agreement at Chambésy, to choose between Orthodoxy and Monophysitism. Whoever wants to remain Orthodox, whoever wants to remain a member of the Body of the Church of Christ, must immediately cease all relationship and communion with the heretical and monophysitizing shepherds of the Churches that signed and accepted the agreement of Chambésy.

"All who remain disinterested or silent, and ally themselves with the supporters of the agreement of Chambésy, have simply embraced Monophysitism and its wrong-thinking 'Fathers' Dioscorus, Severus, Timothy, and the other heretics. Such people have upon their heads the anathemas of the Ecumenical Councils. They are outside the Church, outside of salvation, and their portion is with that of all the heretics.

"We have spoken. Let every... Orthodox faithful person take up his responsibilities before God and man. 'Let us stand aright; let us stand with fear.'"⁸⁷¹

Chambésy was soon producing concrete fruits. Thus on July 22, 1991, the Synod of the Antiochian Patriarchate (which included the notoriously pro-Islamic Metropolitan George Khodre) implemented a series of measures aimed at achieving full union with the Monophysite Syriac Church. These included a prohibition on the proselytism among the Monophysites and full eucharistic communion.⁸⁷² Again, on November 12, 1991 Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch issued an "Official Statement of the Orthodox Church of Antioch on Relations between the Eastern Orthodox and Syrian Orthodox Churches of Antioch" in which the unia between his Church and the

⁸⁷¹ From the translation in *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XIII, № 1, January-February, 1991, pp. 29-30. See also Metropolitan Calliopius of Pentapolis, *Prodosia tis Orthodoxias* (A Betrayal of Orthodoxy), Piraeus, 1991; *O Pharos tis Orthodoxias* (The Lighthouse of Orthodoxy), October, 1991, № 66, p. 120; Monk Isaac, "Commentary on the latest recommendations of the Joint Commission for theological dialogue between the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, № 3, May-June, 1991; "Dossier sur les Accords de Chambésy entre Monophysites et Orthodoxes" (Dossier on the Chambésy Agreements between the Monophysites and the Orthodox), *La Lumière du Thabor* (The Light of Tabor), № 31, 1991.

⁸⁷² *The Word*, April, 1992.

Syrian Monophysites (called here “the Syrian Orthodox Church”) was proclaimed as follows:

“1. We affirm the total and mutual respect of the spirituality, heritage and Holy Fathers of both Churches. The integrity of both the Byzantine and Syriac liturgies is to be preserved.

“2. The heritage of the Fathers in both Churches and their traditions as a whole should be integrated into Christian education curricula and theological studies. Exchanges of professors and students are to be enhanced.

“3. Both Churches shall refrain from accepting any faithful from one Church into the membership of the other, irrespective of all motivations or reasons.

“4. Meetings between the two Churches, at the level of their Synods, according to the will of the two Churches, will be held whenever the need arises.

“5. Every Church will remain the reference and authority for its faithful, pertaining to matters of personal status (marriage, divorce, adoption, etc.).

“6. If bishops of the two Churches participate at a holy baptism or funeral service, the one belonging to the Church of the baptized or deceased will preside. In case of a holy matrimony service, the bishop of the bridegroom's Church will preside.

“7. The above mentioned is not applicable to the concelebration in the Divine Liturgy.

“8. What applies to bishops equally applies to the priests of both Churches.

“9. In localities where there is only one priest, from either Church, he will celebrate services for the faithful of both Churches, including the Divine Liturgy, pastoral duties, and holy matrimony. He will keep an independent record for each Church and transmit that of the sister Church to its authorities.

“10. If two priests of the two Churches happen to be in a locality where there is only one Church, they take turns in making use of its facilities.

“11. If a bishop from one Church and a priest from the sister Church happen to concelebrate a service, the bishop will preside even when it is the priest's parish.

“12. Ordinations into holy orders are performed by the authorities of each Church for its own members. It would be advisable to invite the faithful of the sister Church to attend.

“13. Godfathers, godmothers (in baptism), and witnesses in holy matrimony, can be chosen from the members of the sister Church.

“14. Both Churches will exchange visits and will co-operate in the various areas of

social, cultural, and educational work.

“We ask God's help to continue strengthening our relations with the sister Church, and with other Churches, so that we all become one community under one Shepherd.”⁸⁷³

At the time of writing, the Orthodox and the Monophysites in Syria are indeed “one community” even if they do not yet have one shepherd...

In November, 2009 the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the honorary president of the Masonic “XAN” organization,⁸⁷⁴ said the following before the UN Diplomatic Corps: “The theological dialogue between our two Christian families – that is the Orthodox Church and the Ancient Oriental Churches, has formally ended the misunderstandings of the past. It is not theology that divides us...”

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In March, 1992, the heads of the Local Orthodox Churches met in Constantinople and issued a communiqué that more or less renounced missionary work among the Western heretics. After condemning the work of Catholic Uniates and Protestant fundamentalists in Orthodox countries, they went on to “remind all that every form of proselytism – to be distinguished from evangelization and mission – is absolutely condemned by the Orthodox. Proselytism, practiced in nations already Christian, and in many cases even Orthodox, sometimes through material enticement and sometimes by various forms of violence, poisons the relations among Christians and destroys the road towards their unity. Mission, by contrast, carried out in non-Christian countries and among non-Christian peoples, constitutes a sacred duty of the Church, worthy of every assistance” (point 4).

Here a dishonourable deal was being proposed: if you refrain from proselytising in Orthodox countries, we will not receive converts in western countries. Of course, this renunciation of proselytism among western heretics had been implicit in the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s statements since the encyclical of 1920, and in all the Orthodox leaders’ actions in ecumenical forums since the 1960s. But it still came as a shock to see the “Orthodox Church” renouncing the hope of conversion and therefore salvation for hundreds of millions of westerners. Here the ecumenical “Orthodox” renounced the first commandment of the Lord to His Church after the Resurrection: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28.19-20).

The communiqué also made threats against “schismatic groups competing with the canonical structure of the Orthodox Church” (point 3). Presumably, the True Orthodox were meant. This threat was made clearer when, in May, a delegation from the Ecumenical Patriarchate together with a detachment of Athonite police expelled

⁸⁷³ <http://www.antiochian.org.au/content/view/143/21>.

⁸⁷⁴ *Kathimerini*, October 16, 1992.

the Russian-American monks of the Skete of the Prophet Elijah, who did not commemorate the patriarch, from Mount Athos.

The expulsion of the zealots from Mount Athos⁸⁷⁵, together with the union with the Monophysites at Chambésy, proceeded in parallel with moves towards union with the Catholics. Thus Patriarch Alexis of Moscow began to adopt a more conciliatory attitude towards the uniates of West Ukraine. And although he and his senior hierarchs often protested against Catholic proselytism in Russia⁸⁷⁶, at the March, 1992 meeting he strongly resisted the call by Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem for a cessation of all dialogue between the Orthodox and the Vatican.

In 1994 the delegates of all the Local Churches except Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Jerusalem signed the Balamand agreement with the Catholics, in which the Orthodox and the Catholics were declared to be “two lungs” of the same body (with the Monophysites as a “third lung”?). “On each side it is acknowledged that what Christ has entrusted to His Church – the profession of the apostolic faith, participation in the same sacraments, the apostolic succession of bishops, and, above all, the one priesthood celebrating the one Sacrifice of Christ – cannot be considered to be the exclusive property of one of our Churches.” “All rebaptism [of penitent Catholics in the Orthodox Church] is prohibited.” The Orthodox Church “recognizes the Catholic Church in her entirety as a sister Church, and indirectly recognizes also the Oriental Catholic Churches” (the Uniates). “Special attention should be given on both sides to the preparation and education of future priests with regard to the new ecclesiology, (that they may) be informed of the apostolic succession of the other Church and the authenticity of its sacramental life, (so that) the use of history in a polemical manner (may be avoided)”.

Although the delegates of the Orthodox Churches signed the Agreement, it was ratified by none of the Local Churches in their homelands with the sole exception of the Romanian Patriarchate, which subsequently withdrew its ratification in reaction to the Romanian Uniates’ refusal to accept the document. Nevertheless, there was no official *renunciation* of the Agreement on the Orthodox side. This clearly implied that the Orthodox implicitly agreed with the “branch theory” preached in the Agreement. (The MP had also not officially Chambesy, but it made no difference in practice.)

Patriarch Bartholomew confirmed his acceptance of the branch theory on November 30, 1998: “In view of the fact that one Church recognizes the other Church as a locus of grace, proselytization of members from one Church to the other is

⁸⁷⁵ Damian Thompson, “Holy Sanctuary in turmoil over monks’ eviction”, *The Daily Telegraph*, June 4, 1992; “Ecumenists seize Skete of the Prophet Elias”, *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XIII, № 4, July-August, 1991, pp. 1, 9. For other harassment of non-commemorators on Mount Athos, see Monk Maximus of the Great Lavra, *Human Rights on Mount Athos*, Welshpool: Stylite Publishing, 1990; “Of Truth and Falsehood: Allegations of the ‘O.C.A.’ and Response from the Holy Mountain”, *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XIII, № 3, May-June, 1991.

⁸⁷⁶ Thus in November, 1991, as Roman Catholic bishoprics in the former Soviet Union multiplied, the patriarch said in London that the Vatican had broken certain non-proselytism agreements, and that a flock of no more than 300 Catholics in Novosibirsk did not justify the creation of a bishopric there (Oxana Antic, “New Structures for the Catholic Church in the USSR”, *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, № 21, May 24, 1991).

precluded."⁸⁷⁷ This elicited protests in Greece and Mount Athos, but Bartholomew forced the protestors to back down...

Moscow was hardly less traitorous in its pro-Catholic ecumenism than Constantinople, and with the death in 1995 of the only anti-ecumenist in the MP hierarchy, Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, the victory of the ecumenists appeared to be sealed. However, in December, 1995 a group of about fifty clergy of the diocese of Moscow addressed an open letter to the patriarch denouncing the "crypto-catholic" teaching and actions of several modernist priests and laity in the capital. They pointed to numerous instances of the MP offering direct assistance to Latin propaganda, listing ecumenical or purely Catholic radio stations ("Sophia", "Blagovest") and periodicals (*Simvol, Istina i Zhizn'*, *Novaia Evropa, Russkaia Mysl'*). Active contributors and sometimes even managers of these organs of Latin propaganda included Archpriest Ioann Sviridov (Department of the Religious Education and Catechization of the MP), Igumen Innokenty (Pavlov) (Secretary of the Russian Bible Society), Priest Alexander Borisov (President of the same Society), Igumen Ignaty (Krekshin) (Secretary of the Synodal Commission for the Canonization of Saints of the ROC), Igumen Ioann (Ekonomtsev) (Rector of the Orthodox University of St. John the Theologian), V. Nikitin (chief editor of the official journal of the Department of Religious Education and Catechization *Put' Pravoslavia*), the "priest journalists" G. Chistiakov and V. Lapshin, Priest G. Ziablitsev (employee in the Department of External Church Relations of the MP), who was appointed by his superior, Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyayev), to the commission of the Catholic Church (!) for the canonization of one of their saints. "Such a scandalous fact," wrote the fifty clergy, "i.e. participation in a heterodox enterprise of a canonical character, has not been heard of since the Latins fell away from the Church of Christ in 1054... One is left with the impression that the Vatican is attempting to create within the Church a layer of clergy loyal to the Catholic doctrine who serve the cause of union."⁸⁷⁸

The patriarch tried to deflect this protest by complaining once more about Catholic proselytism in Russia and the Catholics' use of humanitarian aid as a cover for their missionary purposes.⁸⁷⁹ It is not recorded, however, that he rejected the offer of one Catholic organization "Aid to the Suffering Church" to give every priest in the Russian Church an annual salary of \$1000.⁸⁸⁰ Nor was he particularly disturbed when the Pope was declared an honorary member of the new parish of the MP in Ulyanovsk in gratitude for his sending \$14,000 for the construction of the city's cathedral. Nor when, in 1996, "Aid to the Suffering Church" gave \$750,000 to Radio "Sophia"...⁸⁸¹ The patriarch's right hand (his criticism of the Catholics) clearly did not know what his left hand (his reception of largesse from them) was doing...

Moscow, like Constantinople, was able to face down its dissidents. In its council in

⁸⁷⁷ *Ekklesiastiki Alitheia* (Ecclesiastical Truth), December 12, 1998.

⁸⁷⁸ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

⁸⁷⁹ *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), № 204, January, 1996, p. 13

⁸⁸⁰ "Wages for Popes", *30 Days*, № 66, 1994; reprinted in "Vatican Diary", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, January 2/15, 1995, pp. 7-8.

⁸⁸¹ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 205, 217-219.

December, 1994, the patriarchate's participation in the WCC was endorsed as having been inspired "primarily by considerations of the good it would do for the Church".

Then a purge of the anti-ecumenist brotherhoods began.⁸⁸² The decision was made to permit common prayers with heretics with the blessing of the local bishop!⁸⁸³

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The most striking kind of inter-religious ecumenism was manifest in the Orthodox Churches' relations with the Jews. The leader in this was Patriarch Alexis of Moscow. On November 13, 1991 he addressed the Rabbis of New York as follows:-

"Dear brothers, shalom to you in the name of the God of love and peace!... We are all brothers, for we are all children of the Old Testament on Mount Sinai, which, as we Christians believe, was renewed by Christ... Your law is our law, your prophets are our prophets."

This is a profound error, which was thoroughly exposed – and anathematized – by the holy Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Galatians.⁸⁸⁴ It is also condemned in the holy canons, notably in Canon 29 of the Council of Laodicea: And also in the holy canons: "If any shall be found to be Judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ." There is a sense in which the Old Testament law and prophets were not destroyed, but fulfilled by Christ (Matthew 5.17) – that is, in the sense that He revealed their inner meaning. But "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" (Galatians 3.24), and having found Christ, we follow, not the law of the Old Testament, but that of the *New* Testament.

Some parts of the old law are still obligatory for Christians – the Ten Commandments, for example. But even there adjustments need to be made: the commandment to "keep the sabbath holy", for example, applies now to Sundays and Church feast days, not to Saturdays. And the commandments against murder and adultery are now deepened to become commandments against anger and lust. As for circumcisions and animal sacrifices and the worship in the Temple on Mount Moriah, this is now definitely excluded, being replaced by the worship and sacraments of the Church. So the Jews' law is *not* our law. Nor do they stand in a relationship of equality of honour to the Christians. As for the prophets, they prophesied about Christ; and it is the Christians, not the Jews, who have understood the prophecies and paid heed to them.

The patriarch continues: "Judaism and Christianity are united by a spiritual and natural affinity and positive religious interests. We are united with the Jews without

⁸⁸² See A. Soldatov, "Obnovlenie ili obnovlenchestvo?" (Renovation or Renovationism?), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 20 (1521), October 15/28, 1994, pp. 6-9; *Service Orthodoxe de Presse* (Orthodox Press Service), № 194, January, 1995, pp. 7-10 (F); V.N. Osipov, "Pravoslavnoe serdtse na vetru", *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (1527), January 15/28, 1995, pp. 14-15.

⁸⁸³ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, p. 205; from the Documents and Reports of the Council published by the MP in 1995, p. 191.

renouncing Christianity. For this is not contrary to Christianity, but in the name and for the sake of Christianity. And the Jews are united with us also in the name and for the sake of genuine Judaism.”

Astonishing! Then why have the main persecutors of Orthodox Christianity for the last two thousand years been the Jews? And why does the Jews’ “holy” book, the Talmud, say such terrible things about Christ, the Mother of God and Christians in general? No: to be united with the Jews means precisely to renounce Christianity; it is to be united with Annas and Caiaphas and Judas and to be separated from Christ and the holy Apostles, Martyrs and Fathers of the Church.

“We are separated from the Jews because we are not wholly Christian, and the Jews are separated from us because they are not wholly Jewish. Because full Christianity embraces Judaism and full Judaism is Christianity.”

The patriarch speaks truly about himself when he says he is “not wholly Christian”. More precisely, he is not Christian at all. For no Christian, whether “full” or not, can possibly embrace Judaism, which is the antithesis of Christianity. For the Jews reject every single article of the Nicene Creed with the possible exception of the first, about God the Father. And yet even here it cannot be said that the Jews know God the Father. For “who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, hath not the Father” (I John 2.22-23).

“The hierarchs, clergy and theologians of our Church resolutely and openly denounce all and sundry manifestations of anti-Semitism and enmity and pogroms against the Jews.”

The Orthodox Church rejects anti-Semitism, that is, a rejection of the Jews on the grounds of their race. She also rejects pogroms because pogroms are murder. But the Church is and will never cease to be anti-*Judaic*, because Judaism is a lie, the worst of all lies.

“During the notorious Beilis trial, Archpriest Alexander Glagolev, a professor at the Kiev Ecclesiastical Academy, and Ivan Troitsky, a professor at the St. Petersburg Ecclesiastical Academy, firmly defended Beilis and resolutely rejected the accusations of ritual killings allegedly practised by the Jews. The Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, Antony (Vadkovksy), did much to protect the Jews from the anti-Semitic attacks of the extreme right-wing radical organizations. There were also many other hierarchs and theologians of our Church who courageously defended the Jews from the enmity and slanderous accusations made by the anti-Semitic circles: Metropolitan Macarius (Bulgakov), Bishop Donatus (Babinsky) of Grodno, Bishop Vissarion (Nechaev), Archbishop Seraphim (Mescheryakov), Archbishop Macarius (Miroljubov).”

Much could be said about the Beilis trial, which was indeed “notorious” – mainly because of the extreme pressure brought to bear upon witnesses by the Jews and their supporters, and the extreme inefficiency of the police work. Beilis was indeed acquitted, but the court established that the victim, Andrew Yushchinsky, *had* been

the victim of a ritual murder. The patriarch also ignored the fact that the Orthodox Church has officially glorified at least one victim of Jewish ritual murder – of the Child Martyr Gabriel, to whom Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky wrote a service.

“We should also mention that many of our theologians and outstanding religious thinker, such as Vladimir Soloviev, Nicholas Berdiaev, and Father Sergius Bulgakov, stood up for the Jews. Vladimir Soloviev regarded the defence of the Jews, from the Christian point of view, to be one of the major tasks of his life. For him the main question was not whether the Jews were good or bad, but whether we Christians were good or bad. Much had been done for establishing a Christian dialogue by our famous religious thinkers of Jewish origin, Semyon Frank and Lev Shestov.⁸⁸⁵

“In this difficult but sacred cause for all of us we hope for understanding and help from our Jewish brothers and sisters. We shall build, by our joint efforts, a new society – one that is democratic, free, open and just. It will be a society which no one will want to leave, and in which the Jews will live confidently and calmly, in an atmosphere of friendship, creative cooperation and fraternity between the children of our common God – the Father of all, the God of your and our fathers...”⁸⁸⁶

But that is not the teaching of the holy Apostle Paul, himself “a Hebrew of the Hebrews”, who wrote that the Jews “killed both the Lord Jesus Christ and their own prophets, and have persecuted us and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up the measure of their sins; that wrath may come upon them to the uttermost” (I Thessalonians 2.15-16).

The rabbis did not forget the honour paid to them by the patriarch: during the visit of Alexis II to the U.S.A. in 1993 the chief rabbi of New York, Schneier, presented him with the prize “The Call of Conscience”. And both in 1991 and in 1993 the patriarch was a guest of a Zionist organization of the same name; he visited synagogues and met Jewish religious leaders...

In 1992, the president of the Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods, Sergius Poliakov, declared that the patriarch’s speech to the New York rabbis had been “clearly heretical”. And a representative of the Tver diocese declared that “almost 60% of the diocesan clergy” were refusing to commemorate the patriarch.⁸⁸⁷ Unfortunately, only one of those priests actually joined the True Church...⁸⁸⁸

⁸⁸⁵ The first four thinkers he mentions here are all notorious heretics! Bulgakov’s sophianist heresy was officially condemned by the Moscow Patriarchate in 1935.(V.M.)

⁸⁸⁶ *Rech’ Patriarkha Alekseia II k rabbinam g. Nyu Yorka (S.Sh.A.) i Eres’ Zhidovstvuyushchikh*, (The Speech of Patriarch Alexis II to the Rabbis of New York (U.S.A.) and the Heresy of the Judaisers) U.S.A., 1993 (MS), Moscow, 1992, pp. 8-10; Valery Kadzhaya, “Ask Peace for Jerusalem”, http://www.newtimes.ru/eng/detail.asp?art_id=778.

⁸⁸⁷ *Priamoj Put’* (The Straight Path), February, 1992, p. 5; E. Polyakov, “Khronika Tserkovnoj Zhizni v Yanvare-Fevrale 1992 g.” (A Chronicle of Church Life in January-February, 1992) (MS), p. 2.

⁸⁸⁸ *Russkii Pastyr’*, № 30, I-1998, p. 86. Cf. Fr. Timothy Alferov, “Nekotore uroki dvizhenia ‘nepominaiushchikh’ (Some Lessons of the Movement of the Non-Commemorators), *Russkii Pastyr’* (Russian Pastor), № 19, II-1994, pp. 102-104.

In 2009 Patriarch Bartholomew made his own speech before the rabbis of East Park Synagogue. It was very similar in concept to Patriarch Alexis', stressing unity and completely ignoring the blasphemous denial of Christ that is at the root of Judaism.

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In 1997 Patriarch Bartholomew extolled the widest religious syncretism: "Orthodox Christian and modernist, Protestant and modernist, Jew and modernist, Catholic and modernist: however we worship, as long as we abide in our faith and unite it to our works in the world, we bring the living and always timely message of Divine wisdom into the modern world." In the same year he declared: "According to the long-held tradition, the Orthodox Church avoids dictating or making categorical decisions of a social or ethical nature."⁸⁸⁹ This astonishing abdication from the responsibility of an Orthodox bishop "rightly to divide the word of truth" sits uneasily with his heavy-handed suppression of his Orthodox critics...

While these movements towards union with heretics were taking place, the Ecumenical Patriarch was acting with great tyranny towards his fellow patriarchs, especially the one who was lukewarm about ecumenism: Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem. Thus in July, 1993 a "great and super-perfect (παντελης) Synod" was called to judge Patriarch Diodorus and certain of his collaborators for their supposed interference in the Australian Archdiocese of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and certain other questions. The main problem was a very valuable property in Australia which the owner and founder, Archimandrite Hierotheus, refused to give to the Greek Archdiocese, but donated to the patriarchate, which accepted it and sent two bishops, Hesychius and Timothy, to arrange the transfer and establish an exarchate there. It was assumed, completely contrary to the canons, that Jerusalem was "interfering" in Australia on the grounds that the Ecumenical Patriarchate had sole jurisdiction in all lands not directly within the boundaries of any other patriarchate, and therefore in Australia also, in spite of the fact that the Jerusalem Patriarchate had had a mission in Australia since 1892, and Constantinople - only since 1924. Another accusation against Patriarch Diodorus was that he was regularly visited by the "pseudo-Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropus and Fili". The Synod decided with "utmost economy" not to depose the patriarch, but only to expunge his name from the diptychs, and to depose Metropolitans Hesychius and Timothy. The patriarch was summoned to this farce by fax one day before it began, while the other two bishops were not even called to answer. So much for the canonical behaviour of the "canonical" bishops!

The Patriarch of Jerusalem did not in any way agree to the "super-perfect" Synod's decision, and was at first resolved to pay no attention to it. Sadly, however, other voices prevailed, the patriarchate succumbed, the patriarch relinquished (it is said, in return for a hefty payment) the property and the exarchate in Australia, and the two metropolitans went to Constantinople to ask forgiveness of Bartholomew; which was graciously granted. This was part of the Ecumenical Patriarch's continuing campaign to become "the Pope of the East" to whom all the other patriarchs submitted (in

⁸⁸⁹ *Time*, May 5, 1997.

preparation for his submitting to Rome). But his pretensions were rejected by the other Greek Patriarchates and the Old Calendarists. Moscow, too, had no intention of allowing Constantinople to lord it over her...⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁹⁰ Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, November 17, 2005; A.D. Delimbasis, *Rebuttal of an Anticanonical "Verdict"*, Athens, 1993.

61. UNSECRET AGENTS IN CASSOCKS

In June, 1990, the Hierarchical Council of the MP elected Metropolitan Alexis (Ridiger) as the new patriarch. This was the man whom the Furov report of 1970 had called the most pro-Soviet of all the bishops, a KGB agent since 1958 who had been prepared to spy even on his own patriarch, and who, as Metropolitan of Tallinn, said: "In the Soviet Union, citizens are never arrested for their religious or ideological convictions".⁸⁹¹ Worst of all, on July 4/17, 1990, the day of the martyrdom of Tsar Nicholas II, he announced that he was praying for the preservation of the communist party!

After that gaffe, being a clever man, Patriarch Alexis quickly recovered his balance, his sense of which way the wind was blowing; and there was no further overt support of the communists. True, he did attach his signature, in December, 1990, to a letter by 53 well-known political, academic and literary figures who urged Gorbachev to take urgent measures to deal with the state of crisis in the country, speaking of "... the destructive dictatorship of people who are shameless in their striving to take ownership of territory, resources, the intellectual wealth and labour forces of the country whose name is the USSR".⁸⁹² But the patriarch quickly disavowed his signature; and a few weeks later, after the deaths in Vilnius, he declared that the killings were "a great political mistake - in church language a sin". Then, in May, he publicly disagreed with a prominent member of the hardline *Soiuz* bloc, who had said that the resources of the army and the clergy should be drawn on extensively to save the people and the homeland. In Alexis' view, these words could be perceived as a statement of preparedness to use the Church for political purposes. The patriarch recalled his words of the previous autumn: the Church and the Faith should not be used as a truncheon.⁸⁹³ By June, the patriarch had completed his remarkable transformation from dyed-in-the-wool communist to enthusiastic democrat, saying to Yeltsin: "May God help you win the election".

Still more striking was his apparent rejection of Sergianism. Thus in an interview granted to *Izvestia* on June 6 he said: "This year has freed us from the state's supervision. Now we have the moral right to say that the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius has disappeared into the past and no longer guides us... The metropolitan cooperated with criminal usurpers. This was his tragedy.... Today we can say that falsehood is interspersed in his Declaration, which stated as its goal 'placing the Church in a proper relationship with the Soviet government'. But this relationship - and in the Declaration it is clearly defined as being the submission of the Church to the interests of governmental politics - is exactly that which is incorrect from the point of view of the Church... Of the people, then, to whom these compromises, silence, forced passivity or expressions of loyalty that were permitted by the Church leadership in those days, have caused pain - of these people, not only before God, but

⁸⁹¹ *Keston News Service*, № 94, March 21, 1980 p. 1.

⁸⁹² *Keston News Service*, № 369, February 21, 1991, p. 6.

⁸⁹³ Letter in *Literaturnaia Rossia* (Literary Russia), June 14, 1991; Oxana Antic, "Patriarch Aleksii II: A Political Portrait", *Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, № 45, November 8, 1991, p. 17.

also before them, I ask forgiveness, understanding and prayers.”⁸⁹⁴

And yet, in an interview given to *Komsomolskaia Pravda* only two months earlier, he had said: “The most important thing for the Church is to preserve itself for the people, so that they should be able to have access to the Chalice of Christ, to the Chalice of Communion... There is a rule when a Christian has to take on himself a sin in order to avoid a greater sin... There are situations in which a person, a Christian must sacrifice his personal purity, his personal perfection, so as to defend something greater... Thus in relation to Metropolitan Sergius and his successors in the leadership of the Church under Soviet power, they had to tell lies, they had to say that everything was normal with us. And yet the Church was being persecuted. Declarations of political loyalty were being made. The fullness of Christian life, charity, almsgiving, the Reigning icon of the Mother of God were also renounced. Compromises were made.”

In other words, Sergianism, though sinful, was justified. It may have “disappeared into the past”, but if similar circumstances arise again, the “sacrifice” of personal purity can and should be made again!...⁸⁹⁵

The patriarch showed that the poison of Sergianism was in him still during the attempted coup of August, 1991. When the Russian vice-president, Alexander Rutskoy, approached him on the morning of the 19th, the patriarch pleaded “illness” and refused to see him. When he eventually did issue a declaration – on the evening of the 20th, and again in the early hours of the 21st – the impression made was, in Fr. Gleb Yakunin’s words, “rather weak”.⁸⁹⁶ He called on all sides to avoid bloodshed, but did not specifically condemn the plotters.

As Jane Ellis comments: “Though Patriarch Alexis II issued statements during the coup, they were bland and unspecific, and he was widely thought to have waited to see which way the wind was blowing before committing himself to issuing them. It was rather the priests in the White House – the Russian Parliament building – itself, such as the veteran campaigner for religious freedom, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, as well as the Christians among those manning the barricades outside, who helped to overthrow the Communist Party, the KGB and the Soviet system.”⁸⁹⁷

It was not until Wednesday morning that the patriarch sent his representative, Deacon Andrew Kurayev, to the Russian parliament building, by which time several

⁸⁹⁴ “Patriarch Alexis II: I take on myself responsibility for all that happened”, *Izvestia*, № 137, June 10, 1991; Bishop Gregory Grabbe, “Dogmatizatsia Sergianstva” (The Dogmatization of Sergianism), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 17 (1446), September 1/14, 1991, p. 5.

⁸⁹⁵ Grabbe, “Dogmatizatsia Sergianstva”, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁸⁹⁶ Hieromonk Tikhon (Kozushin), personal communication; Natalia Babisyan, “Sviashchenniki na barrikadakh” (Priests on the Barricades), *Khristianskie Novosti* (Christian News), № 38, August 22, 1991, p. 21.

⁸⁹⁷ Ellis, “The Russian Church: hopes and fears”, *Church Times*, September 13, 1991. During the 1993 attack on parliament he showed a similar indecisiveness. “He promised to excommunicate the first person to fire a shot, but when shooting... thundered around the ‘White House’, he forgot about his promise.” (Eugene Sokolov, “Tovarisch Drozdov – Vor Hevronskej” (Comrade Drozdov – the Thief of Hebron), *Russkoe Novoe Slovo* (New Russian Word), 18 July, 1997)

dissident priests were already established there. And it was two priests of the Russian Church Abroad, Fr. Nicholas Artemov from Munich and Fr. Victor Usachev from Moscow, who celebrated the first supplicatory service to the New Martyrs of Russia on the balcony of the White House. Not to be outdone, the patriarchate immediately responded with its own prayer service, and at some time during the same day the patriarch anathematized all those who had taken part in organizing the coup.

By these actions the patriarch appeared to have secured his position vis-à-vis Yeltsin's government, and on August 27, Yeltsin attended a memorial service in the Dormition cathedral of the Kremlin, at which the patriarch hailed the failure of the coup, saying that "the wrath of God falls upon the children of disobedience".⁸⁹⁸ So in the space of thirteen months, the patriarch had passed from a pro-communist, anti-democratic to an anti-communist, pro-democratic stance. This "flexibility" should have surprised nobody; for the essence of sergianism, the root heresy of the Moscow Patriarchate, is *adaptation to the world, and to whatever the world believes and praises*.

In September, 1991, the patriarch said: "A church that has millions of faithful cannot go into the catacombs. The hierarchy of the church has taken the sin on their souls: the sin of silence and of lying for the good of the people in order that they not be completely removed from real life. In the government of the diocese and as head of the negotiations for the patriarchate of Moscow, I also had to cede one point in order to defend another. I ask pardon of God, I ask pardon, understanding and prayers of all those whom I harmed through the concessions, the silence, the forced passivity or the expressions of loyalty that the hierarchy may have manifested during that period."⁸⁹⁹

This is closer to self-justification than repentance (and was in any case contradicted by later statements). It is similar to the statement of Metropolitan Nicholas (Corneanu) of Banat of the Romanian Patriarchate, who confessed that he had collaborated with the Securitate, the Romanian equivalent of the KGB, and had defrocked the priest Fr. Calciu for false political reasons, but nevertheless declared that if he had not made such compromises he would have been forced to abandon his post, "which in the conditions of the time would not have been good for the Church". In other words, as Vladimir Kozyrev writes: "It means: 'I dishonoured the Church and my Episcopal responsibility, I betrayed those whom I had to protect, I scandalized my flock. But all this I had to do for the good of the Church!'"⁹⁰⁰

In another interview in 1997 Patriarch Alexis said, referring to the Church in the time of Patriarch Tikhon: "The Church could not, did not have the right, to go into the catacombs. She remained together with the people and drank to the dregs the cup of sufferings that fell to its lot."⁹⁰¹ Patriarch Alexis here forgot to mention that

⁸⁹⁸ He said that the Church had not supported the coup (although there is clear evidence that Metropolitans Philaret of Kiev and Pitirim of Volokolamsk supported it), but had "taken the side of law and liberty" (*Report on the USSR*, vol. 3, № 36, September 6, 1991, p. 82).

⁸⁹⁹ *30 Dias* (Thirty Days), Rome/Sao Paolo, August-September, 1991, p. 23.

⁹⁰⁰ Kozyrev, "[orthodox-synod] Re: The Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian persecuted Church", orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com. 28 November, 2002.

⁹⁰¹ Quoted by Anatoly Krasikov, "'Tretij Rim' i bolsheviki (bez grifa 'sovershenno sekretno')" (The

Patriarch Tikhon specifically blessed Michael Zhizhilenko, the future Hieromartyr Maximus of Serpukhov, to become a secret catacomb bishop if the pressure on the Church from the State became too great. As for his claim that the sergianists shared the cup of the people's suffering, this must be counted as conscious hypocrisy. It is well known that the Soviet hierarchs lived a life of considerable luxury, while lifting not a finger for the Catacomb Christians and dissidents sent to torments and death in KGB prisons!

On November 9, 2001, the patriarch threw off the mask of repentance completely, stating in defence of the declaration: "This was a clever step by which Metropolitan Sergius tried to save the church and clergy. In declaring that the members of the Church want to see themselves as part of the motherland and want to share her joys and sorrows, he tried to show to those who were persecuting the church and who were destroying it that we, the children of the church, want to be loyal citizens so that the affiliation of people with the church would not place them outside the law."⁹⁰² So the greatest act of betrayal in Russian history was "a clever step", which did not destroy the Judas and those who followed him but "saved the church and clergy"!.!

After the failure of the putsch articles began to appear revealing the links of the Church hierarchy with the KGB. Rattled, the patriarch wrote to Frs. Gleb Yakunin and George Edelstein that their articles were "full of the spirit of unscrupulous blasphemy against the Church."⁹⁰³

One of the biggest fruits of *glasnost'* - which did not, however, lead to a real ecclesiastical *perestroika* - was the confirmation in January, 1992, by a Commission of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet investigating the causes and circumstances of the 1991 *putsch*, that for several decades at least the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate had been KGB agents. Members of the commission - L. Ponomarev, V. Polosin and Fr. Gleb Yakunin - obtained access to the records of the fourth, Church department of the KGB's Fifth Directorate (in which the future president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, had worked), and revealed that Metropolitans Juvenal of Krutitsa, Pitirim of Volokolamsk, Philaret of Kiev and Philaret of Minsk were all KGB agents, with the codenames "Adamant", "Abbat", "Antonov" and "Ostrovsky".

This "news" was hardly unexpected. In 1989 Kharchev, Chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs, confirmed that the Russian Orthodox Church was rigorously controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, especially its Ideological Department, and by the KGB.⁹⁰⁴ Again, Victor Sheimov, a former KGB major with responsibilities for upgrading the KGB's communications security system until his defection in 1980, described the Fifth Directorate as being "responsible for suppressing ideological dissent, running the Soviet Orthodox Church and laying the groundwork for the First Chief Directorate's subversive promotion of favourable

Third Rome and the Bolsheviks), in Filatov, S.B. (ed.), *Religia i prava cheloveka* (Religion and Human Rights), Moscow: Nauka, 1996, p. 198.

⁹⁰² <http://www.ripnet.org/besieged/rparocora.htm?>

⁹⁰³ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1991, № 10.

⁹⁰⁴ Kharchev, *Argumenty i Fakty* (Arguments and Facts), 1992, № 8, p. 5.

opinion about the country's position and policy."⁹⁰⁵ One of Sheimov's jobs was to draft agents to infiltrate the "Soviet Orthodox Church". Again, in 1992 a former KGB agent, A. Shushpanov, described his experiences working in the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations. He said that most of the people working there were in fact KGB agents.⁹⁰⁶

But it was the Commission's report on March 6 that contained the most shocking revelations: "KGB agents, using such aliases as Sviatoslav, Adamant, Mikhailov, Nesterovich, Ognev and others, made trips abroad, organised by the Russian Orthodox Department of External Relations [which was headed by Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev), the future patriarch], performing missions assigned to them by the leadership of the KGB. The nature of their missions shows that this department was inseparably linked with the state and that it had emerged as a covert centre of KGB agents among the faithful."

Again: "The Commission draws the attention of the Russian Orthodox Church leadership to the fact that the Central Committee of the CPSU and KGB agencies have used a number of church bodies for their purposes by recruiting and planting KGB agents. Such deep infiltration by intelligence service agents into religious associations poses a serious threat to society and the State. Agencies that are called upon to ensure State security can thus exert uncontrolled impact on religious associations numbering millions of members, and through them on the situation at home and abroad."⁹⁰⁷

The findings of the Commission included:- (i) the words of the head of the KGB Yury Andropov to the Central Committee sometime in the 1970s: "The organs of state security keep the contacts of the Vatican with the Russian Orthodox Church under control..."; (ii) "At the 6th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, the religious delegation from the USSR contained 47 (!) agents of the KGB, including religious authorities, clergy and technical personnel" (July, 1983); (iii) "The most important were the journeys of agents 'Antonov', 'Ostrovsky' and 'Adamant' to Italy for conversations with the Pope of Rome on the question of further relations between the Vatican and the Russian Orthodox Church, and in particular regarding the problems of the uniates" (1989).⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁵ Sheimov, *Tower of Secrets*, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1993, p. 418, in "The New Soviet Man", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, June 3/16, 1996.

⁹⁰⁶ Shushpanov, *Moskovskie Novosti* (Moscow News), 12 July, 1992, p. 20, in "The New Soviet Man", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, June 3/16, 1996.

⁹⁰⁷ Fr. George Edelshtein, "Double Agents in the Church", *Moscow News*, August 26, 2005.

⁹⁰⁸ For more details of the parliamentary commission's revelations, see *Priamoj Put'* (The Straight Path), №№ 1-2, January, 1992, p. 1; № 3, February, 1992, p. 1; February, 1992; Alexander Nezhny, "Tret'e Imia" (The Third Name), *Ogonek* (Little Fire), № 4 (3366), January 25 - February 1, 1992; Iain Walker and Chester Stern, "Holy Agents of the KGB", *The Mail on Sunday*, March 29, 1992; John Dunlop, "KGB Subversion of Russian Orthodox Church", *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 1, № 12, March 20, 1992, pp. 51-53; "Three Leading Moscow Hierarchs Unveiled as KGB Operatives", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 42, № 3, May-June, 1992, pp. 25-29; Protodeacon Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "A ne nachalo li eto kontsa?" (Is this not the Beginning of the End?), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 9 (1462), May 1/14, 1992, pp. 609; "Ne bo vragom Tvoim povem..." (I will not give Thy secret to Thine enemy...), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tseroki za Granitsei* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), № 1, 1992, pp. 16-22; Fr. Victor Potapov, "Molchaniem predaetsa Bog" ("God is Betrayed by Silence"), *Moscow: Isikhia*, 1992, pp. 36-39; Joseph

The Commission also discovered that the patriarch himself was an agent with the codename "Drozdov". This was not made public because, writes Fen Montaigne, "members of the parliamentary commission had told the patriarch that they would not name him as an agent if he began cleaning house in the church and acknowledging the breadth of cooperation between the church and the KGB. 'So far, we have kept silence because we wanted to give the patriarch a chance,' said Alexander Nezhny, a journalist who said his comparison of the archives and church bulletins convinced him that Alexis II is indeed 'Drozdov'."⁹⁰⁹

Later investigations confirmed the fact. Thus on March 18, 1996 the Estonian newspaper *Postimees* published the following KGB report from the Estonian SSR: "Agent 'Drozdov', born in 1929, a priest of the Orthodox Church, has a higher education, a degree in theology, speaks Russian and Estonian perfectly, and some limited German. He enlisted on February 28, 1958 out of patriotic feelings in order to expose and drive out the anti-Soviet elements among the Orthodox clergy, with whom he has connections, which represents an overriding interest to the KGB agencies. At the time of enlistment it was taken into consideration that in the future (after securing his practical work) he would be promoted through the available channels to Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia. In the period of his collaboration with the organs of the KGB, 'Drozdov' has proved himself in a positive manner, is accurate in his reports, energetic and sociable. He understands theological matters and international situations well, is eager to carry out tasks given him by us and has already presented a good quantity of worthy material... After securing the agent in practical jobs for the agencies of state security concretely worked out, we intend to use him to further our interests by sending him into the capitalist countries as a member of ecclesiastical organizations."⁹¹⁰

Nevertheless, what had been revealed was so shocking that the parliamentary commission was closed down by Ruslan Khasbulatov, the President of the Supreme Soviet, at the insistence, according to Ponomarev, of Patriarch Alexis and the head of the KGB, Yevgeny Primakov.

One of the commission's members, Fr. Gleb Yakunin, was accused of betraying state secrets to the United States and threatened with a private persecution. Fr. Gleb remained defiant. He wrote to the Patriarch in 1994: "If the Church is not cleansed of the taint of the spy and informer, it cannot be reborn. Unfortunately, only one archbishop – Archbishop Chrysostom of Lithuania – has had the courage publicly to

Harriss, "The Gospel according to Marx", *Reader's Digest*, February, 1993, pp. 59-63. See also I.I. Maslova, "Russkaia pravoslavnaia tserkov' i KGB (1960-1980-e gody)" (The Russian Orthodox Church and the KGB (1960s to 1980s), *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), December, 2005, pp. 86-87.

⁹⁰⁹ Montaigne, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on May 3, 1992; quoted in "The Church of the KGB", *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XIV, № 2, March-April, 1992, pp. 22-23.

⁹¹⁰ *Estonian State Archive*, record group 131, file 393, pp. 125-126; James Meek, "File links church leader to KGB", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 13, 1999; Seamus Martin, "Russian Patriarch was (is?) a KGB agent, files say Patriarch Alexej II received KGB 'Certificate of Honour'", *Irish Times*, September 23, 2000; Arnold Beichman, "Patriarch with a KGB Past", *The Washington Times*, September 29, 2000.

acknowledge that in the past he worked as an agent, and has revealed his codename: RESTAVRATOR. No other Church hierarch has followed his example, however.

“The most prominent agents of the past include DROZDOV – the only one of the churchmen to be officially honoured with an award by the KGB of the USSR, in 1988, for outstanding intelligence services – ADAMANT, OSTROVSKY, MIKHAILOV, TOPAZ AND ABBAT. It is obvious that none of these or the less exalted agents is preparing to repent. On the contrary, they deliver themselves of pastoral maxims on the allegedly neutral character of informing on the Church, and articles have appeared in the Church press justifying the role of the informer as essential for the survival of the Church in an anti-religious state. The codenames I discovered in the archives of the KGB belong to the top hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate.”

After citing this letter, Vasily Mitrokhin, former chief archivist of the KGB, and Professor Christopher Andrew of Cambridge University comment: “The letter to Aleksii II was unprecedented in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church – for, as the Patriarch must surely have been aware, DROZDOV, the most important of the KGB agents discovered by Father Gleb in the KGB archives, was in fact himself...”⁹¹¹

In April, 1992, Archbishop Chrysostom of Vilnius said in an interview: “I cooperated with the KGB... but I was not a stool-pigeon.... Yes, we – or, at any rate, I, and I am saying this in the first place about myself – cooperated with the KGB. I cooperated, I gave my signature, I had regular meetings, I gave reports. I have my pseudonym or nickname, as they say – ‘Restavrador’. I cooperated with them consciously so as insistently to pursue my own church line – a patriotic line, too, as I understood it, with the help of these organs. I was never a stool-pigeon, I was not an informer... But together with those among us hierarchs, there are still more among the priests, there is a mass of unworthy, immoral people. It was this immorality, in the absence of a church court among us, that the KGB used. They defended them from us, the ruling bishops, so that we could not punish them.”⁹¹²

In the same year he declared to the Council of Bishops of the MP: “In our Church there are genuine members of the KGB, who have made head-spinning careers; for example, Metropolitan Methodius of Voronezh. He is a KGB officer [code-name PAUL], an atheist, a liar, who is constantly advised by the KGB. The Synod was unanimously against such a bishop, but we had to take upon us such a sin. And then what a rise he had!” According to ex-KGB colonel Konstantin Preobrazhensky, Methodius was in fact not only a KGB agent, but “a regular officer of the GRU, the Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Defence Ministry”. In the KGB they call such people ‘officers of deep cover’. There are quite a few of them in today’s Moscow Patriarchate.”⁹¹³

At the same Council, a commission of eight MP bishops headed by Bishop

⁹¹¹ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, London and New York: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1999, p. 661.

