

THE BATTLE FOR THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

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FOREWORD

This book is a collection of articles written during the last twenty years on the crisis enveloping the Russian Orthodox Church. As the Soviet Union began to collapse in 1989-1990, its faithful ecclesiastical slave, the Sovietised Moscow Patriarchate (MP), also began to break up. The Catacomb or True Orthodox Church, which had always refused to recognise Soviet power or its "Soviet church", emerged from the underground, and the Russian Church Abroad (ROCORA) created parishes on Russian soil into which both "catacombniks" and former members of the patriarchate entered. It was a time of great hope for the resurrection of Russian Orthodoxy. Tragically, those hopes have not been fulfilled. From the mid-1990s, and especially since KGB colonel Putin's arrival at the height of power in 2000, the MP has recovered its position in society while its opponents have warred amongst themselves and fragmented. Most recently, the Russian Church Abroad led by Metropolitan Laurus has joined the MP, thereby betraying the Orthodox Faith and the ecclesiastical course of the Russian Church Abroad throughout its history. These essays reflect that process by one who participated in it both inside and outside Russia.

Since writing these essays, I have changed my attitude towards some of the church figures mentioned in them. However, I have decided to make only minor editorial changes to the texts, insofar as I believe the arguments set out in them remain valid.

Although the picture here drawn may be depressing, the purpose of this book is constructive. It is hoped and believed that by studying the history of the last eighteen years, we, the True Orthodox Christians of Russia may repent of our sins and learn from our mistakes and unite again on a firm basis of faith and love. Then, through the prayers of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors, Holy Russia will rise again from the ashes of the present neo-Soviet catastrophe, to the glory of Christ and the salvation of very many throughout the world!

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1. WHERE IS THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE GOING?

Can two walk together if they are not in agreement with each other?
Amos 3.3.

Forty years ago, the well-known scientist and theologian, Professor Ivan Andreyev, who had been a confessor of the faith in the Solovki camps, posed the question: does the Moscow Patriarchate have grace – that is, the grace of true and valid sacraments? After a thorough examination of the question from a dogmatical and canonical point of view, he gave a clear and categorical reply: no.¹ It goes without saying that the majority of Russian Orthodox Christians today do not agree with this judgement. However, many believers, especially from the intelligentsia, now agree that during the Stalin period the Moscow Patriarchate underwent a very serious fall, a sickness close to death, from which it must recover if the Russian Church is destined to survive. The aim of this article is to pose the question: has anything changed in the last 40 years that would force us to return again to the question of the status of the Moscow Patriarchate. In other words: has the Moscow Patriarchate recovered from its fall, is it beginning to get better, or is this sickness incurable?

Let us look at Andreyev's main argument. In 1927 the Moscow Patriarchate under the leadership of Metropolitan Sergius declared that the joys of the Soviet government are the joys of the Church, and its failures – the failures of the Church, and entered into a pact with the government, condemning and persecuting all those who refused to recognize Sergius and his declaration. In the opinion of Andreyev, this was the sin of Judas who betrayed Christ, in the given instance the betrayal of His Body on earth, the Church, into the hands of His worst enemies. This sin, in the words of Hieromartyr Victor, Bishop of Glazov, was “worse than heresy”; it was complete apostasy. Moreover, sin his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon had anathematised the Soviet government in 1918, the Moscow Patriarchate was now bound by this anathema; for the text of the anathema clearly forbade the children of the Church from having anything to do with the condemned government.

It is necessary to emphasise that this opinion was shared by almost all the leaders of the Russian Church who rejected the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. Thus on July 22, 1928 (Old Calendar), Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev declared that the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate were apostates and had to be submitted to the same canonical punishments as the apostates of ancient times, the libellatici – that is, fifteen years' deprivation of communion after their repentance and return to the Church. Within Russia,

¹ English translation: I.M. Andreyev, *Is Grace Present in the Soviet Church?* Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000.

one of the leaders of the Catacomb Church who admitted that the sergianist church might still have grace was Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan: "The sacraments performed by the sergianists who have been correctly ordained are undoubtedly saving sacraments for those who receive them with faith and simplicity, without reasonings and doubts about their validity, and who even do not suspect anything wrong in the sergianist organization of the Church." But at the same time Cyril pointed out that "they serve for the condemnation of those who perform them and of those who approach them well understanding the unrighteousness existing in sergianism and who by their non-resistance to it reveal a criminal indifference to the mocking of the Church. That is why it is necessary for an Orthodox bishop or priest to refrain from communion with the sergianists in prayer. The same necessity exists for those laymen who have a conscious attitude towards all the details of Church life."²

Four main changes have taken place since that time. First, the attitude of most of the foreign Orthodox Churches has changed towards the Moscow Patriarchate. This was noticeable already in 1945, when representatives of other foreign Churches were present at the enthronement of Patriarch Alexis.

The question is: did these foreign hierarchs sanctify the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate by their presence, or, on the contrary, were they defiled by it? The Apostle Paul says: "Do not become a participant in the sins of others; keep yourself in purity" (I Timothy 5.22). In 1945 the other foreign Churches became participants in the sins of the Moscow Patriarchate. One should not forget that in 1923 the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate entered into communion with the "Living Church", which had been anathematised by Patriarch Tikhon. This communion did not sanctify the "Living Church", but only condemned the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate.

One must also not forget how Stalin rewarded the patriarchs who supported the Moscow Patriarchate in 1945. As V. Alexeyev informs us on the pages of the journal of the Central Committee of the CPSS, *Agitator* (№ 10, 1989): "The order was given to hand over 42 objects from the vaults of the Moscow museums and 28 from the Zagorsk state museum, mainly objects of Orthodox worship, which were used as gifts to the Eastern Patriarchs... Thus, for example, Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria was given a golden panagia with precious stones, a gold cross with precious stones, a full set of hierarchical vestments of gold brocade, a mitre with precious stones... Naturally, a response was expected from the patriarchs, and they did not tarry to express the main thing – eulogies... Patriarch Christopher of Alexandria said: 'Marshall Stalin... under whose leadership military operations are being conducted on an unprecedented scale, is aided in his task by an abundance of Divine grace and blessing...'"

² L. Regelson, *Tragedia Russkoj Tserkvi 1917-1945*, Paris, 1977, p. 495.

Secondly, the Catacomb Church, which was flourishing during the 1930s and during the war, has suffered serious losses. Catacomb bishops in the camps had to choose: either accept Patriarch Alexis or be executed. Unfortunately, some of them chose the easier path. Since then, although the Catacomb Church has continued to exist³, her influence on the broad masses of people has been limited.

Of course, this does not justify the Moscow Patriarchate. Even if every single true bishop in the Soviet Union were to die or be killed, this would not make apostates into Orthodox. St. Seraphim of Sarov prophesied that the bishops of the Russian Church would depart from the true faith; he said that he had prayed fervently for them for several days, but the Lord had refused to have mercy on them. This prophecy is printed in the Divine service books of the Moscow Patriarchate like the writing on the wall of the palace of the Babylonian King Balthasar (Daniel 5). Before the revolution St. John of Kronstadt said that it was quite possible that the whole of the Russian Church would fall away from the truth. This had happened to such famous Churches as the Roman and Carthaginian, and it could happen again in Russia. The Lord said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church (Matthew 16.18). But He did not say where, or in what country. "The Spirit breathes where It wants, and you hear Its voice, and do not know where it is coming from or where it is going" (John 3.8). Grace can leave us easily and very quickly. In the early Church a bishop was thought to lose grace if he simply handed over the books of the Church to the persecutors of the Church. And in the Greek Church under the Turkish yoke many Christians sought martyrdom in order to wipe out the sin of their youth, when they had been forced to accept Islam and thereby fell away from the faith.

Thirdly, since 1960 the Moscow Patriarchate has joined the ecumenical movement and now de facto recognizes the mysteries of all the heretical churches that are living parts of the ecumenical movement and the World Council of Churches: that is, the Monophysite churches in the East, and the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. True, the Moscow Patriarchate sometimes criticizes the Protestant formulations of the WCC; but this does not prevent her representatives from praying with Protestants, and the Protestant Pastor Billy Graham was invited to preach in an Orthodox cathedral in Moscow. The Moscow Patriarchate has deliberately not followed the recent decision of the Jerusalem Patriarchate to stop these ecumenical activities.⁴

Recently the ecumenical movement entered a new phase of "super-ecumenism", in which it seeks closer links with non-Christian religions. And the Moscow Patriarchate had accepted this form of ecumenism also. Thus

³ In fact, there were still fair numbers of Catacomb priests, and a few bishops, until the 1970s. However, by the time of the writing of this article, in 1990, their numbers had dwindled.

⁴ Archbishop Cyril of Smolensk, "Vremia dejstvovat'", *Moskovskij Tserkovnij Vestnik*, № 17, December, 1989, p. 3.

Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev was present at the “prayers for peace” in Assisi, Italy in 1986 at which were present not only the Pope of Rome and the Anglican Primate, but also the Dalai Lama (who considers himself a god) and North American worshippers of the snake. Again, Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk, the head of the publications department of the Moscow Patriarchate, has recently made the following sensational declaration on Soviet television: “When I shall have my own publishing press, I shall publish the Koran according to the most ancient manuscripts belonging to the disciples of the Prophet Mohammed, and I shall give it to the Soviet Muslims.” One should note that the publications department of the Moscow Patriarchate has not published a single Orthodox catechism or theological textbook for mass consumption in the whole history of its existence.⁵

The apostolic canons threaten a bishop or priest who prays with heretics or who recognizes their sacraments (not to speak of the ‘sacred writings’ of the non-Christian religions) with defrockment. Moreover, ecumenism has been condemned by the Fathers of Holy Athos, the True Orthodox Church of Greece and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. This means that if until 1960 the Moscow Patriarchate was a schismatic and apostate organization, now it is also heretical.

Fourthly, the Soviet government has changed its position of open hatred for the Church for a neutral position – although, in the opinion of many, this change is temporary and superficial. However, the question arises: how can a political change influence the status of a Church in the eyes of God? If the Moscow Patriarchate before Gorbachev was an apostate and heretical organization, then the coming to power of such a liberal as Gorbachev has changed the situation only in one respect: for the apostate organization it has become easier and less dangerous to repent. If, however, repentance is not forthcoming, this deprives the Moscow Patriarchate of its last possible excuse. For in essence political changes have nothing to do with Church matters; they only change the external framework within which the living, internal battle between truth and falsehood, righteousness and sin, is carried on.