⁹¹² *Rossijskaia Gazeta*, 1992, № 52, p. 7.

⁹¹³ Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.

Alexander of Kostroma was formed to investigate the charges of collaboration with the KGB. This commission has up to now (twenty-two years later) produced absolutely nothing! In view of the lack of a clear-out of KGB hierarchs, it remains true that, as the saying went, “the MP is the last surviving department of the KGB” or “the second administration of the Soviet state”.

Writing in 1995, John Dunlop concluded that “the overwhelming majority of the current one hundred and nineteen bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate were ordained to the episcopacy prior to August of 1991. This suggests that each of these bishops was carefully screened and vetted by both the ideological apparatus of the Communist Party and by the KGB.”⁹¹⁴ Keston College came to the same conclusion.⁹¹⁵

In fact, according to Preobrazhensky, “*Absolutely all* [my italics – V.M.] the bishops and the overwhelming majority of the priests worked with the KGB. After all, the Church was considered to be a hostile medium, and it had to be controlled through agents. Even the very mechanism of appointing bishops allowed only agents there.

“Bishops were put into the nomenklatura of the Central Committee of the CPSU, and so each one was confirmed by the Ideological department. And what department sent documents there for important personnel appointments? You’re right: the KGB. The certificate on the future bishop was prepared by the Fifth administration, which carried out a general watch over the Church, together with the spy service, if he had been even once abroad. Each of the certificates ended with the same phrase: ‘He has been cooperating since such-and-such a year’.

“This was precisely the most important thing for the Central Committee of the CPSU! This phrase witnessed to the fact that the future bishop was not only loyal to Soviet power, but was hanging from it by a hook: after all, there are unfailingly compromising materials on every agent! And this means that no dissident outbursts were to be expected from this bishop...”⁹¹⁶

Other leading hierarchs in the Soviet bloc were (are) communist agents. Patriarch Ilia of Georgia has been an agent since 1962 with the code-name “Iverieli”.⁹¹⁷ Metropolitan Savva of Poland, the present head of the Polish Church, was recruited by the Polish communist security forces in 1966, with the codename “Yurek”. Another Polish Church leader, Metropolitan Basil, was also an agent.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁴ Dunlop, “The Moscow Patriarchate as an Empire-Saving Institution”, in Michael Bourdeaux, M.E. Sharp (eds.), *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, 1995, Armonk, NY, p. 29.

⁹¹⁵ Felix Corbey, “The Patriarch and the KGB”, *Keston News Service*, September 21, 2000.

⁹¹⁶ Preobrazhensky, *KGB v russoj emigratsii* (The KGB in the Russian emigration), New York: Liberty Publishing House, 2006, p. 41.

⁹¹⁷ *Orthodox Tradition*, vol. XV, № 1, p. 34. According to Alexander Soldatov (“Cherez revoliutsii – k tsarstvu”, *Ogonek*, <http://www.ogoniok.com/5023/16/>, p. 2), his recruitment took place in 1968.

⁹¹⁸ “World Orthodoxy: Savva of Poland admits collaboration with Secret Police”, <http://newsnftu.blogspot.com/2009/05/world-orthodoxy-sava-of-poland-admits.html>.

62. THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IN THE 1990s

With the KGB firmly back in the saddle, it is not surprising that the corruption in the Moscow Patriarchate continued unchecked. One anonymous member of the MP analyzed the situation as follows: "In spite of the liberation and a certain revival of Church life in recent years, her real situation has not really changed markedly for the better. What is the use of an increasing number of baptisms if out of a thousand baptized scarcely one or two can be found who want to become Christians in our sense of the word, but practically everyone considers themselves to be 'believers' (in whom?)? What is the use of a growing number of publications of spiritual literature when clearly anti-church and heretical literature is spread at a far faster rate? What is the use of mass weddings when the number of abortions and divorces grows much faster, not to speak of every other kind of sexual immorality? What is the use of transmitting Divine services on television when the great majority of observers of these programmes do not themselves want to pray in church, preferring to play the role of 'fans', while those who seriously live the life of the Church hardly watch television? What is the point of teaching the Law of God in schools when all the rest of the school programme remains atheist and a pupil of the sixth class 'goes through' the Bible stories in the section of the literature course entitled 'fairytales', and takes exams on the history of the ancient world and the sections on Christianity in accordance with exactly the same textbook as fifteen years ago? And even if there is a serious attitude towards the Law of God in the school, what is the point of it if the child's atheist parents do not teach him Church life, confession and the sacraments, prayer and fasting? Will such learning profit him?

"We are not talking in detail here about the de facto fall of Orthodoxy in West Ukraine..., about the rapid growth and spread of Latinism, of Protestantism, of the special heresy that strives to unite Christianity with Judaism, of Krishnaism, 'non-traditional medicine', astrology, sorcery and the most various kinds of satanism. We are also not talking here about the open campaign of moral corruption through all the means of mass communication, which are almost exclusively in the hands of the enemies of the Church and the fatherland.

"The main thing is that our Church [the MP] has practically renounced the ideals of Holy Russia and Orthodox Statehood as moral-dogmatic standards, but has become entwined in the rabble of democratic politicians, and while breathing a sigh of nostalgia for the Bolsheviks has begun in the persons of her hierarchs to bless all the initiatives of the new power. This has led to our present position of being unable to resist this concentrated and deeply positioned attack of the enemy forces against the Church, which, moreover, has to a significant degree allowed the enemy to enter the Church and sow his tares in her midst. For example, how can we resist the widely disseminated teaching of Protopriest Alexander Men, who departed far from Orthodoxy, but which has been condemned as a heresy by nobody? Only one small, albeit very well written brochure has appeared in a very limited edition. In the conditions of democracy everyone receives blessings for everything, and in the first place those who do evil are blessed for their evil activities. And we have to look on

with horror as the flock of Christ is scattered by wolves before our very eyes..."⁹¹⁹

Archpriest Lev Lebedev, a convert from the MP to ROCOR, was still more trenchant in his criticism: "Only after... 1990, in a situation and atmosphere of *relative* civil liberty, and especially after the staged supposed 'putsch' of the dissolution of the CPSU in 1991 and even of Soviet power in 1993 (!), did the following *become completely clear*. The 'Patriarchate' in the former Sovdepa was *not at all an unfree, enslaved 'Church of silence'*, as it was sometimes called. Its hierarchy had already for a very long time, *not at all under coercion*, not under pressure, but completely voluntarily and from the soul, been attempting to please the Soviet regime. They were not the 'new martyrs' for the Church that they presented themselves as to their flock, and which is how some observers from outside were inclined to see them. The point is that the episcopate of the 'patriarchate' constructed by Sergius had more and more with every succeeding generation (replenishment) *truly fraternised and become friendly with the partocrats, the nomenklatura of the CPSS, to the extent that the nomenklatura degenerated morally and ideologically!* So that the bishops of the 'patriarchate', and especially the highest ones, that is, those who held *real power* in the Church, became one with the partocrats *in spirit*, in their manner of thinking, even, to a large extent, in their language (the use of stock phrases from the newspapers in their sermons and speeches had been noted long before). If there is anything more despicable in the world than the Soviet 'cultural intelligentsia', then it can only be the episcopate of the Moscow 'patriarchate'! The princes (and 'princelets') of the church, exactly like the party boyars, began to be distinguished by an unbelievable haughtiness and arrogance towards those subject to them, and by the basest servility towards those above them, surrounding themselves with houses, dacha-palaces, crowds of toady-lackeys and every kind of luxury. Just like the partocrats, the bloated bishops of the 'patriarchate' became *thieves from the public purse* and swindlers, and acquired an amazing capacity to look with honest, clear eyes on an interlocutor or at their flock and deliberately deceive them in the most convincing manner. Their mendacity, their infinite mendacity almost in everything became a real second nature of the 'patriarchal' hierarchy. 'Evil communications...' If *ecumenism* made the Moscow 'patriarchate' *one* in spirit with all the heretics, and even with non-Christians, with whom it entered into spiritual communion through joint prayers, then *sergianism* made it *one* in spirit with the partocracy. Now, when the very *partocracy* has abandoned even the communist ideology that held it together, and even its own party, so as to become openly private owners of the huge resources stolen from the country and the people, and for that reason has 'rebranded' itself as *democracy*, while holding power in Russia as before, the 'patriarchate', being as before one with it, serves it on mutually beneficial terms. However, as we have seen, from now on the 'patriarchate' has started more and more openly to orient itself on the real masters of the situation – *the Jews*.

"Like all smart dealers 'of this world', the bishops of 'the patriarchate' are no longer able to maintain real ecclesiastical brotherhood and friendship in their relationships with each other. Jealousy, envy, enmity, intrigues and denunciations

⁹¹⁹ Anonymous, "O Pravoslavnom Tsarstve i Poslednem Vremeni" (On the Orthodox Kingdom and the Last Times), no date or place of publication.

against each other have become *the norm* of their mutual relations. This has been transmitted to the clergy. If there are several priests in a parish, there can never be true friendship between them; jealousy and envy have become the norm. There is no point even speaking about *Christian love* among the clergy.

“‘The fish begins to rot from the head.’ This condition and behaviour of the hierarchy of the Moscow ‘patriarchate’ has been transferred, not without opposition, to the lower levels – through the middle clergy to the people, the flock, where it received the most powerful and long-lasting resistance. But with time even the flock ‘gave in’. In the mass of the Christians of the churches of the ‘patriarchate’, mutual *love* has become extremely scarce; more and more its place has been taken by jealousy, envy and the most terrible bitterness against each other (especially on the *kliroses* and at the money ‘desks’), a bitterness such as you will not find in secular establishments! In the last 10 years this has reached the level of pathological fear of each other in connection with suspicions of *witchcraft*! Many in the churches now fear to receive a *prospora* or boiled wheat or a candle from each other... There where faith has withered there have grown up, like poisonous mushrooms, the most varied superstitions! And, you know, they really do practise *witchcraft*! And not only in the villages, but also in the cities, moreover completely educated people! They learn from each other methods of ‘black’ and ‘white’ magic, spells, ‘charms’ and ‘anti-charms’. Sorcerers send their ‘patients’ to certain priests, and these in their turn – to sorcerers. Healer-sorcerers have appeared in the midst of the clergy... They go to him in droves, not only from the diocese, but also from other regions. The profit from it is very large. *Batiushka* generously shares it with the bishop, and *for that reason* the bishop does not touch him, in spite of the outrage of his brethren and some of the believers!... Suffering from spells and the evil eye have become very widespread illnesses amongst parishioners. Medicine in such cases is useless, it cannot even establish a diagnosis. And people suffer terribly! You should see (especially in the countryside) this bewitched, hunched-up, deformed humanity! And all this is *from their own* people, as a result of envy and revenge....

“There where hatred has taken the place of love, you can say what you like, only it is not *the Church of Christ*, and especially not the Russian Orthodox Church.

“The *quality* of faith has changed to an unrecognizable extent. To put it more bluntly, among people of that social milieu where to this day they sincerely suppose that an abandoned church is very suitable for a lavatory, among people of this milieu faith has long ago been turned into some church-like *paganism*, where everything comes down to ‘sacrifices’ to God, so that He may not punish them, or give them something they are asking for. Among people of a higher cultural level, alongside this a thirst for ‘spiritual experiences’ is also noticeable. But if there is no grace of the Holy Spirit and the lofty feelings produced by it, then they are trying to *imagine* them, that is, artificially create them. The result is ‘spiritual deception’ in the form of various levels of exaltation, leading right to psychological and mental illness of one or another level. So that now among believing intelligently the most zealous are always – without fail and necessarily – psychologically *sick people*. On this soil especially luxuriant blooms that have flowered in the ‘patriarchate’ have been the manifestations of false ‘eldership’ and the ‘deification’ of young archimandrites by demonized hysterics. In

contrast to St. John of Kronstadt, the archimandrites (igumens, hieromonks and other 'grace-filled batiushkas') do not drive such people away from themselves, but in every way encourage them, sometimes creating out of these female worshippers veritable bands that morally (and sometimes even physically!) terrorize the other believers. This terrible phenomenon already has a marked antichristian character. One of the female worshippers of one such archimandrite very precisely said: 'Batiushka is our God!' What stands behind this is the thirst to have a 'living god', a man-god, whom one can make an idol of in one's life. The epoch of the 'cult of personality' did not pass in vain. How many hundred and thousands of souls throughout Russia have been hopelessly spoiled by this newly appeared 'elders', 'grace-filled' instructors and 'wonder-workers'! True eldership ceased long ago. Some widely venerated monastics from the Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra, the Pskov Caves monastery, the Riga desert and other places, however one may respect them, cannot be called elders. If only because they *were silent* through all the years of Khrushchev's mockery of the Church, and are silent now, after the speech of the 'patriarch' before the rabbis. Moreover, they do not bless others to speak. Why? Because the 'patriarchate' has constantly instilled and instills in its flock that in the Church '*obedience is higher than fasting and prayer*', having forgotten to explain that this refers to the *real* Church, and not to the false one! These are undoubtedly sincere and assiduous monastics; they also take the 'patriarchate' for the Russian Orthodox Church, that is, they also *believe in the lie*, encouraging those who trust them to believe in it, too...

"We must note that there were and still are completely honourable people in the bosom of the 'patriarchate', people who have sincerely converted to God. But they were always in the minority, and now all the more so, becoming all the time fewer, and they do not have the opportunity to *determine* Church life. Left only with their human strength, they can do little, although they present an at times exemplary model of asceticism and self-denial.

"The phenomena of spiritual deformity, canonical transgressions and moral sins are possible and, moreover, *natural* at any time of the existence of any local Church, insofar as it is a community not of 'the pure and sinless', but precisely of sinful, damaged people. The Church must therefore be a *spiritual hospital* for its members, for the flock. If the Church firmly holds to the Orthodox Faith and the holy canons 'work' in it in relation both to those above, and those below, to everyone (!), then it is a truly living organism of the Body of Christ, which is given life and raised up to God by the Holy Spirit. Then the excesses of various apostasies, crimes and transgressions of the canons in it are just that – *excesses, instances* on the background of what is *on the whole a normal and correct* life. But if the Church falls away both from the Faith and from the canonical order, it ceases to be the Body of Christ, that is, the Church, being turned into a community in which the virtues and correct conditions become occasional *exceptions*, while *the general background* and 'norm of life' turns out to be crime, apostasy and transgression... In such an inverted order of things the Church situation does not help, but *hinders* the salvation of those who trustingly enter it, it simply destroys them. Such, we see, is the situation in the Moscow 'patriarchate' to the highest degree. And so now it is extremely *unclear* what is served by the noisy opening of churches and monasteries, and the adornment of some of them in every

way, and the building of Sunday schools and other institutions of the 'patriarchate'. Does all this serve for the spiritual benefit or the further spiritual *corruption* of people? Most likely, it is the broadening and deepening of the sphere of evil and destruction, a trap for those who have sincerely been drawn to Christ. They will not be able to strike through to Him as long as they accept the 'patriarchate' as the Orthodox Church, as long as they believe in a lie that is incompatible with the Spirit of righteousness, the Holy Spirit."⁹²⁰

Special mention should be made of the role of the "startsyy", or elders, in the life of the MP. According to Igumen Gregory Lourié, the role of the MP elders, and especially Archimandrite Ioann (Krestiankin) of the Pskov Caves monastery, was critical in turning the masses of the people away from ROCOR at the beginning of the 1990s. "Archimandrite Ioann not only did not approve of the opening in Russia of parishes outside the jurisdiction of the ROC MP, but he also reproached ROCOR herself as a schism: 'We have no canonical differences with the Russian Church Abroad, but we cannot now accept them on the Russian land, for they, by not recognizing our Mother Church, which lived through all the woes of Rus' with her people, are becoming, not builders up, but schismatics and destroyers of that little which has remained with us. And if you pray in a church belonging to the [Church] Abroad, you become a schismatic.' "⁹²¹

Perhaps the aspect of patriarchal life that most clearly demonstrated its degradation was its attitude to the very heart of all church life – the sacraments, where a truly appalling picture presents itself. Ludmilla Perepiolkina writes: "[Baptism] as a rule is administered through ablution or even sprinkling⁹²², although, as one knows, the threefold immersion of the baptized into the baptismal font [is the only correct form of baptism and] signifies Christ's death and Resurrection on the third day. Therefore a negligent and needlessly hurried administration of this Mystery becomes an act of sacrilege.

"Both the baptized and their godparents are usually admitted to the Mystery without any preceding catechization and testing of faith. As a rule, godparents remain in absolute ignorance regarding their spiritual obligations and their responsibility before God for the upbringing of their godchildren. The godparents attending mass baptisms of the Moscow Patriarchate are mostly irreligious, often non-Orthodox, or atheists in general...

"Superstitious parents sometimes baptize their children several times ('to keep them from becoming ill...'); religious illiteracy accompanies many other superstitions as well. Lately there have been increased instances of *baptizing and even giving Holy Communion (!) to the dead*. These awful phenomena are caused not only by the ignorance and covetousness of clergymen, but also by the fact that among the clerics

⁹²⁰ Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 644-647.

⁹²¹ Lourié, "Dve Tserkvi, dve very i raznie novomucheniki. Razmyshlenia po sluchaiu konchiny arkhimandrita Ioanna (Krestiankina)" (Two Churches, two faiths and different new martyrs. Thoughts on the occasion of the death of Archimandrite Ioann (Krestiankin)", <http://portalcredo.ru/site/print.php?act=comment&id=915>.

⁹²² In 2014 a photograph appeared on Facebook of Patriarch Cyril "baptizing" by sprinkling. (V.M.)

of the Moscow Patriarchate there is an increase in the number of occultists, wizards, psychics. This is because there are not only neophytes among those ordained... but also converts from Eastern cults, Yoga, paganism, occultism and other demonic delusions. Having failed to renounce their former beliefs, the latter dissolve their 'Christianity' in this contamination. There are 'priests' who practise black magic and are a true horror to their 'spiritual children' whom they have enslaved and reduced to becoming zombies...

"In the city churches of the Moscow Patriarchate Chrismation, which is administered immediately after Baptism, resembles a production line in a factory, rather than a Church Mystery. Since at the time of their baptism people have merely their heads sprinkled with water over the baptismal font, they have their clothes on. A priest then hastily goes round the long rank of the newly baptised who stand there in ignorance. Then, at the sacred moment of Chrismation, requiring a special reverence, when the Holy Spirit is received, there is a general hurried discarding of superfluous clothing. Not infrequently a priest may even anoint parts of the body still covered by clothing.

"The following should be noted. Not so long ago a certain degree of confidence in the Patriarchate's Chrism was based on the fact that every time it was sanctified, a part of the Chrism of the previous years had to be added. Thus, the chrism of the Soviet period must have contained a part of the Chrism sanctified by the Holy Patriarch Tikhon. However, in the most recent years many in the Moscow Patriarchate have been confused, and not only because the Chrism now in use was sanctified by the apostate Patriarch Alexis II (Ridiger). From many areas of Russia priest of the Moscow Patriarchate have reported that by its fragrance this Chrism is indistinguishable from ordinary oil although it should have a very complex fragrance due to the fact that it should consist of a multitude of fragrances symbolizing the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"The Mystery of Confession and the Mystery of Baptism elicit the most criticism. Practically everywhere the so-called 'general confession' is performed, which is not stipulated by the Church canons and which was not permitted even in the Moscow Patriarchate even in the first years after the Second World war, when there was an acute shortage of clergy. At the present time many young priests, accustomed to practice an insipid and formalized 'general confession', refuse to hear individual confession even if it is a question of only one or two people (who want to be confessed individually), not scores of them. A priest only covers the head of a penitent with his epitrachelion and recites the last short prayer of absolution, or simply makes the sign of the cross over him in silence. In 10 minutes time scores of people go through confession in this manner.

"The practice of such 'remission of sins' cannot be called anything but criminal! After all, many people, who for 70 years lived in the militantly atheist country where *sin had become the norm*, and who only recently learned to make the sign of the cross over themselves, often have no idea what sin is. Thus, the overwhelming majority of women who have undergone abortion do not know that they are murderers who have

committed a mortal sin.⁹²³ The same happens to other people who seek healing of their soul in the Church, but do not find it. Is this not the reason why there is such an unprecedented number of all kinds of sects in post-Soviet Russia?

“Through the efforts of Renovationists of the Moscow Patriarchate, its theological academies and seminaries for years have been preparing a complete break between the Mysteries of Confession and Communion, and a rejection of the obligatory Confession before Communion resulting from such a break.

“The Moscow Patriarchate promotes the conviction that ‘obedience is more important than prayer and fasting’, than the Canons and Patristic teaching. This conviction has been turned into a means of the personal dependence and subjugation of church-going people to pseudo-clergy, pseudo-elders and pseudo-Patriarch...

“The most profound Mystery of the Church is that of Holy Communion... The gravest sin of the apostates is the profanation of this Mystery. They turn the Divine Liturgy, which only true believers are permitted to attend, into a show, a spectacle for the crowds of tourists and television viewers, and the Holy Gifts – Christ’s Body and Blood – are given to anybody and at random...

“Besides the corrupting influence which the distortion of the Mystery of Confession or its rejection has upon Orthodox Christians, this innovation is instrumental in achieving the ecumenical objective of allowing access to the Orthodox Mystery of Holy Communion to the non-Orthodox. The resolution of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate concerning admission of Catholics to Communion in Orthodox Churches in Russia had been in force from 1969 to 1986. Subsequently this resolution has not been abolished, it has only been suspended (although on paper only)... At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s one could regularly observe crowds of Western tourists being admitted to Communion (without prior Confession, of course) in the church of St. John the Theologian at the Theological Academy of St. Petersburg. A Jesuit hieromonk Michael Arranz, a Professor of the Eastern Institute in Rome, who in those years was lecturing on Liturgics at the ‘Orthodox’ Theological Academy in Leningrad, would partake of Communion in the Sanctuary of that church along with the clergy.

“When celebrating the *Proskomedia* and reciting litanies (*ektenias*), the ecumenists would commemorate heretics along with the Orthodox in accordance with their sermon on ‘the church without frontiers’, and during the Great Entrance of the Divine Liturgy they would replace the words ‘and may the Lord God remember you *all*

⁹²³ In an article published in *Pravoslavnoe Slovo* (The Orthodox Word), № 12 (49), 1995, priest Timothy Selsky writes that in the MP cathedral of a small town he noticed... a price-list displayed at the candle counter. “The column reading ‘Prayer after Abortion – 8000 Roubles’ caught my eye. What sort of a new rite was this? As I learned later, a woman who would pay the required sum at the candle counter would have a certain prayer read over her, a prayer which allegedly should be read after having killed one’s own child in the womb. Whence all this? What is the mystery of such an easy remission of a mortal sin unknown to any of the Holy Church Fathers? Have we lived to see the day when the forgiveness of the sin of infanticide is bought just like that for a mere 8000 roubles and without any confession at all?” (V.M.)

Orthodox Christians in His Kingdom' by 'and all Christians'.

“In 1994 the Bishops’ Council of the MP left practically all matters concerning communication with the non-Orthodox to the personal discretion of its bishops and clergy, merely pointing out to them the undesirability of bewildering their flock.

“The instances of Protestants partaking of Holy Communion, unprecedented, in the MP, have now become a regular phenomenon, at least in the Novgorod diocese, where its ruling Archbishop Lev [Tserpitsky] openly admits Protestants and Catholics to Communion in the ancient Cathedral of St. Sophia in the city of Novgorod. In this and similar instances the obvious motivation is undoubtedly the material benefit gained as a result of attracting foreign tourists, along with their dollars, pounds and marks, into the Patriarchate’s churches...”⁹²⁴

As we have seen, Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad was both a KGB agent and a secret Vatican bishop. In 1992 the Pope said that he had two cardinals among the bishops in Russia.⁹²⁵ Perhaps one of them was Archbishop Lev.... Another of them may have been Archbishop Theodosius (Protsyuk) of Omsk, who, according to Perepiolkina, “has not only received legates from the Vatican and openly concelebrated with them, even the Divine Liturgy, but presented the well-known Verenfried with an ‘episcopal cross..., thus becoming an inseparable friend’ of the wealthy Catholic sponsor.

“The practice of offering communion to the heterodox... is reaching epidemic proportions in the MP. This may be illustrated by the state of affairs in the Kaliningrad vicariate of the MP which is... ruled by Bishop Panteleimon (Kutov), a subordinate of Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev). In connection with the building project (still only a project, although some donations have already been collected a long time ago) for a Cathedral in the former Koenigsberg (now Kalinigrad), local parishioners hope that ‘this will be an Orthodox church not only by its name. Unfortunately, Bishop Panteleimon’s ecumenical views leave little hope that in the new Cathedral things will be any different from what they are now in the patriarchal churches of the Kaliningrad area, *where Orthodox people are offered communion from one chalice with heretics*. Bishop Panteleimon himself felt no embarrassment when he declared that ‘Catholics... partook of communion in our churches, and the priests offered prayers for them’.

“The ecumenical epidemic has spread to even the remotest areas. In accordance with the Balamand Agreement [of 1994], the same church buildings are now being regularly used by representatives of different denominations (particularly in the Baltic States). In the village (!) Yegla of Borovichi region of the Novgorod district they are building a church which *right at the start* will be intended for ecumenical services. It will have *three altars: Catholic, Protestant and ‘Orthodox’*. The number of such

⁹²⁴ Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 116-117, 118-120, 121, 122. An earlier, Russian-language edition of this important book is entitled *Ekumenizm - put' vedushchej k pogibeli* (Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1992).

⁹²⁵ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

ecumenical prayer houses in Russia is growing.”⁹²⁶

“Ordination... It is generally known that anyone seeking after a high (or simply well-secured) position in the MP under the Communists had to win, in one way or another, the special favour of the God-defying regime.

“All this is entirely contrary to the 30th Apostolic Rule which reads: ‘If any bishop comes into possession of a church office by employing the secular rulers, let him be deposed from office, and let him be excommunicated. And all those who communicate with him too.’ (Compare Rule 3 of the 7th Ecumenical Council.) An unlawful tree cannot produce lawful fruit. Every year the ranks of the Patriarchate’s clergy have been supplemented by those ordained in violation of the Church canons: those tainted by simony, by second marriage, known homosexuals, obviously un-Orthodox and even those married to sectarians (the wife of a Moscow priest A. Borisov, one of the leaders of the late Archpriest Men’s group within the Moscow Patriarchate, is a Pentecostalist who organizes her sect’s meetings in his church.)

“Simony flourishes openly in some dioceses. Thus, it is well known that in Western Ukraine a prospective priest must remunerate his bishop with a sum of 10,000 roubles (the price of a ‘Volga’ car) for his ordination. Parishioners would collect the required sum and present it to their young priest on the day of his first church service. We have no reason to think that his ‘custom’ has in any way suffered from the anarchy which set in after the beginning of perestroika...

“The Sacrament of Marriage is almost always administered without any preparation and without prior Confession of the couple to be married. The determining factor is the payment of a certain sum of money (which in recent years has increased to two, three and more times the average monthly wage). Contrary to the rules, several couples are wed at the same time and often on unstated days and during fasts. Marriages with non-Orthodox and with people of other faiths are allowed. For instance, some of St. Petersburg’s clergy recall a case in the later 70s when one of the well-known Archpriests of that city married his own daughter to a Moslem. It should be added that the perpetration of these and other kinds of unlawful acts is often motivated by the financial and social status of the parties to the marriage...

“Church prayer is also being profaned by the Patriarchate’s clergy when they ‘sanctify’ banks, restaurants, casinos, communist banners of the Red Army and Fleet, as well as buildings used by psychics and ‘healers’. The apostate MP has entered into a special relationship with the ‘Orthodox’ magicians in white coats...

“We may also mention the widespread advertising and sale of ‘holy’ water on the planes of Aeroflot, in shops and restaurants.

“All this, together with ‘funeral services’ for atheists and non-baptised persons (which an Orthodox clergyman may bring himself to perform only as a result of losing

⁹²⁶ Perepiolkina, op. cit., pp. 213-214.

the fear of God), and a scandalous acceptance by the hierarchy of the MP (in the person of Metropolitan Pitirim) of a 'donation' from the criminal sect 'Aum Shinri Kyo' has become the means of replenishing church funds with dirty money.

"Such actions as the luxurious church ceremonies at the funeral of journalist List'yev, notorious for his immoral television programs (in particular those promoting incest), the burial of one of the mafia leaders in the sacred caves of the Pskov Monastery of the Caves, have become a rather symptomatic phenomenon in the Moscow Patriarchate...

"Criminal power has come to replace party power in Russia. This power has immediately secured the support of the MP and has occupied an appropriate place in its life. The MP itself is acquiring a criminal character with its 'church' banks, multi-billion fraud and cooperation with the mafia...

"During the long decades of Communist dictatorship an indulgent attitude to all 'weaknesses' and deviations of hierarchs and clergy had become firmly ingrained in the consciousness of the members of the MP. This justification of shortcomings was motivated by the alleged 'captivity' of the clergy (which from year to year was becoming increasingly voluntary). At the same time the episcopate succeeded in enhancing among the laity and clergy a peculiar kind of Papism ('The Patriarch is responsible for everything') and the cult of 'blessed ignorance' which, allegedly, makes one's salvation easier to achieve. All these phenomena flourished and became the very essence of the Moscow Patriarchate, as the years of 'democratic' rule have been demonstrating, when discussions about 'forced' acts of apostasy... have become meaningless..."⁹²⁷

Many Russians, while not blind to the corruption in the patriarchate, supported it for the sake of the Fatherland; Russia, they thought, could not be resurrected without a Church, and the MP was the only Church that they saw as being able to become the religion of the State. However, as Archpriest Lev Lebedev wrote, "fatherland", "Russia", "the State" had become idols in post-Soviet Russia, more important than the true Faith, without which they are worthless: "The ideological idol under the name of 'fatherland' ('Russia', 'the state') has been completely preserved. We have already many times noted that these concepts are, in essence, pagan ideological idols not because they are in themselves bad, but because they have been *torn out* from the trinitarian *unity* of co-subjected concepts: Faith, Tsar, Fatherland (Orthodoxy, Autocracy, People)... Everything that one might wish to be recognized and positive, even the regeneration of the faith, is done under the slogan of 'the regeneration of the Fatherland (Russia)!' But nothing is being regenerated. Even among the monarchists the regeneration of the Orthodox Autocratic Monarchy is mainly represented as no more than the means for the regeneration of the Fatherland. We may note that if any of the constituent parts of the triad - Orthodoxy, Autocracy, People - is torn away from the others and becomes the only one, it loses its power. Only *together* and in the indicated hierarchical order did they constitute, and do they constitute now, the spiritual (and all the other) strength and significance of Great Russia. But for the time

⁹²⁷ Perepiolkina, *op. cit.*, pp. 125, 127, 129, 130.

being it is the ideological idol 'fatherland' that holds sway..."⁹²⁸

63. ROCOR'S MISSION INSIDE RUSSIA

In March, 1990 ROCOR issued the following guidelines for its Church in Russia, to be known as the "Free Russian Orthodox Church" (FROC): "I. The free Russian Orthodox parishes are neither an independent nor a new hierarchal structure; they are in eucharistic communion with and in the jurisdiction of and subject to the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, which is headed by its first hierarch, Metropolitan Vitaly, and is the preserver of unadulterated Orthodoxy and the traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church.

"II. The clergy are not to join in eucharistic communion with the Moscow Patriarchate until it renounces the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, until it repents of the errors which followed this uncanonical declaration, and removes those ruling bishops who have compromised themselves by uncanonical and immoral acts, who have been involved in corruption and the embezzlement of church funds, who have been placed in power through the interference of the secular authorities, and who have allowed distortions in the services of the Russian Orthodox Church.

"III. The parishes may not pray for the government as long as the controlling and guiding power remains the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which has a militantly atheistic and anti-Church program. In addition, prayer is allowed for apostates only during the prayer, 'that Thou mightest appear to them who have fallen away,' but not during the proskomedia.

"IV. The reasons for the establishment of free parishes: The free Russian Orthodox parishes have opened due to the absolutely paralyzed, unrepentant state of the hierarchy and clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, who have fallen away from pure Orthodoxy through the acceptance of the declaration by Metropolitan Sergius (who usurped the power of the Church in Russia) in 1927 of loyalty to the militantly atheistic communist Soviet power.

"The main errors of the Moscow Patriarchate after the declaration of 1927 are as follows:

"1. The excommunication of those hierarchs, clergy, monastics and laymen who did not accept the declaration, which was followed by mass terror and murder of those who did not accept the atheistic government.

"2. The desecration of the memory of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors.

"3. The collaboration with the atheistic government even in the business of closing churches. Devoted service to the government and public prayer to strengthen its power, which in turn fights against faith and the Church.

⁹²⁸ Lebedev, op. cit., p. 655.

"4. The distortion of the sacraments, rites, sermon, and carelessness in the spreading of the Word of God. Refusal to catechize, which has led masses of laypeople into ignorance and a superficial acceptance of Christianity.

"5. The participation and membership in the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement, for the creation of a worldwide "church", that would unite all heresies and religions.

"6. Submission to secular, atheistic authorities and allowing them to rule the inner life of the church even to the extent of direct control, with the ultimate goal of destroying faith.

"7. The alienation of the hierarchy and clergy from the flock, and a careless, proud relationship towards the laypeople in direct violation of the apostolic injunction to clergy to be an example and not exercise power over others.

"8. The wide-spread moral depravity and mercenariness among the uncanonical clergy.

"9. Uncanonical and capricious transferring of diocesan bishops."⁹²⁹

This was a good manifesto. The problem was: it was not adhered to consistently. And this failure, together with personnel and administrative failures, constituted the main reason for the collapse of ROCOR's mission in Russia. The momentous event of the return of the exiles to Russia was undertaken almost casually, without a clearly defined strategy. Hence difficult problems arose, problems that ROCOR in the end found insuperable...

The first problem was one of self-definition: how could the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad continue to call herself the Church *Abroad* if she now had parishes *inside* Russia? After all, her Founding Statute or Polozhenie stated that ROCOR was an autonomous part of the Autocephalous Russian Church, that part which existed (i) *outside* the bounds of Russia on the basis of Ukaz № 362 of November 7/20, 1920 of Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, and (ii) *temporarily* until the fall of communism in Russia. With the fall of communism and the creation of ROCOR parishes inside Russia in 1990, it would seem that these limitations in space and time no longer applied, and that ROCOR had ceased to exist as a canonical organisation in accordance with her own definition of herself in the Polozhenie. The solution to this problem was obvious: change the Polozhenie! And this was in fact the solution put forward by Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), who had been Chancellor of the Synod from 1931 until his retirement by Metropolitan Vitaly in 1986.

However, the ROCOR episcopate declined his suggestion, probably because a change in the Polozhenie that removed the spatial and temporal limitations of

⁹²⁹ "The Position of ROCOR on the Free Russian Orthodox Church", adopted by the Council of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad, 2/15 March 1990.

ROCOR's self-definition would have had the consequence of forcing the ROCOR episcopate to: (i) remove the centre of her Church administration from America to Russia, (ii) proclaim herself (alongside any Catacomb Church groups that she might recognise) as part of the Russian Orthodox Church *inside* Russia and distinguished from the other parts only by its possessing dioceses and parishes abroad, and (iii) enter into a life-and-death struggle with the MP for the minds and hearts of the Russian people.

However, the ROCOR bishops could not accept these consequences. After all, they were well-established abroad, increasingly dependent economically on money from foreign converts to Orthodoxy, and with few exceptions were not prepared to exchange the comforts and relative security of life in the West for the uncertainty and privations of life in Russia. Thus even after the fall of communism, ROCOR's first-hierarchy, Metropolitan Vitaly, never set foot on Russian soil, in spite of numerous invitations from believers.

Of course, the whole raison d'être of ROCOR was to return to her homeland in Russia (she was previously called the Russian Church *in Exile*, and exiles by definition want to return to their homeland); and it was in anticipation of such a return that she had steadfastly refused to endanger her Russian identity by merging with other Local Orthodox Churches or by forming local jurisdictions identified with specific western countries (like the formerly Russian schism from ROCOR calling itself the Orthodox Church of America). But generations had passed since the first emigration, the descendants of that first emigration had settled in western countries, learned their languages, adopted their ways, put down roots in foreign soil. The exiles were no longer exiles from, but strangers to, their native land...

A second problem concerned ROCOR's relationship to the Catacomb Church. Since 1927, when ROCOR had broken communion with Metropolitan Sergius at the same time as the Catacomb Church, she had looked upon the Catacomb Church as the True Church inside Russia with which she remained in mystical communion, even if such communion could not be realised in face-to-face meeting and concelebration. Indeed, after the death, in 1937, of Metropolitan Peter, the last universally recognised leader of the Russian Church, ROCOR commemorated "the episcopate of the persecuted Russian Church" - that is, the episcopate of the Catacomb Church. After the war, however, a change began to creep in, at first almost imperceptibly, but then more and more noticeably. On the one hand, news of Catacomb bishops and communities became more and more scarce, and some even began to doubt that the Catacomb Church existed any longer. On the other hand, as we have seen, some Catacomb priests inside Russia, having lost contact with, and knowledge of, any canonical bishops there might still be inside Russia, began commemorating Metropolitan Anastasy, first-hierarchy of ROCOR.

These tendencies gave rise to the perception that the leadership of True Orthodoxy had now passed from inside Russia to outside Russia. Moreover, the significance of the Catacomb Church began to be lost, as the struggle was increasingly seen to be between the "red church" inside Russia (the MP) and the "white church" outside Russia (ROCOR). This position was reinforced by the negative attitude taken towards

most of the Catacomb clergy still alive in 1990 by Bishop Lazarus of Tambov, the bishop secretly consecrated by ROCOR in 1982 as her representative in Russia, who declared that the last canonical Catacomb bishop, Schema-Bishop Peter (Ladygin), died as long ago as 1957, and that he and his clergy were now the only group that could rightly be called “the Catacomb Church”.

A third, critical problem concerned the status of the Moscow Patriarchate. ROCOR’s position here was tragically double-minded: the bishops proved themselves incapable of making up their minds whether the MP was their bitterest enemy or their most beloved mother, whether it was necessary to fight her or unite with her!⁹³⁰ This double-mindedness bore bitter fruit that was to lead to schism and the collapse of ROCOR’s mission inside Russia and the eventual fall of the main body of ROCOR herself.

The roots of this double-mindedness go back to the post-war period, when large numbers of Christians fleeing towards Western Europe from Soviet Russia were joined to ROCOR. In receiving these Christians, little difference was made between those who had belonged to the Catacomb Church, and those who had belonged to the MP. Some, even including bishops, turned out to be KGB agents, and either returned to the MP or remained as “moles” to undermine ROCOR. Others, while sincerely anti-Soviet, were not sufficiently “enchurched” to see the fundamental ecclesiological significance of the schism in the Russian Church.

Thus a certain “dilution” in the quality of those joining ROCOR in the second emigration by comparison with the first – and the problem was to get worse with the third and fourth emigrations of the 70s, 80s and 90s – which began to affect the confessing stance of the Church as a whole. Even members of the first emigration were proving susceptible to deception. Over half of the Church in America and all except one diocese in China (that of Shanghai, led by St. John Maximovich⁹³¹) were lured back into the arms of the Soviet “Fatherland” and its Soviet “Church”.

Another reason for this diminution in zeal was ROCOR’s continuing communion with the Local Orthodox Churches of “World Orthodoxy” even after all of these (except Jerusalem) sent representatives to the local Councils of the MP in 1945 and 1948. The reasons for this continuation of communion depended on the Church in question. Thus communion continued with the Serbian Church because of the debt of gratitude ROCOR owed to it because of the hospitality shown by the Serbian Church to ROCOR in the inter-war years. Communion continued with the Jerusalem Patriarchate because all churches in the Holy Land, including ROCOR monasteries, were required, under threat of closure, to commemorate the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Communion also continued, albeit intermittently, with the Greek new calendarist churches, because the Patriarchate of Constantinople was powerful in the United States, the country to which ROCOR moved its headquarters after the war.

⁹³⁰ Fr. Timothy Alferov, “O polozhenii rossijskikh prikhodov RPTsZ v svete itogov patriarkhijnogo sobora” (On the Position of the Russian Parishes of the ROCOR in the Light of the Results of the Patriarchal Council), *Uspenskij Listok* (Dormition Leaflet), № 34, 2000.

⁹³¹ St. John briefly commemorated the patriarch of Moscow in 1945, but quickly repented when he learned the true state of affairs.

This ambiguous relationship towards “World Orthodoxy” inevitably began to affect ROCOR’s zeal in relation to the MP in particular. For if the MP was recognised by Serbia and Jerusalem, and Serbia and Jerusalem were recognised by ROCOR, the conclusion was drawn that the MP, while bad, was still a Church. And this attitude in turn affected ROCOR’s attitude towards the Catacomb Church, which was no longer seen by many, including several of the bishops, as the only true Church in Russia, but rather as a brave, but not entirely canonical organisation or collection of groupings which needed to be “rescued” by ROCOR before it descended into a form of sectarianism similar to that of the Old Believers.

This pro-Muscovite tendency in ROCOR was led by the powerful Archbishop Mark of Berlin, who argued that ROCOR should return into communion with the patriarchate now that communism had fallen.⁹³²

As ROCOR began to lose confidence in herself and the Catacomb Church as the *only* bearers of true Russian Orthodoxy, the accent began to shift towards the preservation, not of Orthodoxy as such, but of *Russianness*. But for a foreign Church, however Russian in spirit, to claim to be more Russian than the Russians inside Russia was bound to be perceived as arrogant and humiliating (especially in the mouth of an ethnic German such as Archbishop Mark of Berlin!). And so, after the need to display a specifically Soviet patriotism fell away in the early 90s, the MP was able to mount a successful counter-attack, claiming for itself the mantle of “Russianness” as against the “American” church of ROCOR.

As a result, at the very moment that ROCOR was called to enter into an open war with the MP for the souls of the Russian people on Russian soil, she found herself unprepared, hesitant, unsure of her ability to fight this enemy, unsure even whether this enemy was in fact an enemy and not a potential friend, sister or even “mother”. In consequence, ROCOR found itself “moving in two directions”, as the brother-priests Dionysius and Timothy Alferov put it. “The first was that of establishing [ROCOR] parishes in Russia. The second was working to enlighten the clergy of the very MP itself, and had as its goal the passing on to the [Russian] Homeland of the riches of the [Russian] Abroad’s spiritual and ecclesio-social experience. The adherents and supporters of both these courses of action argued amongst themselves from the start, although it cannot be said that these two approaches would have been completely and mutually exclusive, the one of the other.”⁹³³

This double-mindedness eventually led to the collapse of the mission. For “if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?” (I Corinthians 14.8). Looking more at her enemies than at the Lord, ROCOR began, like the Apostle Peter, to sink beneath the waves. And the MP which, at the beginning of the 90s had been seriously rattled, recovered her confidence. By the middle of the 90s she had

⁹³² See, for example, his article “Sila Tserkvi v edinenii very i liubvi” (The Strength of the Church is in Unity of Faith and Love), *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii Russkoj Tserkvi za Granitsej* (Herald of the German Diocese of the Russian Church Abroad), No 4, 1997.

⁹³³ Alferov, op. cit.

recovered her position in public opinion, while ROCOR lost ground.⁹³⁴

This doublemindedness can be seen in ROCOR Synod's statement of May 3/16, 1990, which was written by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva. In general it was strongly anti-MP, declaring that sergianism would not come to an end "until it renounces the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, repents of the errors that followed from it, removes from its administration the hierarchs that have compromised themselves by anticanonical and amoral acts, have been involved in corruption and theft from the state through the mediation of secular authorities, and have also permitted distortions in the Divine services of the Russian Orthodox Church." But it contained the qualification that there *might* be true priests dispensing valid sacraments in the patriarchate.

The idea that there can be true priests in a heretical church is canonical nonsense (Apostolic Canon 46), and Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) immediately obtained the removal of the offending phrase. But the damage had been done.

In fact, ROCOR's mission within Russia was also opposed by many within ROCOR herself... Thus Nun Cassia (Tatiana Senina) wrote: "Already at the beginning of the 1990s far from all the clergy of ROCOR supported the creation of canonical structures of our Church in Russia. This, for example, is what Fr. Alexander Mileant (now Bishop of Buenos-Aires and South America) wrote in 1991, officially addressing the believers of the MP in the name of his parish: '... Many write to us from Russia about the problems in the Russian Church (Moscow Patriarchate), about the presence in it of unworthy clergy who co-operated with the God-fighting power... Their presence in the Church is one more inherited illness which we must begin to cure with the help of God. However, we are disturbed by the move of some parishes dissatisfied with the Moscow Patriarchate into the spiritual care of the Russian Church Abroad, and also by the consecration of bishops for Russia. This can lead to a splintering of the Russian Church into a multitude of jurisdictions warring with each other and to the strengthening of sectarianism. Apparently the most appropriate thing to do now would be to convene an All-Russian Church Council as soon as possible with the participation of the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Russian Church Abroad and if possible of other Orthodox Churches in order to discuss the problems of the Orthodox Church in Russia and for the rapprochement or even merging of the Church Abroad with the mother Russian Church. I pray God to enlighten all the archpastors to find the way to correct the problems and instill peace in the Church. On my part I wish success to his Holiness Patriarch Alexis and all the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church in the strengthening of faith in the Russian people!'"⁹³⁵

⁹³⁴ See table 10.7 in Kaariainen, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

⁹³⁵ Senina, "The Angel of the Philadelphian Church", *Vertograd-Inform* (English edition), № 15, January, 2000, pp. 6-24.