But the patriarchate, someone may object, is not made up only of hierarchs. There are also the priests and laity, who are against the cowardly politics of the bishops, who have expressed themselves against the subjection of the Church to the God-fighting state, and who have been imprisoned for their faith – for example, Fr. Gleb Yakunin and the philosopher Boris Talantov, who called the patriarchate “an agent of worldwide antichristianity”. Can one condemn the patriarchate as a whole if amongst its members there are such undoubtedly courageous people?

It is not our business to condemn persons. Our business is only to determine where the True Church is. And in order to answer this question,

⁵ *Vestnik Informatsionnogo Tsentra*, № 31, September 26, 1989, pp. 203.

we have to ask: can a priest or layman be Orthodox while his bishop is a heretic? The unambiguous reply of Church consciousness is: no. We Christians are rational sheep, and our duty is to use our reason in order to determine whether our pastor is a true pastor or a hireling, or something still worse – a wolf in a shepherd's clothing. In the words of the Lord, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow after Me" (John 10.37). But those who follow after apostates will be devoured by wolves.

The Church is the Body of Christ, and the eyes of the body, according to St. Gregory the Theologian, are the bishops. If the eyes are in darkness, as the Lord says, "then the whole body will be in darkness" (Matthew 6.23; Luke 11.34). Therefore if, in the words of the Lord, "thine eye offends thee", - that is, if your bishop is a heretic, "pull it out and cast it away" (Matthew 18.9).

St. Basil the Great says that it is better not to have a bishop than to have a false one. Why? Because, as St. John Chrysostom says, he who communes with one who has been excommunicated from the Church is himself excommunicated; and as Saints John of Damascus and Theodore the Studite say, those in communion with heretics are themselves heretics, even they personally do not agree with their heretical leaders. This follows from the integral character of the Church in which we all – bishops, priests and laity – have the right and duty to check out the genuineness of our bishops' confession of faith.

This was the teaching of the Eastern Patriarchs in their Epistle of 1848, which was directly mainly against the Roman Catholic teaching. For according to Catholicism, all power and responsibility rests only on the Pope, who must therefore be infallible, otherwise the whole Church would fall together with him. But in Orthodoxy there are no infallible bishops, just as there are no irresponsible priests or laity.

It follows that Zoya Krakhmalnikova is wrong when she writes: "We are not responsible for Sergius' declaration, for there is no collective guarantee in the Church".⁶ There is a collective guarantee in the Church, which is called *love*. Love is the blood of the Body of Christ which circulates throughout the body "that there should be no divisions in the body, but that all the members of it should have the same care for each other. Therefore if one member suffers, all the members suffer with him: if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with him. And you are the Body of Christ and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12.25-27).

Therefore if a bishop is a heretic, the priest who represents him during the Divine Liturgy confesses heresy, and the laity who commune enter into communion with heresy. In such a situation the Canons of the Church say that every Christian can break communion with the heretic even before a

⁶ "Once more on the bitter fruits of the sweet captivity", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 17, 1989, p. 5.

Synod of bishops has condemned him (15th Canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople, 861). For the Lord says: "If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into a pit" (Matthew 15.14). And St. John the Apostle writes in his second Epistle (2.20): "You have an anointing from the Holy One and you all have knowledge." If we all have knowledge, we all bear responsibility, and will answer for how we have used that knowledge at the Terrible Judgement.

But the Moscow Patriarchate has replaced this teaching on the Church with a purely Roman Catholic teaching. As Sergius Ventsel writes: "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.

"The place of the Council in his structure of the Church 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 came to 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."⁷

One can often hear another argument. Let us concede that our hierarchs are apostates. Nevertheless, we must not break communion with them for the sake of the unity of the Church and the unity of the Russian land. But we must remember that the unity of the Russian Church was destroyed already in 1927 by Metropolitan Sergius and his Moscow Patriarchate, which strengthened this satanic deed by betrayal and the shedding of the blood of the best representatives of the Russian land. For, as Sergius Ventsel writes, "by the hands of the same Metropolitan Sergius the truly free and canonical Catacomb Church, which was close to victory over the beast, was almost destroyed and deprived of the possibility of witnessing."⁸ Therefore we have to ask ourselves the question: is it possible to preserve the unity of the Church through unity with the destroyers of that unity? What kind of unity would that be?

Not every kind of unity, says St. Gregory the Theologian, is a good unity. There is the unity of thieves and murderers. And the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad recently declared that the strength of the Church does not consist in it's the integrity of its external organization, but in the unity in faith and love of her devoted children.

So what does the unity of the Moscow Patriarchate mean, and on what is it based? This false unity is based on a lie – the most terrible lie about the good of communism, on the non-existence of persecutions, on the so-called political crimes of the martyrs of Christ, and on fear – that is, the fear to remain alone, in the desert, without support from the authorities of this world. But the Apostle says: "God has not given us a spirit of fear" (II Timothy 1.7). And now in the Ukraine, the former bastion of the Moscow Patriarchate, this false unity, strengthened not be the grace of God but by the weapons of the antichristian government, is falling apart with amazing swiftness. For, as the Lord says, "every city or house that is divided within itself will not stand" (Matthew 12.25).

Let us return to the words of the Apostle: God gave us "the spirit not of fear, but of strength, of love and of chastity". In fact, the strength of one man in the truth is very great. St. Maximus the Confessor was a simple monk, but he said: "Even if the whole world enters into communion with the heretical patriarch, I will never do so." And several years later, the Orthodox world,

⁷ Polosin (Sergius Ventsel), "Razmyshlenia o Teokratii v Rossii", *Vestnik Khristianskogo Informatsionnogo Tsentra*, № 48, November 24, 1989, pp. 11-12.

⁸ Polosin, op. cit., p. 11.

which almost completely fallen into the heresy of Monothelitism, recognized that St. Maximus had been right. One more example: in 1439 all the Orthodox hierarchs signed a unia with Rome at the false council of Florence – except for one, St. Mark, Metropolitan of Ephesus. When the Pope heard that St. Mark had not signed the unia, he said: “In that case we have achieved nothing.” And indeed, when the apostate hierarchs returned home, the people rejected them, so great was the authority of St. Mark. The Russian people also rejected the leader of their Church and their representative at the false council, Metropolitan Isidore, who later became a cardinal in Rome. For “there is no insufficiency in the guard of the Lord, and with it there is no need to seek help” (Sirach 40.27).

God has given us “the spirit of love”. But what does true love mean? Love, according to the word of God, signifies the keeping and carrying out of the commandments of Christ (Wisdom 6.17; John 14.23; II John 6). St. Photius the Great says that the greatest act of love is the confession of the truth. Only he loves who is in the truth.

But love which consists in hiding the truth from each other is not love, but in the best case sentimentality, and in the worst – cowardice and cruelty. St. Paul says that even if we give all our property to the poor and our bodies to be burned, but do not have true love, then all our efforts are in vain (I Corinthians 13). For an external act of self-sacrifice and heroism can conceal an inner lie. St. John Chrysostom says that even the blood of martyrdom cannot wash out the sin of schism from the True Church, which is the sin against love.⁹ The Moscow Patriarchate is in schism. Her hierarchs have broken all ties of love with their brothers who departed into the catacombs, with their brothers who were forced to emigrate, with Saints Vladimir and Olga and Sergius of Radonezh, who created the unity of the Russian land, with Saints Alexander Nevsky, Jonah and Hermogen, who defended the Russian land against heresy, and with Saints Seraphim of Sarov, John of Kronstadt and Tikhon of Moscow, who clearly called the Soviet government antichristian.

The Holy Scriptures teach us that we are saved through faith, but that “faith without works is dead” (James 2.17). What is the first, most basic work of faith? Let Abraham, “the father of the faithful”, show us: “And the Lord said to Abraham: Depart from thy land, and thy kindred and the house of thy father, and to the land which I will show thee... And Abraham went, as the Lord told him” (Genesis 12.1, 4). In other words, the first work of faith is obedience to the command of God to leave one’s country, Babylon, the community of the apostates. Abraham was not shown where he had to go. But God had prepared for him not only the promised land, but also a priest, Melchizedek, who was higher than all the priests of the Old Testament, and descendants who would number Christ Himself, the incarnate Son of God.

⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians* 4.4.

God calls us, too, to leave the “spiritual Babylon”, the community of the apostates, leave the whore, that is, the false church which sits on the red beast, that is, communism, drinking “the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses of Jesus” (Revelation 17.6). Then God will receive us. For “come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you” (II Corinthians 6.17). And again: “Come out from her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins” (Revelation 18.4). “Let us go forth therefore unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but seek one to come” (Hebrews 13.13, 14).

Moscow.

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Sunday of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

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2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CATACOMB CHURCH IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

Elder Ambrose of Optina once wrote that when the Russian Empire fell the world would enter the last period of human history, the period described in symbolic form in the *Apocalypse (Revelation)* of St. John the Theologian. This was the period when the Church, like the woman clothed in the sun in the twelfth chapter of the *Apocalypse*, would flee into the wilderness, away from public view, and when the faithful Christians would pray in caves and dens of the earth, like the Catacomb Christians of Ancient Rome. This picture came true after the revolution of 1917.

As the Russian Church in Exile said in its Second Pan-Diaspora Council in Karlovtsy in 1938: "Since the epoch we have lived through was without doubt an epoch of apostasy, it goes without saying that for the true Church of Christ a period of life in the wilderness, of which the twelfth chapter of the *Revelation* of St. John speaks, is not, as some may believe, an episode connected exclusively with the last period in the history of mankind. History shows us that the Orthodox Church has withdrawn into the wilderness repeatedly, from whence the will of God called her back to the stage of history, where she once again assumed her role under more favourable circumstances. At the end of history the Church of God will go into the wilderness for the last time to receive Him, Who comes to judge the quick and the dead. Thus the twelfth chapter of Revelation must be understood not only in an eschatological sense, but in a historical and educational sense as well: it shows up the general and typical forms of Church life. If the Church of God is destined to live in the wilderness through the Providence of the Almighty Creator, the judgement of history, and the legislation of the proletarian state, it follows clearly that she must forego all attempts to reach a legalization, for every attempt to arrive at a legalization during the epoch of apostasy inescapably turns the Church into the great Babylonian whore of blasphemous atheism. The near future will confirm our opinion and prove that the time has come in which the welfare of the Church demands giving up all legalizations, even those of the parishes. We must follow the example of the Church prior to the Council of Nicaea, when the Christian communities were united not on the basis of the administrative institutions of the State, but through the Holy Spirit alone."¹⁰

Today, in 1996, we might be tempted to think that the catacomb phase of Church history is over. The Soviet Union has fallen, freedom and democracy reign, and the Catacomb Church herself is a small, divided remnant that must soon be swallowed up – so human wisdom tells us – in one or another above-ground jurisdiction. I believe that this judgement is wrong for two main reasons, one obvious and the other more profound.

¹⁰ Cited by A. Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960, p. 102.

The obvious reason is that militant anti-theism may return at any moment. It may come as a sudden, savage onslaught similar to that of 1917. Or it may come like the creeping bureaucratism of the European Union.¹¹ But in any case, as long as atheist, western modes of thought continue to dominate the world, the tendency for a secular state to take control of an ever-increasing proportion of our lives will remain. And for that reason the model of catacomb, anti-state Church life will remain relevant.

But there is another, still more important reason why we must study the experience and confession of the Catacomb Church, not as an historical relic, nor even as a mode of life which we may be forced to undertake again in the future, but as a matter of the greatest *contemporary* significance. And that is that *the whole tragedy of Russian Church life since the Civil War has consisted either in the tardy and reluctant acceptance of the necessity for a descent into the catacombs, or in the outright refusal to contemplate such a path.* It follows that if Russia is ever to recover from her present terrible spiritual and moral humiliation, the nature of this tragedy must be thoroughly understood and repented of.

The necessity for the Russian Church to enter into a totally uncompromising struggle with the new state order (more precisely: *anarchy*), and therefore to descend into the catacombs if that state order did not yield its position, was proclaimed *and commanded* at the very highest level, by the Local Council of the Russian Church held in Moscow in 1917-18.

Thus on January 19, 1918, his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon issued his famous anathema against the Bolsheviks, in which he said: "I adjure all of you who are faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ *not to commune with such outcasts of the human race in any way whatsoever*; 'cast out the wicked from among you' (I Corinthians 5.13)."

There has been much argument over the true significance of this anathema. Thus it has been argued that this decree did not anathematise Soviet power as such, but only those people who were creating disturbances and committing sacrilege against the Church in various parts of the country. However, this argument fails to take into account several facts. First, the patriarch himself, in his declarations of June 3/16 and June 18 / July 1, 1923, repented precisely of his "anathematisation of Soviet power".¹² Secondly, even if the decree had not formally anathematised Soviet power as such, since Soviet power sanctioned and initiated the acts of violence and sacrilege, the faithful were in effect being exhorted to have nothing to do with it. And thirdly, when the decree came to be read out at the Council three days later, it was enthusiastically

¹¹ V. Moss, "The European Union – a new Totalitarianism?", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 45, № 2, March-April, 1995; reprinted in Russian in *Pravoslavnaia Tver'*, №№ 5-6, May-June, 1995.

¹² M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994, pp. 280, 286.

endorsed by it in terms which leave no doubt but that the Council understood the Patriarch to have anathematised precisely Soviet power.

This endorsement by the Council had even more authority than the Patriarch's anathema, and quite clearly ordered the faithful to take the most hostile attitude possible to the Bolsheviks: "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 anathematised 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."¹³

Now although it was unprecedented for a Local Church to anathematise and in effect declare war against a government in this way, 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. This and other examples show that, while *the principle of authority as such* is from God (Romans 13.1), individual authorities are sometimes not from God, but are only *allowed* by Him, in which case the Church must offer resistance to them out of loyalty to God Himself.¹⁴

¹³ "Iz sobrania Tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Oktyabr'skoj revoliutsii: listovka bez vykhodnykh dannikh, pod № 1011", *Nauka i Religia*, 1989, № 4 ®; partly translated in Gustavson, op. cit., 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" (*Deyania Sobora*, vol. 6, p. 40).

¹⁴ V.A. Konovalov, *Otnoshenie Khristianstva k sovetskoj vlasti*, Montreal, 1936, p. 35.

The Council's completely uncompromising attitude towards Soviet power was again revealed on January 20, the day after the patriarch's anathema, when the Bolsheviks issued their "Decree on the Freedom of Conscience". This was the Bolsheviks' fiercest attack yet on the integrity of the Church; for it forbade religious bodies from owning property, from levying dues, from organizing into hierarchical organizations, and from teaching religion to persons under 18 years of age. Thus, far from being a measure *for* freedom of conscience, it was, as the Council said, a decree on freedom *from* conscience, and an excuse for large-scale pillaging of churches and murders, often in the most bestial manner.¹⁵ "Under the guise of taking over the Church's property," declared the Council, the decree "aims to destroy the very possibility of Divine worship and ministration." Therefore "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.*"

Now it is a striking fact that these powerful and authoritative words, pronounced at the highest level of Church government, *were never repeated or echoed in official Russian Church life again* – although, as we all know, the savagery of the Soviets not only did not decrease but reached unheard-of proportions. The only significant exception to this statement must be considered the Council of the Russian Church in Exile in Karlovtsy, Serbia, in 1921, which, following the defeat of the Whites in the Civil War, called for an armed crusade against Soviet Russia. The decisions of this Karlovtsy Council have often been reviled by the Moscow Patriarchate as irresponsible politicising; but it must be admitted that they were closer to both the letter and the spirit of the January, 1918 decisions of the Moscow Council than those of any subsequent above-ground Council in Russia.

For the bitter fact is that, from about the beginning of 1922, the Church inside Russia began to negotiate with Soviet power, attempting to win concessions from the anathematised authorities on the basis of precisely that decree on freedom of conscience whose application the Council of 1917-18 had declared to be *irreconcilable with membership of the Orthodox Church!* In fact, the concessions won by the Church were negligible, while the concessions she made to the Bolsheviks were, as we shall see, major and very damaging. They delayed but did not prevent the Church's eventual descent into the catacombs after Metropolitan Sergius' notorious declaration of 1927; and they made that descent more difficult and more costly than it would otherwise have been.

It is necessary at this point to reject the possible charge that, by accusing the Church of having made harmful concessions even before 1927, we are in

¹⁵ Professor Ivan Andreyev, "The Catacomb Church in the Soviet Union", *Orthodox Life*, March-April, 1951. For details of this persecution, see Vladimir Rusak, *Pir Satany*, London, Canada: Zarya, 1991.

effect casting stones at the radiant image of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa and the other Church leaders who supported their general church policy. However, this is not the case at all. First, whatever harmful concessions Patriarch Tikhon, for example, may have made, no one has ever doubted that he made them, not out of motives of personal fear or gain, but in great torment of spirit and for the sake of what he perceived to be the interest of the Church as a whole. Moreover, the fact that he had a martyric end – he was poisoned, according to the witness of his cell-attendant¹⁶ – shows that the Lord counted him worthy of glory, whatever his mistakes. Secondly, while all concessions which bring damage to the Church must be condemned, they are not all of the same order or magnitude. Although Patriarch Tikhon negotiated with Soviet power and made damaging concessions to it, he never, unlike Metropolitan Sergius, denounced his fellow Christians as “counter-revolutionaries”, thereby sending them to certain death; nor did he commemorate Soviet power at the Divine Liturgy, as Sergius did. And thirdly, we must take note of the attitude of those members of the Church hierarchy, such as the future Catacomb Hieromartyrs Archbishop Theodore (Pozdeyevsky) of Volokolamsk and Bishop Mark (Novoselov) of Sergiev Posad, who, while criticising and opposing the Patriarch’s concessions, did not break communion with him – but did break communion with Metropolitan Sergius.

Archbishop Theodore’s position was expressed by the future Archbishop Leontius of Chile as follows: “The whole Orthodox episcopate and people venerated him [Vladyka Theodore] for his principled, uncompromising and straight position in relation to Soviet power. He considered that until the Orthodox Church received the right to a truly free existence, there could be no negotiations with the Bolsheviks. The authorities were only deceiving them, they would fulfil none of their promises, but would, on the contrary, turn everything to the harm of the Church. Therefore it would be better for his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon to sit in prison and die there, than to conduct negotiations with the Bolsheviks, because concessions could lead, eventually, to the gradual liquidation of the Orthodox Church and would disturb everyone, both in Russia and, especially, abroad. [He said this] at a time when his Holiness the Patriarch had been released from prison. Archbishop Theodore honoured and pitied his Holiness, but was in opposition to him. In spite of the persistent request of his Holiness that he take part in the administration of the patriarchate, he refused.”¹⁷

¹⁶ The cell attendants’ testimony is in Archpriest Michael Polsky, *The New Martyrs of Russia*, Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2000, pp. 278-279.

¹⁷ “Vospominania, 1917-1940 gody”, in Nun Ioanna, “Zhizneopisanie arkhiepiskopa Volokolamskogo Feodora (Pozdeyevskogo), posledniago rektora Moskovskoj Dukhovnoj Akademii”, *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn’*, № 9 (549), September, 1995, p. 24.

Let us turn to one very instructive example of how damaging disobedience to the January, 1918 decisions of the Moscow Council could be – the famous affair of the requisitioning of church valuables by the Bolsheviks in 1922.

When the Bolsheviks demanded that the Church give up her valuables to a State commission so that they could be sold and the proceeds given to the starving in the Volga region, the Patriarch agreed on condition that those valuable did not include the most sacred vessels used in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Most commentators have interpreted this as a wise compromise on the part of the Patriarch. However, this was not the opinion of no less an authority than the holy Elder Nectarius of Optina, who said: “You see now, the patriarch gave the order to give up all valuables from the churches, but they belonged to the Church!”¹⁸

It is easy to see why the elder was right and the patriarch wrong in this matter. First, the money gained from the sale of the valuables did not go to feed the poor, but to promote the socialist revolution worldwide.¹⁹ Secondly, the patriarch’s decision placed the parish priests in the very difficult situation of having to choose between disobedience to the patriarch and cooperating in what many of them must have considered to be a near-sacrilegious stripping of the churches for the benefit of the Antichrist. And thirdly, the patriarch’s decision did not in any case prevent bloodshed, as he had hoped. Thus according to one estimate, 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.²⁰ In fact, the patriarch’s decision fell between two stools. It neither saved the lives of the starving, on the one hand, nor protected the churches from attack, on the other.