64. THE FREE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In May, 1990, Bishop Lazarus of Tambov, who had been secretly consecrated by ROCOR Bishop Barnabas of Cannes in 1982, was able to obtain a passport in order to go to New York, where his consecration was confirmed by the ROCOR Sobor. An important decision now lay before the assembled bishops: was the ministry of their sole bishop in Russia to remain in the catacombs for Catacomb Christians, or were they to bless the creation of above-ground parishes in direct and open competition with the MP?⁹³⁶ This question was to divide members of the Catacomb Church from recent converts from the MP...

In fact, the decision to create above-ground parishes had been virtually taken already, because on April 7 Metropolitan Vitaly had received from the MP the parish of St. Constantine the Great in Suzdal under Archimandrite Valentine (Rusantsov), who, according to his own account, had left his ruling bishop after refusing to spy on foreign tourists.⁹³⁷ Valentine was received by the metropolitan through a simple

⁹³⁶ At the end of 1988, the layman Boris Kazushin (now Hieromonk Tikhon) went to New York, handed Metropolitan Vitaly a mass of documents and asked him to open parishes of ROCOR inside Russia and accept his own parish under his omophorion (Open Letter to Bishop Victor of Western Europe, November 2/15, 2009, <http://ftrikhon.livejournal.com>).

According to another source, however, this idea goes back to a correspondence initiated during the perestroika period between the dissident Russian layman (and later priest) Stefan Krasovitsky and Bishop Gregory (Grabbe). Wojciech Zalewski writes: "In April 1989 Krassovitsky in a letter to Grabbe indicated that Alexis Aver'ianov, Zoia Krakhmal'nikova and he himself were thinking about 'the necessity of trying to organize a podvorie of the Church Abroad in Russia'. In September (14/27 September, 1989) he is more specific. Although he did not foresee a possibility that even a single already-established parish would come under ROCA [ROCOR], i.e., under Lazarus' jurisdiction, he suggests forming and registering an informal society (union, that is, brotherhood) in secret unity with ROCA. Its members would not attend the MP churches. Krassovitsky even sent Grabbe a proposal for such a society. When the membership grows, he writes, then a request for a church building for our own could be submitted or even a church of our own could be built. Furthermore, it would be useful to take over from the government some schools and 'educate in these schools a hostile attitude to society in its present moral-ideological condition'. Finally, it will be necessary to find an official name for Lazarus's jurisdiction. At the beginning of October (30 September / 13 October, 1989) Krassovitsky writes '[it would be good to get a church for Vladyka Lazarus' and suggests that priests George Edel'shtein, Oleg Steniaev, Aleksei Aver'ianov and possibly Father Gleb Yakunin all could be helpful in this matter. In turn Grabbe answers by stressing a need for candidates for new bishops without whom 'the matter could die. Vl. Lazarus must have this in view' and suggests pulling other members of the Catacomb Church into ROCA's orbit. To that Krassovitsky replies: 'According to Vl. Lazar, the canonicity of the church-servers of these groups is very doubtful. Besides, in my experience with them they are either infected with a spirit of narrow sectarianism bordering on unhealthy mysticism, or with heresies like sophianism' (23 November / 6 December, 1989)." ("Vozvraschenie Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi na Rodinu. Vzgljad Episkopa Grigoria (Grabbe). Iurii Pavlovich Grabbe's (Bishop Grigorii) Vision of the Return of the Orthodox Church to the Homeland in the Post-Soviet Era" (MS, in English mainly))

⁹³⁷ As Fr. Valentine told the story: "In the Vladimir diocese I served as dean. I was a member of the diocesan administration, was for a time diocesan secretary and had responsibility for receiving guests in this diocese. And then I began to notice that I was being gradually, quietly removed. Perhaps this happened because I very much disliked prayers with people of other faiths. It's one thing to drink tea with guests, and quite another... to pray together with them, while the guests, it has to be said, were of all kinds: both Buddhists, and Muslims, and Satanists. I did not like these ecumenical prayers, and I did not hide this dislike of mine.

"And so at first they removed me from working with the guests, and then deprived me of the post

phone call, in spite of the fact that he had a very tarnished past. Many believed he had been a KGB agent, arguing that he could not have attained such a “cushy” post in the MP without being one.

Whether or not he had been an agent⁹³⁸, and whether or not, if he had, he had repented of that, Valentine soon proved himself to be a good administrator, actively receiving priests and parishes, and providing legal registration for them within the Suzdal diocese. However, some parishes distrusted him precisely for his success in this respect. The parishes in Voronezh and Chernigov had the disconcerting experience of being told that they would be refused registration unless they passed under the *omophorion* either of the local MP hierarch or of Valentine of Suzdal.⁹³⁹ Was Valentine simply using his contacts in the MP with skill, or was there, as many suspected, a more sinister reason for his success? In spite of these doubts, Valentine, who was made Bishop of Suzdal in February, 1991, was able to gain the support of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe).⁹⁴⁰

of secretary, and then excluded me from the diocesan council. Once after my return from a trip abroad, the local hierarch Valentine (Mishchuk) summoned me and said: ‘Sit down and write a report for the whole year about what foreigners were with you, what you talked about with them, what questions they asked you and what answers you gave them.’ ‘Why is this necessary?’ ‘It’s just necessary,’ replied the bishop. ‘I don’t understand where I am, Vladyko – in the study of a hierarch or in the study of a KGB operative? No, I’ve never done this and never will do it. And remember that I am a priest and not a “stooge”.’ ‘Well if you’re not going to do it, I will transfer you to another parish.’

“And so the next day came the ukaz concerning my transfer to the out-of-the-way place Pokrov. I was upset, but after all I had to obey, it was a hierarch’s ukaz. But suddenly something unexpected happened – my parishioners rebelled against this decision, people began to send letters to the representatives of the authorities expressing their dissatisfaction with my transfer: our parishioners even hired buses to go to the capital and protest.

“The patriarchate began to admonish them, suggested ‘a good batyushka’, Demetrius Netsvetaiev, who was constantly on trips abroad, in exchange. ‘We don’t need your batyushka,’ said the parishioners, ‘we know this kind, today he’ll spy on foreigners, tomorrow on the unbelievers of Suzdal, and then he’ll begin to reveal the secret of parishioners’ confessions.’ In general, our parishioners just didn’t accept Netsvetaiev. They didn’t even let him into the church. The whole town was aroused, and the parishioners came to me: ‘Fr. Valentine, what shall we do?’ At that point I told them that I had passed my childhood among the ‘Tikhonites’ [Catacomb Christians], and that there is a ‘Tikhonite Church’ existing in exile. If we write to their first-hierarch, Metropolitan Vitaly, and he accepts us – will you agree to be under his *omophorion*? The church people declared their agreement. However, this attempt to remove me did not pass without a trace, I was in hospital as a result of an attack of nerves. And so, at the Annunciation, I receive the news that our parish had been received into ROCA.” (“Vladyka Valentin raskazyvaet” (Vladyka Valentine tells his story), *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 17 (1446), September 1/14, 1991, pp. 9-10).

⁹³⁸ The present writer put that question directly to Valentine in a Moscow flat in 1998. The answer was: “A monk does not justify himself...”

⁹³⁹ “Chernigovskomu prikhotu RIPTs-RPTsZ – 15 let” (15 Years of the Chernigov Parish of RTOC-ROCOR), http://karlovtchanin.com/inex.php?module=pages&act=print_page&pid=109&SSID.

⁹⁴⁰ Thus on September 17/30 he wrote to the Synod that Suzdal was “a base sent from God”. And he continued: “S.K. [probably Stefan Krasovitsky] writes to me on the question of the development of our mission in Russia: ‘A very great brake is the fact that Vladyka Lazarus has not the right, as he claims, to receive clergy from all round the country into our Church, but only in Tambov province. It would be necessary for him to have such a right. It is also necessary that Archimandrite Valentine should have such a right, and I hope he will return to us in the rank of a bishop. The point is that at present many priests are going both to Vladyka Lazarus and to Fr. Valentine. All the papers, as Vl. Lazarus says, he sends to America. While things are going from here to there, parishes can disperse,

Bishop Lazarus' attitude towards the creation of above-ground parishes, and to the whole idea of a ROCOR mission in Russia, was described by Vitaly Shumilo as follows: "Being placed before the alternative: to remain a secret catacomb hierarch or come out of hiding and lead Church construction in Russia, he chose the latter, although he did not agree to it immediately. Before taking this decision, Vladyka Lazarus in the same year of 1990 conducted a Conference of the catacomb clergy at which he took counsel with them on this question. And since almost everyone expressed their desire that he remain in a catacomb position, he agreed with their demand that he ordain a catacomb bishop for them. The candidate put forward in a conciliar manner was Hieromonk Benjamin (Rusalenko), who came from a family of born catacombniks and had been the spiritual son of the catacomb elder well-known in Belorussia, Hieromonk Theodore (Rafanovich (+1975)). The catacombniks invited an official representative of ROCOR to the meeting and through him petitioned the Synod to ordain one more catacomb bishop for the TOC. The request was granted, and on November 28, 1990 Bishop Benjamin (Rusalenko) was ordained to look after the catacombniks by the ROCOR Synod. He was appointed Bishop of Gomel, a vicar of Archbishop Lazarus.

"It seemed that all the conditions for the reestablishment in the Homeland of the TOC's Church administration with the help of ROCOR had been fulfilled. However, at this point certain members of the ROCOR Synod began to act in a completely opposite direction, which led in the end to contradictions within the Russian dioceses and the disorganization of Church life. One of the serious mistakes of the ROCOR Synod was the decision to open on the territory of Russia, in parallel with the TOC, parishes of ROCOR consisting of clergy and laity who had come over from the Moscow Patriarchate.

"From the first day Vladyka Lazarus spoke against the creation in Russia of parallel parishes and dioceses of ROCOR, considering that in Russia there should be the TOC, and abroad – ROCOR. These two branches were united between themselves, but under different administrative centres. He was profoundly convinced that "the Church Abroad" within the bounds of the Fatherland was canonical nonsense. Vladyka Lazarus' report to

be closed in cooperation with the authorities, etc.

"Fr. Germanus Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, after staying in Russia and getting to know the situation on the spot, writes that keeping Fr. Valentine in the rank of archimandrite without consecrating him while there were three of our bishops in Russia has elicited perplexity: 'I see,' he writes, 'all the "faults" (in inverted commas) of Fr. Valentine, everything that makes him not the typical abroad cleric, but I can WITNESS that he himself sees this and is trying to change. He is precisely that person who has fallen on our heads from the sky, who can get things moving. He is capable of changing the situation in Russia radically in our favour. For this he needs a hierarchical mitre.

"I personally have talked for quite a long time with Fr. Valentine and did not notice in him any of those faults about which Vl. Mark writes. Evidently, life and work in our Church in the course of the past months has not passed in vain for him.

"Fr. Germanus also talked with great veneration about Vladyka Lazarus... but thinks that he is not capable of being a leader. He does not have that firm juridical position which, but a miracle of God, Fr. Valentine has and which we could use. If we want to carry out missionary work in Russia, there is simply no other way out for us." (*Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 4 (105), May, 2002, p. 7).

On October 13/26, 1990, Bishop Gregory wrote to Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco: "Vladyka Lazarus is a fine person, but too accustomed to the catacombs, while he does not have the right to live in Moscow. He is not capable of heading open work. I hope that you, Vladyko, as a member of the Synod will help poor Valentine" (Zalewski, *op. cit.*, p. 4).

the ROCOR Synod in 1993 was devoted to this theme. In July, 1993 there was an expanded Conference of RTOC clergy under the presidency of Archbishop Lazarus in Odessa, which supported Archbishop Lazarus and addressed the ROCOR Synod explaining the necessity of re-establishing Church administration in the Homeland and the administrative self-administration of RTOC in accordance with the Holy Patriarch Tikhon's decree no. 362, without breaking ecclesiastico-canonical unity with ROCOR.

"In the same year of 1993 the Odessa Diocesan Administration of the Russian True Orthodox Church was officially registered by Archbishop Lazarus. Later this was confirmed by the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR. In the Charter of the Odessa Diocese of RTOC it says: 'The Russian True Orthodox Church is an independent part of the once united (before 1927) Local Russian Orthodox Church. The administrative-canonical separation of RTOC from other parts of the Russian Church is envisaged by decree no. 362 of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon dated November 7/20, 1920 and by the Epistle of the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne Metropolitan Agathangelus dated June 5/18, 1922 on the self-government of dioceses. If several dioceses of the RTOC jurisdiction are formed, then a Holy Synod will be formed consisting of Ruling Hierarchs, and a First Hierarch will be elected who will be the constant President of the Holy Synod.'

"Archbishop Lazarus consistently and in a principled manner defended the idea of the restoration of ecclesiastical administration in the Homeland and the preservation of the TOC from being engulfed by ROCOR. This elicited the displeasure of certain representatives of ROCOR such as Archbishop Mark and Bishop Barnabas, and there arose a conflict between a part of the bishops of ROCOR and the bishops inside Russia. The result of the conflict was that Archbishop Lazarus was for a certain time retired and banned from serving. Although the wrongness and uncanonicity of the ROCOR Synod's act was evident, nevertheless, fearing a deepening of disagreements and not wishing to deepen the conflict, the bishops and clergy inside Russia humbly accepted this Synodal decision and submitted to it."⁹⁴¹

Another question discussed at the May, 1990 Sobor in New York was: what was the canonical status of the catacomb jurisdictions not under the leadership of Bishop Lazarus and ROCOR? Not unnaturally, Bishop Lazarus had a decisive influence on the decisions taken in this sphere.

These included the decision of the ROCOR Sobor on May 18 to annul its previous decision of December, 1977 recognising Archbishop Anthony Galynsky-Mikhailovsky and his clergy.⁹⁴² "It cannot be recognised as correct because, in connection with newly revealed circumstances, the Episcopal ordination of Anthony (Galynsky-Mikhailovsky) is very dubious, the more so in that there are no written date confirming the canonicity of the ordination." The priests ordained by him were "to regulate their canonical position by turning towards his Grace Bishop Lazarus of Tambov and Morshansk".

⁹⁴¹ Shumilo, "Kratkaia Istoricheskaia Spravka on RIPTs" (A Short Historical Note on the RTOC), 2008.

⁹⁴² On Archbishop Anthony, see "I Vrata Adovy ne Odoleiut Eia' (materialy k istorii Rossijskoj Istinno-Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi)" (And the Gates of Hell shall not Prevail against Her) (Materials towards the History of the True Orthodox Church), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), № 7, March-May, 1999, pp. 35-40; *Kto est' kto v rossijskikh katakombakh* (Who's Who in the Russian Catacombs), St. Petersburg, 1999.

The Sobor also decided to reject the canonicity of the Catacomb hierarchy deriving its apostolic succession from Bishop Seraphim (Pozdeyev) and Schema-Metropolitan Gennady (Sekach).⁹⁴³ In 2000, a book was published appearing to prove beyond doubt that Bishop Seraphim was no bishop, but an imposter...⁹⁴⁴ More recently, two "Sekachite" bishops were received by Metropolitan Agathangel of New York (ROCOR-A) by cheirothesia...

On August 2/15, 1990 another ukaz signed by Bishop Hilarion on behalf of ROCOR was distributed (but not published) which rejected the canonicity both of the "Seraphimo-Gennadiite" and of the "Galynskyite" branches of the Catacomb Church.⁹⁴⁵ The main accusation made by the ukaz against the two groups was their inability to prove their apostolic succession by producing ordination certificates, as required by the 33rd Apostolic Canon. This was, of course, a serious deficiency; and it was perfectly reasonable that ROCOR should first seek to check, and if necessary correct, their canonical status before entering into communion with them. But in view of both groups' favourable attitude towards ROCOR, it would seem to have been more reasonable and charitable to have talked with them directly, learned their history and their point of view on the problem, and discussed with them some way of correcting this deficiency without dismissing them outright. Just such a charitable, unifying attitude to the various Catacomb groups had been urged by Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), but was rejected by ROCOR. And so the possibility of correcting the canonical anomalies of these hierarchs in a peaceful manner and with their complete cooperation (for most of them had a high regard for ROCOR) was lost.⁹⁴⁶

The news that ROCOR had rejected them produced catastrophic effects in the lower clergy and laity of these Catacomb groups.⁹⁴⁷ The impression was created that ROCOR

⁹⁴³ See Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1982, chapter 40; V. Moss, "The True Orthodox Church of Russia", *Religion in Communist Lands*, Winter, 1991; Hierodeacon Jonah (Yashunsky), "Nashi Katakomy" (Our Catacombs), *Vestnik RKhD* (Herald of the Russian Christian Movement), 1992, № 166; Bishop John and Igumen Elijah, *Tainij Skhimitropolit* (A Secret Schema-Metropolitan), Moscow: "Bogorodichnij Tsentr", 1991; *Kto est' kto v rossijskikh katakombakh*, pp. 53-60.

⁹⁴⁴ V.V. Alekseev, M.Yu. Nechaeva, *Voskreschie Romanovy?* (Resurrected Romanovs?), Yekaterinburg, 2000.

⁹⁴⁵ "Spravka iz Kantseliarii Arkhierejskago Sinoda" (Document from the Chancellery of the Hierarchical Synod), № 4/77/133, 2/15 August, 1990. See also Priest Oleg, "O mir vsego mira, blagosostoianii svyatykh Bozhiih tserkvej i soedinenii vsekh, Gospodu pomolimsa" (For the peace of the whole world and the good estate of the holy Churches of God and the union of all, let us pray to the Lord), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 24 (1453), December 15/28, 1991, pp. 11-12.

⁹⁴⁶ ROCOR later came to believe that they had made a mistake in this matter. Thus Archbishop Hilarion, the sole signatory of the ukaz of August 2/15, 1990 wrote to the present writer: "The statement which I signed as Deputy Secretary of the Synod was based entirely on the information given to us by Archbishop Lazarus. He reported to the Synod on the different groups of the Catacombs and convinced the members of the Synod (or the Council - I don't recall offhand which) that their canonicity was questionable and in some instances - their purity of doctrine as well (e.g. imyabozhniki [name-worshippers]). The Synod members hoped (naively) that this would convince the catacomb groups to rethink their position and seek from the Russian Church Abroad correction of their orders to guarantee apostolic succession. We now see that it was a mistake to issue the statement and to have based our understanding of the catacomb situation wholly on the information provided by Vl. Lazarus. I personally regret this whole matter very much and seek to have a better understanding of and a sincere openness towards the long-suffering confessors of the Russian Catacombs." (Private email communication, July 15, 1998).

⁹⁴⁷ Thus the present writer remembers coming to a catacomb gathering in Moscow on the eve of the Feast of

had come into Russia, not in order to work with the Catacomb Church for the triumph of True Orthodoxy, but in order to *replace* her, or at most to gather the remnants of the catacombs under her sole authority. Indeed, in one declaration explaining the reasons for the consecration of Bishop Lazarus, ROCOR stated that it was in order “to regulate the church life of the Catacomb Church”.⁹⁴⁸

Moreover, in the years to come the ROCOR Synod sometimes describe itself as the *central authority* of the True Russian Church – in spite of the fact that this “central authority” was based, not in Russia, but thousands of miles away in New York!

One Catacomb group, the “Passportless”, so-called because of their refusal to bear Soviet passports as signifying the seal of the Antichrist⁹⁴⁹, was in a somewhat different category. Their leader, Hieromonk Gurias (Pavlov) had been, by common consent, canonically ordained in 1928 by Catacomb Hieromartyr Bishop Nectarius of Yaransk. About five thousand passportless in Eastern Russia and Siberia elected him as their candidate for the episcopate, and in the spring of 1990 he travelled for this purpose to the Synod of ROCOR in New York (for which, of course, he had to compromise and take a passport). However, when Fr. Gurias learned that Bishop Lazarus was to take part in his consecration, believing Lazarus to be a KGB agent, he refused the episcopate, broke with ROCOR and returned to Russia. After some negotiations with the Greek Old Calendarist Archbishop Chrysostom II of Athens, Fr. Gurias turned to the Auxentiites and received consecration as Bishop of Kazan in Boston in July, 1991.⁹⁵⁰ He died in Kazan on Christmas Day, 1995/96.⁹⁵¹

ROCOR’s relationship with the passportless revealed an important theological difference between the True Churches inside and outside Russia in their attitude to the State in Russia. In view of their decades of geographical isolation such a difference was perhaps not surprising. But it turned out to be perhaps the most important single factor leading to the failure of ROCOR’s mission in Russia. The Church inside Russia, living under the threat of complete annihilation, was inclined to describe her situation in apocalyptic terms, thus: since 1917 we have entered the last period of Church history, the

the Dormition, 1990. The priest entered, and instead of vesting himself for the vigil service, took off his cross in the presence of all the people, declaring: “According to ROCOR I am not a priest.” Then he went to Bishop Lazarus and was re-ordained. Meanwhile, his flock, abandoned by their shepherd and deprived of any pastoral guidance, scattered in different directions...

⁹⁴⁸ “Zaiavlenie Arkhierejskago Sinoda Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej” (Declaration of the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad), *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 18 (1423), 15/28 September, 1990, p. 6.

⁹⁴⁹ See V. Moss, “Pechat’ Antikhrista v Sovjetskoj i Post-Sovietskoj Rossii” (The Seal of the Antichrist in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia), *Suzdal’skie Eparkhial’nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), № 10, April-November, 2000, pp. 22-30.

⁹⁵⁰ In November, 1990 the present writer took a petition from Fr. Gurias and representatives of the five thousand passportless to the Chrysostomite Synod in Athens, petitioning that he be made a bishop. Since the Synod was slow in replying, the passportless became impatient and turn to the Auxentiites.

⁹⁵¹ See “A Biography of Archimandrite Gury”, *The True Vine*, vol. 3, № 3 (1992); *Vozdvizhenie* (Exaltation), № 2 (15), February, 1996; *Kto est’ kto v rossijskikh katakombakh*, pp. 44-46; E.A. Petrova, “Perestroika Vavilonskoj Bashni – poslednij shans vselukavogo antikhrista” (The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel – the last Chance of the All-Cunning Antichrist), Moscow, 1991, pp. 5-6 (MS); L. Sikorskaia, *Tajnoj Tserkvi revnitet’. Episkop Gurij Kazanskij i ego somolitoenniki* (Zealot for the Secret Church. Bishop Gurias of Kasan and his fellow worshippers), Moscow: Bratonezh, 2008, pp. 102-105.

period of the Apocalypse; the True Church, like the woman clothed in the sun, has fled into the wilderness, and the earth (the catacombs) has swallowed her up; while the false church, the Moscow Patriarchate, is the whore sitting on the red beast (communism) (Revelation chapters 12-13 and 17). ROCOR had used very similar language to describe the situation in her All-Emigration Council of Belgrade in 1938; but in the post-war years, as news of the Catacomb Church became scarcer, on the one hand, and the Soviet beast became, by the standards of the 1930s, relatively gentler, on the other, this eschatological emphasis became less pronounced. This difference became a clear theological divergence in, for example, the correspondence between Metropolitan Vitaly and representatives of the passportless in the early 1990s. The metropolitan compared the Soviet Union to the Roman empire. St Paul had been proud of his Roman citizenship, he wrote, so what was wrong with having a Soviet passport and being called a Soviet citizen?⁹⁵²

The Passportless Christians were appalled by the comparison – as if Rome, the state in which Christ Himself was born and was registered in a census, and which later grew into the great Orthodox Christian empires of Byzantium, the New Rome, and Russia, the Third Rome, could be compared to the anti-state, the collective Antichrist established, not by God, but by satan (Revelation 13.2), which had destroyed the Russian empire!⁹⁵³ Rome, even in its pagan phase, had protected the Christians from the fury of the Jews: the Soviet Union was, in its early phase, the instrument of the Jews *against* the Christians. Rome, even in its pagan phase, guaranteed a framework of law and order within which the apostles could rapidly spread the faith from one end of the world to the other: the Soviet Union forced a population that was already Orthodox in its great majority to renounce their faith or hide it “in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth” (Hebrews 11.38)... Here we see a falling away of ROCOR from her own earlier teaching in 1933, when she had explicitly rejected the comparison between Soviet and Roman power: “In the present case no historical parallels and analogies are applicable to the Soviet regime. It would be inappropriate to compare it with the Roman authority, submission to which the Apostles Peter and Paul demanded of the Christians of their time...”⁹⁵⁴

Nevertheless, it is clear that God was with Bishop Lazarus and his embryonic church organization. An important witness to this was provided by the Chilean Martyr Jose Munoz and the Montreal Iveron Icon of the Mother of God, which was in his care. This icon appeared in 1982, and began streaming myrrh and working miracles in vast numbers. Until his martyric death in 1997 (when the icon also disappeared) Jose took the icon to almost all the parishes of the Russian diaspora, giving consolation to many. However, he did not go to Russia, and so he decided to make a copy of the icon which could then be sent to Russia. But, as Hieromonk Agathangel writes, he “had to decide who the recipient of the new Icon should be. On the night of August 30 / September 12, 1993, in a vision, he saw his spiritual father, Archbishop Leonty of Chile – in radiance, attired in Archbishop’s vestment and holding a cross-staff. The Archbishop told him that the icon should be entrusted to the pillar of our Church. When Brother Joseph asked who this pillar was, Archbishop Leonty named Archbishop Lazarus. He also added that the

⁹⁵² Metropolitan Vitaly, “Otvét bespasportnomu” (Reply to a Passportless), *Pravoslavnij Vestnik* (Orthodox Herald), February-March, 1990; Petrova, *op. cit.*

⁹⁵³ Petrova, *op. cit.*

⁹⁵⁴ Encyclical Letter of the Council of Russian Bishops Abroad to the Russian Orthodox Flock, 23 March, 1933; translated in *Living Orthodoxy*, #131, September-October, 2001, p. 13.

new icon would be glorified by many miracles and that the truth of his words would be confirmed by the cover falling off the miraculous Iveron Icon. Upon awakening, Brother Joseph immediately went to see the Iveron Icon and, there, he saw its cover lying on the floor..."⁹⁵⁵

The icon copy was given to Archbishop Lazarus, and is now in the possession of the Russian True Orthodox Church led by Lazarus' successor, Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk and Siberia.

The official beginning of ROCOR's mission in Russia was marked by the concelebration of three ROCOR hierarchs – Mark, Hilarion and Lazarus – in Fr. Valentine's parish in Suzdal on June 8/21, 1990.⁹⁵⁶ Valentine soon began to attract priests and parishes from both the MP and the Catacomb Church. However, he also encountered opposition, not only from within Russia, but more unexpectedly, from the ROCOR bishops outside it.

Valentine's main opponent was the German Archbishop Mark, who, in July, 1990, wrote a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly describing Valentine as "in everything – his behaviour, his mentality – a typical product of the Soviet Patriarchate." While slamming Valentine, Mark began interfering in Russian life, and ordained a priest in St. Petersburg. Thus a schism between ROCOR and the leaders of its Russian mission threatened: as early as July 5, 1990 Bishop Lazarus told the present writer that if Mark continued to interfere with his work in Russia, he would form an autonomous church organization on the basis of Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz № 362 – a threat he carried out three years later.

On October 3/16, 1990, Bishop Gregory wrote to Bishop Barnabas seeking his support for the consecration of Archimandrite Valentine to the episcopate. He was not very learned, he said, but he was "bold" and "right-thinking". Then, on October 26, he sought the support of Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco. Finally, at the end of October, "the Metropolitan, urged by Grabbe, approved the consecration of Valentine [to the episcopate], against the opposition of Archbishops Mark of Germany and Anthony of Los Angeles, and directed Archbishop Anthony of Geneva and Bishop Barnabas to consecrate Valentine. This took place in Brussels in February, 1991."⁹⁵⁷

Later in 1991 a third bishop, Benjamin of the Kuban (a former disciple of the Catacomb Confessor Fr. Theodore Rafailovsky), was consecrated. The ROCOR's mission inside the country was now called the "Free Russian Orthodox Church" (FROC), and its numbers had increased to some sixty parishes. Meanwhile the Moscow Patriarchate suffered a very sharp drop in popularity.⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁵⁵ *The Montreal Myrrh-Streaming Icon and Brother Joseph*, Montreal, Sofia: Brother Joseph Memorial Fund, 2008, p. 118.

⁹⁵⁶ Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky, "Torzhestva v Suzdale" (Triumphs in Suzdal), *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 15 (1420), August 1/14, 1990, p. 3.

⁹⁵⁷ Zalewski, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁹⁵⁸ V. Moss, "The Free Russian Orthodox Church", *Report on the USSR*, № 44, November 1, 1991; L. Byzov, S. Filatov, "Religia i politika v obshchestvennom soznanii sovetskogo naroda" (Religion and Politics in the Social Consciousness of the Soviet People), in Bessmertnij, A.R. & Filatov, S.B., *Religia i Demokratia* (Religion and Democracy), Moscow: Progress, 1993, p. 41, note 5.

65. THE FOREIGN BISHOPS INTERVENE

The boundaries of the three FROC bishops' dioceses were not clearly delineated at this stage. As Archbishop Lazarus explained: "The Hierarchical Synod decreed equal rights for us three Russian hierarchs. If someone from the patriarchate wants to join Vladyka Valentine - please. If he wants to join Vladyka Benjamin or me - please. So far the division [of dioceses] is only conditional - more exactly, Russia is in the position of a missionary region. Each of us can receive parishes in any part of the country. For the time being it is difficult to define the boundaries of dioceses."⁹⁵⁹

In November, 1991 Bishop Valentine was asked about Archbishop Mark's role. The reply was carefully weighed: "When the situation in Russia was still in an embryonic stage, Archbishop Mark with the agreement of the first-hierarch of ROCOR made various attempts to build church life in Russia. One of Archbishop Mark's experiments was the 'special German deanery' headed by Fr. Ambrose (Sievers). Now this is changing, insofar as the situation in the FROC has been sufficiently normalized. From now on not one hierarch will interfere in Russian affairs - except, it goes without saying, the three hierarchs of the FROC."⁹⁶⁰

But Mark had no intention of ceasing to interfere. The "Special German deanery" he placed under the Monk Ambrose (von Sievers), a Nazi sympathizer who later founded his own Synod, and in general acted as if Russia were an extension of the German diocese. Many suspected Mark's protégé, if not Mark himself, of being the real Soviet mole within the FROC.

Mark, according to Bishop Valentine, was also stirring up divisions between the Russian bishops; and from the middle of 1991 this disunity was becoming a major problem.

"Lazarus," according to Zalewski, "did not answer Valentine's letters and even broke off contact with the Office of the Metropolitan in New York. While in August that year Valentine expanded the number of his parishes and obtained their official registration, Lazarus' activities showed no tangible results. Lazarus refused to attend the Sobor in New York to settle his differences with Valentine. Grabbe (letter to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva 23 August / 5 September, 1991) indicates that by this refusal Lazarus breaks church laws which is an especially serious offence 'in the conditions of our struggle for existence'."⁹⁶¹

Still more serious was the anti-canonical interference of foreign clergy - not only Mark - inside Russia. Bishops and priests visiting Russia from abroad often showed an extraordinary inability to distinguish between the true Church and the false. Thus Archbishop Laurus, the future Metropolitan, on visiting Sanino, a village in Vladimir

⁹⁵⁹ "Vladyka Lazar otvechajet na voprosy redaktsii" (Vladyka Lazarus replies to the questions of the editors), *Pravoslavnaja Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 22 (1451), November 15/28, 1991, p. 6.

⁹⁶⁰ "Vladyka Valentin vernulsa iz Ameriki" (Vladyka Valentine has returned from America), *Pravoslavnaja Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 3 (1456), February 1/14, 1992, p. 14.

⁹⁶¹ Zalewski, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

region in which there existed a ROCOR priest, chose instead to stay with the local MP priest! Another bishop shared some holy relics with – the MP Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk (KGB agent “Ostrovsky”)!

Again, at a time when the MP, with the help of the local authorities and OMON forces, was seizing back churches that had gone over to the FROC by force, Archbishop Mark was calling for official negotiations with the MP⁹⁶², publicly calling Lazarus and Benjamin poor administrators, and urging believers in a publicly distributed letter “to distance yourselves from Bishop Valentine of the Suzdal and Vladimir diocese of the Free Russian Orthodox Church”, whom he described as “a wolf in sheep’s clothing”. Instead, he told them to turn to Fr. Sergius Perekrestov (a priest who was later defrocked for adultery before leaving the FROC). A priest of the Moscow Patriarchate interpreted this letter to mean that ROCOR had “turned its back on the Suzdal diocese of the FROC”.⁹⁶³

On October 2, 1992, in a letter to Protopriest Michael Artsimovich, Archbishop Mark again demonstrated that he respected neither the Russian bishops nor their flock: “We are receiving by no means the best representatives of the Russian Church. Basically, these are people who know little or nothing about the Church Abroad. And in those cases in which someone possesses some information, it must be doubtful that he is in general in a condition to understand it in view of his own mendacity and the mendacity of his own situation. In receiving priests from the Patriarchate, we receive with them a whole series of inadequacies and vices of the MP itself... The real Catacomb Church no longer exists. It in fact disappeared in the 1940s or the beginning of the 1950s... Only individual people have been preserved from it, and in essence everything that has arisen since is only pitiful reflections, and people take their desires for reality. Those who poured into this stream in the 1950s and later were themselves infected with Soviet falsehood, and they partly – and involuntarily – participate in it themselves, that is, they enter the category of what we call ‘homo sovieticus’... In Russia, consequently, there cannot be a Russian Church because it is all based on Soviet man... I think it is more expedient to seek allies for ourselves among those elements that are pure or striving for canonical purity both in the depths of the Moscow Patriarchate and in the other Local Churches – especially in Serbia or even Greece... We will yet be able to deliver ourselves from that *impurity* which we have now received from the Moscow Patriarchate, and again start on the path of pure Orthodoxy... It is evident that we must... try and undertake the *russification* of Soviet man and the Soviet church...”⁹⁶⁴

Archbishop Mark’s remarks about the russification of Soviet man did not go down well in Russia – especially coming from an ethnic German who was strongly suspected of having been a *Stasi* agent. And his rejection of the very existence of the Catacomb Church especially angered the catacombniks. In a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly dated December 25, 1992, Bishop Valentine complained that Archbishop

⁹⁶² *Priamoj Put’* (The Straight Path), January, 1992, p. 5; *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (The Independent Newspaper), January 18, 1992.

⁹⁶³ *Priamoj Put’* (The Straight Path), January, 1992, pp. 3-4; March, 1992, pp. 3-4.

⁹⁶⁴ Archbishop Mark, in *Suzdal’skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, pp. 108, 109.

Mark's attacks against him had been distributed, not only to members of the Synod, but also to laypeople and even in churches of the Moscow Patriarchate.

And he went on: "On the basis of the above positions I have the right to confirm that after my consecration to the episcopate his Eminence Vladyka Mark did everything to cause a quarrel between me and their Eminences Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin..."

"It is interesting that when their Eminences Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin, by virtue of the Apostolic canons and their pastoral conscience, adopted, with me, a principled position on the question of his Eminence Archbishop Mark's claims to administer Russian parishes, the latter simply dismissed the two hierarchs as being incapable of administration... Then Archbishop Mark ... chose a different tactic. He wrote a letter to Kaliningrad, calling me 'a wolf in sheep's clothing', and this letter was read out from the ambon in the churches of the Moscow patriarchate.

"Yesterday I was told that his Eminence Archbishop Mark sent a fax to the Synod insistently recommending that his Eminence Barnabas not be recalled from Moscow until a church trial had been carried out on Valentine. What trial, for what? For everything that I have done, for all my labours? Does not putting me on trial mean they want to put you, too, on trial? Does this not mean that in striking me with their fist they get at you with their elbow?"⁹⁶⁵

The reference to Bishop Barnabas is explained as follows. In February, 1992 he had been sent to Moscow as superior of the community of SS. Martha and Mary in Moscow, which was designated the Synodal podvorye.⁹⁶⁶ Bishop Barnabas immediately established contacts with the KGB-supported fascist organisation Pamiat'. Then, in May, Pamiat' organized a "car race" in honour of the names-day of Tsar Nicholas II. Members of Pamiat' and Cossacks in 20 cars went through the central streets of Moscow. Bishop Barnabas and the priests Alexis Averianov and Oleg Steniaev, together with the MP priest Victor, served moliebens along the way. "In the course of one of the moliebens Protopriest Alexis Averianov, the spiritual father of the SS. Martha and Mary community and of the National-Patriotic Front Pamiat', called on those assembled 'to take your place in the ranks of the national-patriotic and ecclesiastical movement'. The leader of Pamiat', Demetrius Vasiliev, declared that 'there was no schism in the Russian church'..."⁹⁶⁷ As a result of this, the owner of the Mary-Martha Convent, which had been Barnabas' headquarters, took fright and removed it from ROCOR...

On August 3, Bishop Barnabas organized "a conference of the clergy with the aim of organizing the Moscow diocesan organization of our Church. The conference was attended by more than ten clergy from Moscow and other parts of Russia. In his speech before the participants Vladyka pointed out the necessity of creating a

⁹⁶⁵ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, pp. 63-64.

⁹⁶⁶ According to Mrs. Anastasia Shatilova, it was Barnabas himself who asked for this jurisdiction (*Church News*, July, 2003, vol. 14, № 66 (#120), p. 4).

⁹⁶⁷ *Priamoj Put'* (The Straight Path), May, 1992.

diocesan administration which would unite all the parishes of the FROC in Moscow and Moscow region, and also those parishes in other regions of Russia which wanted to unite with this diocesan administration.”⁹⁶⁸

Barnabas went on to receive clerics who had been banned by the Russian bishops, especially Valentine (whom he accused of homosexuality), and ordained priests in their dioceses without asking them. The appointment of a foreign bishop with almost unlimited powers in Russia was a direct encroachment on the canonical rights of the Russian bishops was becoming increasingly scandalous. According to the holy canons (8th of the 3rd Ecumenical Council, 9th of Antioch, 64th and 67th of Carthage), no bishop can encroach on the territory of another bishop or perform any sacramental action in it without his permission. Also at the August conference, “a diocesan council was elected, containing three members of the National Patriotic Front, Pamyat’, as representatives of the laity.”⁹⁶⁹

On November 7, 1992, Metropolitan Vitaly and the ROCOR acted to distance themselves from the activities of Bishop Barnabas, sending Bishop Hilarion and Fr. Victor Potapov to Moscow to express the official position of ROCOR at a press conference; which duly took place on November 13. However, in February, 1993, at a meeting of the Synod in New York, it was decided to reject this press-conference as “provocative” and to praise one of the pro-fascist priests, Fr. Alexis Averianov, for his “fruitful work with Pamiat’”, bestowing on him an award for his “stand for righteousness”. Moreover, no action was taken against Bishop Barnabas, while Fr. Victor was forbidden to undertake any ecclesiastical or public activity in Russia.⁹⁷⁰

Bishop Gregory desperately tried to support the Russian bishops against Barnabas, but almost the entire foreign episcopate was now working to support Barnabas and undermine Valentine.

Thus on 29 December, 1992, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva wrote to Bishop Gregory: “There is no unity among the episcopate... You support Bishop Valentine, I – Bishop Barnabas... For the time being I am withdrawing from Russian affairs... The metropolitan contradicts himself and easily falls under others’ influence, as, for example, [Fr. Victor] Potapov and others. Thanks to him we are in a muddle... May God not allow the episcopate to be increased there [in Russia] in order that there should be more dirt and quarrels. There is no [good] man there, and none with us either... Act, holy Vladyko, but do not make mistakes.”

This from the man who in the 1970s and 80s had done more than any other to divide ROCOR and weaken its confessing stance against the MP and World Orthodoxy...

⁹⁶⁸ *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 17 (1470), September 1/14, 1992, p. 12.

⁹⁶⁹ Sergius Bychkov, “Voskresenie mifa” (The Resurrection of a Myth), *Moskovskie Novosti* (Moscow News), March 7, 1993; “Ukazanie Protoiereiu Viktoru Potapovu” (Instruction to Protopriest Victor Potapov), February 4/17, 1993 (no. 11/35/39). The official publications of ROCOR shed little light on this about-turn, saying only that the Synod “reviewed and changed certain of its decisions of December 12, 1992” (*Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), №№ 1-2, January-February, 1993, p. 3).

⁹⁷⁰ *Pravoslavnaia Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), № 18 (1471), September 15/28, 1992, p. 11.

On January 12, 1993, Bishop Gregory replied that regardless of whether Valentine was nice or not, "he has 43 parishes and care for parishioners is crucial."⁹⁷¹

In 1993 Archimandrite Adrian and a very large parish in Noginsk applied to come under the omophorion of Bishop Valentine, and was accepted by him on January 19. At the same time the MP circulated an accusation - signed by a woman but with no other indication of time, place or names of witnesses of the supposed crime - that Archimandrite Adrian had raped one altar boy and had had improper relations with another. This accusation turned out to be completely fabricated - the "raped" altar boy wrote a letter of apology to Fr. Adrian and the letter was accepted by the prosecutor in the criminal court. Both youngsters were then sued for stealing icons...

In spite of this, Bishop Barnabas convened a "Church Court of the Moscow Diocesan Administration", and without any kind of investigation or trial, banned the archimandrite, although he belonged to a different diocese, on the grounds of immorality. (The two priests in this court, Protopriest Alexis Averianov and Archimandrite Ioasaph (Shibaev) had already been unlawfully received by Bishop Barnabas into his jurisdiction, although they had been banned (whether justly or not is not the question here) by Archbishop Lazarus.) Now Archimandrite Adrian, who later joined the Ukrainian church, did turn out to be a less than strictly moral priest. Nevertheless, this in no way justified Bishop Barnabas' uncanonical actions. Moreover, as the Russian newspapers pointed out, Bishop Barnabas seemed to be partially supporting the patriarchate in the struggle for this parish - in which, as Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) pointed out, the KGB appeared also to be operating.⁹⁷²

⁹⁷¹ Zalewski, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁹⁷² Emergency report to the ROCOR Synod, May 16/29, 1993, *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), 18-20, 1994, p. 92. In a later report to the Synod (June 9/22, 1993, *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-10, 1994, pp. 94-95), Bishop Gregory, after enumerating Bishop Barnabas' transgressions, appealed that he be brought to trial. He wrote that according to Protocol № 5 of the Sobor, "Bishop Barnabas spoke about disturbances in his relationships with Archbishop Lazarus and [Bishop] Benjamin'... He complained to the Sobor about a priest of Archbishop Lazarus because he did not allow him to serve in his church without the permission of the Archbishop. The President of ROCOR then explained to Bishop Barnabas that insofar as the given parish was in the jurisdiction of Archbishop Lazarus, the priest had been completely right. I personally possess an inquiry from the priest of Archbishop Lazarus which confirms his reply to Bishop Barnabas. On meeting the priest in the Mary-Martha convent, Bishop Barnabas 'demanded that I go under his omophorion. I refrained from going over, at which Bishop Barnabas said: 'You are a rebellious batiushka'. Having spoken about 'disturbances in his relationships with Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin', Bishop Barnabas goes on to criticize Archbishop Lazarus. He recognized that he has 'too hastily' banned Archimandrite Adrian, the unlawfulness of which the President had immediately pointed out. To the question of Archbishop Mark concerning the reception by Bishop Barnabas of the priest Peter Astakhov, who had been banned by Bishop Valentine for living with a woman, Bishop Barnabas, as is recorded in the protocol, replied that he 'had to receive Fr. Peter, since the authorities wanted to seize his church'. Then Bishop Barnabas proclaimed a list of parishes of Archbishop Lazarus which, as he said, wanted to go over to him. The unlawful actions of Bishop Barnabas in relation to other dioceses are listed further on in the same protocol. There it says: "Another written report of Bishop Valentine was read, which expressed a complaint against Bishop Barnabas for his links with Pamyat' and for his receiving clergy without release documents. The actions of Bishop Barnabas introduce disturbance into the parishes of the Russian Church and place its existence under threat." (in *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 8 (100), November, 2001, pp. 3-4).

Incited by Barnabas, several ROCOR bishops wanted to proceed with defrocking Bishop Valentine; but instead he was retired on grounds of ill-health – an uncanonical decision since neither had Bishop Valentine petitioned for retirement nor had the ROCOR bishops investigated his state of health. Bishop Barnabas also attacked Archbishop Lazarus as an incompetent old man, and Bishop Benjamin as a collective farm worker in bast shoes!