Soon after this, the patriarch made another disastrous concession: on April 22 / May 5, 1922, at the insistence of the Bolsheviks, he convened a meeting of the Holy Synod and the Higher Church Council, at which he declared (decree № 342) that “neither the epistle, nor the address of the Karlovtsy Synod [to the Genoa conference] express the voice of the Russian Church.” He ordered the dissolution of the Church in Exile’s Higher Church Administration and

¹⁸ Matushka Evgenia Rymarenko, “Remembrances of Optina Staretz Hieroschemamonk Nektary”, *Orthodox Life*, vol. 26, № 3, May-June, 1986, p. 39.

¹⁹ Thus Trotsky, who, in addition to being the head of the secret commission for the requisitioning of the valuables, also headed the commission for their monetary realization, wrote in a submission to a session of that commission 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 hurry as much as possible...” (Cited in “Mucheniki Shuiskie”, *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizhenia*, № 170, III-1994, p. 190.

²⁰ Gregory Ravich, “Ograblennij Khristos, ili brilliandy dlia diktatury proletariata”, *Chas-Pik*, № 18, p. 26. According to another estimate, the anti-Church campaign cost the lives of 28 bishops, 1,215 priests and over 8000 people altogether (Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*, London: Fontana Press, 1995, p. 355).

the transfer of all power over the Russian refugees in Europe to Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris.²¹ Although all the émigré hierarchs (*including* Metropolitan Eulogius) agreed that the decree was issued under duress and was therefore not binding²², it was later used by pro-Soviet hierarchs to cause serious divisions in the Russian Church in Exile.

Neither did the Bolsheviks show gratitude to the patriarch. Only a few days later, he was placed under house arrest, which gave the renovationist heretics the chance to seize control of the administrative machinery of the Church!

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Russian Church's annus horribilis of 1922 was the result of the Church leadership's decision to abandon the no-compromise position adopted at the 1917-18 Council and negotiate with the Soviets. Nothing was gained by it, and a great deal was lost. Moreover, once the renovationist schism came into being, the patriarch felt compelled to make even more compromises with the Soviets in order to defeat what he considered to be the more immediate threat of the Living Church. It all went to show that, as the English proverb puts it, "when you sup with the devil, you must use a very long spoon..."

So what was the alternative? Outright rejection of the Bolsheviks' demands, leading to a descent of the Russian Church into the catacombs as early as 1922? Was such an alternative practical?

Open opposition, to the extent of war, against the powers that be is not unheard of in Russian Church history. St. Sergius of Radonezh blessed a war of liberation against the Tatars in the fourteenth century, and St. Hermogenes, Patriarch of Moscow, called for another such war against the Polish occupiers of Moscow in 1611. And it was precisely to St. Hermogenes' example that Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), first hierarch of the Russian Church in Exile, had appealed at the Karlovtsky Council of 1921.

²¹ That this decision was indeed dictated by the Bolsheviks is proved by recent information, according to which, on April 20 / May 3, two days before the patriarch's decree, a secret meeting of the presidium of the GPU – Comrades Ushinsky, Menzhinsky, Yagoda, Samsonov and Krasikov – took place, at which 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" (*Istochnik*, № 3, 1995, p. 116).

²² Nor did the patriarch himself consider it binding, for in later acts he implicitly recognized the authority of the émigré Synod of Bishops. For example, he accepted the decision of the Synod to appoint Metropolitan Platon as ruling bishop of the Russian parishes in America. See 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).

However, "Patriarch" Alexis II of Moscow is not inspired by such examples. As he said in an interview, although Patriarch Tikhon "did not hide his sharply negative attitude towards the Bolshevik order," - unlike Alexis himself, who never hid his glowingly *positive* attitude towards it, declaring as late as July 17, 1990²³ that he was praying for the preservation of the Communist Party! - "he did not consider it possible to lead a 'crusade against communism'. Of the two evils - to declare war against the 'reds' and thereby submit the whole Orthodox flock to unavoidable devastation, or by the expression of formal loyalty to the State while preserving the purity of the faith to save that which still could be saved - he chose the lesser, that is, the second. The Church could not, did not have the right to, depart into the catacombs. She remained together with the people and drank the cup of suffering which fell to her lot to the dregs."²⁴

These words astound by their falsehood and hypocritical self-righteousness. Patriarch Tikhon did indeed choose what he saw as the lesser of two evils - a wrong choice, as is argued here, but one made from honourable motives, for the sake of his flock. And out of compassion and respect for him, who truly "drank the cup of suffering to the dregs", most of the people stayed with him - even those who, like Archbishop Theodore, disagreed with him.

But would the Patriarch have agreed that "the Church could not, did not have the right to, depart into the catacombs"? Certainly not! Indeed, in his *Life* of one of the first catacomb bishops, Hieromartyr Maximus of Serpukhov, Protopresbyter Michael Polsky writes: "His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon expressed to Vladyka Maximus (who was at that time simply a doctor) his tormented doubts about the benefit of further concessions to Soviet power. In making these concessions, he had with horror become more and more convinced that the limits of the 'political' demands of Soviet power lay beyond the bounds of faithfulness to Christ and the Church. Not long before his death, his Holiness the Patriarch expressed the thought that apparently the only way out for the Russian Orthodox Church to preserve her faithfulness to Christ would be to depart into the catacombs in the very near future..."²⁵

So "Patriarch" Alexis is contradicted by Patriarch Tikhon himself! Far from not having the "right" to depart into the catacombs, the patriarch considered that it would one day be the *duty* of the Church to do so. The only question was: when?

²³ The day of the commemoration of the Royal Martyrs!

²⁴ Quoted by Anatoly Krasikov, "Tretij Rim i bolsheviki (bez grifa 'sovershenno sekretno')", in S.V. Filatov (ed.), *Religia i Pravda Cheloveka*, Moscow: Nauka, 1996, p. 198.

²⁵ Polsky, *Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie*, Jordanville, 1949-57, vol. 2, p. 21.

Moreover, it was precisely to “remain together with the people” who themselves remained together with Christ, that it was necessary to depart into the catacombs. For when Metropolitan Sergius issued his notorious declaration in 1927, the people rejected it in droves. Thus 90% of the Urals parishes sent it back without an answer; and it is calculated that more than fifty bishops inside Russia, and thirty bishops abroad, refused to support Metropolitan Sergius.²⁶

And did the Soviet bishops “remain with the people”? Not at all! In relation to that large part of the people who remained faithful to the truth they acted as spies and informers. And in relation even to their own flock, they can hardly be said to have shared their sorrows to any significant extent – at least in the post-war period. Rather they lived with all the perks of Soviet functionaries – dachas, limousines, access to special stores obtained by their secret party cards – in a word, like those “princes” of which it is written: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom is no salvation” (Psalms 145.3).

This complete lack not only of solidarity (solidarnost'), but also of Orthodox Catholic conciliarity (sobornost') with the believing people is witnessed even from patriarchal sources. Thus according to Archimandrite Polycarp (Grishin), all the delegates of the Orel-Briansk diocese to the 1988 local council were imposed by the local bishop obedient to a list put forward by the Bolsheviks.²⁷ And at the same council Archbishop Chrysostom of Irkutsk said: “We hierarchs are perhaps the most rightless people in the Russian Orthodox Church. When they transfer us, no one asks us, Why and what for? But we act in the same way with our clergy. We are rightless before the Patriarch and the Holy Synod; they take no notice of us, and we act in the same way.”²⁸

Of course, we can only speculate what would have happened if the Russian Church had chosen to refuse any compromise with the Bolsheviks in 1922. Undoubtedly there would have been great suffering and many martyrdoms – which is what happened, in any case, and has not really ended even now. Quite possibly, a large proportion of the Church population would have fallen away – which is what happened, in any case, by falling into the renovationist and sergianist schisms. But it is also possible that the Bolsheviks, faced with a vast and determined church population united by a holy zeal behind their lawful patriarch, would have backed away from direct confrontation – and made concessions themselves, resulting eventually in the crumbling of their power. And even if the Bolsheviks had not backed down,

²⁶ *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'*, № 20 (1545), October 15/28, 1995, p. 14.

²⁷ Demetrius Kolesnichenko, “O rasprostraneni ereticheskikh i iazycheskikh uchenij sredi iskonno pravoslavnykh narodov SSSR”, *Svobodnaia Rossia*, № 3 (96), 17 July, 1990, p. 28.

²⁸ Valery Borshev, “Vozvraschenie dykhania”, in *Na puti k svobode sovesti*, Moscow: Progress, 1989, p. 283.

we know that by the power of faith the people of God have often “become mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight” (Hebrews 11.34). There is no reason why this could not have happened in the 1920s. And then how different would have been the history of the twentieth century!

However, God’s Providence uses even our sins and falls to accomplish His mysterious and perfect will. “The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble” (Proverbs 16.4). Evidently it was pleasing to Him to humble the Russian people still more for their sinfulness and lack of faith. And perhaps it was not the Lord’s will, as Catacomb Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene of Glukhov said in the 1930s, “that the Church should stand as an intermediary between Himself and the believers,” but that everyone should “stand directly for himself as it was with the forefathers”!²⁹ For this is the specific nature of Christian confession in the time of the Antichrist. And perhaps it is His will that now again, when the Russian Church and nation is incomparably weaker in human terms than it was in 1927 or 1922, *now* is the time to demonstrate that “some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God” (Psalms 19.7). For His strength is made perfect in weakness (II Corinthians 12.9).

But confession must be preceded by understanding; and if we are to make a good confession now, we must apply our understanding to the very beginning of the decline of the Russian Church from the glorious martyrdom of the Civil War years when the Church was united and defiant – that is, to the year 1922. That this year was indeed critical in the destinies of the Russian Church is indicated by a vision granted to a pious girl in 1917 and recounted by Elder Nectarius of Optina. In this vision the Apostle Peter asked the Lord Jesus Christ: “When will these torments end, O Lord?” And the Lord replied: “I will give the people until 1922: if they do not repent and come to their sense, then everyone will perish.”³⁰ 1922 did not mark the end of the Russian people’s sufferings, but rather of their intensification, being the year in which the first major schisms arose and the very name of Russia was swallowed up in that of the Soviet Union. And now, with a few exceptions, everyone is perishing....

The beginning of recovery, therefore, must consist in repentance for that failure to obey the commands of the Moscow Council of 1917-18, that failure to reject any communion whatsoever with the Soviet Antichrist, which began to show its disastrous fruits in 1922. For it was not only the Patriarch and the Church administration that failed then. If the people had resisted the patriarch as they had resisted his attempt to introduce the new calendar later, the disaster could have been avoided and the slide that ended with the sergianist apostasy could have been checked.

²⁹ E.L., *Episkopy-Ispovedniki*, San Francisco, 1971, p. 92.

³⁰ *Zhitia Prepodobnykh Startsev Optinoj Pustyni*, Jordanville, 1992, p. 361.

For if, as the True Church always believed, the Soviet regime was established, not by God, but by the devil (Revelation 13.2), then only outright condemnation of, and refusal to work with, the satanic regime could draw upon the people the blessing of God. For “what accord hath Christ with Belial? Or what hath a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (II Corinthians 6.15). Therefore, says the Apostle, “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them...” (Ephesians 5.11).

Thus the significance of the Catacomb Church for Russia and the world consists the fact that she shows to us the *normal*, and perhaps the only *spiritually safe* mode of existence for the Church in our apocalyptic times in which there are no more God-established Orthodox autocracies. Perhaps, through the prayers of the new martyrs of Russia, a God-protected Orthodox autocracy may one day be established again, as the prophecies indicate. But this can only be an exception to the basic trend, a brief oasis of calm in the swirling maelstrom of apostasy. In general, in the apocalyptic era we have entered since 1917, the Christian can expect no support from the powers that be, but must rather expect snares and temptations. And so, learning from the example of Patriarch Tikhon and the other Church leaders who had to encounter the first blast of the Antichrist’s assault, we must “flee to the mountains” and “not go down to take what is in the house” of what used to be our earthly homeland (Matthew 24.16-17). Confessing openly that we are “strangers and pilgrims” on this earth, we must “go forth to Him *outside* the camp, bearing His reproach...” (Hebrews 13.13).

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3. THE FREE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Short History (1982-1998)

Introduction

When the Soviet Union fell in 1991, the “second administration” of the Soviet government, the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate, continued to exist virtually unchanged, only changing its political orientation from pro-communist to pro-democratic. At this time the leadership of the healthy ecclesiastical forces opposed to the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) inside Russia was assumed by the Free Russian Orthodox Church (FROC). This article consists of a short history of the FROC and a canonical justification of its independent existence.

1. Origins

The origins of the FROC go back to January 5/18, 1981, when a priest of the Russian Catacomb Church, Fr. Lazarus (Zhurbenko), was secretly received into the West European diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva and Western Europe (ukaz no. 648/818/2). Shortly after this, in 1982, another cleric of the West European diocese, Fr. Barnabas (Prokofiev), was secretly consecrated as Bishop of Cannes and sent to Moscow, where he consecrated Fr. Lazarus to the episcopate. The candidacy of Fr. Lazarus had been put forward by the dissident MP priest, Fr. Demetrius Dudko, with whom Archbishop Anthony had entered into correspondence.³¹

On August 1/14, 1990, the Chancellery of ROCOR decided to throw some light on this secret consecration by issuing the following statement: “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 Abroad, secretly performed an episcopal consecration 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.”³²

³¹ This correspondence was published in the German Russian-language journal *Posev* (September, 1979, pp. 50-51) and was therefore well known to the KGB, who, it is argued, oversaw this whole process and “secret” consecration. Archbishop Anthony was the most liberal and pro-MP of the ROCA bishops at that time. His continued communion with ecumenists led to many communities in Western Europe leaving ROCOR, and to the break between ROCOR and the Matthewite Old Calendarists in 1976.

³² “Zaiavlenie Arkhiereiskago Sinoda Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 18 (1423), September 15/28, 1990, p. 6.

This was an ominous phrase: “so that... the Church life of the Catacomb Orthodox Church in Russia might be regulated”. No indication was given as to why the life of the Catacomb Church needed regulating from abroad, nor how it was proposed that this regulation should be accomplished (apart from the consecration of a hierarchy), nor whether the consent of the Catacomb Church to such a regulation had been sought or received, nor what canonical right ROCOR had to regulate the life of the Catacomb Church.³³

In fact the consent of the Catacomb Church, was neither asked nor given.³⁴

Be that as it may, ROCOR now had the beginnings of a secret hierarchy in the Soviet Union. This hierarchy began to act in the spring of 1990, when the first substantial signs of the collapse of Communism and a measure of ecclesiastical freedom were becoming evident. Thus Bishop Lazarus flew to New York, where his consecration was confirmed by the Synod of ROCOR; and believers throughout Russia became aware that ROCOR had entered into combat with the MP on Russian soil.

The first parish to leave the MP and officially join ROCOR was that of St. Constantine the Great in Suzdal, Vladimir province, whose pastor was Archimandrite Valentine (Rusantsov). 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 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

³³ In 1993 Bishop Lazarus’ clergy asked ROCOR: “We ask you to clearly answer the question: does ROCOR confess that the Catacomb Church is her sister, as she often did earlier, and if she does, then on what basis does ROCOR interfere in the inner affairs of the Catacomb Church?” (*Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 134). A good question, but one which should also have been posed to Bishop Lazarus himself, since his own consecration was the first concrete “interference” of ROCOR in the life of the Catacomb Church, and he could have refused to have anything to do with it.

³⁴ Matushka Anastasia Shatilova writes: “The ordination papers (including the certificate) for Archim. Lazarus Zhurbenko were signed by: Metropolitan Philaret, Archbishop Vitaly, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva (though whom the appeal was sent) and Bishop Gregory as Secretary to the Synod. The fifth person to know of this case was I, because I typed all the documentation” (personal communication, September 19 / October 3, 2000).

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 Nyetsvetayev, 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 Nyetsvetayev. 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 ROCOR."³⁵

On June 8/21, 1990, the feast of St. Theodore, the enlightener of Suzdal, the ROCOR hierarchs Mark of Berlin, Hilarion of Manhattan and Lazarus of Tambov celebrated the first hierarchical liturgy in the St. Constantine parish.³⁶ Then, in February, 1991 Archimandrite Valentine was consecrated as Bishop of Suzdal and Vladimir in Brussels by hierarchs of ROCOR. There now began a rapid growth in the number of parishes joining ROCOR on Russian soil, including many communities of the Catacomb Church. Most of these joined the Suzdal diocese under Bishop Valentine, but many also joined the Tambov diocese of Bishop Lazarus and the Kuban diocese of Bishop Benjamin. ROCOR inside Russia was now called the Free Russian Orthodox Church (FROC).

³⁵ "Vladyka Valentin raskazyvaet", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 17 (1446), September 1/14, 1991, pp. 9-10.

³⁶ Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky, "Torzhestva v Suzdale", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 15 (1420), August 1/14, 1990, p. 3.

2. First Signs of Division

Now where truth and Christian piety flourishes the devil is sure to interfere. And at this point he inspired certain hierarchs of ROCOR to hinder the work of the FROC hierarchs by a series of anti-canonical actions.

In 1991 the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR decided to organize church life in Russia on the principle of non-territoriality. 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."³⁷

This decision led to some conflicts between the FROC bishops, but not serious ones. However, it was a different matter when bishops from abroad began to interfere. As early as July, 1990 Archbishop Lazarus told the present writer that if Archbishop Mark of Germany continued to interfere in Russia he might be compelled to form an autonomous Church. And in the same month Archbishop Mark wrote a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly full of innuendos against Archimandrite Valentine. Nor did it stop there. He ordained a priest for St. Petersburg, a "Special German deanery" under the Monk Ambrose (von Sievers), who later founded his own Synod, and in general acted as if Russia were an extension of the German diocese.

In November, 1991 a correspondent of a church bulletin asked Bishop Valentine 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-hierarchy 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."³⁸

In 1992, however, Archbishop Mark's interference not only did not cease, but became more intense, and was now directed particularly against the most successful and prominent of the FROC hierarchs, Bishop Valentine. Thus

³⁷ "Vladyka Lazar otvechaet na voprosy redaktsii", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 22 (1451), November 15.28, 1991, p. 6.

³⁸ *Pruamoj Put'*, special issue; "Vladyka Valentin vernulsa iz Ameriki", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 3 (1456), February 1/14, 1992, p. 14. Italics mine (V.M.).

while calling for official negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate³⁹, Mark called on believers in a publicly distributed letter “to distance yourselves from Bishop Valentine of the Suzdal and Vladimir diocese of the Free Russian Orthodox Church”, described the clergy in obedience to Bishop Valentine as “wolves in sheep’s clothing”, and told them to turn instead 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”.⁴⁰

In a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly dated December 25, 1992, Bishop Valentine complained that Archbishop 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 began to accuse me of ‘lifting everything under myself like a bulldozer’. Therefore his Eminence 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 it striking me with their fist they get at you with their elbow?”⁴¹

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. Then, on August 3, he 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 diocesan administration which would unite all the parishes of the

³⁹ *Priamoj Put’*, January, 1992, p. 5; *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, January 18, 1992.

⁴⁰ *Priamoj Put’*, January, 1992, pp. 3-4; *Priamoj Put’*, March, 1992, pp. 3-4.

⁴¹ *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, No. 18-20, pp. 63-64.

FROC in Moscow and Moscow region, and also those parishes in other regions of Russia which wanted to unite with this diocesan administration.”⁴² “At the diocesan conference... a diocesan council was elected, containing three members of the National Patriotic Front, Pamyat', as representatives of the laity.”⁴³

This was a double blow to the FROC. First, the appointment of a foreign bishop with almost unlimited powers in Russia was a direct affront to the attempts of the Russian bishops to prevent foreign interference in their dioceses. The encroachment of the foreign bishops 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.) Secondly, Bishop Barnabas' open endorsement of the fascist organization Pamyat', which organized provocative demonstrations and even an attack on the offices of *Moskovskij Komsomolets*, scandalized church opinion both in Russia and outside.