Worse was to come. Bishop Barnabas wrote (on official Synod notepaper) to Metropolitan Vladimir (Romanyuk) of the uncanonical Ukrainian Autocephalous Church seeking to enter into communion with him, and followed this up by visiting him in Kiev. The whole affair was exposed when Metropolitan Vitaly received an invitation from the “Patriarch” to visit Kiev in order to make the inter-communion official.⁹⁷³ Of course, the MP seized on this to discredit the whole of ROCOR!

“In the shortest time [Barnabas] introduced the most complete chaos into the life of the Free Church⁹⁷⁴, which was beginning to be reborn. This representative of the Synod began, above the heads of the Diocesan Bishops of the Free Church in Russia, and in violation of the basic canonical rules, to receive into his jurisdiction clerics who had been banned from serving by them, to carry out ordinations in their dioceses without their knowledge, and finally was not ashamed to demand, at the Council in 1993, that he should be given rights to administer *all the parishes of the Free Church in Russia!*⁹⁷⁵ This request was not granted by the Council, the more so in that it learned that ‘the empowered representative of the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad in Moscow’, on writing-paper of the Hierarchical Synod, wrote a petition to ‘the Locum Tenens of the Kievan Patriarchal Throne’, Metropolitan Vladimir (Romanyuk), in which it said that ‘the treacherous Muscovite scribblers hired by the Moscow Patriarchate are trying to trample into the mud the authority of the Russian Church Abroad. In this connection: we beseech you, Your Eminence, through the Kievan Patriarchate headed by you, to give our ecclesiastical activity a juridical base and receive us into brotherly communion.’ Extraordinary as it may seem, the Council did not consider it necessary to defrock its representative, and it was put to him that he should set off for the Holy Land for a mere three months without right of serving – which, however, he did not carry out. This shameful letter was widely distributed by the Moscow Patriarchate, while the ‘Patriarchal Locum Tenens’, delighted by this prospect, invited the First-Hierarch of the Church Abroad to visit Kiev in written form. This letter was also widely distributed.”⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁷³ According to the Ukrainian publication *Ohliadach* (Observer), even after Bishop Barnabas was banned from Russia by the ROCOR Synod, he continued his links with the Ukrainians. “On an unofficial level, relations have continued to the present. With the secret blessing of Archbishop Barnabas, Archimandrite Joasaph (Shibaiev), dean of the Russian parishes of ROCOR, went under the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church-Kievan Patriarchate” (quoted in *Church News*, July, 2003, vol. 14, № 66 (#120), p. 3).

⁹⁷⁴ “Such disturbance and division of the flock as the atheists and the MP could only dream about” (Bishop Valentine in *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 5). (V.M.)

⁹⁷⁵ *Protocol no. 8*, April 30 / May 13, 1993.

⁹⁷⁶ *Istoki Rossijskoj Pravoslavnoj Svobodnoj Tserkvi* (The Sources of the Free Russian Orthodox Church), Suzdal, 1997, pp. 19-20.

66. THE FIRST SCHISM

On April 14/27, 1993 Archbishop Lazarus sent a report to the Synod detailing the many canonical violations committed against the Russian bishops, and in particular against himself, to which the leadership of ROCOR had not reacted in spite of many appeals. He then declared his “temporary administrative separation” from the Synod until the Synod restored canonical order. But, he insisted, he was not breaking communion with ROCOR.⁹⁷⁷

As a result of this, without consulting either him or his diocese, a session of the ROCOR Synod meeting in Cleveland, Ohio retired him, and transferred the administration of his parishes to Metropolitan Vitaly.

In May, during its Council in Lesna, the Synod effectively retired Bishop Valentine also – it goes without saying, against his will and without canonical justification. As Metropolitan Vitaly wrote to him: “The Hierarchical Council has become acquainted with your administrative successes. However, your health in such a difficult situation makes it necessary for us to retire you because of illness until your full recovery. This means that if you are physically able, you can serve, since you are in no way banned from church serving, but you are simply freed from administrative cares”.

During the Council a letter was read from a group of Catacomb Christians expressing disagreement with the actions of Archbishop Lazarus and asking that Bishop Barnabas be placed in charge of all the Russian parishes. Bishop Barnabas also received support from a parish in Voronezh, which asked that the Council confirm in its epistle the reasons not allowing ROCOR to enter into communion with the MP.

At the same time, however, Archbishop Mark told the bishops that in five years his German diocese would no longer exist, and that more and more people considered the confrontational approach to the MP wrong. He was opposed by Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles and Bishop Gregory. However, Archbishop Mark brought this issue up more than once (in Protocols 3 and 7), which shows where he himself was moving...⁹⁷⁸

In a report to the Synod dated May 16/29, after sharply criticizing the Synod’s unjust and uncanonical actions against Bishop Valentine, Bishop Gregory said: “Our responsibility before God demands from us the annulment of this conciliar resolution, and if there are accusers who have material which has not yet been shown us in documentary form, then Bishop Valentine must be returned to his see and the affair must be either cut short or again reviewed by the Council, but now in agreement with the canons that we have in the Church. For this would clearly be necessary to convene a Council, and for a start a judgement must be made about it in the Synod...”

⁹⁷⁷ “Dukhovnie dokumenty po istorii Katakombnoj Tserkvi. Doklad Arkhiepiskopa Lazaria Tambovskogo Arkhierejskomu Soboru RPTsZ, 14/27 aprelija, 1993 g.” (Spiritual documents on the history of the Catacomb Church. The Report of Archbishop Lazarus of Tambov to the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR, April 14/27, 1993” ,

http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=919.

⁹⁷⁸ <http://www.russia-talk.com/otkliki/ot-117.htm>.

“As a consequence of this Archbishop Lazarus has already left us. And Bishop Valentine’s patience is already being tried. If he, too, will not bear the temptation, what will we be left with? Will his flock in such a situation want to leave with him? Will not it also rebel?”

“For clarity’s sake I must begin with an examination of certain matters brought up at the expanded session of the Synod which took place in Munich.

“A certain tension was noticeable there in spite of the external calmness. It turned out that behind the scenes a suspicious attitude towards Bishop Valentine had arisen. Already after the closing of the Synod I learned that several members of the Synod had been shown a document containing accusations of transgressions of the laws of morality against Bishop Valentine. The President of the Synod did not have this document during the sessions but only at the end. It was then that I, too, received a copy of the denunciation from Archbishop Mark, who was given it by Bishop Barnabas, who evidently did not know how to deal with such objects according to the Church canons. I involuntarily ascribed the unexpected appearance of such a document amidst the members of the Synod to the action of some communist secret agents and to the inexperience of Bishop Barnabas in such matters.

“The caution of the Church authorities in relation to similar accusations in the time of troubles after the persecutions was ascribed to the 74th Apostolic canon, the 2nd canon of the 1st Ecumenical Council and especially to the 6th canon of the 2nd Ecumenical Council. At that time the heretics were multiplying their intrigues against the Orthodox hierarchs. The above-mentioned canons indicate that accusations hurled by less than two or three witnesses – who were, besides, faithful children of the Church and accusers worthy of trust – were in no way to be accepted...

“Did they apply such justice and caution when they judged Bishop Valentine, and were ready without any investigation to ... defrock him for receiving Archimandrite Adrian? And were the accusations hurled at the latter really seriously examined?”

“Beginning with the processing, contrary to the canons, of the accusations against Bishop Valentine on the basis of the single complaint of a person known to none of us⁹⁷⁹, the Sobor was already planning to defrock him without any kind of due process, until the argument of his illness turned up. But here, too, they failed to consider that this required his own petition and a check to ascertain the seriousness of his illness. The intention was very simple: just get rid of a too active Bishop. They didn’t think of the fate of his parishes, which exist on his registration. Without him they would lose

⁹⁷⁹ Bishop Valentine’s accuser turned out to be Alexander R. Shtilmark, an assistant of the Pamyat’ leader, Demetrius Vasiliev. His motivation was clear. Later, several of Shtilmark’s relatives witnessed to his mental unbalance. And his sister, Maria Stilmark asserted (personal communication, March, 2006) that her brother denies ever having sent a complaint to the Synod! In spite of this, and Bishop Valentine’s repeated protestations of his innocence (which appear not to have reached Metropolitan Vitaly) ROCOR, in the persons of Archbishop Mark and Bishop Hilarion continued to drag this matter out for another two years (Reports of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), *Suzdal’skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 123, 126). (V.M.)

it.

“While we, in the absence of the accused and, contrary to the canons, without his knowledge, were deciding the fate of the Suzdal diocese, Vladyka Valentine received three more parishes. Now he has 63. Taking into account Archimandrite Adrian with his almost 10,000 people, we are talking about approximately *twenty thousand souls*.

“The question arises: in whose interests is it to destroy what the papers there call the centre of the Church Abroad in Russia?

“The success of Bishop Valentine’s mission has brought thousands of those being saved into our Church, but now this flock is condemned to widowhood and the temptation of having no head only because he turned out not to be suitable to some of our Bishops...”⁹⁸⁰

It was in this highly charged atmosphere, with their bishop forcibly and uncanonically retired and the registration of all their parishes hanging by a thread, that the annual diocesan conference of the Suzdal diocese took place from June 9/22 to 11/24. It was also attended by priests representing Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin. Hieromonk Agathangel (Pashkovsky) read out a letter from Archbishop Lazarus in which he declared that although he had considered the actions of ROCOR in Russia to be uncanonical, he had tolerated them out of brotherly love, but was now forced to speak out against them, for they were inflicting harm on the Church. First, ROCOR did not have the right to form its own parishes in Russia insofar as the Catacomb Church, which had preserved the succession of grace of the Mother Church, continued to exist on her territory. Therefore it was necessary only to strengthen the catacomb communities and expand them through an influx of new believers. Secondly, the hierarchs of ROCOR had been acting in a spirit far from brotherly love, for they had been treating their brothers, the hierarchs of the FROC, as second-class Vladykas: they received clergy who had been banned by the Russian Vladykas, brought clergy of other dioceses to trial, removed bans placed by the Russian hierarchs without their knowledge or agreement, and annulled other decisions of theirs (for example, Metropolitan Vitaly forbade an inspection to be carried out in the parish of Fr. Sergius Perekrestov of St. Petersburg). Thirdly, the ROCOR hierarchs were far from Russia and did not understand the situation, so they could not rightly administer the Russian parishes. Thus the Synod removed the title ‘Administering the affairs of the FROC’ from all the hierarchs except Bishop Barnabas, which forced the dioceses to re-register with the authorities - although, while a new registration was being carried out, the parishes could lose their right to ownership of the churches and other property. Moreover re-registration was almost impossible, insofar as it required the agreement of an expert consultative committee attached to the Supreme Soviet, which contained hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate. Fourthly, the ROCOR hierarchs had been inconsistent in their actions, which aroused the suspicion that their actions were directed, not by the Holy Spirit, but by forces foreign to the Church.⁹⁸¹ Archbishop Lazarus concluded by calling for the formation of a True

⁹⁸⁰ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 89-90.

⁹⁸¹ There were objective grounds for such a suspicion. Thus the protocols of this Council for June

Orthodox Catacomb Church that was administratively separate from, but in communion with, ROCOR, on the basis of Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz № 362, which had never been annulled.

The Conference's Address and Resolutions accused the Synod of inactivity and of not defending the parishes in Russia from persecution by the MP, and of "not hurrying to exchange their titles of bishops of distant regions and cities with non-Russian names for the names of Russian regions and cities..."

"The Hierarchy Abroad remains unreachable. In this unreachableness, alas, many have begun to find a similarity with the unreachableness for believers of the hierarchy of the MP. The one certain factor influencing the majority of the hierarchs of ROCOR in their relationship to their suffering fellow-countrymen in Russia is intense distrust. Suspicion and mistrustfulness have become the spring that moves the hierarchs of ROCOR. We would like to know in accordance with what rules and canons the Hierarchical Council intended to deprive the Russian hierarchs, Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine, of their sees... Did the Hierarchical Council ask the much-suffering Russian people whether their conscience allows them to take upon themselves the sin of Judas and betray their spiritual Archpastor? We cannot keep silence, peacefully surveying the destructive activity of the hierarchs of the Church Abroad in Russia... and we are forced to govern ourselves in accordance with the Decree of the Holy Hierarch Tikhon, Patriarch and Confessor of All Russia, the Sacred Synod and the Higher Ecclesiastical Council on the independence of those parts of the Russian Church deprived for one reason or another of the possibility of communicating with her central authorities... If the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR were to adopt new and uncanonical decisions that are incomprehensible for Russian [Rossijskikh] Orthodox Christians, we reserve for ourselves the right correspondingly to adopt decisions that will aid the regeneration of Russian Orthodoxy and its salvation..."

"In view of the uncanonicity of certain resolutions of the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR that took place in the convent of Lesna in France, and the session of the Hierarchical Synod that preceded it in Cleveland (USA), in relation to the Russian parishes and events in Russia and the completely distorted presentation of them, we ask the First Hierarch of ROCOR to convene an emergency Council and rescind the resolutions that are contrary to the Canons and Decrees of the Holy Church. If our request is rejected, then the whole responsibility for the consequences lies upon those who have adopted anti-canonical bans that violate the Apostolic Rules and the Rules of the Holy Church... Desiring the speediest overcoming of the isolation of the hierarchs of ROCOR from the Russian [Rossijskoj] flock and their return to the Homeland..."

9/22 record: "Hieromonk Vladimir, superior of the Borisovsk church, says that three months before the Session of the Hierarchical Council, his relative said that he should abandon the Suzdal Diocese since they were going to retire Bishop Valentine at the Session of the Sobor in France. She knew this from a party worker linked with the KGB. And three years later he learned that this question had indeed been discussed. He is interested to know how it happened that the KGB realized its intention in real life?" (*Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), № 23, 1995, p. 54; letter to the author by Hieromonk Vladimir (Ovchinnikov), June 23 / July 6, 1993).

After quoting these words, Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles wrote, in a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly: "All the documents of the congress: the Agenda, the Resolutions, the Address to the Synod and the Protocols serve as vivid accusations first of all against Bishop Valentine, but also against all the participants in the congress who signed the Address and Resolutions..."

"How is one to describe this, which is only a few extracts from the whole? This is uncommon ignorance, and madness, and untruth, and rebellion, and murmuring, and open threats of a schism, and an unjust comparison of the Church Abroad with the MP, and the taking on themselves of the role of a higher arbiter over the Hierarchical Council. In the unprecedented demand that the resolutions of the Council be rescinded it is not indicated precisely which resolutions are meant.

"Moreover, the threat of separation from the Church Abroad if the unnamed demands are not met, besides the mad demand that the dioceses abroad be liquidated, constitutes a real threat..."⁹⁸²

The tone of the conference documents was indeed strong: but it could well be argued that the very serious situation warranted it, and that hierarchs such as Archbishop Anthony, instead of complaining about "rebellion" and "a real threat", should have acted to avert the threat...

At the end of the conference it was decided that the Suzdal diocese would follow Archbishop Lazarus' example in separating administratively from ROCOR while remaining in communion in prayer with it. Bishop Valentine expressed the hope that this would be only a temporary measure, and he called on Metropolitan Vitaly to convene an extraordinary Council to remove the anticanonical resolutions of the Council in Lesna and the Synod meeting in Cleveland...⁹⁸³

Meanwhile, a meeting of the clergy Archbishop Lazarus' diocese in Odessa on July 17 confirmed that they were "on the verge of a break" with ROCOR. They reiterated their belief that the bans on Archbishop Lazarus were uncanonical and called on the hierarchs of ROCOR to review them in a spirit of brotherly love and mutual understanding. However, the ROCOR Synod, at the initiative of Archbishops Mark, Lavr and Hilarion, proceeded to place bans on Archbishop Lazarus.

Meanwhile, the Chilean layman Jose Munos, who was the keeper of the famous myrrh-streaming Montreal Iveron icon of the Mother of God, was painting a copy of it. When the work was finished, he wondered to whom to give it. Then, in the night of September 30 / August 12, 1993, he saw in a vision his spiritual father, Archbishop Leonty of Chile, in bishop's vestments and with a staff in his hand. Vladyka said that the new icon should be given to a pillar of the True Church. When Brother Jose asked

⁹⁸² Letter of Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, no heading, no date; original in the archive of Archbishop Anthony (Orlov) of San Francisco.

⁹⁸³ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 121; letter to the author by Hieromonk Vladimir, op. cit.

who this was, the hierarch named Archbishop Lazarus (Zhurbenko). He also said that it would be glorified by many miracles; and as a sign of the truth of his words, he said that the cover on the icon would fall off. On awaking, Jose went to the icon and saw that the cover was on the floor... Six days later the icon was given to Archbishop Lazarus... The fragrant copy of the Montreal Iveron icon has indeed done many miracles in Russia...⁹⁸⁴

On November 2, 1993 (i.e. over eighteen months since the scandals erupted), the Synod decided to withdraw Bishop Barnabas from Russia and to place all his parishes in the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Vitaly.⁹⁸⁵ Later, on July 8, 1994, Bishop Barnabas was forbidden from travelling to Russia for five years.⁹⁸⁶ All the parishes of ROCOR in Siberia, Ukraine and Belarus were entrusted to Bishop Benjamin.⁹⁸⁷

By the beginning of 1994 the Russian bishops had received no reaction whatsoever from the Synod to any of their letters and requests. This was probably under the influence especially of Archbishop Mark, who told the Hierarchical Council that "Valentine is a tank that will crush us under its weight."⁹⁸⁸

On March 8/21, 1994, in a conference taking place in Suzdal, Bishop Valentine said: "On June 10/23, 1993 in Suzdal there took place a diocesan congress in which resolutions were taken and an Address was sent to the Synod indicating the transgressions, by the above-mentioned Hierarchs, of the Apostolic Canons and decrees of the Fathers of the Church, of the Ecumenical and Local Councils. At the same time they asked that his Grace Bishop Barnabas be recalled, and that Archbishop Mark should ask forgiveness of the clergy and the Russian people for his humiliation of their honour and dignity. If our request were ignored, the whole weight of responsibility would lie on the transgressors of the Church canons. But so far there has been no reply.

"We sent the Resolution of the clergy, monastics and laypeople warning that if there continued to be transgressions of the Apostolic Canons and Conciliar Resolutions on the part of the Hierarchs, with the connivance of the Hierarchical Synod, the whole responsibility would lie as a heavy burden on the transgressors. The Synod *did not reply*.

"Together with his Eminence Archbishop Lazarus and the members of the Diocesan Councils I sent an address to the Synod in which their attention was drawn to the wily intrigues on the part of those who wished us ill, and asked that the

⁹⁸⁴ "Odigitria Russkoj Istinno-Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi: Chudotvornij obraz Iverskoj Ikony Bozhiej Materi Blagoukhajuschej" (The Hodigitria of the Russian True Orthodox Church: The Wonderworking Image of the Fragrant Iveron Icon of the Mother of God), <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=24>.

⁹⁸⁵ However, the metropolitan did not intend to visit his Russian dioceses. Indeed, as Metropolitan Valentine told the present writer, he refused many such requests on the grounds that he might be killed. Valentine saw in this refusal of the metropolitan to visit his Russian flock one of the main reasons for the collapse of the ROCOR mission.

⁹⁸⁶ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), No 3-4, May-August, 1994, p. 5).

⁹⁸⁷ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), No 5-6, September-December, 1993, pp. 7, 9.

⁹⁸⁸ *Church News*, vol. 12, No 1 (83), January-February, 2000, p. 5.

situation be somehow corrected, placing our hopes on Christian love and unity of mind, which help to overcome human infirmities. But in the same address we laid out in very clear fashion our determination that if the Hierarchical Synod did not put an end to the deliberate transgressions, we would be forced to exist independently, in accordance with the holy Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz № 362 of November 7/20, 1920, in the interests of the purity of Orthodoxy and the salvation of our Russian flock. The reply consisted in Vladyka Metropolitan threatening a ban.

"I sent a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly in which I besought him earnestly to confirm my status before the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation, so that the Suzdal Diocesan Administration should not lose its registration. This time the reply was swift, only not to the Diocesan Administration, but to the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation under the signature of Bishop Barnabas, saying that the Russian Hierarchs were no longer Administering the affairs of the FROC, and that this duty was laid upon him. As a result I and the member of my Diocesan Council began visiting office after office, a process that lasted many months.

"It is difficult for you to imagine how much labour we had to expend, how many written bureaucratic demands we had to fulfill, in order to get our Regulations re-registered. If I had not undertaken this, all the churches would automatically have been taken out of registration and then, believe me, the Moscow Patriarchate would not have let go such a 'juicy morsel'."⁹⁸⁹

After hearing more speeches in the same vein, including one from Archbishop Lazarus, the Congress made the following decisions: 1. To form a Temporary Higher Church Administration (THCA) of the Russian Orthodox Church, which, without claiming to be the highest Church authority in Russia, would have as its final aim the convening of a Free All-Russian Local Council that would have such authority. 2. To elect and consecrate new bishops. 3. To declare their gratitude to ROCOR and Metropolitan Vitaly, whose name would continue to be commemorated in Divine services, since they wished to remain in communion of prayer with him. 4. To express the hope that the Hierarchical Synod would recognize the THCA and the consecrations performed by it.

One of the members of the Congress, Elena Fadeyevna Shipunova declared: "It is now completely obvious that the subjection of the Russian dioceses to the Synod Abroad contradicts the second point of Ukaz № 362. The Russian Church is faced directly with the necessity of moving to independent administration in accordance with this Ukaz. After the sergianist schism Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan called for such a move, considering Ukaz № 362 as the only possible basis of Church organization. Incidentally, Metropolitan Cyril also indicated to Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky that he had to follow Ukaz № 362 instead of usurping ecclesiastical power. Metropolitan Cyril and the other bishop-confessors tried to organize the administration of the Russian Church on the basis of this Ukaz, but they couldn't do this openly. Now for the first time the Russian Church has the opportunity to do this. We could say that this is an historical moment. The Temporary Higher Church

⁹⁸⁹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 159-160.

Administration that has been created is the first legal one in Russia since the time of the sergianist schism. The Centre of Church power ceased its existence after the death of Metropolitan Peter more than half a century ago, but we have not yet arrived at the Second All-Russian Council which has the power to re-establish Central Church power.”⁹⁹⁰

On March 9/22 the THCA, which now contained three new bishops: Theodore of Borisovsk, Seraphim of Sukhumi and Agathangel of Simferopol, together with many clergy, monastics and laity, informed Metropolitan Vitaly and the Synod of ROCOR of their decision. On March 23 / April 5 the Synod of ROCOR rejected this declaration and the new consecrations, and decided to break communion in prayer with the newly formed Autonomous Church, but without imposing any bans.⁹⁹¹

In this decision the ROCOR Synod called itself the “Central Church authority” of the Russian Church, which contradicted both its own Fundamental Statute and the simple historical fact that, as the FROC bishops pointed out, since the death of Metropolitan Peter in 1937 the Russian Church had had no “Central Church authority”.⁹⁹²

Nor was this the only indication that ROCOR was beginning to change its perception of herself... In their May, 1993 Council in Lesna, the ROCOR hierarchs decided that the Church in Russia was now free and changed the commemoration “For the Orthodox episcopate of the persecuted Church of Russia” to “For the Orthodox episcopate of the Church of Russia”.⁹⁹³

It was strange that, at a moment when their own bishops inside Russia were being persecuted, the impression should be given that persecution had ceased – unless they considered that they had no persecuted bishops inside Russia and that the phrase referred to the MP...

As Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov wrote: “What Church were they talking about? A lack of precision was revealed, and confusion was created between ‘the persecuted Russian Church’ of the Tikhonites, Josephites and all the catacombniks, on the one hand, and the MP on the other. It was as if there few who understood what was going on. After all, the MP with the aid of OMON had already begun to take away the churches in Russia that had passed over to us, and our Church had begun to be persecuted by the MP. Therefore the Metropolitan and a series of church-servers never changed the former formula, witnessing to the fact that for them the Russian Church was not the MP.”⁹⁹⁴

⁹⁹⁰ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, pp. 168-169.

⁹⁹¹ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), №№ 1-2, January-April, 1994, pp. 14-16; *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 196-198.

⁹⁹² *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 198, 200-201.

⁹⁹³ <http://www.russia-talk.com/otklici/ot-117.htm>.

⁹⁹⁴ Zhukov, “Poslanie nastoiatelia khrama RPZTs v Parizhe” (Epistle of the Rector of the ROCOR Church in Paris), in *Otkliki na deiania Arkhιεrejskogo Sobor RPTsZ 2000 goda i na prochie posleduischie za nim sobytia* (Reactions to the Acts of the Hierarchical Council of the ROCOR in 2000 and to other events that followed it), part 2, Paris, 2001, p. 85). Of course, the FROC bishops also

During the ROCOR Sobor, Bishop Barnabas criticised all the bishops in Russia and asked the Sobor to give him *alone* administration of *all* the parishes in Russia.⁹⁹⁵ Then, in order to strengthen ROCOR's hand in the coming struggle with the FROC, Archimandrite Evtikhy (Kurochkin) was consecrated Bishop of Ishim and Siberia on July 11/24.⁹⁹⁶ He turned out to be a fierce enemy of the other Russian bishops...

Bishop Gregory, who had not been admitted to the sessions of the ROCOR Synod, fully approved of the actions of the Russian Hierarchs in a letter to Bishop Valentine dated March 24 / April 6. And on the same day he wrote the following to Metropolitan Vitaly: "We have brought the goal of the possible regeneration of the Church in Russia to the most undesirable possible end. Tormented by envy and malice, certain of our bishops have influenced the whole course of our church politics in Russia. As a consequence of this, our Synod has not understood the meaning of the mission of our existence abroad.

"As I warned the Synod in my last report, we have done absolutely everything possible to force the Russian bishops to separate from us administratively. They have had to proceed from Resolution № 362 of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7/20, 1920 in order to avoid the final destruction of the just-begun regeneration of our Church in our Fatherland. But our Synod, having nothing before its eyes except punitive tactics, proceeds only on the basis of a normalized church life. Whereas the Patriarch's Resolution had in mind the preservation of the Church's structure in completely unprecedented historical and ecclesiastical circumstances.

"The ukaz was composed for various cases, including means for the re-establishment of the Church's Administration even in conditions of its abolition (see article 9) and 'the extreme disorganization of Church life'. This task is placed before every surviving hierarch, on condition that he is truly Orthodox.

"The Russian Hierarchs felt themselves to be in this position when, for two years running, their inquiries and requests to provide support against the oppression of the Moscow Patriarchate were met with complete silence on the part of our Synod.

"Seeing the canonical chaos produced in their dioceses by Bishop Barnabas, and the Synod's silent collusion with him, the Russian Hierarchs came to the conclusion that there was no other way of avoiding the complete destruction of the whole enterprise but their being led by the Patriarch's Resolution № 362.

retained the old formula...

⁹⁹⁵ Protocol 5; *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 4 (105), May, 2002, p. 4.

⁹⁹⁶ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church News), №№ 3-4, May-August, 1994, pp. 60-65. Bishop Evtikhy had left the MP in the early 1990s for four reasons: (i) the sexual demands made by the MP's Metropolitan Theodosius of Omsk to the wives of clergy and parishioners, (ii) his refusal to demand the return of church buildings from the authorities, (iii) his refusal to give catechism lessons before baptism, and (iv) his ban on baptising by full immersion (Roman Lunkin, "Rossijskie zarubezhniki mezhdru dvukh ognj" (The Russians Abroad between two fires), <http://www.starlightsite.co.uk/keston/russia/articles/nov2005/01Kurochkin.html>).

“Our Synod unlawfully retired Bishop Valentine for his reception of a huge parish in Noginsk... but did not react to the fact that Bishop Barnabas had in a treacherous manner disgraced the Synod, in whose name he petitioned to be received into communion with the Ukrainian self-consecrators!

“I don’t know whether the full text of Resolution № 362 has been read at the Synod. I myself formerly paid little attention to it, but now, having read it, I see that the Russian Hierarchs have every right to cite it, and this fact will come to the surface in the polemic that will inevitably take place now. I fear that by its decisions the Synod has already opened the path to this undesirable polemic, and it threatens to create a schism not only in Russia, but also with us here...

“There are things which it is impossible to stop, and it is also impossible to escape the accomplished fact. If our Synod does not now correctly evaluate the historical moment that has taken place, then its already profoundly undermined prestige (especially in Russia) will be finally and ingloriously destroyed.

“All the years of the existence of the Church Abroad we have enjoyed respect for nothing else than our uncompromising faithfulness to the canons. They hated us, but they did not dare not to respect us. But now we have shown the whole Orthodox world that the canons are for us an empty sound, and we have become a laughing-stock in the eyes of all those who have even the least relationship to Church affairs.

“You yourself, at the Synod in Lesna, allowed yourself to say that for us, the participants in it, it was now not the time to examine the canons, but we had to act quickly. You, who are at the helm of the ship of the Church, triumphantly, before the whole Sobor, declared to us that we should now hasten to sail without a rudder and without sails. At that time your words greatly disturbed me, but I, knowing your irritability with me for insisting on the necessity of living according to the canons, nevertheless hoped that all was not lost yet and that our Bishops would somehow shake off the whole of this nightmare of recent years.

“Think, Vladyko, of the tens of thousands of Orthodox people both abroad and in Russia who have been deceived by us. Do not calm yourself with the thought that if guilt lies somewhere, then it lies equally on all of our hierarchs. The main guilt will lie on you as the leader of our Sobor...”⁹⁹⁷

Unfortunately, however, Metropolitan Vitaly was beginning to show the same kind of condescending and contemptuous attitude to the Russian flock as Archbishop Mark had been demonstrating for some time. Thus in one letter to Bishop Valentine, after rebuking him for receiving Archimandrite Adrian, he wrote: “We understand that, living in the Soviet Union for these 70 years of atheist rule, such a deep seal of Sovietism and of departure from right thinking has penetrated into the world-view of the Russian people that you, too, were involuntarily caught up by the spirit of this wave...”⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹⁷ Bishop Gregory, *Pis'ma* (Letters), Moscow, 1998, pp. 123-125.

⁹⁹⁸ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 149.

Even such an attitude would have been tolerable if the metropolitan had decided to govern the Church in accordance with the holy canons. But at the Lesna Council in 1993 he had told a priest to tell Bishop Gregory not to keep referring to the canons!⁹⁹⁹

Some FROC priests – notably Protopriest Lev Lebedev of Kursk – while fully agreeing that the ROCOR bishops had committed uncanonical acts on Russian soil, nevertheless believed that the actions of the FROC bishops had been hasty and were justified only in the case that ROCOR had fallen away from Orthodoxy, which, as everyone agreed, had not yet taken place. In a letter to Bishop Gregory dated April 4, 1994, and approved by Metropolitan Vitaly, Fr. Lev maintained that no personal reasons could justify legal separation from the authority of the supervising Metropolitan. He claimed that the only legal church authority in Russia was now ROCOR, which, since it remained faithful to Orthodoxy, had the right to administer all groups that did not want to remain in the falsehood of the MP.

Fr. Lev attitude may have been influenced by his attitude towards Bishop Valentine. He was suspicious of him because he, unlike all others, had managed to obtain church buildings and registration from the authorities. And he hinted that since the authorities granted rights only to “their own”, Bishop Valentine was in fact one of “their own”.¹⁰⁰⁰

In a letter dated April 26, Bishop Gregory accused Fr. Lev of allowing his personal dislike of Valentine to interfere with his judgement. Fr. Lev in his turn accused Bishop Gregory of allowing “personal offence and desire” to dictate his letter to the metropolitan of April 6, 1994.

Bishop Gregory argued that ROCOR’s two founding documents, the ukaz № 362 and the Polozhenie of ROCOR, did not allow for the Church outside Russia to rule the Church inside Russia. ROCOR could *help* the Church inside Russia, but not *rule* it: “For decades we living abroad have commemorated ‘the Orthodox Episcopate of the Persecuted Church of Russia’. But in our last Sobor we removed from the litanies and the prayer for the salvation of Russia the word ‘persecuted’, witnessing thereby that we already officially consider that the persecutions on the Russian Church have ceased.

“And indeed, our parishes in Russia are now harried in places, but basically they have complete freedom of action, in particular if they lay no claim to any old church, which the Moscow Patriarchate then tries to snatch. However it does not always succeed in this. Thus the huge Theophany cathedral in Noginsk (with all the buildings attached to it) according to the court’s decision remained with our diocese...

“In other words, we can say that if there is willingness on our side we now have every opportunity of setting in order the complete regeneration of the Russian Orthodox Church in our Fatherland.

⁹⁹⁹ Bishop Gregory, *Doklady* (Reports), Moscow, 1999, p. 85.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Zalewski, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

“The very first paragraph of the ‘Statute on the Russian Church Abroad’ says: ‘The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad is an *indivisible part of the Russian Local Church* TEMPORARILY self-governing on conciliar principles UNTIL THE REMOVAL OF THE ATHEIST POWER in Russia in accordance with the resolution of the holy Patriarch Tikhon, the Holy Synod and the Higher Ecclesiastical Council of the Russian Church of November 7/20, 1920 № 362 (emphasis mine, B. G.).

“If we now lead the Russian Hierarchy to want to break their administrative links with the Church Abroad, then will not our flock abroad finally ask us: what ‘Episcopate of the Russian Church’ are we still praying for in our churches? But if we took these words out of the litanies, then we would only be officially declaring that we are no longer a part of the Russian Church.

“Will we not then enter upon a very dubious canonical path of autonomous existence, but now without a Patriarchal blessing and outside the Russian Church, a part of which we have always confessed ourselves to be? Will not such a step lead us to a condition of schism in the Church Abroad itself, and, God forbid, to the danger of becoming a sect?...

“It is necessary for us to pay very careful attention to and get to know the mood revealed in our clergy in the Suzdal diocese, so as on our part to evaluate the mood in which our decisions about the Church in Russia could be received by them.

“But will we not see then that it is one thing when the Church Abroad *gives help* to the Russian Church through the restoration in it of a canonical hierarchy, but something else entirely *when we lay claims to rule the WHOLE of Russia from abroad, which was in no way envisaged by even one paragraph of the ‘Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad’, nor by one of our later resolutions?’*¹⁰⁰¹

¹⁰⁰¹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 128-129, 130.

67. THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX AUTONOMOUS CHURCH

In July, 1994 ROCOR entered into communion with the defrocked Greek Old Calendarist group called “the Cyprianites” or, as they preferred to call themselves, “the Holy Synod in Resistance”. ROCOR officially accepted their ecclesiology, which essentially consisted in arguing that while the World Orthodox were ecumenist heretics they still had the grace of sacraments (an impossible contradiction, according to Orthodox ecclesiology). This was not a unanimous decision. At the 1993 Council, when the subject was first discussed, Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) and Bishop Cyril of Seattle spoke against the union, which would contradict ROCOR’s decision of 1978 not to enter into union with any of the Greek Old Calendarist Synods until they had attained unity amongst themselves. However, Archbishops Laurus and Mark said that it was awkward to refuse communion with Cyprian when they were already in communion with the Romanian Old Calendarists, with whom Cyprian was in communion (but who were stricter and more Orthodox in their ecclesiology). In the summer of 1993 a commission was set up consisting of Archbishop Laurus, Bishop Metrophanes and Bishop Daniel which prepared the way for the eventual decision to unite with Cyprian at the 1994 Council.

However, at the Council Bishop Daniel continued to express doubts, and Bishop Benjamin of the Kuban refused to sign the union together with Bishop Ambrose of Vevey. And there were rumours that Metropolitan Vitaly and Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles had signed only under pressure. Archbishop Lazarus also had his doubts, especially after a concelebration between Metropolitan Vitaly and Cyprian in Slatioara, Romania, during which the chalice was knocked over.¹⁰⁰²

After the decision Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) wrote that the Cyprianites “confess their own and by no means Orthodox teaching on the possibility of the grace-filled action of the Holy Spirit in churches that have clearly become heretical”. Moreover he declared: “In passing this Resolution on communion with the group of Metropolitan Cyprian, our Council has unfortunately also forgotten about the text of the Resolution accepted earlier under the presidency of Metropolitan Philaret, which anathematized the ecumenical heresy...

“In fact, by not looking into the matter seriously and forgetting about the anathematizing of the new calendarist ecumenists that was confirmed earlier (and perhaps not having decided to rescind this resolution), our Council, however terrible it may be to admit it, has fallen under its own anathema... Do we have to think that our Hierarchical Council has entered on the path of betraying the patristic traditions, or only that out of a misunderstanding it has allowed a mistake which it is not yet too late to correct at the November session in France?”¹⁰⁰³

¹⁰⁰² Fr. Alexander Pavpertov and Alexander Tarakhanov, Facebook conversation, March 23, 2016.

¹⁰⁰³ Bishop Gregory, “The Dubious Ecclesiology of Metropolitan Cyprian’s Group”, *Church News*, no. 5, September-October, 1994, pp. 2-4; “Arkhiejskij Sobor RPTsZ 1994 goda: Istoria Priniatia Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkoviu Yereticheskoi Ekkleziologii Mitropolita Kipriana”, *Sviataia Rus’* (Holy Russia), 2003; *Vernost’* (Faithfulness), 98, December, 2007.

However, the mistake was not corrected at the second session of the Hierarchical Council in November, 1994. Instead, the decision was made to initiate negotiations with the MP. Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles commented on this at the Council: "ROCOR is going to hell..."¹⁰⁰⁴

Then, in his Nativity epistle for 1995/96 Metropolitan Vitaly contradicted the Cyprianite ecclesiology he had signed up to, saying that he personally believed that the Moscow Patriarchate did *not* have the grace of sacraments.¹⁰⁰⁵ And in December, 1996, he wrote flatly that the Moscow Patriarchate was "the Church of the evil-doers, the Church of the Antichrist", which "has completely sealed its irrevocable falling away from the body of the Church of Christ".¹⁰⁰⁶

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The FROC still sought reconciliation with ROCOR, and so the two senior bishops, Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine, went to the November, 1994 Council. There, according to Bishop Valentine, "there took place *mutual* repentance and forgiveness between ROCOR and FROC".¹⁰⁰⁷ He may have been referring here to the first and second points of the "Act" that was presented to the two Russian bishops for their signatures, which certainly implied that blame was not to be attached to one side exclusively. Needless to say, ROCOR since then has always denied the mutual nature of this act...

The "Act" greatly troubled the two bishops, because they saw that it involved changes that were very detrimental for the life of the FROC. However, Archbishop Lazarus wanted to sign nevertheless, and Bishop Valentine, though unwilling to sign, did not want to create a schism among the Russian bishops by not following the lead of his senior, Archbishop Lazarus. But he did obtain from Bishop Hilarion an assurance that if he wanted to amend any points in the Act, he could do so and his amendments would be included in the final published document. However, he was urged to sign now "in the name of brotherly love". So he signed, after which he promptly had a heart attack, and was whisked away to a hospital in Paris, where he was in intensive care for a week.

According to Bishop Andrew (Maklakov), while Valentine was in hospital, he was visited by Bishop Hilarion, who persuaded him, ill and groggy though he still was, to sign a document transferring ownership of the Suzdal churches to the ROCOR Synod. Understanding the mistake he had made, Bishop Valentine rushed back to Suzdal, where it was agreed to rename the "Free Russian Orthodox Church" as "The Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church", and re-register the property of the Church in this new name. In this way the plan to transfer the property of the Church inside Russia into the hands of the Church outside Russia was foiled...¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰⁴ Personal communication with the present writer, Lesna, November/December, 1994.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *Pravoslavniy Vestnik* (The Orthodox Herald), January-February, 1996.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Letter to Archbishop Mark of Germany and Great Britain, November 29 / December 12, 1996.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Valentine, Nativity Epistle, 1994/1995.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Maklakov, "Tserkovnij Pogrom XXI Veka" (Church Coup of the 21st Century, part 2, *Vernost'*, April, 2012, no. 171. <http://metanthonymemorial.org/VernostNo171.html>.

On December 1, 1994 the Lesna Council confirmed Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine as the ruling bishops of their dioceses. An ukaz to this effect was sent by Metropolitan Vitaly to Bishop Valentine on December 8.

In January, 1995 there took place the fifth congress of the bishops, monastics and laity of the Suzdal Diocese to discuss the results of the Lesna Sobor. Opening the congress, Bishop Valentine said: "On returning home to the diocese, I have not begun to hide anything or to lay it on thick. Equally, I have not begun to soften those circumstances in which we found ourselves at the Hierarchical Council. I have expounded everything as in confession and offered everyone to make their judgement on the given question. My brothers and co-bishops, and also the members of the Diocesan council, on getting to know the state of affairs and having carefully read the Act, have unambiguously and categorically rejected it, which has served as the reason for convening the Congress of clergy, monastics and laity of the Suzdal Diocese and for reaching a decision on the future functioning of the THCA and of our Orthodox existence as a whole. The Church Administrative district (THCA) that has been created cannot pass under the jurisdiction of the Synod Abroad and cannot be dissolved by it. We are more than convinced that we no longer have to wait long for the time when the two parts, ROCOR and the FROC, will unite into one and will work together to prepare the All-Russian Council to re-establish the unity that has been lost and a worthy leadership of the Church of God".

This message sent out mixed signals: on the one hand, that the Act in its existing form was unacceptable and that the Church inside Russia was no longer prepared to be administered from outside Russia, and on the other hand that the Church inside Russia did not want to break eucharistic communion with the Church outside Russia. When the discussion was passed to the hall, the Act was widely and strongly criticized by the parish clergy, as was the ROCOR Synod's proposed redefining of diocesan boundaries. The latter was of particular concern to them because it would necessitate the re-registration of very many parishes. Since they had achieved registration only with the greatest difficulty in the first place, they did not of course welcome this prospect. But more importantly, it would very probably mean that they would be refused any registration, since the Moscow Patriarchate representatives in the ministry of Justice would insist that changing names and diocesan boundaries was unacceptable. This in turn would very likely mean that their churches would be handed over to the Moscow Patriarchate.

It was therefore proposed that ROCOR be respectfully asked to amend the Act in a number of points, and a corresponding epistle to the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR was drawn up. Here is the original Act of November 29, 1994, together with the changes proposed by the FROC's letter of January 27, 1995 (in italics):

"We, the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR, under the presidency of the First-Hierarch, His Eminence Metropolitan Vitaly of Eastern America and New York, and the Most Reverend Hierarchs: Archbishop Lazarus of Odessa and Tambov and Bishop Valentine of Suzdal and Vladimir, taking upon ourselves full responsibility before God and the All-Russian flock, and following the commandments of the One,

Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, in the name of peace and love, for the sake of the salvation of our souls and the souls of our flock, declare the following:

“1. We recognize our mutual responsibility for the disturbances that have arisen in the Russian [Rossijskoj] Church, but we consider that certain hasty actions of the Hierarchical Synod cannot serve as justification for a schism in the Russian Church and the establishment of the Temporary Higher Church Administration.” Comment by the FROC bishops: *We definitely do not agree with the definition of the actions of the Russian hierarchs as a schism, for these actions were a forced measure aimed at guarding the canonical rights of the Bishop in his diocese, and the created Temporary Higher Church Administration was formed, not in spite of, but in accordance with the will and ukaz no. 362 of the holy Patriarch Tikhon, at a time when the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR left the Russian hierarchs without any communications, directives, holy Antimins or holy Chrismation. If we recognize our mutual responsibility for the disturbances that have arisen in the Russian Church, then it is our right to recognize certain hasty actions of the Hierarchical Sobor and Synod as uncanonical and as inflicting direct harm on the work of restoring true Orthodoxy in Russia, which has served as the terminus a quo for our conditional administrative separation and the formation of the Temporary Higher Church Administration. The concrete intra-ecclesiastical situation has dictated such a course of action on our part, but at the same time we have admitted that administrative independence must in no way automatically lead to canonical and eucharistic independence. Such communion has not been broken by us, in spite of the one-sided decision of the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR.*

“2. We ask each other’s forgiveness, so that from now on we should not reproach anybody for the actions which lead to the division and the founding of the THCA.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *It is not a matter of reproaches but of the essence of the actions of both sides, which have led to administrative division and the founding of the THCA. By examining each concrete action, we would be able mutually to understand the depth of the causes, and proceeding from that, calmly and without detriment, remove their consequences in the present.*

“3. We consider the organization of the THCA to be an unlawful act and abolish it.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *The very formulation of this point seems to us to be faulty in view of the final aim of our joint efforts.*

“4. We consider the consecration of the three hierarchs: Theodore, Seraphim and Agathangel, which was carried out by their Graces Lazarus and Valentine, to be unlawful. Their candidacies should be presented in the order that is obligatory for all candidates for hierarchical rank accepted in ROCOR, and, if they turn out to be worthy, then, after their confession of faith and acceptance of the hierarchical oath, they will be confirmed in the hierarchical rank.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *We do not agree at all that the episcopal consecrations performed by us were not lawful. The obligatory order for all candidates for hierarchical rank accepted in ROCOR could not be a guide for us in our actions since at that time we were administratively independent of ROCOR. If we approach this demand from a strictly formal point of view, then the Hierarchical Synod should have asked us concerning our agreement or disagreement with the new consecrations, especially the consecration of his Grace Bishop Eutyches – which was not done. In spite of your limitation of our rights, we have recognized these consecrations and are*

far from the thought of demanding a confession of faith and acceptance of the hierarchical oath a second time, specially for us.

“5. In the same way, all the other actions carried out by Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine and the THCA organized by them which exceeded the authority of the diocesan bishops, but belonged only to the province of the Hierarchical Sobor and Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR, are to be considered to be invalid.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *Until the moment that we ceased to be members of ROCOR, and the THCA was formed, all our actions and suggestions were presented for discussion and confirmation by these higher church instances. Having conditionally separated from ROCOR in administrative matters, we were entitled to carry out these actions.*

“6. Archbishop Lazarus is reinstated in the rights of a ruling hierarch with the title ‘Archbishop of Odessa and Tambov’”. Comment of the FROC bishops: *The formulation of this point admits of an ambiguous interpretation and is therefore on principle unacceptable for us. Judging objectively, his Grace Archbishop Lazarus did not lose his rights as a ruling bishop, in spite of the ukaz of the Hierarchical Synod concerning his retirement. The ukaz seems to us to be canonically ill-founded, and therefore lacking force and unrealized. We suggest the formulation: ‘In view of the erroneous actions of the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR, Archbishop Lazarus is not to be considered as having been retired and is recognized as having the rights of the ruling hierarch of his diocese with the title (Archbishop of Tambov and Odessa).*

“7. Bishop Valentine will be restored to his rights as the ruling hierarch of Suzdal and Vladimir after the removal of the accusations against him on the basis of an investigation by a Spiritual Court appointed by the present Hierarchical Sobor.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *The given point is excluded, in agreement with the Ukaz of the Hierarchical Synod. [This refers to the ukaz dated November 18 / December 1, 1994, quoted above, which reinstated Vladyka Valentine as Bishop of Suzdal and Vladimir.]*

“8. To bring order into ecclesiastical matters on the territory of Russia a Hierarchical Conference of the Russian Hierarchs is to be organized which does not encroach on the fullness of ecclesiastical power, but which is in unquestioning submission to the Hierarchical Sobor and the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR. One of the members of the Hierarchical Conference will be a member of the Synod, in accordance with the decision of the Hierarchical Sobor.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *It is suggested that this formulation be changed, and consequently also the meaning of the eighth point: ‘The THCA does not encroach on the fullness of ecclesiastical power. In certain exceptional situations it recognizes its spiritual and administrative submission to the Hierarchical Sobor of the ROCOR. One of the members of the Hierarchical Conference will be a temporary, regular member of the Synod, in accordance with the decision of the Hierarchical Sobor of ROCOR and the Hierarchical Conference of the Russian Bishops.*

“9. After the signing of the Act it will be published in all the organs of the church press, and in particular in those publications in which their Graces Lazarus and Valentine published material against the Hierarchical Sobor and Hierarchical Synod of the ROCOR.” Comment of the FROC bishops: *The formulation should be changed as*

*follows: After the signing of the Act it will be published in all the organs of the church press, and in particular in those publications in which their Graces Lazarus and Valentine published material explaining certain hasty actions of the Hierarchical Synod and Sobor of ROCOR.”*¹⁰⁰⁹

However, Bishop Evtikhy (who later joined the Moscow Patriarchate) interpreted this proposal as a rebellion against the authority of ROCOR which the senior bishops Lazarus and Valentine had only recently reaffirmed. As Evtikhy put it several years later: “The unfortunate monk Valentine Rusanov, in signing the Act of reconciliation with the Council of ROCOR, had, as time showed, something quite different in his thought and intentions: to hide this Act from his flock, never to carry it out, and then to overthrow it.”¹⁰¹⁰

But such an accusation is manifestly unjust. For: (i) Valentine did *not* hide the Act from his flock, but discussed it with them openly and extensively (in fact, it was the ROCOR flock that never got to see the Act), and (ii) if he and his fellow-bishops had seemed to reject it before the beginning of the Congress, this was, nevertheless, not their final decision, which was not to reject it outright but to seek amendments. This was only reasonable considering that it was precisely the Russian flock that would suffer all the evil consequences of the Act’s ill-thought-out propositions.

Then a priest asked Bishop Evtikhy which had a higher authority for him: the Apostolic Canons and the decisions of the Russian Council of 1917-18 and of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon - or those of the ROCOR Synod? Bishop Evtikhy replied: “The resolutions of living hierarchs are preferable to those of dead ones. Even if the resolutions of the ROCOR Synod were uncanonical, for me this would have no significance, I would be bound to carry them out”. This reply elicited uproar in the hall, and Bishop Evtikhy left, taking with him a recording of the proceedings.

*

Shortly before this Congress, the ROCOR Synod had sent a respectfully worded invitation to Bishops Theodore, Agathangel and Seraphim to come to New York for the February 22 meeting of the Synod and “for the formalities of re-establishing concelebration”.¹⁰¹¹

It is significant that the Synod had also invited Bishop Evtikhy, who was *not* a member of the Synod – but not Archbishop Lazarus, who *was* a member of the Synod, as agreed at the Lesna Sobor.

On the day after the arrival of Bishops Theodore and Agathangel in New York, in Bishop Agathangel’s words, “we were handed a ‘Decree of the Hierarchical Synod of the Synod of ROCOR’, in which their Graces Lazarus and Valentine, and also Bishops Theodore, Seraphim and I, were declared to be banned from serving. For Vladyka

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (Suzdal Pilgrim), № 22, 1995, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰¹⁰ “Obraschenie Episkopa Evtikhia Ishimskogo i Sibirskogo” (Address of Bishop Eutyches of Ishim and Siberia), *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 3, p. 60.

¹⁰¹¹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (Suzdal Pilgrim), № 23, 1995, pp. 32-33.

Theodore and me this was like a bolt from the blue... We were told that the reason for this decision was our supposed non-fulfillment of the conciliar Act, which had been signed by, among the other Hierarchs, their Graces Lazarus and Valentine. The point was that the conference of Russian Bishops which had been formed in agreement with this same Act had asked for several formulations in the Act to be changed, so as not to introduce disturbance into the ranks of the believers by the categorical nature of certain points. This was a request, not a demand. But, however hard we tried, we could not convince the Synod that none of the Russian Bishops was insisting and that we were all ready to accept the Act in the form in which it had been composed. We met with no understanding on the part of the members of the Synod. Vladyka Theodore and I affirmed in writing that we accepted the text of the Act in the form in which it had been composed and asked for a postponement in the carrying out of the 'Decree' until the position of all the absent Russian Bishops on this question could be clarified. In general we agreed to make any compromises if only the 'Decree' were not put into effect, because in essence it meant only one thing – the final break between the Russian parishes and ROCOR.

“We gradually came to understand that it was not any canonical transgression of the Russian Bishops (there was none), nor any disagreement with the text of the conciliar Act, nor, still less, any mythical ‘avaricious aims’ that was the reason for the composition of this document, which, without any trial or investigation, banned the five Hierarchs from serving.¹⁰¹² It was the Hierarchical Conference of the Russian Bishops, which had been established by the Council that took place in Lesna monastery, that was the real reason giving birth to the ‘Decree’. The Sobor of Hierarchs, moved in those days by ‘Paschal joy’ (as Metropolitan Vitaly repeated several times), finally came to create an organ of administration in Russia which, if not independent, but subject to the Synod, was nevertheless an organ of administration. When the ‘Paschal joy’ had passed, the Synodal Bishops suddenly realized: they had themselves reduced their own power, insofar as, with their agreement, Hierarchs could meet in vast Russia and discuss vital problems. Before that, the Church Abroad had not allowed itself to behave like that. And it was this, unfortunately, that the foreign Archpastors could not bear. On receiving for confirmation the protocols of the first session of the Hierarchical Conference with concrete proposals to improve Church life in Russia, the foreign Bishops were completely nonplussed. Therefore a reason that did not in fact exist was thought up – the supposed non-fulfillment of the Act.

“The members of the Synod, exceeding their authority, since such decisions are in the competence of the Sobor, decided, by means of canonical bans, to confirm their sole authority over the whole of Russia – both historical Russia and Russia abroad. The very foundations of the Church Abroad as a part of the Russian Church living abroad were trampled on, and the Synod on its own initiative ascribed to itself the rights and prerogatives of the Local Russian Church.

¹⁰¹² This Decree, dated February 22, also stated that the Odessa-Tambov and Suzdal-Vladimir dioceses were declared “widowed” (a term used only if the ruling bishop has died) and were to be submitted temporarily to Metropolitan Vitaly. See *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (The Suzdal Pilgrim), № 23, 1995, p. 31; *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 1A (43), February, 1995, p. 3. (V.M).

“It did not even ponder the fact that, in banning at one time five Hierarchs, it was depriving more than 150 parishes – that is many thousands of Orthodox people – of archpastoral care. Cancelling the labour of many years of Hierarchs, priests and conscious, pious laymen in our Fatherland.

“In Russia a very real war is now being waged for human souls; every day is full of work. Depriving Orthodox Christians of their pastors without any objective reason witnesses to the haughtiness and lack of love towards our country and its people on the part of the members of the Synod Abroad. We, the Orthodox from Russia, are called ‘common people’ by Metropolitan Vitaly (thank you, Vladyko Metropolitan!).

“Vladyka Theodore and I were promised that, in exchange for our treachery, we would be confirmed in our hierarchical rank. And it was even proclaimed that we would be appointed to foreign sees. For us personally, who were born and brought up in Russia, this was very painful to hear...”¹⁰¹³

Bishop Gregory Grabbe wrote: “The very fact that Bishops Theodore and Agathangel were summoned without the slightest qualification to a session of the Synod witnesses to the recognition of their hierarchical consecrations. This is especially obvious if we remember the joyful declarations of the President of the Council [in Lesna in December, 1994] concerning the decrees that had previously been accepted opening the way to a peaceful resolution of all the problems of the Church Administration in Russia. Bishops Theodore and Agathangel came to the session of the Synod on the basis of precisely this understanding of their status. However, completely unexpected for us, the Synod raised the question, not even of whether their episcopate should be doubted, but of banning them from serving with the threat of defrocking five out of the seven Russian Bishops, which, if the Bishops from Russia had entered the ranks of the Church Abroad should have been carried out in the definite legal procedure laid out in the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. But we should not forget that one of the especially important legal principles of the above-mentioned Statute was that all its rules had in mind only the affairs of the Church Abroad, but by no means the affairs of the Church in Russia...”¹⁰¹⁴

On February 24 the ROCOR Synod issued an epistle which for the first time contained a semblance of canonical justification in the form of a list of canons supposedly transgressed by the five Russian bishops. Unfortunately, they clearly had no relevance to the matter in hand. Thus what relevance could the 57th Canon of the Council of Carthage – “On the Donatists and the children baptized by the Donatists” – have to the bishops of the Free Russian Orthodox Church?!

The Synodal Epistle said that “on returning to Russia, Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine committed an unheard-of oath-breaking: not carrying out individual points of the Act they had signed, they subjected all its points to criticism and began to spread lies concerning the circumstances of its signing”.

¹⁰¹³ “Witness” of February 28, 1995, *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (Suzdal Pilgrim), № 23, 1995, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰¹⁴ Grabbe, “On Recent Events in Church Life in Russia and Abroad”.

This was a lie, and on February 28, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) wrote to Bishop Valentine: "I cannot fail to express my great sorrow with regard to the recent Church events. Moreover, I wish to say to you that I was glad to get to know Vladykas Theodore and Agathangel better. They think well and in an Orthodox manner. It is amazing that our foreign Bishops should not have valued them and should have treated them so crudely in spite of all the acts and the whole unifying tendency which was just expressed by Metropolitan Vitaly at the last Sobor. The whole tragedy lies in the fact that even the latter wanted to construct everything solely on foreign forces that do not have the information necessary to decide problems which are strange and unfamiliar to them. Therefore they do not want to offer this [task] to the new forces that have arisen in Russia.

"As a result, we are presented with the complete liquidation of these healthy forces. This is a great victory of the dark forces of our Soviet enemies of Orthodoxy in the persons of the Moscow Patriarchate.

"I am glad that you will not give in to them, and I pray God that He help you to carry on the Orthodox cause, apparently without the apostate forces of Orthodox Abroad..."¹⁰¹⁵

ROCOR's action, which transgressed Canons 27, 28 and 96 of the Council of Carthage, was the last straw for the FROC bishops. In March, 1995 the THCA was rehabilitated under the leadership of Archbishop Valentine, and on March 14 the THCA resolved to denounce the Act signed by the Russian Bishops at the Hierarchical Council in France in November, 1994; to declare the bans on the Russian bishops as contrary to the holy canons and therefore not to be obeyed; to consider the actions of Bishop Eutyches and his report to the Synod of ROCOR of January 30 to be an intentional and slanderous provocation; to consider the ROCOR Synod's attempt to declare the dioceses of the Russian bishops "widowed" as absurd, and their attempt to fill these sees while their bishops are still alive as a transgression of 16th Canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople.¹⁰¹⁶

However, Archbishop Lazarus left the March session of the THCA in an unexpected way, saying: "My seedlings are dying" (*rassada propadaiet*)¹⁰¹⁷ and then returned, "repenting", to ROCOR with his vicar, Bishop Agathangel.¹⁰¹⁸ ROCOR restored Lazarus to the status of a ruling bishop, not immediately, but only eighteen months later, in October, 1996. However, in accordance with a resolution of the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR in 1996, the Hierarchical Conference of the Russian Bishops inside Russia was stripped of what little power it had. Its representation in ROCOR was annulled, and not one of the Russian bishops entered into the ROCOR Synod.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 1A (43), February, 1995, p. 5.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik* (Suzdal Pilgrim), № 23, 1995, p. 34.

¹⁰¹⁷ Igumen Theophan (Areskin), <http://suzdalite.livejournal.com/35173.html> .

¹⁰¹⁸ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church News), №№ 3-4, May-August, 1995, pp. 3-4.

Lazarus' controversial "repentance" split his flock in Ukraine. Thus Hieromonk (later Bishop) Hilarion (Goncharenko), in a petition for transfer from ROCOR to the FROC, wrote: "Vladyka Lazarus together with the Synod Abroad has cunningly and finally destroyed the whole Church in the Ukraine. My former friends and brothers in the Lord have... turned to me with tearful sobs and the painful question: 'What are we to do now in the stormy and destructive situation that has been created?'"¹⁰¹⁹

The mission of ROCOR to Russia – that is, the mission as still administered from New York – was now effectively dead as a unified, large-scale operation. And opinion polls reflected this change: after the sharp rise in popularity of ROCOR at the beginning of the 1990s, and drop in the popularity of the MP¹⁰²⁰, by the middle of the 1990s the MP had recovered its position. Such a reversal cannot be attributed to any change for the better in the MP, which, as we have seen, continued to be as corrupt and heretical as ever, but rather to the suicidal civil war of the ROCOR hierarchs. As if to accentuate the failure of ROCOR, fires destroyed the cathedrals of Metropolitan Vitaly and Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles. And in October, 1997, one of her greatest holy objects, the myrrh-streaming "Montreal" Iveron icon went missing and its guardian, the highly respected Chilean Orthodox, Jose Munoz-Cortes was murdered...¹⁰²¹

The fall of the ROCOR mission to Russia was accompanied by some ecumenist deviations in the faith. Thus Bishop Agathangel (Pashkovsky) wrote: "...the Grace of the Holy Spirit, the Grace of the Sacraments, resides also with the Catholics, Monophysites, and in part, with Old Believers and Protestants who have not violated the formula in performing the sacraments (baptism). The Orthodox Church does not re-baptize those who come from these heresies, but receives them through repentance. Catholics and Monophysites are not chrismated a second time. The Sacrament of Marriage is also accepted. In the Moscow Patriarchate, there are six Sacraments which have been preserved and are recognized as valid – baptism, chrismation, the priesthood, marriage, unction, repentance."¹⁰²²

In May, 1995, summoning his last strength, Bishop Gregory went to Suzdal, received communion from Bishop Valentine and publicly for the last time expressed his support for the FROC. In October, he died – no ROCOR bishop was present at his burial...

On September 10, 1996 the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR defrocked Bishop Valentine, citing his supposed violation of the "Act" on January 26 and a few irrelevant canons.¹⁰²³

¹⁰¹⁹ *Suzdal'skij Blagovest'* (Suzdal Bell-Ringing), № 3, January-February, 1997, p. 3.

¹⁰²⁰ V. Moss, "The Free Russian Orthodox Church", *Report on the USSR*, № 44, November 1, 1991; L. Byzov, S. Filatov, *op. cit.*, p. 41, note 5.

¹⁰²¹ Bishop Ambrose of Methone reported that a few days before his death Jose told him that he had left the icon in Canada (personal communication, November 17, 2005).

¹⁰²² *Vestnik IPTs* (Messenger of the True Orthodox Church), No. 2, 1994, pg. 30. In 2014 Agathangel signed a much stricter confession of faith when he entered into communion with the True Orthodox Church under Archbishop Kallinikos. There is no record of his having repented of his former views...

¹⁰²³ *Orthodox Life*, vol. 47, № 3, May-June, 1997, pp. 42-43; *Suzdal'skij Blagovest'* (Suzdal Good News),

In 1999, the Synod of the FROC (now renamed the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC)) passed a resolution “concerning the hierarchs and representatives of the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate who received their rank through the mediation of the authorities and organs of State Security. In relation to such it was decided that every year on the Sunday of Orthodoxy ANATHEMA should be proclaimed, using the following text: ‘If any bishops, making use of secular bosses, have seized power in the Church of God and enslaved Her, let those and those who aid them and those who communicate with them without paying heed to the reproaches of the Law of God, be ANATHEMA.’¹⁰²⁴

№ 3, January-February, 1997, p. 3.

¹⁰²⁴ *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), № 7, March-May, 1999, p. 7. Cf. “Rossijskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov’, 1990-2000” (The Russian Orthodox Church, 1990-2000), *Vertograd-Inform*, №№ 7-8 (64-65), July-August, 2000, pp. 22-39.

68. THE SERGIANIST CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM

Having effectively rejected most of the Catacomb Church, as well as most of her own organisation inside Russia, ROCOR began inexorably to fall towards the “black hole” of the Moscow Patriarchate. In December, 1996 Archbishop Mark had a meeting with Patriarch Alexis in Moscow which scandalized Russian Orthodox faithful in many countries. And shortly after he issued a joint declaration with Archbishop Theophan of the MP in Germany which effectively recognised the MP as a True Church with which ROCOR had to unite as soon as possible. Metropolitan Vitaly then said about Archbishop Mark that he had “lost the gift of discernment” ...

In 1997 the MP took de facto control of ROCOR’s monasteries and properties in the Holy Land.

The story began when Patriarch Alexis declared his desire to visit ROCOR’s monasteries and to serve at the tomb of Archimandrite Antonin, the famous builder of the Russian Church’s churches in the Holy Land in the nineteenth century. To allow him to do this would have meant violating the ROCOR Synod’s ukaz of April 19, 1994, according to which “the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate are not allowed to carry out any kind of Divine services (that is: put on an epitrachelion, perform a litiya or prayer service, etc.) on the territory of our monasteries.” Moreover, the patriarch’s intentions were clearly not peaceful or religious, for before his visit he announced that he was going to the Holy Land to take possession of the properties of ROCOR! In spite of that, the Synod of Bishops ordered, in its meeting in New York on May 13, that the chief heresiarch of modern times should be allowed into the holy places under ROCOR’s jurisdiction and treated “with honour and respect” .

However, ROCOR’s leaders in the Holy Land, Bishop Barnabas of Cannes, Archimandrite Bartholomew and Abbess Juliana of the Eleon monastery, decided to remain faithful to the still-unrepealed ukaz of April 19, 1994, and refused admittance to the KGB patriarch and his suite. The ROCOR Synod punished them for this, expelling them from the Holy Land. And then, on July 13, Metropolitan Vitaly, under heavy pressure from Archbishop Mark, apologised both to Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem, and to the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat (an MGB agent who trained in Moscow)¹⁰²⁵! Patriarch Alexis then resorted to violence: with the aid of the Palestinians, he took the Hebron monastery by force in an operation that was reminiscent of the similar operations carried out by him with the aid of OMON troops against ROCOR parishes in Vladivostok, Ryazan and other places. (Abbess Juliana suffered concussion. This was in fact the second time that she had been violently expelled from a monastery in the Holy Land by the MP, the first time being in 1948.) Finally, on July 29, the 70th anniversary of Metropolitan Sergius’ declaration, the ROCOR Synod expelled Bishop Barnabas of Cannes, Archimandrite Bartholomew and Abbess Juliana from the Holy Land.¹⁰²⁶ Even mute nature was sorrowful: Abraham’s Oak at Hebron died one year after its seizure by the MP... Later it turned out that on February 5, 1997 the monastery had been secretly transferred to the MP

¹⁰²⁵ See materials in *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (Russian Orthodoxy), № 3 (7), 1997.

¹⁰²⁶ *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 16 (1589), August 15/28, 1997.

through the head of the MP's Russian ecclesiastical mission in Jerusalem, Vasily Vasnev ...¹⁰²⁷

The critics of Abbess Juliana pointed to the fact that access to the Holy Places was guaranteed by law for all pilgrims. Actually, while the Oak of Abraham, situated on the grounds of the Hebron monastery, was clearly a Holy Place, the Eleon and Gethsemane monasteries were situated close to, but not precisely on, the sites of the Lord's Ascension, Agony in the Garden and Betrayal by Judas. However, assuming that the monasteries were situated on a Holy Place, let us consider the force of this argument.

Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov wrote: "Such a law exists in Israel. But nobody can say with certainty that such a law is also in force on the territory of the Palestinian Autonomy. And even if it is, in view of the special military situation there (as far as Hebron is concerned, the conflicts between the Palestinians and the Jews have led, in the last two months, to tens of deaths and hundreds of people wounded), one can say that the functioning of the law is not the norm in the Palestinian Autonomy. The best proof of this is the fact that there are differences between the various Palestinian levels of authority in evaluating the lawless actions of the Palestinian police in Hebron..."

"If such a law exists in the Palestinian Autonomy, then in Hebron, in the given instance, it became quite inapplicable for us. Arafat considers that we occupy the territory unlawfully. How can we act in accordance with the law concerning the reception of visitors if we are not considered to be the owners of this place? Thus Arafat himself removes from us the basis for fulfilling the law. But we become still less responsible before this law (I repeat, if this law is in force) if the visitor who is planning to come is in the eyes of the authorities the lawful owner. Consequently, the first violators of the law are the authorities themselves, who are placing us in a position outside the law. But what fulfillment of the law is required of us here? The concept of hospitality has very little to do with this..."

"As regards the attitude of the Jews to this law in the given case, it is known that, not long before the projected visit to the Holy Land of Alexis II, one of the important officials of the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, Uri Mor, visited our monastery on Eleon with the aim of finding out what the attitude to the visit of the Moscow Patriarch was there. Our nuns replied that the arrival of the Patriarch, supposedly for the 150th anniversary of the Mission, was nothing other than a Soviet show; the 150th anniversary was an excuse, since the 100th anniversary of the Mission was celebrated triumphantly in Jerusalem in 1958 under the leadership of Archbishop Alexander of Berlin, in the presence of officials of the Jordanian state and, of course, of representatives of the Greek Patriarchate (officially the Mission goes back to its establishment by the Turkish government in 1858). To this Uri Mor replied: 'You can protest as you like.' And then he said: 'I see that your approach is different from that in Gethsemane... *If you don't want to receive him, that is your business!*' And he added:

¹⁰²⁷ *El Mascobbijeh* (Hebron); Abbess Juliana, in "Paroles d'un detraque et reponse de Mere Juliana" (A Deranged Person's Words and Mother Juliana's Reply), orthodox-tradition@yahoo.com, June 22, 2004.

'Israel will never change the status quo on its territories.'

"Patriarch Diodorus' attitude to this question is also characteristic. When his emissary accompanying Alexis II was rejected, Patriarch Diodorus received the nuns of the Eleon monastery and expressed to them his principled censure. And, demonstrating his power, he said that he could enter Eleon, if he wanted, with the help of the Jewish police, but he would not do this. And he dismissed them in peace, after asking: 'Whose side is Hebron on?'"¹⁰²⁸

"Let us add that the Catholic monastery of the Carmelites admits nobody, and nobody has laid claims against it. As S. Chertok, a journalist living in Jerusalem, has clearly written (*Russkaia Mysl'*, № 4179, 19-25 June, 1997): 'In Israel access to the holy places is truly free. However, in closed institutions this is done at established or agreed hours, and, of course, without resorting to force. This rule particularly applies to monasteries where order is defined by a strict rule.'"¹⁰²⁹

Even if the law concerning the free access of pilgrims to the holy places were clearer and more strictly applied, it could still not have applied to Patriarch Alexis for the simple reason that *he was not a pilgrim*. Having announced publicly before his visit that he was going to the Holy Land to take possession of the properties of ROCOR, he took the Hebron monastery by force. In other words, he acted like a thief - and no law, secular or sacred, can compel one to accept a self-declared thief onto one's property... But even if such an impious law existed, it would be necessary to ignore it for the sake of piety, of the Law of God. Would the great confessors of the faith in the Holy Land - Saints Theodosius the Great, Euthymius the Great and Sabbas the Sanctified - have allowed the heresiarchs of their time to carry out services in their monasteries? It is inconceivable.

What at first sight appeared to be the strongest argument advanced by the critics of Abbess Juliana was the fact that ROCOR in the Holy Land commemorated Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem, and was therefore bound to receive his friends and guests. Thus according to Protopriest George Larin, who later became Archbishop Mark's deputy in the Holy Land, "we do not even have the right to perform Divine services in our churches in the Holy Land without the blessing of his Beatitude Diodorus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and... we perform the Divine Liturgy on antimins sanctified by his Beatitude, ... we pray for him and commemorate him in the litanies before our First-Hierarch... When hierarchs and priests and deacons arrive on pilgrimage in the Holy Land, they do not have the right (according to the canons of the Orthodox Church) to perform Divine services even in our churches without the Patriarch of Jerusalem's special permission, which is why we go from the airport first to his Beatitude for a blessing!"¹⁰³⁰

At the same time Fr. George admitted that Patriarch Diodorus "concelebrates with

¹⁰²⁸ It should be pointed out that Patriarch Diodorus' twenty-year reign as patriarch (he died in 2000) was characterized by extreme corruption, both financial and sexual. See Grigorios Skalokairinos, "On the Sidelines at the Jerusalem Patriarchate", *Kathimerini*, July 23, 2001. (V.M.)

¹⁰²⁹ Zhukov, Letter of July 19, 1997 to Alexander Ivanovich Musatov.

¹⁰³⁰ Larin, Letter of August 18/31, 1997 to Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky.

the Patriarch of Moscow and does not wish to concelebrate with our hierarchs". A strange and clearly uncanonical situation, in which the ROCOR monastics in the Holy Land already had their own first-hierarchy, but were forced to have another one - who served with their chief enemy but not with them! Who was it Who said that one cannot serve two masters?...

At this point, some words should be said about the very particular position of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Though a part of World Orthodoxy, as we have seen, Jerusalem, together with its satellite Church of Mount Sinai, has always been on its conservative "wing", is lukewarm about ecumenism, and is the only Greek-speaking Church not to have accepted the new calendar. The reason for this is obvious. The church of the Holy Sepulchre is divided between the Orthodox and several heterodox Christian churches, and there is rivalry also at several other holy sites. The Orthodox patriarchate has long stood on guard for the status quo (it will be recalled that a dispute over the Holy Places was the spark that led to the Crimean War), and therefore fears any disruption in the status quo that ecumenism might bring. Thus Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem criticized the ecumenical movement, and in 1989 left the World Council of Churches, although it appears that he did not break off all contact with the ecumenical organizations.

However, there are strong forces working in favour of ecumenism. The Jerusalem Patriarchate is financially dependent on the Ecumenical Patriarchate. And this dependence becomes stronger as its Palestinian flock, wearied by the constant pressure of the supposedly secular and democratic Israeli authorities on Christians in the Holy Land¹⁰³¹, chooses to emigrate in ever-increasing numbers. This same pressure on the Church hierarchy compels it to seek out friends among the heterodox both within and outside Israel. And so the friendship of the patriarchate for ROCOR makes less sense from a political point of view and is increasingly seen as dispensable by its hierarchs. Thus Metropolitan Timothy of Lydda declared: "The Russian monastery of Hebron has been returned to its legal owner [i.e. Alexis of Moscow]", emphasizing that "the time has come to overcome the divisions now that the Church in Russia is free. There is only one Russian Orthodox Church and one cannot recognize as such the tiny grouping which separated from it a long time ago for whatever reasons."¹⁰³²

The question for ROCOR, meanwhile, was: what was the purpose of her presence in Jerusalem? To have a quiet life undisturbed by any conflicts with her neighbours? In that case, she would have done best to give up her ineffectual pose of pseudo-independence and join either the Patriarchate of Jerusalem or the MP's Mission in Jerusalem. Or was it to inherit the Kingdom of heaven through a good confession of faith, even to the shedding of blood if necessary? In that case, she should have broken communion with the Patriarch of Jerusalem (for, as St. John Chrysostom says, "he who is in communion with an excommunicate is himself excommunicated") and

¹⁰³¹ See William Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain*, London: HarperCollins, 2005, part V.

¹⁰³² *Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, 221, September-October, 1997, p. 16. Patriarch Diodorus was reported to have distanced himself from that remark.

firmly resist all attempts of KGB agents in cassocks to “have cups of tea” and “serve Divine services” in her monasteries.

To take the latter, zealot course would undoubtedly have led to confrontation, and possibly to expulsion from the Holy Land itself (which is what Abbess Juliana in fact suffered). But it would have attracted the Grace of God and encouraged many other covert opponents of ecumenism in the Holy Land and elsewhere. After all, as the Apostle Paul put it: “If God is with us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8.31).

One bishop critical of Abbess Juliana wrote: “Obviously, it was a question of drawing a line at some point: Alexey evidently could not be received as though he were a patriarch, but the other extreme, closing the gates in the face of the delegation is another extreme, which, elsewhere might indeed be appropriate, but in the context was provocative to the local authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical. Diplomacy has little place in matters of principle, but neither, I feel, does provocation...”

These comments betray a lack of understanding of the situation in which Abbess Juliana and her fellow zealots were placed.

First, she had been ordered to receive him “with honour and respect”, which precluded treating him as though he were not a patriarch. True, the Synod had given her a speech to the patriarch in which it was written: “We welcome you not as the Patriarch of all Russia, but as a guest of Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem”. But, as Abbess Juliana wrote, “standing in front of the television cameras I would have been shamed in front of the whole world!!!... This seemed to me absurd. Every welcome is already a welcome, and holding in my hands the paper, the reporters could have put into my mouth completely different words. And in essence I would have had to go up to receive his blessing.”¹⁰³³

Again, a highly respected protopriest from Russia, while criticizing the Synod for going too far in one direction, criticized Abbess Juliana for going too far in the other, saying that she should have let Alexis in, but “drily, officially”.

However, even if she had received him “drily” and “officially”, could she, a frail woman who did not have the support even of all her nuns, have prevented him from serving at the tomb of Archimandrite Antonin once he and his vast entourage had crossed the threshold of the convent?

If she had tried to do so, the scandal may have been even greater, and she might well have been simply pushed aside, just as she was pushed aside at Hebron a little later.

In any case, if the KGB Agent “Patriarch” had been allowed into the citadel of ROCOR in Jerusalem, the real relationship of ROCOR to him and his patriarchate would have been completely misrepresented and the whole world would have known who the real master was, not only on Eleon, but in the Russian Church as a

¹⁰³³ Letter of Abbess Juliana to Metropolitan Vitaly, July 4/17, 1997.

whole.

The most shocking aspect of the whole affair was the letter of apology to the Muslims. Protopriest Benjamin Zhukov made some illuminating comments on the diplomatic significance of the metropolitan's letter to Arafat: *"In the letter to Arafat there is not a word about the unlawful seizure of property, about the inhumane beating of the monastics, about the crying violation of international law, as was expressed by Archbishop Laurus in his protest. Nothing of the kind! In this address, eight days after the lawless actions of the Moscow Patriarchate with the help of the Palestinian OMON, under the guise of a 'diplomatic note' with the aim of receiving Hebron back again, there took place a complete 'whitewash' and 'justification' of all the criminals in the affair of the seizure of Hebron. Perhaps, in fact, in such circumstances Hebron will be returned to our Church: the Moscow Patriarchate would make off, as Khrushchev once made off in Cuba, having got a long way in! Perhaps... but would it not be better to sacrifice Hebron (we may even say that we do not have the strength to keep it), rather than to sacrifice our faithful monks, whose exploit we did not defend in this lamentable letter. We have similarly failed to value the exploit of those who trusted us and who have been beaten up by the OMON in our homeland... This was a diplomatic failure for the whole world to see!"*

There can be no doubt that Metropolitan Vitaly was forced to make this apology by Archbishop Mark, who was not sent to the Holy Land in July at the bidding of the Synod, but came of his own will, having supposedly heard about the events "from the newspapers". Many suspect - and there is certainly much evidence pointing in that direction - that the events in Hebron and Jerusalem were actually planned by the Moscow Patriarch with Archbishop Mark at their secret meeting in December, 1996.

Archbishop Mark's position in relation to Moscow was set out in an article in which he began by affirming that the events in the Holy Land should not stop attempts to overcome the schism with the Moscow Patriarchate - which, however, was a "division", not a "schism". Then he reviewed the main obstacles to union in a perfunctory and misleading way. Finally, he called for an All-Emigration Council to review relations with the patriarchate and to consider the question: "Is eucharistic communion possible with complete autonomy?"¹⁰³⁴ This showed where his thought is moving - towards making ROCOR a "completely autonomous" Church in communion with the patriarchate, like the Orthodox Church of America!

It also became clear that Archbishop Mark was planning to hand over the remaining ROCOR properties to the MP. For his close assistant in this affair, Protopriest Victor Potapov, said in an interview: "We declare outright that we consider the Church Abroad to be an inalienable part of Russian Orthodoxy and that *we would like to give over to Russia everything that we have available, and in particular also here in the Holy Land.*"¹⁰³⁵

¹⁰³⁴ *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii*, № 4, 1997. See also his letter to the Synod of January 30 / February 12, 1998, <http://www.stetson.edu/~psteves/relnews/archbishopmark1202.html>.

¹⁰³⁵ *Nezavisimaia Gazeta - Religii*, July 24, 1997.

In 2000, Patriarch Alexis, during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, presented documents laying claim to the Hebron monastery to the Palestinian authorities, who accepted them. In 2005, he awarded Ambassador Hairi al Oridi with "The Order of the Holy and Right-Believing Prince Daniel" for his contribution to the development of relations between Russian and Palestine." Bishop Mark of Yegorievsk, who presented the award along with the Patriarch, noted that the Ambassador took an active role in preparing for the two visits of Patriarch Alexis to the Holy Land..."¹⁰³⁶

As for the Jerusalem Patriarchate, by the end of the millennium there was no question that it had thrown its lot in completely with the ecumenists. Thus in a Joint Statement with the Antiochian Patriarchate, the Monophysites, the Papists and the Protestants in the summer of 1999 it declared: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us... Oriental Orthodox [Monophysites], Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical... We renew our commitment to strive to be [the] One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, according to the will of the Lord Jesus, 'so that they may be one' (John 17.11)... by opening our hearts and minds to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we encounter each other cooperatively, with respect, and with kindness. In Him, we are one..."¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³⁶ www.mospat.ru , October 31, 2005.

¹⁰³⁷ "Final Statement of the Seventh Assembly of the Middle East Council of Churches, in Dr. Fred Strickert, *The Washington Report: On Middle East Affairs: Christianity and the Middle East*, July/August, 1999, pp. 84-85.

69. THE WITNESS OF ST. PHILARET

In June, 1998, under pressure from believers inside Russia, Metropolitan Vitaly recovered somewhat from his wavering, and in defiance of his liberal bishops outside Russia declared, in a letter to a priest: "I have received your letter, which takes the form of a 'pastoral letter' or 'encyclical epistle.' You would never have written such a letter if you had known all the facts. I presume that you do not know them all. However, the question of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia is one of such supreme importance in our days, that you can only presume to write about it if you are in possession of full information. From time to time the Lord allows temptations to arise in the history of the Church. We know of all the Ecumenical Councils, which were assembled as a result of heresies which were disturbing the souls of the faithful. What is the temptation facing us now? The European Christian religions or various sects? No. At the present time the principal trial and temptation facing us is the question of the Moscow Patriarchate and the question of whether we adopt the right, Orthodox attitude towards it or not, which amounts to the same thing as whether we adopt a right or a wrong attitude towards Christ, towards Truth Itself. This is why the Moscow Patriarchate is the most serious question for each Orthodox Russian, for on this depends our eternal salvation or our perdition. You probably do not know everything about this and this is your fatal error. You have not examined all the documents about what happened to the Moscow Patriarchate, beginning with Metropolitan Sergius. Without full knowledge you let yourself write your 'pastoral letter' which was ill considered and unjust as concerns the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia which, for nearly 80 years, has been keeping to a straight path, without turning aside or losing its way. This is your sin, dear father.

"Now let us look at the issue most closely. We do not have any communion with the Moscow Patriarchate, either in prayer or in the sacraments. This is not because we are critical of it, but because there are canonical rules on which the Church of Christ has stood since its very foundation by Christ our Saviour, which have been transgressed by the Moscow Patriarchate. And transgressing the canons is equivalent to destroying the Church. The breaking of canons by the Moscow Patriarchate amounts to a breaking of the Apostolic Succession. Clearly you are not aware of this and so have allowed yourself to write such an unworthy 'epistle.'

"What is this all about? It is a very serious matter. From the very earliest years the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia has had no communion at all with the Moscow Patriarchate for very good reasons. Let us recall how, in a document dated 25th December 1924, Patriarch Tikhon appointed one of three Metropolitans - whichever of Metropolitans Kyrill, Agathangel or Peter of Krutitsa could manage to be present in Moscow - to replace him after his death until such time as a new Patriarch could be elected. Metropolitans Kyrill and Agathangel were not allowed to travel to Moscow from their places of exile by the Soviet government. The 58 bishops who assembled in Moscow for the funeral of Patriarch Tikhon examined the document left by the late Patriarch, and then recognized Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa as locum tenens of the Patriarchal throne until the lawful election of a new Patriarch. He was loyal to the Soviet government in the sense that he did not speak

out against it publicly, but he completely refused to make any untrue statements in support of it or to meet any of its demands which were unacceptable to the Church. On 27th November / 10th December 1925 he was arrested. At first he was imprisoned in the Butyrka Prison, in a large cell together with common criminals, and then he was exiled to a remote part of Asia. A few days before his arrest Metropolitan Peter appointed Metropolitan Sergius, who was then in Moscow, as his deputy, and indicated two other possible deputies - Metropolitan Michael, the Exarch of the Ukraine, and Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, who was then still Archbishop of Rostov.

“At first Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky did not sign the ‘Declaration’ and was put in prison, but he was let out very soon after. This seemed highly suspicious to all the faithful. It turned out that now he had signed the Declaration. In other words, he had betrayed the Church to the Bolshevik government. He thereby deprived it of its own internal freedom in spiritual and administrative matters. When Metropolitan Peter learned that Metropolitan Sergius had signed this Declaration - in other words, that he had changed the whole course of the life of the Church - he wrote him two letters from prison, copies of which have been preserved. In these letters he said, very politely, "You, your eminence, had no right to change the course of the Church" i.e. to betray it to the Bolsheviks. He received no answer to these letters. And he was the real authority over Metropolitan Sergius. Clearly Sergius had concluded that by being arrested Metropolitan Peter had also been deposed from his position of authority in the Church, which is completely contrary to the Orthodox canons. Then Metropolitan Peter sent a letter by hand, thinking that it was the postal service that was at fault, and even then Metropolitan Sergius made no reply to his ecclesiastical superior, who was still his superior, even though confined to prison! For no Bolshevik government authority can deprive a single bishop or a single priest of his spiritual authority. This is something which you should know. Despite this, Sergius decided that he need no longer reckon with him as someone in a senior position. When Metropolitan Peter returned from his exile, the Bolsheviks realized that Metropolitan Peter was senior to Metropolitan Sergius in the Church, and then they immediately arrested him and shot him. None of the ruling bishops (and there were about ten of them) submitted to Metropolitan Sergius as the successor to the Patriarch. So they were all arrested, sent into exile, and ultimately killed. The Bolsheviks did everything possible to smooth the way for Metropolitan Sergius. Thus Metropolitan Sergius set out on a path drenched in the blood of the martyred bishops of Russia. On one occasion Lenin said, ‘If you need a Church, we will give you one, we will even give you a Patriarch, but it is WE who will give you your Patriarch. And it is WE who will give you your Church.’ Of course, Father, you do not know this, and so you have allowed yourself to write your composition. At the moment when Metropolitan Sergius ceased to recognize Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa as his spiritual authority he deprived himself of the Apostolic Succession and became a usurper. Such was the path taken by Metropolitan Sergius, and after him by all the other patriarchs and metropolitans up to the present day, which is why we do not have any communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. It is a *pseudo-patriarchate* with a *pseudo-patriarch* at its head. This is the fundamental reason. So we do not point at it and say there, look what it's turned into, because the very heart of the matter is, that the Moscow Patriarchate has lost the Apostolic Succession, which is to say, that it has lost the Grace of Christ.

We have not the slightest intention of taking part in a Bishops' Council, or Sobor, jointly with the Moscow Patriarchate."¹⁰³⁸

One of those who supported the metropolitan here was Archpriest Lev Lebedev of Kursk: "How right was Archbishop Seraphim of Brussels when he wrote with regards to the MP in 1994: 'It is by our existence independently of the MP that we will benefit Orthodoxy, as well as the MP. As long as we exist, no matter how small a lot we are, the MP will always have to be mindful of us. We serve as the *saving* deterrent for its blunders. If we disappear and merge with them, the hands of the MP will be completely untied.'"

While considering that the MP was graceless, Fr. Lev was not in favour of the metropolitan's making a public declaration to that effect...

In 1998 Fr. Lev was due to address the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR in New York. However, he was mysteriously taken ill and died in his hotel room before he could deliver his report, which contained a scathing exposé of Archbishop Mark of Germany. He also wrote: "One cannot but admit that the apostate, heretical and criminal majority of the MP hierarchy corresponds entirely to the state of society as a whole; it is one of the 'moles' or 'worms' greedily devouring whatever it can still find to devour in the rotting corpse. Under these circumstances what can the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad have in common with the Moscow 'Patriarchate'? Nothing! Hence it follows that any kind of 'dialogue' or 'conference' with the MP with the aim of clarifying 'what divides us and what unites us' is either an abysmal failure to understand the essence of things or a betrayal of God's truth and the Church. What divides us is everything! And what unites us is nothing, except perhaps the outward forms of church buildings, clerical vestments and the order of services (but in all respects even here). Therefore it is necessary to realize clearly and confirm officially that now the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia is not a part of the Church of Russia, but the only lawful Russian Church in all its fullness! 'Recognition' of the MP by ROCOR would provide the MP with the appearance of legitimacy in the eyes of the entire world. But this cannot be allowed to happen... And if one's soul suffers pain for the Russian-speaking population of Russia, then it is only through constant and firm reproof of the MP, and not through making advances towards it, that it is possible to save those in Russia who still seek salvation and are capable of accepting it. It is therefore essential to return to the uncompromising attitude towards the MP that was taken by ROCOR from the beginning. And it is quite wrong, under the pretext of 'the good of the Church' and 'operational efficiency', to undermine the authority of the Primate of ROCOR, who is capable of distinguishing truth from falsehood and of 'discerning the spirits'. Recently ROCOR has been afflicted by a whole series of disasters one after the other. The murder of the guardian of the miraculous myrrh-streaming Iveron icon was especially terrible. But it is after the very indecisive resolutions of the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR in 1993 and 1994 and the

¹⁰³⁸ Vitaly, "Letter to a Priest", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 1, November, 1998, #2, p. 17 (English edition); https://www.monasterypress.com/priest.html?fbclid=IwAR2qMpfwt9Pd9dB4yjy5_DAahjzmcXIKDr_XWGDH8f4Qj-tr-kWz9KR2mE.

subsequent steps taken by some of our hierarchs towards rapprochement with the MP that these disasters began, one after the other – disasters which bear witness to the withdrawal of God’s beneficence towards our Church, because of its deviation from the truth. How many more disasters do the supporters of fraternization with the criminal and heretical MP wish to bring down upon us?”

*

That Archbishop – and future Metropolitan – Laurus was a leader in the movement of ROCOR away from True Orthodoxy and towards “World Orthodoxy” was revealed in the disrespectful way he treated the incorrupt relics of his predecessor, Metropolitan Philaret.