On October 25 / November 7, 1992, Metropolitan Vitaly and the Synod of 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 Averyanov, for his “fruitful work with Pamyat'”, 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.⁴⁴

The year 1993 brought no relief for the beleaguered FROC bishops from their foreign brothers. Thus when the large and prosperous parish of the MP in Naginsk under its very popular pastor, Archimandrite Adrian, applied to come under the omophorion of Bishop Valentine, and was accepted by him on January 18, Bishop Barnabas interfered and suggested they come under *his omophorion* – which offer was politely but firmly turned down. 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

⁴² *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'*, № 17 (1470), September 1/14, 1992, p. 12

⁴³ *Pravoslavnaiia Rus'*, № 18 (1471), September 15/28, 1992, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Sergius Bychkov, “Voskresenie mifa”, *Moskovskie Novosti*, March 7, 1993; “Ukazanie Protoiereu Viktoru Potapovu”, February 4/17, 1993 (№ 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'*, №№ 1-2, January-February, 1993, p. 3).

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, without any kind of investigation or trial, suspended the archimandrite and wanted to depose Bishop Valentine for accepting such a pervert into his diocese. The Russian newspapers pointed out that 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.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, several ROCOR bishops wanted to proceed with defrocking Bishop Valentine; but the decision was made to retire him instead on grounds of his ill-health – a completely uncanonical decision since neither had Bishop Valentine petitioned for his retirement nor had ROCOR bishops investigated his state of health.

But worse was to come. Bishop Barnabas wrote 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 Moscow Patriarchate gleefully displayed this letter as proof of ROCOR's incompetence, and it was only with the greatest difficulty (and delay) that the Synod, spurred on by Fr. Victor and Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) outside Russia, and by Bishop Valentine inside Russia, began to extricate themselves from this scandal.

A recent publication summed up Bishop Barnabas' contribution to Russian Church life in this year: “In the shortest time [he] introduced the completest chaos⁴⁶ into the life of the Free Church, 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!*⁴⁷ 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 traitrous Muscovite scribblers hired by the Moscow Patriarchate are trying to trample

⁴⁵ Emergency report to the ROCOR Synod, May 16/29, 1993, *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 92. In a later report to the Synod (June 9/22, 1993, *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-10, 1994, pp. 94-95), Bishop Gregory, after enumerating Bishop Barnabas' transgressions, appealed that he be brought to trial.

⁴⁶ Bishop Valentine's phrase was: “such disturbance and division of the flock as the atheists and the MP could only dream about” (*Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 5).

⁴⁷ *Protocol* № 8, April 30 / May 13, 1993.

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-Hierarchy of the Church Abroad to visit Kiev in written form. This letter was also widely distributed."⁴⁸

This was clear evidence, if further evidence were needed, that the interference of foreign bishops in the affairs of the Free Russian Orthodox Church had to be drastically curbed, and that the canonical rights of the FROC bishops to rule their own dioceses without interference from the "centre" (several thousand miles away from Russia!) had to be unequivocally strengthened and protected.

However, a letter dated October 2, 1992 from Archbishop Mark to Protopriest Michael Artsumovich of Meudon gave equally clear evidence, if further evidence was needed, that this ROCOR hierarch at any rate neither intended to protect the rights of the Russian bishops nor in any way respected either them or their flock: "We are receiving [from the MP] 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

⁴⁸ *Istoki Rossijskoj Pravoslavnoj Svobodnoj Tserkvi*, Suzdal, 1997, pp. 19-20.

that we must... try and undertake the *russification* of Soviet man and the Soviet church..."⁴⁹

Archbishop Mark gave himself away in this shocking and insulting letter: disdain for the "pitiful" and supposedly long-dead Catacomb Church, disgust with the "impure", "Soviet" Free Russian Church, admiration for the "purity" of the apostate churches of "World Orthodoxy" with their Masonic and KGB-agent "hierarchs". As for the remark – by an ethnic German – about the "russification" of the Russian Church, the reaction in the heart of Holy Russia was one of understandable dismay...

3. The First Separation

Archbishop Mark wanted to rid himself of the "impurity" of the Free Russian Church; he was soon to achieve his aim. On April 14/27, 1993 Archbishop Lazarus sent an "explanatory report" to the Synod detailed the many serious 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. As a result of this, without consulting either him or his diocese, the ROCOR meeting in Cleveland, Ohio retired him, and the administration of his parishes was transferred 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 now way banned from church serving, but you are simply freed from administrative cares".

At this point the first signs of serious dissent with ROCOR's politics in Russia in the ranks of ROCOR's episcopate appeared in the person of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), the foremost canonist of ROCOR and a man of enormous experience in church matters, having been at the very heart of ROCOR's administration from 1931 until his forced retirement by Metropolitan Vitaly in 1986. In an emergency report to the Synod dated May 16/29, after sharply criticizing the unjust and uncanonical actions of the Synod, he 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

⁴⁹ Quoted in *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, pp. 108, 109.

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...

"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 us⁵⁰, the Sobor was already planning to defrock him

⁵⁰ Bishop Valentine's accuser turned out to be Alexander R. Shtilmark, an assistant of the Pamyat' leader, Demetrius Vasilyev. His motivation was clear. Later, several of Shtilmark's relatives witnessed to his mental unbalance. In spite of this, and Bishop Valentine's repeated protests of his innocence (which appear not to have reached Metropolitan Vitaly) ROCOR, in

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 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..."⁵¹

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 Agathangelus 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

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*, №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 123, 126).

⁵¹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 89-90.

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.⁵² Archbishop Lazarus concluded by calling for the formation of a True 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.

At the end of the conference it was decided that the Suzdal diocese would follow Archbishop Lazarus' example in separating administratively from ROCOR while retaining 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...⁵³

A meeting of the clergy Archbishop Lazarus' diocese in Odessa on July 4/17 confirmed that their separation from ROCOR was conditional, "on the verge of a break". 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".

Some FROC priests - notably Protopriest Lev Lebedev of Kursk - while fully agreeing that the ROCOR bishops had committed uncanonical acts on Russian soil, nevertheless began to express the view 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. However, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) adopted a quite different position. He pointed out that the claims of ROCOR to *rule* as opposed to *help* the Church in Russia contradicted ROCOR's own fundamental Statute:-

⁵² There were objective grounds for such a suspicion. Thus the protocols of this Council for June 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 GB realized its intention in real life?" (*Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 23, 1995, p. 54; letter to the author by Hieromonk Vladimir (Ovchinnikov) of June 23 / July 6, 1993).

⁵³ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, p. 121; letter to the author by Hieromonk Vladimir, op. cit.

“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 do not lay claim to receive 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 remain 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.

“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?*"⁵⁴

On October 20 / November 2 (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 (who, throughout the 1990s, has not set foot once on Russian soil, in spite of numerous invitations).⁵⁵ All the parishes of ROCOR in Siberia, Ukraine and Belarus were to be entrusted to Bishop Benjamin.⁵⁶

By the beginning of 1994 the Russian bishops had received no reaction whatsoever from the Synod to any of their letters and requests. 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 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.

⁵⁴ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 128-129, 130.

⁵⁵ Later, on June 26 / July 8, 1994, Bishop Barnabas was forbidden from travelling to Russia for five years (*Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№ 3-4, May-August, 1994, p. 5).

⁵⁶ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№ 5-6, September-December, 1993, pp. 7, 9.

“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 fulfil, 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’.”⁵⁷

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 them. 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 Fateyevna 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 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,

⁵⁷ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 159-160.

but we have not yet arrived at the Second All-Russian Council which has the power to re-establish Central Church power.”⁵⁸

On March 9/22 the THCA, which now contained three new bishops: Theodore of Borisovsk, Seraphim of Sukhumi and Agathangelus 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.⁵⁹ 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 has had no “Central Church authority”.⁶⁰ Then, in order to strengthen ROCOR’s hand in the coming struggle with the FROC, Archimandrite Eutyches (Kurochkin) was consecrated Bishop of Ishim and Siberia on July 11/24.⁶¹

Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), however, 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

⁵⁸ *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, pp. 168-169.

⁵⁹ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’*, №№ 1-2, January-April, 1994, pp. 14-16; *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 196-198.

⁶⁰ *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, №№ 18-20, 1994, pp. 198, 200-201.

⁶¹ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’*, №№ 3-4, May-August, 1994, pp. 60-65.

abolition (see article 9) and 'the extreme disorganization of Church life'. This task is placed before every surviving hierarchy, 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 no. 362.

"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...”⁶²

4. The Second Separation.

In spite of receiving no reply to their repeated requests that the ROCOR Synod re-establish canonical order in Russia, Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine accepted an invitation from Abbess Macrina of Lesna monastery – not, significantly, from the Synod or any individual hierarch – to go to the Lesna Sobor of ROCOR in November, 1994. Here, on November 10/23, in spite of a very cold reception, – “both of us,” as Bishop Valentine later wrote, “were in fact isolated from the Hierarchical Sobor and its acts” – they asked forgiveness and were again received into communion, according to the official minutes of ROCOR.⁶³ It should be noted, however, that in the “Act” later signed by all the bishops but *not* published in the official minutes, the forgiveness was asked from *both* sides.

On the same day the Sobor resolved: “1. The Council of Bishops considers the normalization of interrelations with the Most Reverend Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine to be possible on the condition that the THCA be abolished without measures of interdiction against its organizers. 2. It is possible to recognize the three hierarchical ordinations performed by Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine as lawful if, permeated by a feeling of repentance and humility, the newly-ordained hierarchs will renounce the text previously signed by them and will take an oath in accordance with the text established by our higher ecclesiastical authority, which will be issued to them from the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops. 3. The Most Reverend Russian [hierarchs] are responsible for organizing a hierarchical conference to make decisions on local questions. Moreover, one of the Most Reverend Russian [hierarchs] [this was later decreed to be Archbishop Lazarus] will be a member of the Synod of Bishops.”⁶⁴

None of the outstanding issues dividing the two sides were discussed at that time, but the Russian bishops did manage to ask Bishop Hilarion for

⁶² Bishop Gregory, *Pis'ma*, Moscow, 1998, pp. 123-125; *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 23, 1995, pp. 21-23.

⁶³ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№ 5-6, September-December, 1994, p. 13; *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XVI, № 4, July-August, 1994, p. 9.