Metropolitan Philaret reposed on the feast of the Archangel Michael, 1985. Nearly thirteen years passed, and it was arranged that his remains should be transferred from the burial-vault under the altar of the cemetery Dormition church of the Holy Trinity monastery in Jordanville into a new burial-vault behind the monastery’s main church. In connection with this, it was decided, in preparation for the transfer, to carry out an opening of the tomb.

On November 10, 1998 Archbishop Lavr of Syracuse and Holy Trinity, together with the clergy of the community, served a pannikhida in the burial vault; the coffin of Metropolitan Philaret was placed in the middle of the room and opened. The relics of the metropolitan were found to be completely incorrupt, they were of a light colour; the skin, beard and hair were completely preserved. His vestments, Gospel, and the paper with the prayer of absolution were in a state of complete preservation. Even the white cloth that covered his body from above had preserved its blinding whiteness, which greatly amazed the undertaker who was present at the opening of the coffin – he said that this cloth should have become completely black after three years in the coffin... It is noteworthy that the metal buckles of the Gospel in the coffin fell into dust on being touched – they had rusted completely; this witnessed to the fact that it was very damp in the tomb; and in such dampness nothing except these buckles suffered any damage! In truth this was a manifest miracle of God. However, the reaction of Archbishop Lavr to this manifest miracle was unexpected: he ordered that the coffin with the relics be again closed...

On the eve of the reburial of the relics, November 20, at the beginning of the fourth hour of the day, the coffin of the holy hierarch was taken from the Dormition church to the monastery church of the Holy Trinity in a car. The serving of the pannikhida was led by Archbishop Laurus, with whom there concelebrated 20 clergy. None of the other hierarchs of ROCOR came to the translation of the relics of the holy hierarch Philaret (only Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan wanted to come, but he was hindered by a sudden illness). After the pannikhida the coffin with the body of the holy hierarch was placed in the side wall of the church, and at 19.00 the All-Night Vigil began. The next day, November 21, Archbishop Laurus headed the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the church. With him concelebrated 18 priests and 11 deacons, several more clergy who had arrived prayed with the laypeople in the church itself. About 400 people gathered in the over-crowded church. All those present were greatly upset and

grieved by the fact that during the pannikhida, as during the All-Night Vigil and the Liturgy, the coffin with the relics of the holy hierarch Philaret remained sealed. In spite of the numerous requests of clergy and laity, who had specially come to Jordanville so as to kiss the relics of the holy hierarch, Archbishop Laurus refused to open the coffin. He also very strictly forbade making photocopies from the shots that had already been taken of the incorrupt relics of the saint or even to show them to anyone. Archbishop Laurus called on those assembled to pray for the peace of the soul of the reposed First Hierarch until the will of God should be revealed concerning his veneration among the ranks of the saints... After the Liturgy a pannikhida was served, and then the coffin with the relics of the holy hierarch Philaret were taken in a cross procession around the Holy Trinity cathedral and then to the prepared place in the burial vault, where Archbishop Laurus consigned the relics of the holy hierarch to the earth.¹⁰³⁹

There have been other witnesses to the holiness of Metropolitan Philaret. The following took place on the feast of St. Stephen, January 9, 2006 in the True Orthodox women's monastery of Novy Stjenik, which has just been built in a very remote part of Serbia in spite of threats to destroy it coming from the false patriarchate of Serbia.¹⁰⁴⁰ The nuns were expelled from Old Stjenik a few years ago because of their opposition to the heresy of ecumenism, and were under the omophorion of a hierarch of the "Florinite" branch of the True Orthodox Church of Greece.

Nun Ipomoni (which means "patience" in Greek) suffered from very severe asthma attacks. On this day, she had the most severe attack yet and suffocated. For 20 minutes she did not breathe and her body was without any sign of life. Now it should be noted that a few days before this, the 10 nuns in this monastery led by Schema-Abbess Euphrosyne had earnestly prayed to the Lord to give them the fear of God.

During the 20 minutes that she was clinically dead Nun Ipomoni met several demons in a dark tunnel; they got hold of her and were trying to drag her to hell. It was a most terrifying experience. After 20 minutes, Matushka Euphrosyne anointed her dead body with oil from the lampada in front of the icon of St. Philaret of New York. At the moment when the oil touched her head, which felt like an electric shock, she revived and began to move. For some afterwards, she was still very weak and wept all the time. But the next day Fr. Akakie arrived at the monastery, served the liturgy for three days in a row, communed her and gave her the sacrament of Holy Unction. Now she has fully recovered. She feels well, walks and even prepares food. This whole incident has had a very beneficial effect on all of the nuns. Their prayer to receive the fear of God was answered. And they ardently thanked God and his great hierarch, St. Philaret of New York.

¹⁰³⁹ Senina, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴⁰ This miracle was recounted by the spiritual father of the monastery, Hieroschemamonk Akakije, personal communication, March, 2006.

70. ROCOR AND THE SERBS

In 1999, during the Kosovan war, the ROCOR Synod issued the following appeal: "The present condition of our Sister Church of Serbia and the much suffering Serbian people is becoming ever more difficult. Employing the evil of slander and violence, NATO is attempting to excise Kosovo, the very heart of Serbia. And bombs are exploding near Belgrade itself. This appeal directs the Archpastors to call the clergy and flock to pray, not only in church but also at home for the salvation of the land of Serbia and its faithful people, to whom we are bound by bonds of consanguinity." The Appeal then instructed ROCOR priests to pray at the Liturgy "for the suffering Orthodox people of Serbia", and in molebens - "for His Holiness Paul, Patriarch of Serbia, for the Archpastors, clergy and flock of Serbia".¹⁰⁴¹

What was striking about this appeal was the fullness of the recognition of "our Sister Church of Serbia" - at a time when the Serbian Church was increasing its ecumenical activity. Logically, of course, this implied that not only the Serbian Church, but all the Local Churches of World Orthodoxy, with whom the Serbs were in full communion, were "Sister Churches" of ROCOR - together, perhaps, with those non-Orthodox churches, such as the Catholic, with whom the Serbs declared themselves to have "brotherly" relations. And yet all these Churches had been anathematised by ROCOR in 1983 for their participation in the pan-heresy of ecumenism - which anathema had been reaffirmed as recently as May, 1998.¹⁰⁴²

What did this mean? That the ROCOR Synod was simply *stupid* in not realising the incompatibility of its "Appeal" with its own recent condemnation of ecumenism? Or that it was *deliberately deceiving* the faithful by *pretending* to condemn and separate itself from heresy, while actually entering secretly - or now, perhaps, not so secretly - into communion with it?

Secondly, ROCOR was accusing NATO of "slander and violence". What slander? Surely ROCOR did not believe the communist propaganda machine? Surely it did not deny the ever-mounting evidence of atrocities and "ethnic cleansing" on the part of the Serbs?! As for violence, the violence of NATO was, of course, regrettable, but much less than the violence of the Serbs against their own citizens. Why did ROCOR - unlike Patriarch Paul - not say a word about that evil? Why was ROCOR reversing the political as well as the ecclesiastical position it had maintained for most of this century - that is, of support for NATO against the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and Asia? The clue here appeared to be a word that figures prominently in the "Appeal": "consanguinity". Everything, it appears, was forgiven to the Serbs because they had Slavic blood in common with the Russians.

Another reason was indicated in ROCOR's epistle of July 13, 2001: "Concerning our relationship to the Serbian Orthodox Church, we declare that the relationship of our Church with her is special, being conditioned by our historical closeness to the

¹⁰⁴¹ Translated in *The Shepherd*, vol. XIX, № 8, April, 1999, pp. 20, 21.

¹⁰⁴² *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 9, 1998. See "ROCOR changes text which anathematized ecumenism", *Church News*, vol. 12, № 4 (86), April, 2000, pp. 3-4.

Serbian Church, which accepted the Russian Church Abroad and a multitude of Russian refugees under her loving roof and cared for us as our own Mother. Now the Serbian Church herself is suffering a heavy trial from the attack of global forces on Kosovo and other parts of Serbia. We, at such a difficult time, cannot turn our backs to Her.”¹⁰⁴³

And yet, only two weeks before, on July 31, 1999 Metropolitan Vitaly had issued an ukaz directing ROCOR clergy not to concelebrate with the Serbs because of their participation in the WCC. So on the one hand, the Serbs were ROCOR’s “sister church”, and on the other, they were in communion with heretics and not in communion with the True Church. Which version of history was true?

Archbishop Mark was so perturbed by this ukaz that he wrote to Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco on August 7 saying that “we are now in danger of completely losing our connection with universal Orthodoxy... I cannot take part in this according to my conscience. Should I retire?”¹⁰⁴⁴ ROCOR might have been spared many troubles if he had...

¹⁰⁴³ *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), № 4 (95), June-July, 2001, p. 5. In answer to this argument we may quote the words of the ROCOR Hieromonk Joseph of Moscow in a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly about the Serbian Patriarchate: “Now I would like to return to the last telephone conversation I had with you. This concerns Vladyka Mark's serving with the Serbs. At that time you said that some hierarchs of ROCOR, such as Archbishop John (Maximovich) and Archbishop Nicon (Rklitsky) allowed this. That is understandable. You know, they were raised and looked after by pastors of the Serbian Church. We, too, love the Serbian Church and the Serbian people - the Serbian Church in the person of Patriarch Barnabas once sheltered the persecuted Russian émigré hierarchs. But times change and life does not stand still. It is already 30 years since Vladyka John died, and almost 20 since Vladyka Nicon. The Serbian Patriarch Barnabas and those Serbian hierarchs who feared nobody and offered hospitality to the persecuted Russian Church died a long time ago. The contemporary Serbian episcopate is very far from what it was in the 1930s. You know, almost the same thing has happened with the Serbian Church as happened with the Russian Church. Their episcopate has also been appointed by communist authorities, and they have also gradually departed from the purity of Orthodoxy. This is what the well-known Serbian theologian, Archimandrite Justin (Popovich), who could in no way be accused of not loving his own Serbian Church or of not being Orthodox, wrote about this: ‘... The atheist dictatorship has so far elected two patriarchs... And in this way it has cynically trampled on the holy rights of the Church, and thereby also on the holy dogmas.’ I think that Fr. Justin had a better view of the negative processes taking place in the Serbian Church than Vladyka Mark. The first-hierarchs of the Serbian Church take an active part in the WCC; they pray with all kinds of heretics and people of other religions; they support the anti-Orthodox initiatives of the Patriarch of Constantinople. And must we close our eyes to all this just because in the 1930s Patriarch Barnabas helped our Russian hierarchs - or because Vladyka Mark studied in the Serbian Theological University? This is simply not serious. If we're going to reason like that, and take our memories of the past as our guiding principle in our present actions, without taking into account present realities, then we can come to sheer absurdity and will not avoid serious mistakes. In that case we must have eucharistic communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople because ten centuries ago Rus' received Orthodoxy from Byzantium.

“If our relationship to the Serbian Church and people is one of unhypocritical love and gratitude, then especially now, in this difficult time for Serbia, we must help them to come to understand and see those departures from Orthodoxy which are being carried out by the Serbian hierarchy, and for which, perhaps, the Right Hand of God is sending them these horrific military trials which are taking place there. This will be the gratitude of the Russian Church to the Serbian people for the hospitality they received from it in the 1930s.”

¹⁰⁴⁴ Archbishop Mark, <http://www.listok.com/sobor72.htm>.

Then, in 2000, the Serbian Patriarch broke all links with ROCOR... The official reason for this was reported by a MP publication: "By a decision of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church of December 28, 1998, a podvorye of the Moscow Patriarchate was formed in the city of Bari, Italy, for the spiritual nourishment of the local Russian-speaking community and the numerous pilgrims who visit this city to venerate the honourable relics of the holy hierarch and wonderworker Nicholas, as well as for the support of working contacts with religious, state and social circles in Italy. The co-worker of the Department of external ecclesiastical relations, the priest Vladimir Kuchumov, was appointed as superior.

"From the beginning of the activity of the podvorye, it became known that in the lower church of the former Russian home for receiving pilgrims, which is partly used, in accordance with an agreement, by the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCOR), there was serving a clergyman of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

"His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia wrote to His Holiness Patriarch Paul of Serbia, asking him to clarify the situation that had been created, which violated the canonical structure of the Orthodox Church, insofar as the pastoral service of a clergyman of the Serbian Patriarchate was taking place in a schismatic ecclesiastical structure having no communion with any Local Orthodox Church.

"His Holiness Patriarch Pavle of Serbia sent a return letter to His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow and All Russia, in which he expressed the position of the Sacred Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church in relation to the schismatics. In particular he declared the following:

"... The Sacred Hierarchical Synod of our Holy Church has forbidden their Graces, the Diocesan Bishops, to give any kind of canonical permission to priests to depart for the jurisdiction of the above-mentioned 'church'. We hope that they will stick to this.

"We are sorry that such a thing could have taken place, and we hope that this incident will in no way spoil the age-old good brotherly relations that have existed throughout the course of our united history.

"In this hope, we beseech Your Holiness and the Most Holy Russian Orthodox Church, which is so dear to us, [to forgive] our oversight, which took place in the city of Bari, and not to consider it to be a sin. We assure you that such an unpleasant incident will not be repeated.

"Your Holiness knows the brotherly and Christian relations that the Serbian Orthodox Church and people had towards Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev and the bishops, monks and Russian people who came to us in flight from the violence of the communists in 1918. This brotherly relationship continued only until, after the fall of the communists, the representatives of the Russian Church Abroad started to spread their priesthood onto the territory of Russia, thereby violating the canonical authority of the Russian patriarchate. The Sacred Synod has more than once directed its protests to the leadership of the Russian Church Abroad in America and demanded that it cease from such actions since they are anticanonical and worthy of

every condemnation.”¹⁰⁴⁵

The communion of certain ROCOR hierarchs with the Serbs had always been presented as proof that ROCOR was still in communion with World Orthodoxy. Now, however, a choice had to be made: either full integration into World Orthodoxy through submission to the MP, or a complete breaking of all ties with it and a return to the confessing stance of Metropolitan Philaret.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Information Bulletin* of the Department of External Ecclesiastical Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, № 3, 2000, pp. 51-52.

71. ROCOR'S LAST STAND

On February 18 / March 2, 2000, the ROCOR Synod issued one of its last passably Orthodox statements, but one already lacking the punch that one would expect from a truly Orthodox, confessing Synod:-

“The leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate has now officially declared that it looks upon the property of the Russian Church Abroad as its own, for only it, and no other, is the “sole legal heir to the property of the pre-Revolutionary Church,” which, consequently, “is being held by the schismatics abroad illegally,” and that such a decision “is accepted by the Orthodox believing people of Russia with joy and profound gratitude.”

“This statement compels us, the hierarchs abroad, to address the Russian Orthodox people directly. It is essential that we clarify the essential question which has emerged over the last decade - the question of succession with regard to the Russian Orthodox Church and historical Russia.

“On the eve of the fall of the Communist regime it seemed possible that the previous cause of the ecclesiastical division-the atheistic government-was already falling away, and that the rest of our problems would be resolved in a fraternal dialogue. The Council of Bishops repeatedly referred to this idea in its epistles, and in actual fact strove to open paths to this fellowship. In this, however, great difficulties were encountered, and later-as far as we are able to judge, due to the active interference of the authorities in Russia early in 1997 - our attempts at clarification were broken off (the seizure of the monastery in Hebron). Difficulties manifested themselves, firstly, in a totally different attitude toward questions essential to the Church, and our differences in this regard have not been resolved to the present day.

“A) The question of the holiness of the new martyrs and the Tsar-Martyr, the anointed of God, who were slain by the atheistic authorities. From our point of view, they fulfilled the principal mission of the Church of Russia in the 20th century.

“B) The policy of collaboration with the atheistic authorities begun by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) against that part of the Church “disloyal” to the Communist overlords, which brought about the destruction of the former. From our point of view, to defend this policy is to demean the struggle of the New Martyrs.

“C) The ecumenical activity of the Orthodox in the World Council of Churches. From our point of view, this crosses the boundaries set by the holy canons and the Tradition of the holy fathers, infringing upon the very truth of Orthodoxy.

“Relations toward the post-Communist leadership of the Russian Federation. From our point of view, they are introducing a non-Christian policy designed to break down the Russian people and destroy Russia. And this false spirit is in nowise offset by the gilding of domes and the restoration of church buildings in which these very leaders are praised Attempts at “dialogue” on these differences on various levels did not lead to the hoped-for results. We acknowledge that in this certain of our

representatives are partly to blame, for in their haste to make the Truth clear they insufficiently understood the complex conditions of the turmoil in Russia. In the tumultuous sea of the last decade in Russia it was incredibly difficult to make our Russian brethren hear the Truth of the Russian Church by which we live-in unbroken succession and without the intrusion of malicious powers into our ecclesiastical life. We were mistaken in our response to the situation in Russia and in our search for reliable allies, being somewhat lacking in patience and love for those opposed to us - which soon even became viewed as arrogance in the eyes of the Russian people. Yet what we wished for was something quite different.

“Over all the preceding decades, we had preserved spiritual fellowship with those who did not submit to militant atheism, preserving Orthodoxy; and our hearts were open to them, in whatever part of the Church of Russia they were to be found. This fellowship was in part also in accordance with the canons of the Church, so that when times of greater liberty came, these ties, this presence in Russia, were also revealed. This happened because there was preserved, and continued secretly to live, that part of the Church of Russia which did not accept the “Declaration of Loyalty” (1927) imposed by the militant atheists, wherewith Metropolitan Sergius tried to bind both the conscience of all Orthodox people in Russia as well as our conscience (demanding that each clergyman abroad personally sign an oath of “loyalty to the Soviet authorities”).

“As the years passed, the word “schism” began to be applied to us and others who were viewed as “disloyal”; this term continues to distort the ecclesial crux of the question to this day. We have never accepted this term, and we do not wish to apply it to others. This question is extremely painful, and must, from our point of view, be resolved in some other way.

“As early as 1923, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad resolved: “Having as our immediate objective the nurturing of the Russian Orthodox flock abroad, the Council of Bishops, the Synod, the hierarchs and priests, within the limitations of their powers, must show all possible cooperation in meeting various spiritual needs when asked to do so by the ecclesiastical organizations which remain in Russia or by individual Christians.” In particular, it was stipulated: “Representatives of the dioceses located outside the boundaries of Russia, acting together, express the voice of the free Russian Church abroad; but no individual person, nor even the Council of the bishops of these dioceses, represents itself as an authority which has the rights which the whole Church of Russia possesses in all its fullness, in the person of its lawful hierarchy.”

“The concept of the whole Church of Russia and a lawful hierarchy, according to canon law, does not exclude the diaspora, but naturally embraces the totality of the Church of Russia in the light of the Pan-Russian Council of 1917-1918. It is impossible to restore this integrity by a process of rejection and exclusion which have their origin with the militant atheists, who tried to set the Orthodox people against one another, and for this purpose concocted the ‘Living Church’ and other obstacles. We consider that the interpretation of historical and ecclesiastical judgment must be a joint task over which the Russian people - all of us - must labor with great patience, first of all

with love for the Truth. Otherwise, there is the danger that we will fall to disentangle ourselves from the snares, or may fall into them again.

“We reject the word ‘schism,’ not only as one which distorts the crux of the problem, but also, as a lie against the whole Church of Russia concocted by the enemies of Christ during the most terrible period of persecutions. We have never accepted this lie concerning the Church just as we have not accepted the lie concerning the Church contained in the “Declaration,” in which, to please the regime of that time, patristic doctrine and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures were trampled underfoot. For this reason, our fathers declared in 1927: “The portion of the Church of Russia abroad considers itself an inseparable, spiritually united branch of the great Church of Russia. It does not separate itself from its Mother Church, and does not consider itself autocephalous. As before, it considers its head to be the patriarchal *locum tenens* Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and commemorates him [as such] during the divine services.” At that time, we discovered that the lawful first hierarch of the Church of Russia had rebuked his deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, from exile, for “exceeding his authority”, and commanded him to “return” to the correct ecclesiastical path; but he was not obeyed. In fact, even while Metropolitan Peter was alive, Metropolitan Sergius usurped, first his diocese (which, according to the canons, is strictly forbidden), and later his very position as *locum tenens*. These actions constituted not only a personal catastrophe, but also a universal catastrophe for our Church.

“We never left the Church, even though there have been those who began to separate and drive us out with the word ‘schism’ from those most terrible of days even to the present-failing to grasp the main point, and still not being aware of it. It is impossible to resolve contemporary ecclesiastical questions by simply usurping the title ‘sole lawful ecclesiastical leadership,’ trampling the tragic truth of the Church in Russia underfoot. Our readiness, even over the last decades, to help the believing people in Russia (as far as our weak powers permitted) in various ways (literature, bearing witness concerning the persecution of the Church, protests) has not changed. It has led to our receiving believers under our *omophorion*, and, for various reasons, a small number of clergymen in addition to those who already had had a secret existence for some time. In addition to the above- mentioned reasons, others were added which entailed at the time intolerable violations of the canons of the Church, and these were still uncorrected in 1989-1991. Then a tempest arose over the ‘opening’ of parishes of the Church Abroad in Russia. We did not try actively to open parishes and foist ourselves on them from abroad, but merely ‘accepted’ those Russian people who had learned more about the history of the Church and its life and yearned for ecclesial communion with us, despite the barriers of a propaganda inherited from past times. This little portion, for which our shortcomings did not overshadow the Truth and which, for this reason, decided to unite themselves in Russia to our prayers, has been subjected to persecutions, while our Church is slandered in all the official church publications.

“Yet the same leadership: of the Moscow Patriarchate, which on the new stage of gradual liberation has exacerbated the situation by its own interpretation of events and has so bitterly fought against the ‘parallel structure,’ has itself, since the end of

World War II, continuing to carry out the demands of the authorities then in power, created its own structures where it was only possible in the diaspora, and in Israel, in 1948, totally drove away our monastics when establishing itself. At that time this was, for us, although grievous, at least understandable—we saw the Church's lack of freedom and the enslavement of officially sanctioned ecclesiastical structures in Russia, which were fettered by the authorities and chained to the authorities. These latter years have witnessed a new wave of forcible seizures by the Moscow Patriarchate of churches and monasteries from the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in various countries, or attempts to seize them— with the help of the secular authorities (foreign and Russian), wherever such is possible—in Italy, Israel, Germany, Denmark, Canada. Now it is finally confirmed, even by the mouth of the primate of the Moscow Patriarchate, Alexis II, and representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Affairs, that they have no desire for unification with us on the proposed position of Truth. They prefer to resolve the indicated points of disagreement and the question of the history of the Church of Russia simply by eliminating the Church Abroad, by crushing it. In other words, the present leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate prefers to continue the policies of Metropolitan Sergius – only in a new form, at a new level.

“Thus, when we pose the question of succession, we have in mind not only property title to the churches abroad. Regarding this question, it is well known that the Soviet regime refused them, as it did ‘ecclesial obscurantism’ in general, when in the 1930's it announced its ‘five-year plan for atheism.’ It is precisely the Russian emigration which was able to save these churches from confiscation by foreign states and from destruction, carefully restoring them with its own means as Russia Abroad, which is open with all its heart both to the Russian past (tsarist Russia) and a Russia of the future. Therefore, this is in actuality our joint heritage—the heritage of the whole Russian people, and without fail it will be such as a result of the restoration of the one Church of Russia, which stands in the Truth. However, to our distress, the past decade has shown that the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate are avoiding true union, are not ready for it, for this would mean that they would have to give an honest account to the people and listen to its voice. This is also the reason why they are violently seizing churches which have not been preserved by their efforts, taking no account of the outlay of expenses, even though in Russia itself thousands of desolate churches need to be saved.

“It is obvious that the principal objective of this is the smothering of our Church, and not the nurturing of the flock abroad, for here they do not in the least fear the terrible scandalizing of that flock. Who among the emigrants will enter those churches which have been wrested away by violence and wickedness? One cannot fail to see that they are attempting to eliminate us as a vexing and incorruptible witness to the loth century history of Russia. The main succession which we preserve and which our ‘opponents’ in the Moscow Patriarchate are trying to uproot in our person, is historical and spiritual. After the militantly atheist Revolution, it was our Russian Church Abroad which became the linchpin of that small portion of the Russian nation which did not recognize the Revolution and chose as its path the preservation of loyalty to our Orthodox state. This stubborn stand for the Truth, despite its apparent ‘unreality,’ pressure from the Bolsheviks, from pro-Soviet hierarchs, and the surrounding

democratic world, was realized among us as a 'struggle for Russianism in the midst of universal apostasy' - in the hope that for this God would have mercy on Russia and give our people a last chance to restore its historic aspect. This was the primary purpose of the Russian diaspora. It is for this that we have been praying in our churches for eighty years: 'For the suffering land of Russia' and 'That He may deliver its people from the bitter tyranny of the atheist authorities.' This refers also to the post-Communist regime of the Russian Federation, which considers itself the successor not so much of historical Russia (this is declared only rarely, and in words only) as the successor of the Bolshevik regime. The entire legal system of the Russian Federation is founded on the Soviet legal system, and not on the pre- Revolutionary laws. The present democratically elected officials in Russia have preserved the majority of Bolshevism's atheistic symbols (the five- pointed star, etc.), monuments, street and city names, ignoring the people's original intent: that the Communist heritage be overturned, that the national tragedy of Russia in the loth century be reassessed, that there be repentance. At the same time, a new, anti-Christian ideology has taken root in the Russian land. And so as to weaken the people's opposition to this, there is being waged an intentional, conscious, calculated demoralization of the people themselves by cutting them off from their true, historic and spiritual roots. And all of this is going on with the permission, consent and even blessing of the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate which, in order to preserve its own power structures, is prepared to collaborate with any regime whatever, and to participate actively in ecumenism, not only with non-Orthodox Christians, but even with non-Christian political powers. 'By our joint efforts we will build a new, democratic society,' declared the head of the Moscow Patriarchate, Alexis II, in 1991, in an address made to rabbis in New York, where he preached peace for all 'in an atmosphere of friendship, creative cooperation and the brotherhood of the children of the One God, the Father of all, the God of your fathers and ours.' How a similar irenic activity answers to our fate is evident in the fact that not long ago, while in Israel for the feast of the Nativity of Christ, the primate of the Moscow Patriarchate performed three morally incompatible activities: he prayed to the God we have in common, Christ the incarnate Son of God, then reached an agreement with the Moslems concerning the seizure of one of our monasteries, and finally praised the destroyer Yeltsin for 'laboring for the good of Russia' and for his 'efforts in restoring the morality of our people.'

"We are convinced that the intensifying persecution against the Russian Church Abroad throughout the world is one of the steps being taken toward the establishment of a new world order. Furthermore, peoples deprived of them own spiritual and cultural originality, and Christian principles are being perverted and undermined. Anti-Christian powers are achieving their objectives by employing various methods, among which is the inciting of certain nations and confessions against others, and often of a certain part of a nation against another, always encouraging within the local Orthodox Churches those groups which are deemed useful at a given moment, and denigrating those who oppose them. Is this not what is taking place right now in the midst of Russian Orthodoxy? Is it not obvious that there are powers which are striving to reduce the Church of Russia to an ideological instrument-both the authorities of the Russian Confederation and the 'mighty of this world' who stand behind them - for the control of the Russian people'? How can we fail to remember the image of the harlot church seated upon the beast, which is described in the Book of Revelation?

And if the Book of Revelation tells us: 'Power was given him over all kindred, and tongues, and nations. And all who dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear' (Revelation 13: 7-9), then it would seem that over the past decade it has been entirely possible to discuss and clarify in a 'dialogue' in what way one ought to understand, following a true, patristic interpretation of the Sacred Scripture (which every consecrated bishop is obligated by oath to keep holy), that 'there is no power but of God' (Romans 13:1-5). By this it may be possible to set aright the perversion of the Orthodox Faith, terrible in its consequences, which is to be found in documents being published in the name of the Moscow Patriarchate as in the name of the Church of Russia itself. Encroachment upon the sense of Holy Tradition hinders spiritual healing. Our appeal continues to be ignored... the Truth of the Church is not being proclaimed; false teaching is not being condemned.

"We know that a significant part of the people and clergy of Russia are aware of the danger of the situation, which is being manifested in many different forms. Still, the neo-Renovationists, the ecumenists, and their opponents within the "right-leaning" circles of the Moscow Patriarchate, who call themselves "true catacomb Christians" despite all their irreconcilable differences, not to mention the very leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, are united in spreading the selfsame slander against our Church. We know that our being situated outside Russia can seem 'unpatriotic' to some - as is proclaimed in the publications of the Moscow Patriarchate. Yet those who attack us for this should read St. Athanasius the Great's 'Apology for My Flight,' and the canons of St. Peter of Alexandria, to avoid unchurchly, secular reasoning and to understand how the Holy Church has actually treated similar questions. We see in this fate of part of the Russian people, sent into the West by the Providence of God, a call to understand the universal scale of the impending apocalyptic period. We do not place our hope in foreign authorities when we appeal to them, pointing out the principles of Justice (as the holy Apostle Paul once appealed to his Roman citizenship so as to avoid violence united with iniquity) when we demand the cessation of the iniquity inflicted upon the 'little flock' of Christ, our little Church. Justice is appealed to - as we avail ourselves of a traffic light on a road - so as to insure elementary order for all, among whom one may also consider the émigrés who once saved themselves from annihilation. We place our trust in the One Holy Trinity, Whom we confess, and on the wisdom of our people, who for a thousand years have confessed the unity of the Trinity amid all the vicissitudes of history. We hope that, taught by its new bitter experience, it will have learned a lesson from the 20th century through which it has just lived. The fate of Russia is in the hands of God and the hands of the Russian people, if they desire to remain the people of God.

"We, descendants of the various generations of émigrés, who find ourselves exiles in a foreign land by dint of the bitter dregs which our people drained in the beginning, as well as many of the other peoples of the world (whose children have since come to us for the salvation of Christ), hope to hold out until that day when, through the supplications of our holy new-martyrs, Russia will be moved by prayer to carry out its final mission-to bear witness before the world concerning the Truth of 'Orthodoxy and the Orthodox form of government. As far as our scant powers permit, we will

always bear witness to this for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Our goal, however modest, is not to allow anyone to drown this Truth in the ocean of impending apostasy.

“Forgive us, compatriots who are dear to us in Christ, for our mistakes. And do not discard the Truth itself with our shortcomings and weaknesses. We call upon you to be aware of the universal scale of the present Church problems, to reunite with us in common prayer, and to deepen in our native land the struggle of being Russian amid the conditions of apostasy-despite the policies of those worldly and ecclesiastical authorities who do not value Russia’s universal spiritual vocation. Why is our existence disturbing to those who call us ‘a tiny handful of schismatics?’ Saint Mark of Ephesus demonstrated that the Truth is not measured by the number of ruling hierarchs. All of Orthodoxy can be defended by a single, solitary ‘schismatic’. The holy apostles, the holy fathers and teachers of the Church, the holy martyrs, call upon us, for the sake of Truth, to withdraw from falsehood, from the imminent kingdom of the Antichrist, and to struggle in love for Christ, that we may be written ‘in the Book of Life of the Lamb, Who was slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear.’”

72. ON THE EVE OF THE MILLENIUM

In 1999, ten years since perestroika began to expose the secret corruption of the MP, the situation in the Church was back to “normal” – that is, homosexuality among the leading metropolitans¹⁰⁴⁶ and drunkenness among the priests¹⁰⁴⁷, combined with tight cooperation with the leading elites in government and the mafia.¹⁰⁴⁸

The MP was also completely dependent on the State financially. “*Pravoslavnaia Gazeta* [The Orthodox Newspaper], the official publication of the Yekaterinburg diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate, characterizes this situation as follows: ‘In 1917 all the property of the Orthodox Church was nationalized and de facto passed into the ownership of the state. In the last decade previously nationalized things have begun to be handed over to believers. But, as it turns out, not a single church is today owned by the Russian Orthodox Church. The churches are handed over only for use...’¹⁰⁴⁹

Homosexuality, “the sin of Metropolitan Nikodem”, as it is known in the MP, is very useful to the KGB. Preobrazhensky writes that for the last 70 years the KGB has been actively promoting homosexuals to the episcopate. “Even Patriarch Sergius is said to have been one of them. The homosexual bishops were in constant fear of being unmasked, and it made them easily managed by the KGB.” Before he died in 2015 Fr. Gleb Yakunin calculated that about 250 out of the 300 bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate were homosexual.¹⁰⁵⁰

In 1999, after persistent complaints by his clergy, the homosexual Bishop Nikon of Yekaterinburg was forced to retire to the Pskov Caves monastery. However, within three years he was back in Moscow as dean of one of the richest parishes. “The influential homosexual lobby of the Moscow Patriarchate saved Bishop Nikon.”¹⁰⁵¹

In 1998 the MP blessed a book compiled by Metropolitan Juvenal of Krutitsa and Kolomna, entitled *A Man of the Church*, consisting of fulsome tributes to the notorious Metropolitan Nikodem of Leningrad by several of his fellow-hierarchs. The Archbishop of Tver even wrote: “At present many are capable of accusing the former [clergy] of supposed collaboration with the KGB, including Vladyka Nikodem. But there was no other way out: the Church had to live somehow. Therefore there came into being a special mode of acting in order not to permit a total destruction of the Church...”¹⁰⁵²

¹⁰⁴⁶ Bychkov, “The Synod against a Council”, *Moskovskii komsomolets*, August 20, 1999, quoted by Joseph Legrande, “Re: [paradosis] Re: Solovki (WAS: Dealing with Heresy)”, orthodoxtradition@yahoo.com, 31 August, 2002.

¹⁰⁴⁷ “Dukhoventstvo stradaet alkogolizmom chasche, chem drugie gruppy naselenia, utverzhdauiu psikhiatry” (The clergy suffer from alcoholism more than other groups of the population, say psychiatrists), portal-credo.ru, news, December 8, 2005.

¹⁰⁴⁸ This continues to the present day, with tragic consequences. Thus Archimandrite German (Khapugin) of Davydova Pustyn, near Moscow, “a very active businessman and quite rich”, was murdered in 2005 (Jeremy Page, “Mafia secret of murdered abbot”, *The Times*, July 29, 2005, p. 35).

¹⁰⁴⁹ Preobrazhensky, *KGB v russoj emigratsii*, op. cit., p. 53.

¹⁰⁵⁰ The MP’s Deacon Andrei Kuraiev had a lower estimate: 50 bishops.

¹⁰⁵¹ Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.

¹⁰⁵² Protopriest Michael Ardov, “A ‘Man of the Church in a Blue Cover’”, *Church News*, August-

In this period an extraordinary increase in highly dubious miracles took place. For example, “as described in the newspaper *Radonezh* № 4 for 1999, in the Holy Entrance of the Mother of God monastery in Ivanovo diocese, in one of the cells myrrh-gushing takes place from any icons that are brought into it. By February more than 1000 such cases had been registered, and by April – more than 1600! That is, hundreds of times more that the number of myrrh-gushing, glorified icons that have appeared in the whole history of Christianity!”¹⁰⁵³

While such occult manifestations multiplied, the grossest ecumenism continued to be practised – almost certainly because the FSB (KGB) still needed MP clergy to penetrate foreign confessions for espionage purposes.¹⁰⁵⁴ As we have seen, the anti-ecumenical protests of the early and mid-1990s were suppressed, the challenge of ROCOR was rebuffed, and the “Third Way” practised by the Bulgarian and Georgian Churches ignored. While anti-ecumenical elements still existed in the MP (as when *Russkij Vestnik* published a protest against the MP’s participation in the WCC by the Abbot and 150 monks of Valaam in 1998), along with renovationist, occultist, nationalist and communist elements, all were held together by the culture of obedience to the patriarch: all was permitted so long as no “schism” was created...

Some were impressed by the apparent hostility of the MP to the Roman Catholics’ proselytism of Russia. However, from the remarks of the leading hierarchs it became clear that the argument was simply over the Catholics’ supposed violation of a “mutual non-aggression pact”. Russia was the “canonical territory” of the MP, so the Catholics had no right there (as the patriarch put it: “Russia has historically been Orthodox for a thousand years, and therefore the Roman papacy has no right to make a conquest of it”): they should stick to their own “canonical territory”, the West. That meant that the MP renounced any right to convert western heretics to Orthodoxy. As Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev), the future patriarch, put it: “In practice we forbid our priests to seek to convert people. Of course it happens that people arrive and say: ‘You know, I would like, simply out of my own convictions, to become Orthodox.’ ‘Well, please do.’ But there is no strategy to convert people.”¹⁰⁵⁵

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As the liberal era of the 1990s came to an end, the resurrection of the spirit of Soviet patriotism became more and more evident. This spirit, which seeks to justify the Soviet past and rejects repentance for its sins, was illustrated most vividly in an article entitled “The Religion of Victory” in which a new Russian religio-political bloc, “For Victory!” presented its programme. The victory in question was the victory of the Soviet forces over Nazi Germany in 1945, whose blood was considered by the bloc to have “a mystical, sacred meaning”, being “the main emblem of the Russian historical consciousness”.

September, 1998, vol. 10, № 7 (14), pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁵³ *Vertograd-Inform*, № 4 (49), 1999.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Preobrazhensky, “Ecumenism and Intelligence”.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Gundiaev, interview conducted by Alexis Venediktov, March 22, 2001.

Similarly, an article on an MP web-site produced this astonishing blasphemy: "The 'atheist' USSR, trampling down death by death, resurrected and saved the world. Only because 'godly' and 'ungodly' soldiers died in their millions do we live today and the whole population of the world, the whole of humanity, is alive. It would be no exaggeration to think that that terrible and great war and great Victory in that Great war caused the first sociologically large-scale micro-resurrection, a reproduction by the peoples of the USSR of the exploit of Christ.

"May 9, 1945 became the most convincing witness of the fact that 2000 years ago Christ was resurrected. Therefore our Great Victory is the feast of feasts, it is Pascha..."¹⁰⁵⁶

The political and economic aspects of the bloc's programme were communistic; but its nationalist and religious aspects were still more alarming. Yeltsin and his colleagues were accused of having betrayed '45 and the "truly genius-quality" achievements of post-war Sovietism.

"However", wrote Valentine Chikin, "the enemy [which is clearly the West] has not succeeded in destroying our Victory. Victory is that spiritual force which will help us to be regenerated. From Victory, as from a fruitful tree, will arise new technologies, will grow new schools, defence will be strengthened, a world-view will be worked out. A new communality embracing the whole nation will confirm the Victory of '45 in the 21st century, too.

"Let us not forget: in the 40s a wonderful fusing together of Russian epochs took place. Of the pagan, with Prince Sviatoslav ['the accursed', as the Orthodox Church calls him], who defeated the Khazars. Of the Orthodox, in which the great Russian commanders and saints Alexander Nevsky and Dimitri Donskoj acted. Of the monarchist, with Peter, Suvorov and Kutuzov. In the smoke of the battles of the Fatherland war they combined with the brilliant 'reds' Zhukov, Vasilevsky and Rokossovsky, which Joseph Stalin so clearly and loudly proclaimed from the Mausoleum...

"Only the bloc 'For Victory' has the right to claim the breadth of the whole nation. The ideology of the bloc 'For Victory!' is the long awaited national idea... Victory is also that sacred word which overflows the Russian heart with pride and freedom."

Alexander Prokhanov continued the theme: "Victory is not simply the national idea. Victory is a faith, the particular religious cast of mind of the Russians. Under the cupola of Victory both the Orthodox and the Muslim and the atheist and the passionately believing person will find himself a place. Of course, in order to reveal this faith, it needs its evangelists, such as John the Theologian. It needs its builders and organizers. In the consciousness of this religious philosophy there is a place for artists and sculptors, sociologists and political scientists, historians and politicians.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Yuri Krupnov, "The Victory is Pascha", <http://pravaya.ru/look/7580?print=1>.

“We still have to finish building this great Russian faith – Victory! In it the miracle expected for centuries, which was handed down from the sorcerers from mouth to mouth, from Kievan Rus’ to the Moscow principedom, from the empire of the tsars to the red empire of the leaders (vozhdej). This is the hope of universal good, of universal love. The understanding that the world is ruled, not by the blind forces of matter, but by Justice and Divine righteousness....”¹⁰⁵⁷

This Soviet patriotism was supported by, among others, the former idol of ROCOR’s liberals, Fr. Dmiri Dudko. “Now the time has come,” he wrote, “to rehabilitate Stalin. And yet not him himself, but the concept of statehood. Today we can see for ourselves what a crime non-statehood is and what a blessing statehood is! No matter how many cry that in Soviet times many perished in the camps – how many are perishing now, without trials or investigations... If Stalin were here, there would be no such collapse.... Stalin, an atheist from the external point of view, was actually a believer, and this could be proved by facts if it were not for the spatial limitations of this article. It is not without reason that in the Russian Orthodox Church, when he died, ‘eternal memory’ was sung to him... The main thing is that Stalin looked after people in a fatherly manner. Stalin legitimately stands next to Suvorov!”¹⁰⁵⁸

“Ecclesiastical Stalinism” was the most horrific sign of the lack of repentance of the MP even now that it was free from Soviet oppression. That lack of repentance has continued and intensified in the first decades of the twenty-first century...

¹⁰⁵⁷ V. Chikin, A. Prokhanov, “Religia Pobedy: Beseda” (The Religion of Victory: A Conversation), *Zavtra* (Tomorrow), № 32 (297), 1999, p. 2. Cf. Egor Kholmogorov, “Dve Pobedy” (Two Victories), *Spetsnaz Rossii* (Russia’s Special Forces), № 5 (44), May, 2000, and my reply: V. Moss, “Imperia ili Anti-Imperia” (Empire or Anti-Empire), <http://www.romanitas.ru/Actual/Impire.htm>.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Dudko, “Mysli sviaschennika” (The Thoughts of a Priest), <http://patriotica.narod.ru/history/dudko>.

VI. BLOODY SUNSET? (2000-)

73. THE MP'S "JUBILEE" COUNCIL

In August, 2000 the MP held a "Jubilee" Hierarchical Council which seemed at least partly aimed at removing some of the last obstacles towards ROCOR's unification with it. These obstacles, as formulated by ROCOR during the decade 1990-2000 were: 1. Ecumenism, 2. Sergianism, and 3. The Glorification of the New Martyrs, especially the Royal New Martyrs.

1. Ecumenism

In the document on relations with the heterodox, which was composed by a small group of bishops and presented to the Council for approval on the first day, few concessions were made to the opponents of ecumenism, apart from the ritual declarations that "the Orthodox Church is the true Church of Christ, created by our Lord and Saviour Himself; it is the Church established by, and filled with, the Holy Spirit..." "The Church of Christ is one and unique..." "The so-called 'branch theory', which affirms the normality and even the providentiality of the existence of Christianity in the form of separate 'branches'... is completely unacceptable."

But, wrote Protopriest Michael Ardov (ROAC, Moscow), "the 'patriarchal liberals' will also not be upset, insofar as the heretics in the cited document are called 'heterodox', while the Monophysite communities are called the 'Eastern Orthodox Churches'. And the 'dialogues with the heterodox' will be continued, and it is suggested that the World Council of Churches be not abandoned, but reformed..."¹⁰⁵⁹

And why should these ecumenical activities not continue, when the council recognizes no sin in them? For "during Orthodox participation of many decades in the ecumenical movement, Orthodoxy has NEVER been betrayed by any representative of a Local Orthodox Church. On the contrary, these representatives have always been completely faithful and obedient to their respective Church authorities, and acted in complete agreement with the canonical rules, the Teaching of the Ecumenical Councils, the Church Fathers and the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church."

Although there has been much talk about anti-ecumenism in the MP, as in the Serbian Church, it is significant that only one bishop, Barsanuphius of Vladivostok, voted against the document on relations with the heterodox (six Ukrainian bishops abstained). The MP's Fr. (now Metropolitan) Hilarion (Alfeyev) explained the origins of the document on ecumenism: "The subject of inter-Christian relations has been used by various groups (within the Church) as a bogey in partisan wars. In particular, it has been used to criticise Church leaders who, as is well known, have taken part in ecumenical activities over many years." In Alfeyev's opinion, "ecumenism has also been used by breakaway groups, such as the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Old Calendarists, to undermine people's trust in the Church." Therefore there was

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ardov, "The 'Jubilee Council' has confirmed it: the Moscow Patriarchate has finally fallen away from Orthodoxy" (Report read at the 8th Congress of the clergy, monastics and laity of the Suzdal diocese of the Russian Orthodox [Autonomous] Church, November, 2000).

a need “for a clear document outlining the theological basis of the Russian Orthodox Church’s attitude towards heterodoxy, i.e. the question of why we need and whether we need dialogue with the non-Orthodox confessions, and if so which form this dialogue should take.” Alfeyev refused to answer the question whether the Council would discuss the matter of the participation of the MP in the WCC, but said that the patriarchate felt obliged to continue negotiations with Protestant and Catholic representatives in the WCC and to be a part of the ecumenical committee.¹⁰⁶⁰

After the Council, there was no let-up in the MP’s ecumenical activities. Thus on August 18, “Patriarch” Alexis prayed together with the Armenian “Patriarch”. And on April 21, 2005, he congratulated the new Pope Benedict XVI on his accession, and expressed the hope that he would strive to develop relations between the two churches. When asked how he evaluated Pope John Paul II’s ministry, he replied: “His Holiness’ teachings have not only strengthened Catholics throughout the world in their faith, but also borne witness to Christianity in the complex world of today.”¹⁰⁶¹ After ROCOR joined the MP in 2007, the MP noticeably increased its ecumenical activities and its relationship with the Vatican continued to improve...