⁶⁴ *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XVI, no. 4, July-August, 1994, pp. 9-10.

explanations of two things that worried them: ROCOR's entering into communion with the Greek Old Calendarist Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili (which Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) had strongly protested against), and its forthcoming negotiations (at Archbishop Mark's insistence) with members of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Then they were invited to join the Sobor. However, as they crossed the threshold of the monastery church where the Sobor was in session, the Russian bishops were handed an "Act" – Bishop Valentine later called it an "Act of capitulation" – which had already been signed by all the ROCOR bishops and which the two Russian bishops were now told to sign.⁶⁵ "When we had cursorily looked through this Act," writes Bishop Valentine, "I began to protest, to which Archbishop Mark said that if we didn't want peace and did not want to sign, we could leave the hall." Vladyka Valentine said that both sides had to participate in drawing up such an act, after which Bishop Hilarion, deputy secretary of the Synod, promised "that they would edit the act, taking into account our remarks and suggestions". Then Archbishop Lazarus agreed to sign. Bishop Valentine, though unwilling to sign, did not want to create a schism from Archbishop Lazarus. So he, too, signed. Two hours later, overcome by the extreme tension of the occasion, Bishop Valentine suffered a heart attack and was rushed to a hospital in Paris, where he was placed in intensive care.

While Vladyka Valentine was still in hospital and in a very weak condition, two ROCOR bishops came to him, gave him communion and asked him to sign two more documents (he does not remember what was in those documents). On returning to Lesna, Vladyka offered a second variant of the Act to Vladyka Lazarus. Lazarus did not want to sign this second variant, but he suggested to Vladyka Valentine that he sign in the capacity of his deputy. So Valentine signed his own variant of the Act and gave copies of it to both Vladyka Lazarus and the ROCOR Synod.⁶⁶ Bishop Eutyches later witnessed that Bishop Valentine's proposed changes to the original Act were not accepted by the other bishops at the Sobor.⁶⁷

It is not known precisely on which day these events took place. However, we do know that on November 17/30 it was resolved: "1. To survey all the Most Reverend members of the Council after receipt by the Synodal Chancery

⁶⁵ A severely truncated version of this "Act" was published in *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (№№ 5-6, September-December, 1994, pp. 13-14), but the whole "Act" has never, to the present author's knowledge, been published in the ROCOR press, in spite of the decision to do so "in all organs of the church press" (point 9 of the "Act", see below). In fact, Bishop Valentine reported that the ROCOR chancellery had told him that the Act would not be published (*Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, p. 12).

⁶⁶ This account is based on Archbishop Valentine's own words to the present writer, together with his letter to the Suzdal Council dated January 11/24, 1995 (*Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, pp. 6-10).

⁶⁷ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, p. 12.

of all data on the bishops ordained in Russia: Theodore, Seraphim and Agathangel. 2. To invite these three bishops to the city of Munich (if possible, for the altar feast of the Holy New-martyrs), for carrying out the nomination and confession of faith and concelebrations with the Most Reverend members of the Council. 3. To approve the proposed borders of the Russian dioceses.”⁶⁸

This latter decision, which involved the division of the parishes of ROCOR-FROC in Russia into six dioceses with newly-defined boundaries was to elicit, as we shall see, was to elicit serious discontent among the Russian clergy because of the threat it posed to the registration of their churches. Bishop Valentine did not sign it – probably because he was already in hospital.

On the same day, still more seriously, the Synod published an epistle declaring that “the time has come to seek living communion with all the parts of the One Russian Orthodox Church, scattered by dint of historical circumstances”. This serious compromise in the confessing stance of ROCOR vis-à-vis the Moscow Patriarchate, with which it quite clearly said that it wanted “better relations”⁶⁹, was signed by Archbishop Lazarus – but, again, not by Bishop Valentine. It was later to be used by Archbishop Mark as an excuse for his treacherous relations with the patriarchate.

The next day, in two special *ukazes*, ROCOR confirmed Bishop Valentine as ruling hierarch of the Suzdal diocese and recognized that the accusations of immorality which had been hurled at him two years before, and which Archbishop Mark had insisted on bringing before the Synod, although the canons forbade it, were completely unfounded.⁷⁰

On November 22 / December 5, having returned from hospital in Paris to the Lesna monastery, Bishop Valentine wrote a letter to the Sobor once again explaining the serious problems caused to the FROC by the canonical transgressions of ROCOR. And he appealed to the ROCOR bishops to relate to the FROC bishops in the same way that the famous ROCOR theologian Archbishop Averky had once (in 1971) recommended that they relate to the Old Calendarist Greeks: “Our interference must be limited to giving the Greeks grace-filled bishops, and then we must leave them to live independently.”⁷¹ It was evident that, in spite of the restoration of communion with ROCOR, Vladyka was still deeply worried by the intentions of ROCOR with regard to the Russian dioceses – a fear that was to prove to be more than justified...

⁶⁸ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№5-6, September-December, 1994, p. 16; *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 21, 1995, pp. 44-46; *Living Orthodoxy*, vol. XVI, № 4, July-August, 1994, p. 10.

⁶⁹ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№ 5-6, September-December, 1994, p. 10; *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 21, 1995, p. 49.

⁷⁰ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 21, 1995, pp. 42, 43.

⁷¹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 21, 1995, p. 32.

On January 12/25, 1995 there was a meeting of the bishops and clergy of the FROC in Suzdal to discuss the results of the Lesna Sobor. Besides the Act, of particular concern to many of the clergy was the fact that the redefining of the diocesan boundaries proposed at the Sobor would involve the necessity of re-registration for 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 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 patriarchate.

Thus the Moscow Protopriest Michael Ardov said: "Concerning the church building which I occupy, I must say that if I transfer to Vladyka Eutyches [to whom ROCOR had given the Moscow and St. Petersburg dioceses], what will happen? The building is registered with the Suzdal diocese. They tell us that we are in this building unlawfully, and that we still have to secure its transfer to us. It is well known that [Moscow Mayor] Luzhkov is categorically against our parish. They forced us to change our parish rules sixteen times before registering it. Of course, I submit to the Ukaz of the Hierarchical Synod, but I have a request for our bishops: they must take into account that this is not Canada and not America, but a different state, and we have different perspectives."⁷²

Several other priests spoke against re-registration for similar reasons.

Towards the end of the meeting, Protopriest Andrew Osetrov posed the following question to Bishop Eutyches: "Which do you consider preferable for Russian believers – the Resolutions of the Hierarchical Synod and Sobor of ROCOR and its First-Hierarchy, or the Resolutions of the All-Russian Sobor of 1917-18 and the holy Patriarch Tikhon?" Bishop Eutyches replied: "Preferable are the Resolutions of living hierarchs, and not dead ones. Even if the Resolutions of the Synod of ROCOR will be uncanonical, for me this has no significance, I must fulfil them."⁷³

This summed up the difference between the two sides. For ROCOR (and the Russian Bishops Benjamin and Eutyches) obedience to the Synod was the ultimate value, more important even than the holy canons which every bishop swears to uphold at his consecration. For the FROC bishops, on the other hand, the authority of ROCOR could not be placed higher than the objective good of their own flock, which could be preserved only by faithfulness to the canons of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the highest authorities in the post-revolutionary Russian Church – the decisions of Patriarch Tikhon and the 1917-18 Council.

⁷² *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, p. 12.

⁷³ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, pp. 15-16.

The next day, January 13/26, the seven FROC bishops met and decided to put off a final decision on the thorny question of the territorial division of dioceses. When discussion passed to the Act, Bishop Eutyches said that the Act had not been fulfilled by the Russian bishops and refused to take any further part in the Conference. Later, in a letter to Metropolitan Vitaly dated January 17/30, he wrote that "Bishop Benjamin, convinced that the meeting completely supported Bishop Valentine and was hostile to the Church Abroad and himself personally, left the meeting [on January 12/25]. I participated in the meeting to the end and was struck by the general anti-ROCOR mood of the hierarchs, priests, nuns and laymen."⁷⁴

On January 14/27 the Hierarchical Conference (excluding Bishops Eutyches and Benjamin) approved a letter to the ROCOR Synod, in which they wrote that the Act approved by the Lesna Sobor "was in extreme need of a series of substantial changes to the points, and additions". Below we quote the Act, together with the comments of the FROC bishops (in italics):

"We, the Hierarchical Synod of the ROCOR, under the presidency of the First-Hierarchy, 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 the 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.

⁷⁴ Suzdal'skij Palomnik, No 23, 1995, p. 15.

*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 Agathangelus, 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.⁷⁵

'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 member 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 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 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,

⁷⁵ This refers to the ukaz dated November 18 / December 1, 1994, quoted above, which reinstated Vladyka Valentine as Bishop of Suzdal and Vladimir. It should be pointed out that Vladyka Valentine had been raised to the rank of archbishop by the THCA in the previous year.

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.”⁷⁶

Now on January 3, Bishop Hilarion on behalf of the ROCOR Synod had sent a respectfully worded invitation to Bishops Theodore, Agathangelus and Seraphim to come to New York for the February 9/22 session of the Synod and “for the formalities of re-establishing concelebration”.⁷⁷ It is significant that the Synod had also invited Bishop Eutyches, 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.

When Bishops Theodore and Agathangelus arrived in New York, they were listened to and on the next day, in Bishop Agathangelus’ 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.”⁷⁸ For Vladyka Theodore and me this was like a bolt from the blue... We were told that the reason for this decision was our supposed non-fulfilment 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

⁷⁶ The comments of the FROC were published in *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, pp. 26-27.

⁷⁷ *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, № 23, 1995, pp. 32-33.

⁷⁸ This Decree, dated February 9/22, 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*, № 23, 1995, p. 31; *Tserkovnie Novosti*, № 1A (43), February, 1995, p. 3.

trial or investigation, banned the five Hierarchs from serving. 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-fulfilment 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.

"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..."⁷⁹

This act of blackmail – we recognize you if you accept a foreign see, but do not recognize you if you stay in Russia – exposed the complete lack of canonical justification in the acts of the ROCOR Synod. Let us recall that: (a)

⁷⁹ "Witness" of February 15/28, 1995, *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 23, 1995, pp. 35-36.