Deacon Nicholas Savchenko summed up the MP’s degree of immersion in ecumenism as follows: “In an inter-confessional undertaking there are two degrees of participation. One case is participation with the authority of a simple observer, that is, of one who does not enter into the composition, but is only an observer from the side. It is another case when we are talking about fully-entitled membership in an ecumenical organization.

“Unfortunately, at the present time the ROC MP takes part in the activity of the WCC precisely as a fully-entitled member of the Council. It is precisely on this problem that I consider it important to concentrate attention. After all, it is the membership of the ROC MP in the WCC which most of all, willingly or unwillingly, encroaches upon the teaching of the faith itself and therefore continues to remain an obstacle to our [ROCOR’s] communion [with the MP]. It is possible to list a series of reasons why membership in the WCC is becoming such an obstacle.

“1. The first important reason consists in the fact that the ROC MP today remains in the composition of the highest leadership of the WCC and takes part in the leadership, planning and financing of the whole of the work of the WCC.

“Official representatives of the ROC MP enter into the Central Committee of the WCC. The Central Committee is the organ of the Council’s administration. It defines the politics of the WCC, make official declarations relating to the teaching of the faith and gives moral evaluations of various phenomena of contemporary life within those limits given to it by the church-members. The composition of the last CC of the WCC was elected at the WCC assembly in Harare in 1998. As is witnessed by the official list

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Church News*, vol. 12, № 6 (88), July-August, 2000, p. 8. Alfeyev had already shown his ecumenist colours in his book, *The Mystery of Faith* (first published in Moscow in Russian in 1996, in English by Darton, Longman and Todd in 2002), which was strongly criticised from within the MP by Fr. Valentine Asmus.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Associated Press*, April 21, 2005; *Corriere della Sera*, April 24, 2005.

of the members of the CC of the WCC, five members of the Central Committee come from the MP, headed by Bishop Hilarion (Alfeyev). In all there are about 150 people in the CC, including 9 women priests, which we can see from the list of the members of the CC. The last session of the CC of the WCC with the participation of the representatives of the ROC MP took place at the end of August, 2003.

“Besides participating in the CC, the representatives of the MP go into the make-up of the Executive Committee of the WCC, one of whose tasks is the direct leadership of the whole apparatus of the Council and the organization of all its undertakings. There are 24 people in the official list of the members of the Executive Committee of the WCC, including the MP’s representative Bishop Hilarion (Alfeev). Besides him, there are representatives of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, the Romanian Patriarchate and the American Autocephaly in the Executive Committee of the WCC. The last session of the Executive Committee with the participation of representatives of the MP took place at the end of August, 2003. At this last session a new ‘Committee for Prayer’ was formed. It was to occupy itself with the preparation of the text and rite of ecumenical prayers. There are 10 people in all in this committee, including a representative of the MP, Fr. Andrew Eliseev. Besides, the deputy president of the ‘Committee for Prayer’ is a Protestant woman priest. Because of this participation the ROC MP is inevitably responsible for all the decisions of the WCC that contradict the dogmatic and moral teaching of the Orthodox Church.

“2. The second reason for the incompatibility of membership of the WCC with the canons of the Church consists in the fact that the regulations of the Council presuppose the membership in it not of individual person-representatives, but precisely of the whole Local Church in all its fullness. Each Local Church in the WCC is considered in its complete fullness to be a member or a part of the heterodox community.

“In correspondence with the Basis of the WCC, it is a ‘commonwealth of Churches’. In this definition there is a significant difference from the original formulation offered by the commission on ‘Faith and Order’ in 1937, when the future WCC was offered as a ‘community of representatives of the Churches’. The difference is substantial. A community of the Churches themselves is not the same as a community of representatives of the Churches, as we said earlier. In the present case it turns out that the Orthodox Church is considered to be a part of a certain broader commonwealth under the name of the WCC. The legislative documents of the WCC even directly reject any other understanding of membership – after all, if it were not so, the Council would no longer be a Council of churches. And the declaration on entrance into the WCC is given in the name of a church, and not in the name of representatives. In the declaration the church asks that it itself be received into the composition of the WCC. The Council is not a simple association of churches. In the regulatory documents it is asserted that it is a ‘body’ having its own ‘ecclesiological meaning’, as is said about it directly in the heading of the Toronto declaration. The regulatory documents reject only the understanding of the Council as a ‘body’ in separation from the church-members. But in union with the church-members the Council is precisely a ‘body’ with its own ‘ecclesiological meaning’. And this ‘ecclesiological meaning’ of the WCC, by definition ‘cannot be based on any one conception of the Church’, as it says in point

3.3 of the Toronto declaration. That is, the Orthodox Church is considered in its fullness to belong to the 'body' with this 'ecclesiological meaning', which in accordance with the constitution cannot be Orthodox.

"Such an understanding of membership in the WCC as the membership of the whole Orthodox Church is contained in the documents on the part of the Local Churches. For example, we can cite the following quotation from the document 'The Orthodox Church and the World Council of Churches'. This document was accepted at the session of the inter-Orthodoxy Consultation in 1991 in Chambésy. It says in point 4: 'The Orthodox Churches participate in the life and activity of the WCC only on condition that the WCC is understood as a 'Council of Churches', and not as a council of separate people, groups, movements or religious organizations drawn into the aims and tasks of the WCC...' (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1992, № 1, p. 62).

"Such an understanding of the membership of the whole of the Orthodox Church in the WCC was earlier officially confirmed by the Pan-Orthodox Conferences. Thus the Pan-Orthodox Conference of 1968 formulated its relationship with the WCC in the following words: 'To express the common consciousness of the Orthodox Church that it is an organic member of the WCC and her firm decision to bring her contribution to the progress of the whole work of the WCC through all the means at her disposal, theological and other.' (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1968, № 7, p. 51). The following, Third Pre-Conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference confirmed this formulation in the same sense in the Russian translation. 'The Orthodox Church is a complete and fully-entitled member of the WCC and by all the means at her disposal will aid the development and success of the whole work of the WCC' (*Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1987, № 7, p. 53). Although these formulations elicited disturbances at the time, nevertheless they have not been changed to the present day, insofar as only the Local Church herself can be a member of the WCC. Any other interpretation of membership is excluded. Either a Local Church is a member or part of the WCC, or it is not.

"From what has been said it turns out that membership in the WCC is not simply observation of the activity of the Council. Membership is precisely becoming a part of the ecumenical commonwealth. The ROC MP must not be a member of the WCC since this signifies becoming a member of the ecumenical movement.

"3. The third reason why membership in the WCC contradicts Orthodoxy is that membership inevitably signifies agreement with the constitutional principles of the WCC and its rules. For example, it says in the Constitution of the WCC (chapter 3) that the Council is created by the church-members to serve the ecumenical movement. Does this mean that the church-members must, or obliged in their fullness, to serve the ecumenical movement? It appears so. Further the Constitution of the WCC (chapter 3) describes the obligations of those entering the Council of churches in the following words: 'In the search for communion in faith and life, preaching and service, the churches through the Council will... facilitate common service in every place and everywhere and... cultivate ecumenical consciousness'. From these words it follows directly that common preaching with the Protestants is becoming a constitutional obligation of the Orthodox Church. Obligations still more foreign to Orthodoxy are

contained in the Rules of the WCC – a separate document that directly regulates the obligations of those entering into the Council of churches. Chapter 2 of the Rules of the WCC is called ‘Responsibilities of membership’. The following lines are found in it. ‘Membership in the WCC means... devotion to the ecumenical movement as a constitutive element of the mission of the Church. It is presupposed that the church-members of the WCC... encourage ecumenical links and actions at all levels of their ecclesiastical life’. These words of the Rules of the WCC oblige the Orthodox Church to perceive the contemporary ecumenical movement with all its gross heresies and moral vices as a part of the life of the Orthodox Church.

“One more important constitutional document is the declaration ‘Towards a common understanding and vision of the WCC’. This document was accepted by the Central Committee of the WCC in 1997 with the participation of representatives of the Local Churches. It also contains views which are incompatible with the Orthodox teaching on the Church. In the first place this concerns how we are to understand the term that is the cornerstone of the Basis of the WCC, that the Council is a ‘commonwealth of Churches’. In paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 the meaning of the term ‘commonwealth’ is described in the following words: ‘The use of the term ‘commonwealth’ in the Basis really convinces that the Council is more than a simple functional association of churches... We can even say (using the words of the Resolution on ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council) that ‘real, albeit incomplete communion (*koinonia*) exists between them [the churches] already now’. From this quotation it follows directly that the church-members of the WCC are considered as entering into limited ecclesiastical communion with other members of the WCC with all their plagues and heresies. The document ‘Towards a common understanding and vision of the WCC’ in point 3.5.3 even directly extends this ecclesiastical communion to the whole Orthodox Church with all her people. The document says that this ecclesiastical communion in the Council ‘is not something abstract and immobile, it is also not limited by the official links between the leadership of the churches and their leaders or representatives. It is rather a dynamic, mutually acting reality which embraces the whole fullness of the church as the expression of the people of God’.

“The most important document of the WCC having a constitutional significance continues to remain the Toronto declaration – ‘The Church, the churches and the WCC’. On the basis of this document the Local Churches in the 1960s entered into the WCC. In it we also clearly see the principles that radically contradict Orthodoxy. Thus point 4.8 of the Toronto declaration declares: ‘The church-members enter into spiritual mutual relationships through which they strive to learn from each other and help each other, so that the Body of Christ may be built and the life of the Church renewed.’ Evidently, this principle of the ‘building of the Church of Christ’ contradicts the Orthodox teaching on the Church. However, it is precisely this, as we see here, that is inscribed in the foundation document of the WCC and can in no way be changed. Besides, the document in its conclusion says the following about the principles of the Toronto declaration, including the principle of the ‘building of the Body of Christ’: ‘Not one of these positive presuppositions which contain in themselves the basis of the World council are in conflict with the teachings of the church-members’.

“From what has been said we can draw the conclusion that membership in the

WCC presupposes agreement with its constitutional principles, which contradict Orthodoxy. The ROC MP should not be a member of an organization whose constitutional principles contradict Orthodoxy...¹⁰⁶²

However, there was little chance of the MP heeding this good advice when the patriarch had called the WCC “the cradle of the One Church” in 1991...

2. Sergianism

The MP approved a “social document” which, among other things, recognized that “the Church must refuse to obey the State” “if the authorities force the Orthodox believers to renounce Christ and His Church”.¹⁰⁶³ As we shall see, enormous significance was attached to this phrase by ROCOR. However, on the very same page we find: “But even the persecuted Church is called to bear the persecutions patiently, not refusing loyalty to the State that persecutes it”. We may infer from this that the MP still considers that its loyalty to the Soviet State was right and the resistance to it shown by the Catacomb Church was wrong. So, contrary to first appearances, the MP remained mired in sergianism. Sergianism as such was not mentioned in the document, much less repented of. This is consistent with the fact that the MP has never in its entire history since 1943 shown anything other than a determination to serve whatever appears to be the strongest forces in the contemporary world. Until the fall of communism, that meant the communists. With the fall of communism, the MP was not at first sure whom she had to obey, but gradually assumed the character of a “populist” church, trying to satisfy the various factions within it (including nominally Orthodox political leaders) while preserving an appearance of unity.

In this connection Frs. Vladimir Savitsky, Valentine (Salomakh) and Nicholas Savchenko write: “The politics of ‘populism’ which the MP is conducting today is a new distortion of true Christianity. Today this politics (and the ideology standing behind it) is a continuation and development of ‘sergianism’, a metamorphosis of the very same disease. Today it seems to us that we have to speak about this at the top of our voices. Other problems, such as the heresy of ecumenism and ‘sergianism’ in the strict sense, while undoubtedly important, are of secondary importance by comparison with the main aim of the MP, which is to be an ‘all-people’ Church, In fact, in the ‘people’ (understood in a broad sense, including unbelievers and ‘eclectics’) there always have been those who are for ecumenism and those who are against. Therefore we see that the MP is ready at the same time to participate in the disgusting sin of ecumenism and to renounce it and even condemn it. It is exactly the same with ‘sergianism’ (understood as the dependence of the Church on the secular authorities). The MP will at the same time in words affirm its independence (insofar as there are those who are for this independence) and listen to every word of the authorities and go behind them (not only because that is convenient, but also because it thus accepted in the ‘people’, and the authorities are ‘elected by the people’). In a

¹⁰⁶² Savchenko, “Tserkov’ v Rossii i ‘Vsemirnij Soviet Tserkvej” (The Church in Russia and the World Council of Churches), *Pravoslavnaja Rus’* (Orthodox Russia), 1743, January 15/28, 2004, pp. 10-12.

¹⁰⁶³ *Iubilejnij Arkhierejskij Sobor Russkoj pravoslavnoj tserkvi. Moskva 13-16 avgusta 2000 goda* (The Jubilee Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, Moscow, 13-16 August, 2000), St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 159.

word, it is necessary to condemn the very practice and ideology of the transformation of the MP into a Church 'of all the people'."¹⁰⁶⁴

This analysis has been confirmed by events since the former KGB Director Putin came to power in January, 2000. The MP has appeared to be reverting to its submissive role in relation to an ever more Soviet-looking government, not protesting against the restoration of the red flag to the armed forces and approving the retention of the music of the Soviet national anthem.

In 2001 Patriarch Alexis stated: "As regards the accusations of the so-called Sergianism, I would like to say that one has to live here, in the homeland, to understand that it is an artificial accusation and an artificial pretext whipped up only to prevent reunification ... (the 1927 declaration) was a courageous step by which Metropolitan Sergei tried to save the Church and the clergy."

A courageous step! So there is nothing to repent of in Sergianism!

Later, on July 18, 2002, the MP Synod issued an official justification of Sergianism, ratifying a document entitled "The relationships between the Russian Orthodox Church and the authorities in the 20s and 30s", which declared: "The aim of normalising the relationship with the authorities cannot be interpreted as a betrayal of Church interests. It was adopted by the holy Patriarch Tikhon, and was also expressed in the so-called 'Epistle of the Solovki Bishops' in 1926, that is, one year before the publication of 'The Epistle of the deputy patriarchal locum tenens and temporary patriarchal Synod'. The essence of the changes in the position of the hierarchy consisted in the fact that the Church, having refused to recognise the legitimacy of the new power established after the October revolution in 1917, as the power became stronger later, had to recognise it as a state power and establish bilateral relations with it. This position is not blameworthy; historically, the Church has more than once found herself in a situation in which it has had to cooperate with non-orthodox rulers (for instance, in the period of the Golden Horde or the Muslim Ottoman Empire)."¹⁰⁶⁵

However, Soviet power was very different from that of the Tatars or Ottomans, and "bilateral relations" with it, unlike with those powers, involved falling under the anathema of the Church. Moreover, if the Church at first refused to recognise Soviet power, but then (in 1927) began to recognise it, the question arises: which position was the correct one? There can be no question but that the position endorsed by the Russian Council of 1917-18 was the correct one, and that the sergianist Moscow Patriarchate, by renouncing that position, betrayed the truth – and continues to betray it to the present day through its symbiotic relationship with a government that openly declares itself the heir of the Soviet State.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Protopriest Vladimir Savitsky, Hieromonk Valentine (Salomakh) and Deacon Nicholas Savchenko, "Pis'mo iz Sankt-Peterburga" (Letter from St. Petersburg), *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 1, Paris, 2001, p. 92.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Moskovskij Tserkovnij Vestnik* (Moscow Church Herald), №№ 14-15, pp. 243-244; quoted by Fr. Michael Ardov, <http://portal-credo.ru/site/?act=english&id=13>.

In January 24, 2005 Metropolitan Kyril (Gundiaev) of Smolensk, head of the MP's Department of Foreign Relations, confirmed that the MP does not condemn sergianism: "We recognize that the model of Church-State relations [in the Soviet period] did not correspond to tradition. But we are not condemning those who realized this model, because there was no other way of preserving the Church. The Church behaved in the only way she could at that time. There was another path into the catacombs, but there could be no catacombs in the Soviet space..."¹⁰⁶⁶

And yet the catacombs did exist "in the Soviet space" and produced a rich crop of sanctity...¹⁰⁶⁷

In 2017, when Kyril was already patriarch, he offered praises to Sergei, and even, with the participation of multiple metropolitan, blessed a statue of him. So much for repentance for Sergianism!

Kyril's position as head of the Department for External Relations was taken by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), who made this startling revelation to the American ambassador in Russia, as revealed by Wikileaks: "A (or the) main role of the Russian Orthodox Church is in providing propaganda for the official politics of the government."¹⁰⁶⁸

A clear example of how Sergianism continues to exist in practice is provided by the fact that the president of North Korea, Kim Chen Ir, though no friend of religion - in fact, religion is banned in North Korea - has nevertheless allow the MP to build a church to the Life-Giving Trinity in Pyonyang! Moreover, the beloved leader is devoting about \$1,000,000.00 to its building! This is a country where millions of people are starving...

The question is: why should this avowed enemy of God be helping to build a church to the Life-Giving Trinity? Could it be that the black ryassas of Korean clergy could provide a good cover for exchanges between the beloved leader of the Korean masses and the beloved leader of the Russian masses?

A clue is provided by the interesting fact that four students from North Korea have been studying in the Moscow theological seminary, and are now deacons in the MP, serving in the St. Nicholas cathedral in Vladivostok. And why have they come to Russia to study Orthodoxy? It seems they are quite frank in their reply to this question: they are in Russia at the command of their secular masters. "Orthodoxy comes to us with difficulty, but our great leader comrade Kim Chen Ir has taken the decision to build an Orthodox church in Pyonyang," declared Deacon Fyodor to journalists.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Gundiaev, in *Vertograd-Inform*, № 504, February 2, 2005.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See V. Moss, *The Russian Golgotha*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2006, volume 1: North-West Russia.

¹⁰⁶⁸ "Otkrovenie Tovarisha Alfeyeva" (A Revelation of Comrade Alfeyev), *Nasha Strana* (Buenos Aires), N 2907, January, 2010, p. 4.

ROAC priest Fr. Michael Ardov has commented well on this: "This is the sin of dual faith, for which the Lord punishes more severely than for lack of faith. A Christian cannot at the same time bow down to the Lord and to the powers of darkness. In North Korea there reigns the cult of the family of the Kims, which is accompanied by barbaric rites. The bishop of Vladivostok Benjamin should not allow the North Korean double-faithers over the threshold of the church even under threat of his being banned from serving. It is in this that his episcopal duty lies, and not in fulfilling the commands of the bosses like a soldier. But he has prepared the latter, demonstrating sergianism in action. It is noteworthy that this same Bishop Benjamin, being a professor of the Moscow theological academy, is glorified as a strict zealot of Orthodoxy. His example shows why in principle there can be no good bishops in the Moscow Patriarchate..."¹⁰⁶⁹

3. The New Martyrs

The major problems here from the patriarchate's point of view were the questions of the Royal Martyrs, on the one hand, and of the martyrs of the Catacomb Church who rejected Metropolitan Sergei, on the other. Non-royal martyrs killed before the schism with the Catacomb Church could be "safely" canonized. Thus in 1989, the MP canonized Patriarch Tikhon, and in 1992 it canonized three more martyrs and set up a commission to inquire into the martyrdom of the Royal Family, about which an MP publication wrote in 1998: "No less if not more dangerous as an ecclesiastical falsification is the MP's Canonization Commission, headed by Metropolitan Juvenal (Poiarkov), which has suggested a compromise glorification of Tsar Nicholas Alexandrovich: 'Yes, he was guilty of the tragedy on Khodynka field, he hobnobbed with Rasputin, he offended the workers, the country became backward. In general as a ruler of a state he was completely useless. Most important, he brought the country to revolution. But he suffered for Christ...' Such a falsification will only continue that dirty stream of slander which the Christ-fighters began to pour out already long before 1917..."¹⁰⁷⁰

After nearly a decade of temporising, the MP finally, under pressure from its flock, glorified the Royal New Martyrs and many other martyrs of the Soviet yoke. Having unanimously *rejected* this canonization at their council in 1998, two years later they unanimously *accepted* it. The glorification of the Royal New Martyrs was a compromise decision, reflecting the very different attitudes towards them in the patriarchate. The Royal Martyrs were called "passion-bearers" rather than "martyrs", and it was made clear that they were being glorified, not for the way in which they lived their lives, but for the meekness with which they faced their deaths. This allowed the anti-monarchists to feel that Nicholas was still the "bloody Nicholas" of Soviet mythology, and that it was "Citizen Romanov" rather than "Tsar Nicholas" who had been glorified - the man rather than the monarchical principle for which he stood.

As regards the other martyrs, Sergius Kanaev writes: "In the report of the President

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ardov, <http://rocornews.livejournal.com/197515.html>.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Pravoslavie ili Smert'* (Orthodoxy or Death), № 8, 1998.

of the Synodal Commission for the canonisation of the saints, Metropolitan Juvenal (Poiarkov), the criterion of holiness adopted... for Orthodox Christians who had suffered during the savage persecutions was clearly and unambiguously declared to be submission 'to the lawful leadership of the Church', which was Metropolitan Sergius and his hierarchy. With such an approach, the holiness of the 'sergianist martyrs' was incontestable. The others were glorified or not glorified depending on the degree to which they 'were in separation from the lawful leadership of the Church'. Concerning those who were not in agreement with the politics of Metropolitan Sergius, the following was said in the report: 'In the actions of the "right" oppositionists, who are often called the "non-commemorators", one cannot find evil-intentioned, exclusively personal motives. Their actions were conditioned by their understanding of what was for the good of the Church'. In my view, this is nothing other than blasphemy against the New Martyrs and a straight apology for sergianism. With such an approach the consciously sergianist Metropolitan Seraphim (Chichagov), for example, becomes a 'saint', while his ideological opponent Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd, who was canonized by our Church, is not glorified. For us another fact is also important, that Metropolitan Seraphim was appointed by Sergius (Stragorodsky) in the place of Metropolitan Joseph, who had been 'banned' by him."¹⁰⁷¹

Other Catacomb martyrs were "glorified" by the MP because their holiness was impossible to hide. Thus the relics of Archbishop Victor of Vyatka were found to be incorrupt and now lie in a patriarchal cathedral – although he was the very first bishop officially to break with Sergius and called him and his church organization graceless! Again, the reputation of Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan was too great to be ignored, in spite of the fact that by the end of his life his position differed in no way from that of St. Victor or St. Joseph.

Some, seeing the glorification of the Catacomb martyrs by their opponents, remembered the Lord's words: "Ye build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets'. Therefore ye bear witness against yourselves that ye are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up the measure of your fathers!" (Matthew 23.29-32).

This blasphemous canonisation of *both* the true *and* the false martyrs, thereby downgrading the exploit of the true martyrs, had been predicted by the ROCOR priest Fr. Oleg Oreshkin: "I think that some of those glorified will be from the sergianists so as to deceive the believers. 'Look,' they will say, 'he is a saint, a martyr, in the Heavenly Kingdom, and he recognized the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, so you must be reconciled with it and its fruits.' This will be done not in order to glorify martyrdom for Christ's sake, but in order to confirm the sergianist politics."¹⁰⁷²

¹⁰⁷¹ Kanaev, "Obraschenie k pervoierarkhu RPTsZ" (Address to the First Hierarch of the ROCOR), in *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 2, Paris, 2001, pp. 3-4 ; *Jubilejnij Arkhierejskij Sobor* (Jubilee Hierarchical Council), op. cit., pp. 43, 44.

¹⁰⁷² "Ierei o. Oleg otvechaet na voprosy redaktsiii" (The Priest Fr. Oleg Replies to the Questions of the Editors), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 23 (1452), December 1/14, 1991, p. 7.

The main thing from the MP's point of view was that their founder, Metropolitan Sergius, should be given equal status with the catacomb martyrs whom he persecuted. Thus in 1997 the patriarch said: "Through the host of martyrs the Church of Russia bore witness to her faith and sowed the seed of her future rebirth. Among the confessors of Christ we can in full measure name... his Holiness Patriarch Sergius."¹⁰⁷³

By the time of the council of 2000, the MP still did not feel able to canonise Sergius – probably because it fears that it would prevent a union with ROCOR. But neither did it canonise the leader of the Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. This suggested that a canonisation of the two leaders was in the offing, but depended on the success of the negotiations between the MP and ROCOR.

The patriarch's lack of ecclesiastical principle and ecclesiological consistency in this question was pointed out by Fr. Peter Perekrestov: "In the introduction to one article ("In the Catacombs", *Sovershenno Sekretno*, № 7, 1991) Patriarch Alexis wrote the following: 'I believe that our martyrs and righteous ones, regardless of whether they followed Metropolitan Sergius or did not agree with his position, pray together for us.' At the same time, in the weekly, *Nedelya*, № 2, 1/92, the same Patriarch Alexis states that the Russian Church Abroad is a schismatic church, and adds: 'Equally uncanonical is the so-called "Catacomb" Church.' In other words, he recognizes the martyrs of the Catacomb Church, many of whom were betrayed to the godless authorities by Metropolitan Sergius's church organization..., and at the same time declares that these martyrs are schismatic and uncanonical!"¹⁰⁷⁴

For in the last resort, as Fr. Peter pointed out, for the MP this whole matter was not one of truth or falsehood, but of *power*: "It is not important to them whether a priest is involved in shady business dealings or purely church activities; whether he is a democrat or a monarchist; whether an ecumenist or a zealot; whether he wants to serve Vigil for six hours or one; whether the priest serves a panikhida for the victims who defended the White House or a moleben for those who sided with Yeltsin; whether the priest wants to baptize by immersion or by sprinkling; whether he serves in the catacombs or openly; whether he venerates the Royal Martyrs or not; whether he serves according to the New or Orthodox Calendar - *it really doesn't matter*. The main thing is to commemorate Patriarch Alexis. Let the Church Abroad have its autonomy, let it even speak out, express itself as in the past, but only under one condition: *commemorate Patriarch Alexis*. This is a form of **Papism** - let the priests be married, let them serve according to the Eastern rite - it makes no difference, what is important is that they commemorate the Pope of Rome."¹⁰⁷⁵

It is open to question whether the patriarchate's canonisation of even the true martyrs is pleasing to God. Thus when 50 patriarchal bishops uncovered the relics of Patriarch Tikhon in the Donskoj cemetery on April 5, 1992, witnesses reported that "it was even possible to recognise the face of the Patriarch from his incorrupt visage, and

¹⁰⁷³ Ridiger, in Fr. Peter Perekrestov, "The Schism in the Heart of Russia (Concerning Sergianism)", *Canadian Orthodox Herald*, 1999, № 4.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Perekrestov, "Why Now?" *Orthodox Life*, vol. 44, № 6, November-December, 1994, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Perekrestov, "Why Now?" *op. cit.*, p. 43.

his mantia and mitre were also preserved in complete incorruption. Witnesses also speak about a beautiful fragrance and an unusual feeling of reverential peace at that moment. But then, as some patriarchal clerics confirm, on contact with the air the relics crumbled, or - as the Catacomb Christians remark - the relics were not given into the hands of the Moscow Patriarchate. Then they buried them in plaster - a blasphemous act from an Orthodox point of view...¹⁰⁷⁶

The MP council's documents were well characterised by the ROCOR clergy of Kursk as follows: "Everywhere there is the same well-known style: pleasing the 'right' and the 'left', the Orthodox and the ecumenists, 'yours' and 'ours', without the slightest attempt at definiteness, but with, on the other hand, a careful preservation of the whole weight of the sins of the past and present."¹⁰⁷⁷

The "Jubilee Sobor" was final proof, if proof were needed, that the MP had not repented and could not repent unless its higher echelons were removed and the whole church apparatus was thoroughly purged.

To this day there is no sign of that happening...

¹⁰⁷⁶ Eugene Polyakov, personal communication, April 5, 1992.

¹⁰⁷⁷ "Obraschenie kurskogo dukhovenstva k mitropolitu Vitaliu" (Address of the Kursk Clergy to Metropolitan Vitaly), *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 3, p. 80.

74. "THE SECOND OCTOBER REVOLUTION"

In October, 2000, the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR took place in New York. In almost all its acts it represented a reaction to, and to a very large extent an approval of, the acts of the MP's Jubilee council. Its most important acts were three conciliar epistles addressed: the first to the Serbian Patriarch Paul, the second "To the Beloved Children of the Church in the Homeland and in the Diaspora" and the third "To the Supporters of the Old Rites".

The first of these epistles, dated October 26, declared that ROCOR and the Serbs were "brothers by blood and by faith" and that "we have always valued the eucharistic communion between our sister-Churches and the desire to preserve the consolation of this communion to the end of time". And towards the end of the Epistle we read: "We beseech your Holiness not to estrange us from liturgical communion with you".

It should be remembered that this was written only two years after ROCOR had officially reissued its anathema on ecumenism, and only a few months after the Serbian Patriarch himself had said that there was *no* communion between his Church and ROCOR, calling ROCOR a "church" only in inverted commas! Moreover, as recently as September, 2000, the official publication of the Serbian Church, *Pravoslav'e*, had reported that, at the invitation of the patriarchate there had arrived in Belgrade a Catholic delegation, which had made a joint declaration witnessing to the fact that Serbian hierarchs had been praying together with the Catholics for the last three weeks!¹⁰⁷⁸ So, having justly anathematised the Serbs as heretics, and having witnessed the continuation of their heretical activity, ROCOR was now *begging* to be brought back into communion with the heretics!

Why? The reason became clear later in the Epistle: "A miracle has taken place, the prayers of the host of Russian New Martyrs have been heard: the atheist power that threatened the whole world has unexpectedly, before our eyes, fallen! Now we observe with joy and hope how the process of spiritual regeneration foretold by our saints has begun, and in parallel with it *the gradual return to health of the Church administration in Russia*. This process is difficult and is not being carried forward without opposition. Nevertheless, a radiant indicator of it is the recent glorification of the New Martyrs of Russia headed by the slaughtered Royal Family and the condemnation of the politics of cooperation with the godless authorities which took place at the last Council of the Russian Church in Moscow.

"There still remain other serious wounds in the leadership of the Russian Church which hinder our spiritual rapprochement. Nevertheless, we pray God that He may heal them, too, by the all-powerful grace of the Holy Spirit. Then there must take place the longed-for rapprochement and, God willing, the spiritual union between the two

¹⁰⁷⁸ The Serbian bishops declared that "during these three days our sense of brotherhood in Christ was deepened through our [joint] prayer and work."

Also in 2000 the Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb celebrated a mass in a suburb of Novi Sad in northern Serbia which was attended by the local Orthodox bishop.

torn-apart parts of the Russian Church – that which is in the Homeland, and that which has gone abroad. *We pray your Holiness to grant your assistance in this.*”

So the ROCOR bishops – this letter was signed by all of them – were asking a heretic anathematised for ecumenism to help them to enter into communion with other anathematised ecumenists – their old enemies in Moscow, whom they now characterised in glowing and completely false terms as if they had already returned to Orthodoxy! Why, then, should the ROCOR bishops continue to speak of ecumenism as an obstacle to union with the MP? As the Kursk clergy pointed out: “It is not clear how long, in view of the declared unity with the Serbian patriarchate, this last obstacle [ecumenism] to union with the MP will be seen as vital.”¹⁰⁷⁹

The second of the epistles, dated October 27, made several very surprising statements. First, it again spoke of “the beginning of a real spiritual awakening” in Russia. Considering that less than 1% of the Russian population went to the MP, then, even if the spiritual state of the MP were brilliant, this would hardly constitute “awakening” on any significant scale. Moreover, as Demetrius Kapustin pointed out, the supposed signs of this awakening – the greater reading of spiritual books, the greater discussion of canonical and historical questions in the MP – are not good indicators of real spiritual progress: “It is evident that the reading of Church books can bring a person great benefit. However, a necessary condition for this is love for the truth. The Jews also saw Christ, and spoke with Him, but they did not want humbly to receive the true teaching, and not only were they not saved, but also took part in the persecutions and destroyed their own souls. It is the same with many parishioners of the MP. On reading books on the contemporary Church situation, many of them come to the conclusion that sergianism and ecumenism are soul-destroying. However, these doubts of theirs are often drowned out by the affirmations of their false teachers, who dare to place themselves above the patristic tradition. Satisfying themselves with a false understanding of love (substituting adultery with heretics and law-breakers for love for God, which requires chastity and keeping the truth) and obedience (substituting following the teaching of false elders for obedience to God and the humble acceptance of the patristic teaching, and not recognizing their personal responsibility for their own Church state), they often take part in the persecutions and slander against the True Orthodox. In a word, even such good works as the veneration of the Royal Martyrs are often expressed in a distorted form (by, for example, mixing it with Stalinism, as with the ‘fighter from within’ Dushenov)”.

Kapustin then makes the important point that “an enormous number of people... have not come to Orthodoxy precisely because they have not seen true Christianity in the MP (alas, in the consciousness of many people in Russia the Orthodox Church is associated with the MP). In my opinion, the MP rather hinders than assists the spiritual awakening of the Russian people (if we can talk at all about any awakening in the present exceptionally wretched spiritual condition of Russia).”¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁹ “Obraschenie kurskogo dukhovenstva k mitropolitu Vitaliu” (Address of the Kursk Clergy to Metropolitan Vitaly), *Otkliki*, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 79.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Kapustin, “Raz’iasnenia Episkopa usilili somnenia” (The Explanations of the Bishop have Increased Doubts), *Otkliki*, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 66. Kapustin was actually commenting on Bishop Evtikhy’s report to the Council. However, since the Council in its epistle accepted Evtikhy’s report almost *in toto*, and

Secondly, ROCOR's epistle welcomed the MP's glorification of the New Martyrs, since "the turning of the whole Russian people in prayer to all the holy New Martyrs of Russia and especially the Royal new martyrs... had become possible now thanks to the recognition of their holiness by the Hierarchical Council of the Moscow Patriarchate". As if the Russian people had not already been praying to the Holy New Martyrs in front of icons made in ROCOR for the past twenty years!

Moreover, as Protopriests Constantine Fyodorov and Benjamin Zhukov wrote, "the possibility of turning in prayer to the Russian New Martyrs was opened to the people *not by the Moscow Patriarchate (as is written in our Hierarchical Council's Epistle), but by the martyric exploit of these saints themselves, who were glorified by our Church in 1981. The prayer of the Russian people to these saints never ceased from the very first day of their martyric exploit, but was strengthened and spread precisely by the canonization of the Church Abroad.*"¹⁰⁸¹

Thirdly: "We are encouraged by the acceptance of the new social conception by this council, which in essence *blots out* the 'Declaration' of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927".¹⁰⁸² And yet in the MP's "social conception" Sergius' declaration was not even mentioned, let alone repented of. In any case, how could one vague phrase about the necessity of the Church disobeying the State in certain exceptional cases (which was contradicted on the same page, as we have seen) *blot out* a Declaration that caused the greatest schism in Orthodox Church history since 1054 and incalculable sufferings and death?! Two years later, as we have seen, in July, 2002, the Synod of the MP, far from "blotting out" the declaration, said that Sergius' relationship to the Soviet authorities was "not blameworthy", so not only has the MP *not* repented for sergianism, but it has continued to *justify* it, contradicting the position of the Catacomb new martyrs whom it has just glorified and who gave their lives because of their opposition to sergianism.

As Metropolitan Vitaly wrote: "The so-called 'Social Doctrine' of the Moscow Patriarchate is a purely Roman Catholic concept which is foreign to the Orthodox Church and which, regardless of its possibly well-meaning intentions, holds nothing profitable for the Orthodox Christian. This Doctrine does not reflect any repentance for the past mistakes and in no manner can it cross out the treacherous Declaration of 1927."

The epistle, which was signed by all the bishops except Barnabas, obliquely recognised this fact when it later declared: "We have not seen a just evaluation by the Moscow Patriarchate of the anti-ecclesiastical actions of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) and his Synod and their successors". If so, then how can we talk about Sergius' Declaration being *blotted out*?!

repeated many of his points, the remarks on the bishop's report apply equally to the conciliar epistle.

¹⁰⁸¹ Fyodorov, Zhukov, "Ispovedanie iskonnoj pozitsii RPTsZ" (The Confession of the Age-Old Position of the ROCOR), *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 3, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸² Again, it was Bishop Evtikhy's report that played the vital role here: "We simply no longer notice it, one phrase from the Social Doctrine is sufficient for us" (A. Soldatov, "Sergij premudrij nam put' ozaril" (Sergius the Wise has Illumined our Path), *Vertograd*, № 461, 21 May, 2004, p. 4).

The third epistle, addressed to the Old Ritualists without distinguishing between the Popovtsi and Bespopovtsi, was similarly ecumenist in tone, beginning with the words: "To the Believing children of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Homeland and in the diaspora, who hold to the old rite, the Council of bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad sends greetings! Beloved brothers and sisters in our holy Orthodox faith: may the grace and peace of the Man-loving Saviour be with you to the ages!"

It was one thing to remove the bans on the old rites, as ROCOR had done in its Council in 1974: it was quite another to recognise the schismatics as Orthodox. And in such terms! For later in the epistle ROCOR compares the persecutions of the Old Ritualists to the persecutions of St. John Chrysostom, and begs forgiveness of the Old Ritualists as the Emperor Theodosius the Younger had begged it of the holy hierarch! But, as Bishop Gregory Grabbe pointed out after the 1974 Council, the sins of the Russian State in persecuting the Old Ritualists in the 17th century should not all be laid on the Church of the time, which primarily condemned the Old Ritualists not for their adherence to the old rites (which even Patriarch Nikon recognised to be salvific), but for their disobedience to the Church. To lay all the blame for the schism, not on the Old Ritualists but on the Orthodox, even after the Old Ritualists had proudly refused to take advantage of the many major concessions made by the Orthodox (for example, the edinoverie) while stubbornly continuing to call the Orthodox themselves schismatics, was to invert the truth and logically led to the conclusion that the Orthodox Church was not the True Church!

As clergy of the Kursk diocese pointed out: "The conciliar epistle to the Old Ritualists, in our opinion, is not only an extremely humiliating document for the Orthodox Church, but also contains signs of a heterodox ecclesiology. Effectively equating the Old Ritualists with the confessors of Orthodoxy, the Hierarchical Council, first, leaves them with their convictions, thereby blocking the path to repentance, and secondly, either teaches that outside the Orthodox Church there can exist true confession, or considers that the Church can be divided into parts which for centuries have not had any eucharistic communion between themselves. Both in form and in spirit the epistle in question represents a complete break with the patristic tradition of the Orthodox Church.... It seems that all that remains to be added is the request: 'We humbly beseech you to receive us into your communion and be united to the Holy Church.'¹⁰⁸³

¹⁰⁸³ "Obraschenie kurskogo dukhovenstva k mitropolitu Vitaliu" (Address of the Kursk Clergy to Metropolitan Vitaly), *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 3. pp. 81-82, 76. A fuller extract from this address: "... But now it is necessary to touch upon another document issued by our Sobor. In it, eucharistic unity with our erring brethren the Old Ritualists is discussed. Most certainly, we welcome this possibility. What could bring greater joy to the heart of any Russian Orthodox person, than the return to the Russian Church, after three-and-a-half centuries, of Russian people who have fallen away from the Church, but remained faithful to Orthodox ecclesiastical and Russian national traditions! That is, if only our archpastors viewed the matter precisely in this light: as the return to the Church of those who have fallen away from her. Unfortunately, the Sobor's appeal to the representatives of Old Ritualism is couched in terms that leave it uncertain just who is in schism from the Church, we or our erring brethren the Old Ritualists.

The feelings of the protestors were summed up by Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky and Roman Vershillo, who said that a "revolution" had taken place, and that "if we are to express the meaning of the coup shortly, then there took place, first, a moral disarmament, and secondly, the self-abolition of ROCOR as a separate part of the Russian Local Church... Alas, [it] is composed in such a way that it is not actually

Truly, the self-abasement of the Sobor of Bishops knows no bounds! In the name of our entire Church it does not merely ask the Old Ritualists' forgiveness for past offenses and cruelties (a request that would be altogether justifiable and with which we would entirely concur), but literally proclaims the schismatics great confessors of Orthodoxy. This could not be expressed more plainly than in the Sobor's epistle: "In this we wish to follow the example of the holy Emperor Theodosius the Lesser, who translated the relics of St John Chrysostom to Constantinople from the town where his parents had mercilessly exiled the saint. Paraphrasing his words, we cry to the persecuted, 'Forgive, brethren and sisters, the sins committed against you out of hatred. Do not regard us as guilty of the transgressions of our forebears; do not hold us responsible for their rash deeds. Although we are children of your persecutors, we have done you no evil. Forgive their trespasses, that we may escape the blame they deserve. We cast ourselves at your feet and entrust ourselves to your prayers. Pardon the reckless violence of those who wronged you, for through our lips they repent for what they have done to you and ask forgiveness...' For this passage to be completely comprehensible, it would seem necessary only to add, 'We humbly beg you to receive us into communion and unite us to the Holy Church.' How so? If the Old Ritualists are true spiritual heirs to the holy hierarch John Chrysostom, then they are true confessors of Orthodoxy. In this case we, the Orthodox, are true spiritual heirs of the lawless persecutors of the father and teacher of the Church, heirs of impious apostates. As for the Emperor Theodosius II (408-450)* mentioned in the epistle, he is no saint of the Orthodox Church, as anyone can learn by examining the list of saints in the Jordanville calendar. Rather, he is infamous in ecclesiastical history for having convened the "Robber Council" of 449, immediately before his death. The bizarre self-flagellation of our bishops (may Your Eminence forgive us for using such a phrase!) reaches its apogee with this astounding statement: "We sorrowfully admit that the fierce persecution of our Church during the past decades may, at least partially, be God's punishment for the persecution of the children of the Old Rite by our predecessors." Thus the holy hierarchs glorified by the divine Spirit, for example Tichon and Metrophanes of Voronezh, Demetrius of Rostov, and Joasaph of Belgorod, become in part responsible for the grievous woes that befell the Russian Orthodox Church! After all, they had recourse not only to ecclesiastical-disciplinary measures, but to governmental-administrative ones as well in battling the Schism. Furthermore, guilt may be imputed to all the saints who lived after the schism, as not having come to the defense of the unjustly persecuted "Orthodox confessors." In the end it follows that the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia suffered to a considerable degree deservedly, paying with their blood for the sins of the Church! For some reason, however, our archpastors chose to make no mention of the fact that the gory bacchanalia which was the Russian Revolution was in no small measure financed by Old Ritualist capital.

We ask you to understand us, revered Vladiko: we do not regard every action even of men adorned by God with holiness as correct and infallible. Perhaps they were too severe in dealing with the Old Ritualists. Notwithstanding, we believe it is important to consider the general stance of the saints and the Church of Russia. Whatever economy they employed, they always regarded the Old Ritualists as outside the Church. We can also understand that pastoral compassion, condescension to human weakness, and the development of an historical understanding call, not for accusations or theological polemics against the devotees of the Old Ritual, but for a delicate call to unity through mutual forgiveness of offenses (and indeed, the Old Ritualists have sinned against us and thus given us reason to forgive). We cannot, however, reconcile ourselves to unity with the Old Ritualists on the basis of total spiritual capitulation. We are sincerely convinced that the maximal concession possible on our part is to lift all the bans and the anathema on the pre-reform divine services and to request forgiveness for persecutions and cruelty. This, but not in the form it takes in the epistle issued by the Bishop's Sobor."

*It seems the clergy of Kursk were mistaken in this. For the feastday of St. Theodosius the Younger is on the 29th of July.

clear who has really fallen into schism from the Church: we or our errant Old Ritualist brothers!"¹⁰⁸⁴

For ROCOR the writing was now on the wall. The October, 2000 Council constituted a clear break with the traditional attitude towards the MP and World Orthodoxy adopted by Metropolitans Anthony, Anastasy and Philaret, as well as Vitaly in his last years. Only a clear renunciation of that clear break could keep the children of ROCOR within the Church and Faith of their fathers...

*

It did not happen. First, in October, 2001 Metropolitan Vitaly was removed as first-hierarchy – willingly or unwillingly, the evidence is ambiguous – and replaced by one of the leading plotters, Metropolitan Lavr. Then those who most ardently rejected the union course were pushed out of the Church. Then, in 2006, a so-called “Fourth All-Diaspora” Council in San Francisco was able to shake off the dissenters and endorse the union – by this time the obstacles to the union were brushed aside as if they were not worthy of discussion. Finally, on May 17, 2007 the formal union took place in Moscow.

95 per cent of ROCOR’s members in Russia refused to join the union and sought refuge in one or another of the “splinters of ROCOR” which sprang up, the most canonical being that of the Russian True Orthodox Church (RTOC) under Archbishop Lazarus of Tambov (when he died a little later, he was succeeded by Archbishop Tikhon of Omsk). 33 per cent of ROCOR members outside Russia – a much smaller percentage, but still considerable – also rejected the union. ROCOR, the last sizeable opponent of the MP and champion of True Orthodoxy had been swallowed up into the maw of the false church...

There was one good result of this great spiritual tragedy. With the fall of the ROCOR Synod, whose headquarters were located in New York, the leadership of the Russian Church returned to the Homeland. A very difficult struggle faced the small remnant of True Orthodox Christians; but the truth, and therefore the hopes for a resurrection of Holy Russia lay with them.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Krasovitsky, Vershillo, “Esche raz o sergianstve” (Once More about Sergianism), *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 2, p. 52.

EPILOGUE. THE RUSSIAN CHURCH UNDER PUTIN

We would have healed Babylon, but her wound is not healed.
Jeremiah 51.9.

It is written: 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of thieves.
Luke 19.46.

On January 1, 2000, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, former head of the FSB (KGB), was appointed Acting President of the Russian Federation (in March he became President). The union of the posts of Head of State with Head of the KGB in one person was unprecedented (although Andropov, Putin's hero, had been successively Head of the KGB and Communist Party Secretary). This innovation must be seen as portending not only a new, but quite possibly *the last* phase, of the Russian revolution...

The return to power of the KGB, now renamed the FSB, was certainly the most remarkable fact of the new era. For, as Preobrazhensky writes, "After the democratic reforms of the 1990s the KGB officers managed to get everything back. All the Directorates of the Soviet KGB are reunited now in today's FSB, except two of them: the First, which managed intelligence, and the Ninth, which guarded the highest Communist bureaucrats. Both are formally independent, but keep close connections with the FSB... The former First Chief Directorate of the KGB is now called the Foreign Intelligence Service. It successfully managed operation 'ROCOR'"¹⁰⁸⁵ – that is, the absorption of ROCOR into the MP.¹⁰⁸⁶

In the Soviet period the three centres of power were the Party, the Army and the KGB. During the 1990s under Yeltsin the Party had lost power and prestige, and the Army had been enfeebled; but the KGB, after a shaky start, recovered, and now controlled the whole state apparatus. As regards the Church, nothing seemed to have changed radically; it was still controlled by KGB agent-hierarchs. However, two important things had changed. First, Church and State were now so close that "symphony" would seem to be too weak a word for their union; and secondly, *the KGB/FSB itself seemed to have undergone a spiritual transformation*, from fierce killer of Christians on a massive, unprecedented scale to supposedly meek and mild protector of Christians and Orthodoxy. The question was: do leopards change their spots? ...

Writing in 2006, the intelligence experts Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin explain: "Ridiculed and reviled at the end of the Soviet era, the Russian intelligence community has since been remarkably successful at reinventing itself and recovering its political influence. The last three prime ministers of the Russian Federation during Boris Yeltsin's presidency – Yevgeni Primakov, Sergei Stepashin and Vladimir Putin – were all former intelligence chiefs. Putin, who succeeded Yeltsin as President in 2000, is the only FCD [First Chief Directorate] officer ever to become Russian leader. According to the head of the SVR [Foreign Intelligence Service], Sergei Nikolayevich

¹⁰⁸⁵ Preobrazhensky, "Ecumenism and Intelligence".

¹⁰⁸⁶ Preobrazhensky, "Hostile Absorption of ROCOR".

Lebedev, 'The president's understanding of intelligence activity and the opportunity to speak the same language to him makes our work considerably easier.' No previous head of state in Russia, or perhaps anywhere else in the world, has ever surrounded himself with so many former intelligence officers. Putin also has more direct control of intelligence than any Russian leader since Stalin. According to Kirpichenko, 'We are under the control of the President and his administration, because intelligence is directly subordinated to the President and only the President.' But whereas Stalin's intelligence chiefs usually told him simply what he wanted to hear, Kirpichenko claims that, 'Now, we tell it like it is'.

"The mission statement of today's FSB and SVR is markedly different from that of the KGB. At the beginning of the 1980s Andropov proudly declared that the KGB was playing its part in the onward march of world revolution. By contrast, the current 'National Security Concept' of the Russian Federation, adopted at the beginning of the new millennium, puts the emphasis instead on the defence of traditional Russian values: 'Guaranteeing the Russian Federation's national security also includes defence of the cultural and spiritual-moral inheritance, historical traditions and norms of social life, preservation of the cultural property of all the peoples of Russia, formation of state policy in the sphere of the spiritual and moral education of the population...' One of the distinguishing characteristics of the Soviet intelligence system from Cheka to KGB was its militant atheism. In March 2002, however, the FSB at last found God. A restored Russian Orthodox church in central Moscow was consecrated by Patriarch Aleksi II as the FSB's parish church in order to minister to the previously neglected spiritual needs of its staff. The FSB Director, Nikolai Patrushev, and the Patriarch celebrated the mystical marriage of the Orthodox Church and the state security apparatus by a solemn exchange of gifts. Patrushev presented a symbolic golden key of the church and an icon of St. Aleksei, Moscow Metropolitan, to the Patriarch, who responded by giving the FSB Director the Mother God 'Umilenie' icon and an icon representing Patrushev's own patron saint, St. Nikolai – the possession of which would formerly have been a sufficiently grave offence to cost any KGB officer his job. Though the FSB has not, of course, become the world's first intelligence agency staffed only or mainly by Christian true believers, there have been a number of conversions to the Orthodox Church by Russian intelligence officers past and present – among them Nikolai Leonov, who half a century ago was the first to alert the Centre to the revolutionary potential of Fidel Castro. 'Spirituality' has become a common theme in FSB public relations materials. While head of FSB public relations in 1999-2001, Vasili Stavitsky published several volumes of poetry with a strong 'spiritual' content, among them *Secrets of the Soul* (1999); a book of 'spiritual-patriotic' poems for children entitled *Light a Candle, Mamma* (1999); and *Constellation of Love: Selected Verse* (2000). Many of Stavitsky's poems have been set to music and recorded on CDs, which are reported to be popular at FSB functions.

"Despite their unprecedented emphasis on 'spiritual security', however, the FSB and SVR are politicized intelligence agencies which keep track of President Putin's critics and opponents among the growing Russian diaspora abroad, as well as in Russia itself. During his first term in office, while affirming his commitment to democracy and human rights, Putin gradually succeeded in marginalizing most opposition and winning control over television channels and the main news media.

The vigorous public debate of policy issues during the Yeltsin years has largely disappeared. What has gradually emerged is a new system of social control in which those who step too far out of line face intimidation by the FSB and the courts. The 2003 State Department annual report on human rights warned that a series of alleged espionage cases involving scientists, journalists and environmentalists 'caused continuing concerns regarding the lack of due process and the influence of the FSB in court cases'. According to Lyudmilla Alekseyeva, the current head of the Moscow Helsinki Group, which has been campaigning for human rights in Russia since 1976, 'The only thing these scientists, journalists and environmentalists are guilty of is talking to foreigners, which in the Soviet Union was an unpardonable offence.' Though all this remains a far cry from the KGB's obsession with even the most trivial forms of ideological subversion, the FSB has once again defined a role for itself as an instrument of social control..."¹⁰⁸⁷

It is as if the KGB - which, after all, has always been the best-informed and best-educated part of the state - has come to the conclusion as regards Orthodoxy, that it is here to stay, there is no use trying to extirpate it, so "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!" Indeed, by making a suitably modified Orthodoxy part - even the central part - of the State's ideology, it may become very useful. The question that needs to be asked, then, is: is this a genuine conversion of the persecutor into the apostle, like St. Paul on the road to Damascus, or, on the contrary, is it a truly demonic ruse designed to subvert and therefore destroy the last remnant of true belief in Russia?

In order to answer this question, we have to examine, first, what are the real beliefs of Putin himself, the undisputed ruler of the new state, and secondly, how has he acted towards Russian Orthodoxy both at home and abroad?

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Coming to power at the beginning of the new millennium, Putin presented himself as "all things to all men": a democrat to the democrats, a socialist to the socialists, a nationalist to the nationalists, and an Orthodox to the Orthodox. He goes to Orthodox Christmas and Pascha services, bowing and crossing himself, often visits Valaam monastery and has Metropolitan Tikhon of Pskov as his reputed confessor. It was he who personally promoted the union of the MP and ROCOR, an idea first mooted by Archbishop Mark in 1997 and by Archbishop Laurus on July 17, 1999 and finally brought to fruition in 2007...¹⁰⁸⁸ "Project ROCOR" was evidently very important to him as part of his wider claim to reunite all the parts of the "Russian world", as his puppet-like patriarch, Kyril Gundiaev, calls it. Nor is his enthusiasm for religious unions restricted to Russian Orthodoxy, at home and abroad. He has gone several times to Mount Athos, and claims to champion supposedly Orthodox countries from Syria to Serbia. He has also displayed great respect for Judaism, Islam and Buddhism; and his ecumenism extends to frequent visits to the Pope.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The KGB and the World. The Mitrokhin Archive II*, London: Penguin, 2006, pp. 490-492.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Fr. Benjamin Zhukov, Appeal to the West European Clergy, December 15, 2000; *Church News*, vol. 12, № 9 (91), p. 4.

And yet Putin remains a KGB man to the core; as he himself said, "Once a chekist, always a chekist." And he is no believer... On September 8, 2000, when asked by the American television journalist Larry King whether he believed in God, he replied: "I believe in people..." This refusal to confess a faith in God is not surprising. It should be remembered, as ex-KGB Colonel Konstantin Preobrazhensky points out, that Putin "began his career not in the intelligence ranks but in the 'Fifth Branch' of the Leningrad Regional KGB, which also fought religion and the Church. Putin carefully hides this fact from foreign church leaders, and you will not find it in any of his official biographies... The myth of Putin's religiosity is important for proponents of 'the union'. It allows Putin to be characterized as some Orthodox Emperor Constantine, accepting the perishing Church Abroad under his regal wing. For his kindness we should be stretching out our arms to him with tears of gratitude..."¹⁰⁸⁹ We should expect that Putin's KGB experience should have given him training in how to *pretend* to be a believer, but it virtually excludes the possibility that he is one in fact¹⁰⁹⁰ - unless he has undergone a remarkable late conversion, which he denies...

Thus "1) he lights menorahs when he worships at his local synagogue¹⁰⁹¹;

"2) he has worshipped the mortal remains of Kin Il Sung in North Korea;

"3) he has worshipped the mortal remains of Mahatma Gandhi;

"4) he 'believes not in God, but in Man' (as he himself has stated);

"5) he was initiated into an especially occult form of 'kighthood' (read: freemasonry) in Germany;

"6) he has restored the communist anthem;

"7) he has restored the bloody red rag as the RF's military banner;

"8) he has not removed the satanic pentagram from public buildings (including cathedrals);

"9) he has plans of restoring the monument to 'Butcher' Dzerzhinsky [now fulfilled];

"10) he has not removed the satanic mausoleum in Red Square nor its filthy contents"¹⁰⁹² [and still refuses to do so].

¹⁰⁸⁹ Preobrazhensky, *KGB/FSB's New Trojan Horse: Americans of Russian Descent*, North Billerica, Ma.: Gerard Group Publishing, 2008, p. 97.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Preobrazhensky, *KGB v russoj emigratsii*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁰⁹¹ In 2013 Putin went to Israel, put on a Jewish skull-cap and prayed (or pretended to pray) at the Wailing Wall. Apparently, he approved of the idea of rebuilding the Jewish Temple, an idea that is anathema to all Orthodox Christians (and many Protestants too)... (V.M.)

¹⁰⁹² George Sprukts, orthodoxtradition@yahooogroups.com, 24 June, 2004.

Putin's real faith is in his own right to rule unopposed by anyone or anything. As his propagandist Yegor Kholmogorov wrote: "Putin's power was, from the very beginning, non-electoral in origin, it was not a matter of being 'appointed by Yeltsin', but of what the Chinese call 'the mandate of heaven', an unquestioned right to power... As a politician, Putin has already for a long time been above politics..."¹⁰⁹³

Putin's style of rule certainly resembles that of a Chinese emperor more than that of a democratic politician. The way he disposes of opposition politicians, businessmen and journalists suggests that his concept of "sovereign democracy", as he calls it, veers more towards "sovereignty" than to "democracy", and towards the sovereignty of one man even more than of the nation. In Russia they like to call democracy "demonocracy". But in the words of the German journalist Boris Reitschuster, Putinist democracy is what one might call "democratura".¹⁰⁹⁴

Putin can get away with this because the general population, as well as being cowed by his KGB bullies, is still saturated in Soviet modes of thinking. Thus according to a 2005 survey, 42% of the Russian people, and 60% of those over sixty, wanted the return of "a leader like Stalin."¹⁰⁹⁵ Such statistics enable him not to be shy of using strong-arm methods of policing and espionage work, including murder. Thus in July, 2006, the Duma passed two laws allowing the secret services to eliminate "extremists" both in Russia and on foreign territory, and defining "extremism" to include anyone "libellously critical of the Russian authorities".

The number of Putin's victims, while still not approaching the levels of Stalin's, is steadily rising. And one of the levers of his power is the fear that if opposed too much he may try and emulate the bloodthirstiness of some of his Soviet predecessors. But Kholmogorov appears to think that his "mandate from heaven" allows him to do what he wants in this sphere: "We as a people must be ashamed only about one thing, of our poor fulfilment of the task placed on us by God, of 'ruling the peoples autocratically'. And any 'national repentance' which people like to talk endlessly about must begin with our tanks on the streets of Eastern Europe."

"For those who claim," writes Professor Olga Ackerly, "that the 'CIS is different from the USSR' and Putin is a 'practising Orthodox Christian', here are some sobering facts. The first days and months Putin's presidency were highlighted by the reestablishment of a memorial plaque on Kutuzovsky Prospect where Andropov used to live. The plaque was a symbol of communist despotism missing since the 1991 putsch, bearing Andropov's name - a former head of the KGB, especially known for his viciousness in the use of force and psychiatric clinics for dissidents. On May 9, 2000, Putin proposed a toast to the 'genius commander' Iosif Stalin and promoted many former KGB officers to the highest state positions."¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹³ Kholmogorov, "Kremlevskij Mechtatel'" (Kremlin Dreamer), *Spetnaz Rossii* (Russia's Special Forces), 2000/2.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Kasparov, *Winter is Coming*, London: Atlantic Books, 2015, p. 182.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Orlando Figes, "Vlad the Great", *New Statesman*, 3 December, 2007, p. 34.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ackerly, "High Treason in ROCOR: The Rapprochement with Moscow", http://stnicholascandles.com/High_Treason.htm, p. 21.

When Putin came to power, the Russian population was in a state of shock from the robber capitalism of the 1990s, and wanted only one thing: law and order, and the repression of those criminals who had stolen their wealth. For the sake of that they were prepared to forgo the good things the Yeltsin years had brought: the possibility of finding the truth in both politics and religion. Although Putin was himself one of the robber capitalists of the 1990s, he promised to provide law and order, and duly delivered on his promise – with the one proviso that he and his criminal cronies, “the new oligarchs”, were to be above the law if Putin decreed it.

The cost of this implicit bargain with the Russian people was high. With the aid of the KGB, Putin moved to muzzle press and TV freedom, rig elections and, if necessary, eliminate rivals. He also restored the red flag and hammer and sickle to the armed services and the melody of the Soviet national anthem. Organized crime has flourished under his patronage (as it did while he was in St. Petersburg). In general his regime may be described as neo-Soviet without Marxism-Leninism but with a superficially democratic and, less superficially, nationalist tinge – of which we shall say more later.

The Church does not criticize, or interfere with, this bargain in any way. The Putin-Gundiaev “symphony of powers” – or, more accurately: absorption of the Church power into that of the State – is aiming for the resurrection of the Soviet Union, or “the Russian world”, as Gundiaev prefers to call it. There is much of the old Sovietism in this brave new world, but it is more seductive, more “exciting” – and more craftily deceptive. It appeals to a far wider clientèle than old-style communists. Nationalists and democrats, monarchists and atheists, westerners and Slavophiles – all can find a place in the new Russia. Only one condition is attached: that Putin’s regime is accepted as the lawful successor both of the Soviet and of the tsarist regimes – including those non-Russian states that were subject to those regimes.

Thus Putin is notoriously aggressive on the international stage, especially towards America but also to nations in the “Near Abroad”. He invaded Georgia in 2007 and Ukraine in 2014; but the Ukrainians, after a hesitant start in which they were forced to surrender Crimea, have fought back well. The Church has become involved in this war also, backing attempts to extend the boundaries of “the Russian world” in the ecclesiastical as well as the political sphere.

With not much success recently, however. The old contest between Moscow and Constantinopolitan for the Ukrainian Orthodox has intensified. As the new millennium dawned, Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, supported by the secular authorities and Ukrainian nationalists, declared that the Ukraine was his canonical territory, and that the unification of the Kievan metropolia to the MP in 1686 had been uncanonical. In August, 2000, under strong pressure from the MP, he renounced this position¹⁰⁹⁷ – but, as it turned out, only temporarily. In November he reached an agreement with the UOAC and the UOAC-KP, but excluding the UOC-

¹⁰⁹⁷ Church News, October, 2000, vol. 12, № 7 (89), pp. 10-11.

MP, on the formation of a united local church that would provide for “a cessation of mutual accusations” and a halt to the process of transfer of parishes from one jurisdiction to the other. A commission would oversee the organisational work, and this Commission would then present its conclusions to himself, after which he would determine “the canonical questions and the status of bishops and clergy” of both churches. This united church was approved of by the Ukrainian authorities, and deputies calculated that if such a church came into being and was recognized by Constantinople, a majority of believers in the UOC would join it.¹⁰⁹⁸ The invasion of the Patriarchate of Constantinople into the canonical territory of the Russian Church exacerbated their already strained relations (because of the quarrel over Estonia, in particular).

The already tense situation was exacerbated by the Uniate Cardinal Husar calling on all the Ukrainian Orthodox to unite in “One Orthodox Ukrainian National Church” with the Byzantine rite but in submission to the Pope. In June, 2001 the Pope met leaders of all the Ukrainian churches in Kiev with the exception of the UOC-MP.¹⁰⁹⁹ By the latest count the UOC-MP had 9047 communities in the Ukraine (an increase of 557 on the previous year), the UOAC-CP had 2781 (an increase of 290), the UAOC had 1015, the Uniates had 3317 and the Latin-rite Catholics – 807.¹¹⁰⁰

An autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) finally came into being at the unification council in Kyiv on 15 December 2018. The new Church was given a Tomos of Autocephaly by Patriarch Bartholomew in Constantinople on 5 January 2019. “The unification council voted to unite the all existing Ukrainian Orthodox major jurisdictions: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) as well as a part of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (a branch of the Moscow-based Russian Orthodox Church, which claims jurisdiction over Ukraine). The Unification Council elected Epiphanius Dumenko – previously the Metropolitan of Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi and Bila Tserkva (UOC-KP) – as its primate, the Metropolitan of Kyiv and all Ukraine.

“According to the statute that the OCU adopted at the unification council, ‘Orthodox Christians of Ukrainian provenance in the Orthodox diaspora’ should henceforth be subject to the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Article 4 of the Statute). This provision is also enshrined in the OCU's tomos of autocephaly. In March 2019 Metropolitan Epiphanius said that the transfer of parishes of the dissolved Kyiv Patriarchate to the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate had already begun. The creation and subsequent recognition of the OCU by other autocephalous Orthodox Churches have met staunch opposition and attempts at subversion on the part of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) as well as the government of Russia.”¹¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁹⁸ <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/news/001113/glav.htm>; *Vertograd-Inform*, № 12 (69), 2000, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Sobornost'*, June, 2001; in *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 12 (1681), June 15/28, 2001, p. 16.

¹¹⁰⁰ *NG-Religia*, № 7, 2001; in *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 11 (1680), June 1/14, 2001, p. 16. In Russia at the same time there were four bishops, 220 parishes, 215 priests, 230 nuns, a seminary and a college (*Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), 31 May – 6 June, 2001).

¹¹⁰¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthodox_Church_of_Ukraine

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In view of Putin's boasting of his Orthodox values as against the degeneracy of the West, it seems not irrelevant to inquire to what degree he has actually made the country more Orthodox (understanding "Orthodoxy" in a very broad sense).

To Putin's credit is higher church attendance: "In Russia, the numbers of people claiming to be 'Orthodox' increased from 31% to 72% between 1991 and 2008, while regular church attendance [grew] from 2% to 7%."¹¹⁰² On the downside, the figures for membership of the Orthodox Church can be misleading. One poll showed that many of those calling themselves Orthodox also call themselves atheist, which suggests that "Orthodoxy" is for many a national rather than a religious label...

Putin also discourages homosexuality and abortion (without actually banning them), and anti-homosexuality is even enshrined in his new 2020 constitution. But of course it would help him to sound less hypocritical in his criticisms of "Eurosodom" if his team actually practised what they preach. As we have seen, according to different sources, between one third and two thirds of MP hierarchs, the supposed teachers and guardians of the conscience of the people, are homosexuals...

Putin has encouraged the building of churches (most recently, a hideous cathedral for the army that combines Orthodox and Soviet symbolica), and introduced Orthodoxy theology and history into the school curriculum, making the appearance of bearded priests or monks a common sight on national media. This especially helps inculcate the lying mythology of Stalin's victory in the Second World War; indeed, Putin himself finds this mythology so important that he has taken a hand in rewriting the history of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.¹¹⁰³

Dmitri Volchek writes: "'One Russia' [Putin's political party] proposes imprisonment for people who spread false information about the activity of the USSR during the war.

"A final version of a bill forbidding the rehabilitation of Nazism is ready. It was worked out by the 'One Russia' fraction in the Duma. The coordinator of the patriotic platform of OR, the president of the Committee for Security Irina Yarovaia, considers it necessary to punish people for 'denial of fact and approval of crimes established by a sentence of the International Military Tribunal, as well as the distribution of knowingly false information about the activity of the USSR during the Second world war connected with accusing people of committing crimes established by the publicly determined sentences of the International Military Tribunal.

¹¹⁰² "Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump's great success in exploiting the rise of nationalist Christianity", *The Conversation*, March 20, 2018.

¹¹⁰³ Andrei Zubov, "Sovietskaia Istorija Iskazila Soznanie Vladimir Putina", *Novosti Rossii*, June 19, 2020; Owen Matthews, "Vladimir Putin's History Fetish", *The Spectator*, June 20, 2020.

“Yarovaia proposes punishing such crimes with a fine of up to 300,000 roubles or imprisonment up to three years. It is proposed that the same actions carried out with the use of one’s service status or of the media should be punished with a fine of up to 100,000 – 500,000 rubles or a prison term of up to five years. In previous editions of the bill there was no mention of the USSR; it was a matter only of banning the declaration of the actions of the anti-Hitler forces as criminal. ‘Criticism of the USSR is threatened with prison,’ warns the newspaper *Vedomosti*. ‘If the bill is passed, will not historians occupied with the investigation of the crimes of Stalinism find themselves on the bench of the accused?’”¹¹⁰⁴

On the minus side, the culture of greed in Russia probably equals or even exceeds that in the West. The inequalities in wealth between the rich and the poor are greater in Russia than in any other major country; pensioners have been particularly hard-hit. The vices of capitalism have come to roost in the former communist super-power. Moreover, the Church has taken an active part in this, supporting both the regime’s neo-Sovietism and its criminal economy, in which it has itself taken an enthusiastic part. This is illustrated by the activities of “the tobacco metropolitan”, now Patriarch Kyril Gundiaev, who imports tobacco and alcohol duty-free and is now one of the richest men in Russia.¹¹⁰⁵

Putin’s early popularity was largely owing to the fact that the country as a whole was growing richer. But he was not responsible for that: already in 1999 alone, GDP had grown 10%, and in the 2000s the world price for oil rose over 700%. Most of that wealth was taken by Putin and his cronies. However, enough filtered down to the bureaucracy and the middle class to keep them, at any rate, happy. They were also happy that the most conspicuously rich “oligarchs” of the 1990s had been tamed.

But this picture of Putin’s saving the country from the oligarchs is misleading. “The oligarchs of the 1990s,” writes chess champion Gary Kasparov, “may have been robbing Russia blind, but at least we could find out about it in the press. Those days are over and the elite circle of oligarchs around Putin have power and riches beyond the dreams of Yeltsin’s entourage. In 2000, when Putin took charge, there were no Russians in the *Forbes* magazine list of the world’s billionaires. By 2005 there were thirty-six. In 2008 there were eighty-seven, more than Germany and Japan combined, in a country where 13 percent of our citizens were under a national poverty line of \$150 a month...

“According to the 2015 numbers, even after a year of Western sanctions and plunging oil prices, there are still eighty-eight Russian billionaires on the *Forbes* list, which still doesn’t list Putin or several of his closest cronies. I find it impossible to believe that a man like Putin who holds the power of life and death over eighty-eight

¹¹⁰⁴ Volchek, “Kvazireligia Velikoj Pobedy” (The Quasi-religion of the Great Victory), *Radio Svoboda*, February 7, 2014, <http://www.svoboda.org/a/25255849.html>.

¹¹⁰⁵ In 1995, the Nikolo-Ugreshky Monastery, which is directly subordinated to the patriarchate, earned \$350 million from the sale of alcohol. The patriarchate’s department of foreign church relations, which Cyril ran, earned \$75 million from the sale of tobacco. But the patriarchate reported an annual budget in 1995-1996 of only \$2 million. Cyril’s personal wealth was estimated by *the Moscow News* in 2006 to be \$4 billion.” (<http://news-nftu.blogspot.com>, February, 2009)

billionaires is not the richest of them all. The occasional leaks about mysterious Black Sea mansions and enormous bank transfers to nowhere add more circumstantial evidence to the case that by now Putin is likely the richest man in the world..."¹¹⁰⁶

Banking on the high price of oil, Putin began to rebuild Russia's economic and military might in the 2000s. But imbalances within the economy hindered diversification. He also had to keep the oligarchs and Mafiosi on his side, which meant that, as the "boss of bosses", he had to keep his hand in organized crime.

In his book *McMafia*, Glenny has shown that trade liberalization and globalization in the 1990s engendered an enormous explosion in organized crime throughout the world. It now constitutes not only a significant part of total world economic output, but also a distinct threat to the sovereignty of several nations. Whether we are speaking about drug-trafficking (Colombia, Mexico), people-trafficking (China), counterfeiting (North Korea), gold (India), protection rackets (Japan), guns and bombs (North Korea), banking fraud (Brazil), oil (Nigeria, Libya) or diamonds (South Africa), in each sphere we see both enormous profits and penetration of governments and security forces. The cost not only in taxes but in ruined lives has been particularly horrendous in the case of drug-trafficking; here the criminals have consistently triumphed over the governments; even the war on drugs waged by the United States is judged by experts to have been a total failure, to the extent that decriminalisation – i.e. surrender – is being seriously put forward as the only "solution". There is no doubt that Putin and his international mafioso connections has benefited much from this organized crime wave.

In the 1990s the growth of organized crime in Russia penetrated and overwhelmed not only the elected government, but even the mighty KGB; the boundaries between business, law enforcement and the Russian mafia became hard to make out; and the power of the Russia mafia spread also to places like Israel, Czechia and Hungary. Putin made great electoral capital out of his claims to control these oligarchs and *mafiosi*. And indeed, some of the oligarchs of the 1990s – those who refused to buckle under to Putin, like Berezovsky and Gusinsky (in the media) and Khodorkovsky (in oil) – were indeed tamed, imprisoned, or expelled.

Thus Glenny writes: "In the 1990s, the oligarchs and gangsters clearly controlled the Kremlin. Under Vladimir Putin, who systematically used popular hostility to the oligarchs to strengthen his political position as President, the situation was reversed: criminal and oligarch interests were subordinate to state interests. It does not follow that Putin and friends persecuted criminals or dispensed with corrupt practices. On the contrary, they flourished as before but they are now much more carefully controlled. Of course, it is often difficult to tell who is truly running the show – the chicken or the egg!"¹¹⁰⁷

¹¹⁰⁶ Kasparov, *Winter is Coming*, London: Atlantic Books, 2015, p. 185.

¹¹⁰⁷ Glenny, *McMafia*, 2017, pp. 98-99. Recently, Said Amirov, the Dagestani gangster politician, was arrested and imprisoned, which has elicited speculation that the government may be reasserting its authority over the gangsters – that is, the non-governmental gangsters. Marc Galeotti writes: "The modern Russian state is a much stronger force than it was in the 1990s, and jealous of its political authority. The gangs that prosper in modern Russia tend to do so by working with rather than

Whoever truly runs the show, it is clear that the financial interests of Putin and his business friends play an increasingly important role in his conduct of international affairs, as is witnessed by his recent complaints to the G20 countries that they are not buying enough of his Sputnik anti-covid vaccine.

Financial interests are an especially important factor in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict - in addition, of course, to Putin's purely political desire to restore the Soviet empire to its pre-1992 boundaries. But it is very difficult to disentangle such supposedly "pure" political motives from dirty financial ones. Thus there can be little doubt that the oligarchs that control such monstrous State-mafia companies as Gazprom and Rosneft are vitally interested in acquiring complete control over the oil and gas pipelines that pass through Ukraine.

Thus the American National Security Adviser, General Macmaster, said in May, 2016 that "Russia invaded Ukraine without being punished, established dominance over this territory and then turned the situation in such a way as to pretend that we and our allies are escalating matters." The general drew attention to the complex strategy employed by Moscow, which was based on a combination of two factors - 'the usual forces' and, under their cover, 'the much more complex campaign bound up with the use of criminality and organized crime.'"¹¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the KGB's long campaign to undermine Ukrainian independence, which involved attempts to assassinate pro-western Ukrainian politicians, such as Yushchinsky, appears to owe much to "turf wars" between Russian and Ukrainian oligarchs.¹¹⁰⁹

Other wars that Putin has conducted - in Chechnya, Georgia and Syria, for example - also "coincidentally" happen to have important pipelines passing through them. If the United States is sometimes accused of conducting wars in the Middle East for the sake of oil interests, the same can be said with still greater confidence about Russia.

Anton Grigoriev writes: "Few are those who take account of the fact that criminality in the 2000s was not conquered, but *integrated*. In Putin's time, not only have the Chechens become the greatest patriots of the Russian Federation, but also the Russian 'thieves in law'. Who, let us say, will now fail to call Joseph Kobzon, not only Russian, and a member of 'One Russia' [Putin's political party] but also a loyal patriot loyal to the authorities? But in the 1990s Kobzon was one of the deputies who did not enter into any of the deputies' groupings, was not a member of the party of power of that

against the state. In other words: do well by the Kremlin, and the Kremlin will turn a blind eye. If not, you will be reminded that the state is the biggest gang in town." ("Gangster's Paradise: How Organised Crime Took Over Russia", *The Guardian*, March 23, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/mar/23/how-organised-crime-took-over-russia-vory-super-mafia>)

¹¹⁰⁸ "Sovietnikom Trumpa po natsbezopasnosti stal ideologom vojny s Rossiej" (Trump's counselor on security has become an ideologue of war with Russia), *Kavkaztsentr*, February 21, 2017, <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2017/02/21/114276/sovetsnikom-trampa-po-natsbezopasnosti-stal-ideolog-vojny-s-rossiej.shtml>.

¹¹⁰⁹ Andrei Illarionov, "Boevoj put' FSB v Ukraine" (The martial path of the FSB in Ukraine), *Online Kiev*, June 10, 2014, <http://kiev-online.net.ua/politika/andrei-illarionov-boevoi-put-fsb-v-ukrai.html>.

time, and was forbidden entry into the USA, with which the Russian Federation at that time entertained the best official relations. Since 1995 he had been forbidden entry because of suspicions that he was linked with organized crime. Several attempts to get an American visa, including with the help of diplomatic channels, led to nothing. But in the 2000s Kobzon became a political figure of pan-national reputation – the president of the Culture Committee of the State Duma from ‘One Russia’, and deputy-president of the Committee for Information Politics. That is, he became one of the authorities.

“In the 1990s there was unorganized crime. In the 2000s this turned into the vertically integrated backbone of the new order.”¹¹¹⁰

Anders Aslund writes: “Putin controls the Russian state institutions, its secret police and its big state companies. Together with a few old friends from St. Petersburg, the president is tapping the big state companies through overpriced no-bid procurement, transfer pricing, asset stripping and stock manipulation. They are also making money by extorting old oligarchs and taking loans from state banks, not to be returned.

1:55

“Boris Nemtsov, who was murdered outside of the Kremlin, and still-active opposition politician Vladimir Milov exposed this kleptocracy in their booklet ‘Putin and Gazprom’ in 2008. A more extensive account in English is Karen Dawisha’s book *Putin’s Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* The Panama Papers, a series of leaked documents on offshore accounts released in April 2016, offered plenty of evidence of Putin’s secret wealth.

“Overall assessments indicate a personal enrichment of Putin and his closest cronies of some \$20 billion to \$25 billion a year since 2006. Nemtsov and Milov documented pilfering from Gazprom of \$60 billion from 2004 to 2007, and this was probably just over half of their enrichment, which has only increased. By now, this group would have accumulated \$240 billion to \$300 billion. Businessman Bill Browder estimates that Putin is the richest man in the world, with a personal wealth of \$200 billion. Total private Russian holdings abroad are assessed in the range of \$800 billion to \$1.3 trillion, according to Global Financial Integrity and a National Bureau of Economic Research study.”¹¹¹¹

¹¹¹⁰ Grigoriev, “Banditizm 1990-kh godov i novij poriadok pri Putine” (Banditry in the 1990s and the new order under Putin), October 16, 2016, http://anton-grigoriev.livejournal.com/1684413.html?utm_source=fbsharing&utm_medium=social.

¹¹¹¹ Aslund, “It’s Time to Go After Vladimir Putin’s Money in the West”, *The Washington Post*, March 29, 2018. Putin’s wealth was estimated in 2007 at about \$40 billion. See Luke Harding, “Putin, the Kremlin power struggle and the \$40bn fortune”, *The Guardian*, December 21, 2007, pp. 1-2. But in 2013 the *Sunday Times* estimated it at \$130 billion, twice that of Bill Gates (<http://artemov-igor.livejournal.com/227037.html>). In 2012, the former Kremlin adviser Stanislav Belkovsky revised this estimate upwards (Rob Wile, “Is Vladimir Putin secretly the Richest Man in the World?” *Money*, January 23, 2017, <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/vladimir-putin-secretly-richest-man-171217146.html>). Bill Browder then revised it upwards again: “Is Putin the world’s real richest man? After 17 years in power, Russian leader has a \$200 billion fortune, 58 planes and helicopters and 20 palaces and country retreats” *Daily Mail*, February 20, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4242718/Vladimir-Putin-200-billion-fortune.html#ixzz4ZKELKhAz>.

But if Putin undoubtedly turned the tables on the mafia, or integrated himself with them to such an extent that he became “the boss of bosses” and the richest of them all, whose interests (apart from his own) does he ultimately represent?

There can be only one possible answer to that question: the KGB/FSB. As Martin Sixsmith writes, “In December 1999,... Vladimir Putin went to celebrate his election victory with his old comrades at the FSB. When the toasts came round and Putin proposed they should drink ‘To Comrade Stalin’ there was a shocked silence followed by a loud cheer. Putin opened his celebratory speech by jokingly telling his former colleagues: ‘The agent group charged with taking the government under control has completed the first stage of its assignment.’...”¹¹¹²

“The agent group” now moved on very quickly to the next stage: the re-establishment of the former USSR’s military power. Thus, as Masha Gessen writes, only his second decree “established a new Russian military doctrine, abandoning the old no-first-strike policy regarding nuclear weapons and emphasizing a right to use them against aggressors ‘if other means of conflict resolution have been exhausted or deemed ineffective’. Soon another decree re-established mandatory training exercises for reservists (all Russian able-bodied men were considered reservists) – something that had been abolished, to the relief of Russian wives and mothers, after the country withdrew from Afghanistan. Two of the decree’s six paragraphs were classified as secret, suggesting they might shed light on whether reservists should expect to be sent to Chechnya. A few days later, Putin issued an order granting forty government ministers and other officials to classify information as secret, in direct violation of the constitution. He also re-established mandatory military training in secondary schools, both public and private; this subject, which for boys involved taking apart, cleaning, and putting back together a Kalashnikov, had been abolished during perestroika. In all, six of the eleven decrees Putin issued in his first two months as acting president concerning the military. On January 27 [Prime Minister] Kasyanov announced that defense spending would be increased by 50 percent – this in a country that was still failing to meet its international debt obligations and was seeing most of its population sink further and further into poverty...”¹¹¹³

Such an order could only mean one thing: that, having returned to power, the KGB was returning to the perennial expansionist goals of Soviet politics. Of course, Russia in 2000 was incomparably weaker than it had been even as recently as 1990. But the train was now back on the rails leading to the same goals as Lenin and Stalin had put before themselves. Evidence of this are the vast sums of money spent on former vassals or allies of the Soviet Union in the Third World who still received hand-outs in Putin’s reign. Thus from 2000 to 2018 \$140 billion dollars’ of debts were written off to such countries as Vietnam, North Korea, Mongolia and Cuba.¹¹¹⁴

¹¹¹² Sixsmith, *The Litvinenko File*, London: Macmillan, 2007, p. 302.

¹¹¹³ Gessen, *The Man without a Face. The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*, London: Granta, 2013, pp. 153-154.

¹¹¹⁴ Alena Blinova, Facebook, February 21, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=541067356273500&set=a.407996966247207.1073741830.100011107219308&type=3&theater>

It goes without saying that old friends still stuck in the old Marxist ways were not deprived of this largesse. So Zyuganov's Russian Communist Party, as well as Zhirinovskiy's nationalist "Liberal Democrats", were given cosy and honoured places in the new order - so long as they did not present a serious threat to Putin's "One Russia", but remained a loyal (extremely loyal) "opposition". (In fact, these opposition parties have been extremely useful to Putin. The Communists have kept the poor old pensioners onside, while Zhirinovskiy has been used to air outrageous opinions and policies which Putin adheres to but which he does not want to espouse publicly.)

Putin has clearly not renounced Communism, although he cannot be seen to be over-committed to such an old-fashioned ideology. As he said in 2016 to the Pan-Russian People's Front: "You know that like millions of Soviet citizens - over 20 million - I used to be a member of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), and not just a regular member: for almost 20 years I worked for the organization called the Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union [KGB]. This organization derives from the Cheka, which was then called the armed unit of the Party. If for some reason a person left the Communist Party, they were immediately fired from the KGB. I did not join the party simply because I had to, though I cannot say I was such a dedicated communist, but I treated this with great care. As opposed to numerous party functionaries, I was not one of them; I was a rank-and-file member. As opposed to many functionaries, I did not trash my membership card, I did not burn it. I would not want to criticize anyone now - people had different motives and this is their own business. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union fell apart; my membership card is still out there somewhere.

"I have always liked communist and socialist ideas. If we consider the Code of the Builder of Communism that was widely published in the Soviet Union, it strongly resembles the Bible. This is not a joke; it was actually an excerpt from the Bible. It spoke of good things: equality, fraternity, happiness. However, the practical implementation of these ideals in this country had little in common with what the utopian socialists Saint-Simon or Owen spoke about. This country had little resemblance to their City of the Sun."

Clearly, Putin has little idea of what Christianity or the Bible really teaches. He needs his Orthodox electorate, so he goes through the motions of being a Christian. But he also needs to hang on to his Communist electorate; so Lenin remains in his mausoleum as witness to the fact that God's curse still hangs over Russia...

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On September 11, 2001, the Twin Trade Towers in New York were destroyed by Muslim suicide bombers. This day - the feast/fast of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist, the prophet of repentance in the Orthodox Church - was a last warning call for the western world, of which Putin's Russia was now definitely a part. It was certainly a warning call for Russia, which had accumulated massive sins in the previous century.

The century began promisingly with the martyrdom of 222 Chinese Orthodox Christians from the Russian Spiritual Mission in Peking, the capital of the world's last pagan empire. But by century's end, in the wake of the Russian revolution, the greatest spiritual and geopolitical tragedy of the last one thousand years, not only this Mission, but all the Missions of the Russian Church, and even the heartland of Russia herself had been laid waste and defiled. In fact, without the protection of the Russian empire, the Local Orthodox Churches all fell into Sergianism and/or Ecumenism, "the heresy of heresies", and became slaves of the rulers of this world: New Zion had all but been turned into Babylon... Meanwhile, "the mystery of iniquity" let loose by the Russian revolution has spread throughout the world, killing hundreds of millions of souls and bodies...

A faithful remnant has survived. Thus in May, 2004 the True Orthodox Church of Russia, the last canonical successor of both the Catacomb Church and ROCOR, issued a courageous condemnation of Putin's policies. And in its Odessa Sobor in 2008 it issued the best statement of the True Orthodox Faith. However, other ecclesiastical bodies calling themselves "True Orthodox" have arisen, confusing the faithful; and there is no denying that the faithful remnant is small and divided. It truly requires faith to see in it the Ark of Salvation, the Israel of God, "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3.15). And yet in this very pitifulness of God's Church is contained perhaps the most important lesson that we can derive from this story: that we must not put our trust in appearances and in the strength of man, that "cursed is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord" (Jeremiah 17.5), and that "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (I Corinthians 12.9).. We must not be deceived by beautiful churches and overflowing congregations, nor even by ascetic feats and miracles. For where the faith is defiled, everything is defiled. But the true Church, being the Bride of Christ, remains immaculate ...

Instead, we must search with the eyes of faith sharpened by love to find David and all his meekness amidst the phoney majesty of his taller and more handsome brothers. However weak and small the external appearance of the True Church, it is in her alone that the True Faith abides; in her alone is the Power and the Wisdom of God. "Fear not, *little flock,*" said the Lord, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12.32)... Which brings us to the second lesson we can derive from this history of twentieth-century Orthodoxy: that God's power is made perfect in weakness (II Corinthians 12.9). That is why the greatest saints and wonderworkers of the twentieth century, such as St. John Maximovich, have been found precisely in the small, weak flock of the True Orthodox Church that has cut itself off from the apostasy of the far larger flock of World Orthodoxy...

Sooner or later, God's justice will descend upon His Church for the sins of many generations. On the world, too, of course - but first of all on the Church, which is that salt that keeps the world from total corruption (Matthew 5.13). For "judgement begins at the house of God, and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?" (I Peter 4.17) - who now, tragically, include the vast majority even of those living in traditionally Christian countries.

The twentieth century has been the era of God's judgement on His Church for all the accumulated historical sins of the earlier "Sardian" period of Church history that began with the Fall of Constantinople, the New Rome, in 1453, and ended with the Fall of Moscow, the Third Rome, in 1917.

At the beginning of the century a truly righteous man, Tsar Nicholas II, ruled the Orthodox commonwealth of nations. But neither he nor the whole panoply of holiness that was concealed within the Church at that time – a holiness that was to be revealed especially in the great choir of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia – could prevent the just execution of God's sentence on the His inheritance. For as the Prophetess Hulda said to the emissaries of the righteous King Josiah of Judah, who had already initiated a programme of religious restoration: "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book they have read before the king of Judah, because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out in this place, and not be quenched...'" (II Chronicles 34.24-25).

King Josiah was granted to die before the execution of God's judgement on ancient Israel. Tsar Nicholas, being a still greater man, was granted to share in the sufferings of his people, the new Israel, in order to expiate both his sins and theirs by sharing in the sufferings of Christ. By century's end, after decades in which even church leaders called him "bloody Nicholas", the Tsar-Martyr has finally been generally recognized for who he was and is. It is this veneration, together with that of all the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, the great glory of the twentieth century, and the prophecies of the coming of a truly Orthodox Tsar, that give hope of a resurrection of Orthodoxy in the twenty-first century...

The axe of retribution fell first in the inter-war years, when the greatest persecution in the history of Christianity fell upon Russia. Nor did it end there: the communist scourge spread after the Second World War to all the Orthodox countries of Eastern Europe except Greece. And even after the end of the Cold War and the apparent fall of communism, heresy has continued to ravage the already severely weakened organism of the Orthodox Church. Ecumenism, Sergianism, Darwinism, Nationalism, Democratism and other new heresies such as Romanideanism and Name-Worshipping have swept through the Local Orthodox Churches, cutting down their numbers even as the external appearance of Orthodoxy has become familiar throughout the world.

It is as if the Heavenly Vinedresser, determined to eliminate the last trace of disease, has been pruning the Vine to such an extent that there are no branches left, only a tiny root half hidden in the earth. But to the eye of faith that root is indestructible: "On this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against Her" (Matthew 16.18). And from that root, as from the rod of Jesse, a flower will yet spring forth that will fill the whole world with its fragrance...

Glory to God for all things!