Bishops Theodore and Agathangelus had just been formally recognized as canonical bishops, (b) they had agreed in writing to fulfil all of the ROCOR Synod's conditions, including the signing of the Act without any alterations, (c) they had not been accused of any canonical transgressions, and (d) they had not been subjected to any investigation or trial, as the canons demanded. Their only crime, it would appear, was that they lived in Russia – a novel charge against a bishop of the Russian Church!

On February 11/24 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?⁸⁰

On February 15/28, 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 Agathangelus 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...”⁸¹

The next month Archbishop Valentine recounted these events in a Lenten letter to his flock, and continued: “This *second* instance of administrative pressure on the Russian Hierarchs, and, moreover, in such an undisguisedly *cunning* form, when flattering mentions and assurances of friendship and invitations came in the name of the Synod of ROCOR, while in fact another attempt to *usurp* power over the Russian flock was taking place, forces me to make certain clarifications.

⁸⁰ *Tserkovnie Novosti*, № 1A (43), February, 1995, p. 5.

⁸¹ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 23, 1995, p. 34.

“On November 7/20, 1920 the holy Patriarch Tikhon together with the Sacred Synod and the Higher Ecclesiastical Council of the Russian Church passed the exceptionally important Resolution № 362 concerning the self-governing of Dioceses in the case of the absence of a canonical Higher Church Administration or the impossibility of communicating with it. On the basis of this Ukaz, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) organized the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. In Russia on the basis of this Ukaz there was organized the Catacomb or ‘Tikhonite’ Church under the leadership of its inspirer, the holy New Martyr Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd. In its time the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad helped in the establishment of a lawful hierarchy in Russia, consecrating to the Episcopate their Graces Lazarus, Valentine and Benjamin. Instead of expanding the Church in the Homeland, there appeared the temptation of ruling it from abroad, declaring itself the ‘Central Church Authority’, which is what the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR did in practice in April, 1994 (cf. *Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, special issue, №№ 18,19,20). But then a declaration was made concerning the supposedly ‘unlawful’ creation by the Russian Hierarchs, on the basis of Ukaz № 362, of a Temporary Higher Church Administration, whereas the Ukaz № 362 of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7/20 said directly: ‘The care for the organization of a Higher Church authority... is the unfailing duty of the eldest according to rank of the Hierarchs in the indicated group.’

“Intra-ecclesiastical freedom and the dignities of the Bishops based on the Holy Canons do not permit administrative arbitrariness and do not give the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR the right to the supreme administration of the Church. And our following of the Canons and Ukaz № 362, which was specially written for the Russian Dioceses existing in identical conditions, cannot give an excuse to whoever it may be to declare the Russian Hierarchs to be in some kind of ‘schism’. Having neither reasons, nor lawful authority or canonical rights to ‘ban’ the Russian Hierarchs, the Chancellery of the Synod of ROCOR is only witnessing, in the latest incident, to a *deep crisis* in the administration of ROCOR itself, when the President of the Hierarchical Synod Metropolitan Vitaly is not able to control the resolutions and ukazes issuing from the Chancellery of the Synod. It is impossible to take the documents signed by Vladyka Metropolitan Vitaly seriously when in the course of less than a year their meaning has several times changed to the complete opposite.⁸² It is impossible to believe that in the ‘punitive actions’ of the Russian Hierarchs that have now become quite usual there is contained love for Russia, about which the hierarchs of ROCOR speak so eloquently. It is impossible to look on with indifference as, instead of building up the

⁸² Vladyka was probably thinking of the incident, a little less than a year before, when Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles declared that in its session of February 21-24 the Hierarchical Synod had banned both Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Valentine from serving at the same time that Metropolitan Vitaly was writing to Bishop Valentine that he was “in no wise banned from serving” (*Suzdal’skij Palomnik*, № 21, 1995, pp. 28-29).

Church in the much-suffering Homeland, they incessantly 'divide territory', as a result of which churches of the FROC fall into the hands of the Moscow Patriarchate."⁸³

On February 27 / March 12, 1995 Archbishops Lazarus and Valentine and Bishops Theodore, Seraphim and Agathangelus met in Suzdal and re-established the THCA which had been created on March 5/18, 1994. Then they decided: "To qualify the Decree of the Hierarchical Sobor [sic – Synod would have been more accurate] of ROCOR of February 9/22 and the claims contained in it to leadership of the whole Russian Church by the Hierarchical Synod and the First-Hierarchy of ROCOR as exceeding their authority and a transgression of the Holy Canons and the Statute of ROCOR. In particular, the 8th Canon of the Third Ecumenical Council has been transgressed, which declares: 'May the haughtiness of secular power not creep in under the guise of sacred acts; and may we not lose, little by little and without it being noticed, the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us through His Blood. And so it is pleasing to the Holy and Ecumenical Council that every Diocese should preserve in purity and without oppression the rights that belonged to it from the beginning... And if anyone should propose any resolution contrary to this, let it be invalid.'"⁸⁴

It is significant that it was precisely this Canon that was quoted by Hieromartyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd, when he laid the foundations for the Catacomb Church in January, 1928. And indeed, the arguments between ROCOR and the FROC increasingly came to resemble the arguments between Metropolitan Sergius and the Catacomb Church, on the one hand, and Sergius and the foreign bishops who separated from him, on the other. The issue in 1928-30, as in 1995, was the question: who, if anyone, had the power to create a central organ of Church administration having full patriarchal power to rule over all the bishops of the Russian Church? Metropolitan Sergius then, like Metropolitan Vitaly today, claimed that he had such power, and proceeded to act with greater fierceness and disregard for the canons than any real pope or patriarch. But the Catacomb bishops then, like the FROC bishops today, claimed that since the death of the last canonical Patriarch and the imprisonment of his locum tenens, Metropolitan Peter, there was no alternative but to return to the decentralized form of Church administration prescribed by the never-repealed Patriarchal ukaz № 362.

According to the ukaz, neighbouring bishops *in identical circumstances* could *voluntarily* unite into TCHAs and govern themselves as autonomous Churches until the convening of the next canonical Sobor of the whole Russian Church. But (a) bishops living in different States and separated by

⁸³ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 22, 1995, pp. 30-31; *Tserkovnie Novosti*, № 1A (43), February, 1995, pp. 7-8.

⁸⁴ *Suzdal'skij Palomnik*, № 23, 1995, p. 42.

thousands of miles of ocean obviously do not live in identical circumstances, and (b) no group of bishops or TCHA has power over any other TCHA, nor can it claim to have rule over the whole Russian Church, so that (c) full patriarchal power can belong only to the future Local Council of the All-Russian Church and the organs elected by it. To these restrictions must be added, for hierarchs of ROCOR, those detailed in its still-unrepealed Statute, that is: (a) ROCOR is only a *part* of the Russian Church, like any other TCHA or autonomous group of bishops, and certainly not its real *centre*, as it has recently claimed; (b) its administrative powers extend only over the Church *Abroad, outside* Russia; (c) it must continue to commemorate “the Episcopate of the Russian Church” – that is, of the Church *inside* Russia; and (d) even its powers over the Church Abroad are valid only until the fall of the atheist power, when power returns to the Church inside Russia...⁸⁵

Conclusion

Today, three and a half years since the second schism between ROCOR and the FROC, the situation has not changed in essence. Almost immediately after the events of February, 1995, frightened by the threat of defrocking by the ROCOR Synod, Archbishop Lazarus and his vicar, Bishop Agathangelus, left the FROC and returned, “repenting”, to ROCOR.⁸⁶ But what has always, since 1990, been the core of ROCOR-FROC inside Russia, the Suzdal diocese, has remained firm, and has in fact increased in strength.

In accordance with a resolution of the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR in 1996, the Hierarchical Conference of the Russian Bishops 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. At the same Council meeting Bishop Valentine was defrocked. The FROC, naturally, refused to recognize this decision.⁸⁷

The desertion of Archbishop Lazarus requires some comment. The secret consecration of Fr. Lazarus (Zhurbenko) was the first major mistake of ROCOR inside Russia. It was surprising in that ROCOR might have been expected to consecrate, not the newly appeared Lazarus, but one of the fourteen hieromonks who had been received under the omophorion of Metropolitan Philaret on November 26 / December 7, 1977, after the death of their Catacomb archpastor, Archbishop Anthony Galynsky-Mikhailovsky, in

⁸⁵ As Protopriest Andrew Osetrov writes: “The Church Abroad should either transfer its Administration to Russia and no longer call it the Synod of ROCOR (the more so in that one can enter and leave the Homeland now without hindrance), or, if the hierarchs of ROCOR do not want to return to the Homeland, they must recognize their Church administration to be subject to the administration of the Church in the Homeland” (*Suzdal'skij Blagovest'*, № 3, January-February, 1997, p. 3).

⁸⁶ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№ 3-4, May-August, 1995, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁷ *Suzdal'skij Blagovest'*, № 3, January-February, 1997, p. 3.

1976.⁸⁸ Moreover, there were other distinguished Catacomb pastors with links to ROCOR, such as Fr. Michael Rozhdestvensky (+1988), who would have been eminently suitable candidates for the episcopate.

Besides, the career of Fr. Lazarus himself had not been without controversy. Although he had been reared in the Catacomb Church, and had been in the camps, he had been refused ordination to the priesthood by three Catacomb hierarchs, including Archbishop Anthony Galynsky-Mikhailovsky – all of whom he later accused, by a strange coincidence, of being uncanonical. He then joined the Moscow Patriarchate and received ordination there from a certain Bishop Benjamin of Irkutsk. Only a year later, he returned to the Catacomb Church in Siberia, and was instrumental, according to some catacomb sources, in sowing such suspicion against the Catacomb Bishop Theodosius Bahmetev (+1986) that almost the whole of his flock deserted him.⁸⁹ Some even accuse him of having betrayed Catacomb Christians to the KGB. Be that as it may – and such accusations are easily made, but much less easily proved – there can be no doubt that a large part of the Catacomb Church distrusted Lazarus and refused to have anything to do with him. This was true both of the “moderates” and the “extremists” in the Catacomb Church, both of the “Seraphimo-Gennadiite” branch, led by Metropolitan Epiphany (Kaminsky)⁹⁰, of the “Matthewites” led by Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov)⁹¹, and of the “passportless” branch represented by the Catacomb Archimandrite Gury (Pavlov), who, when about to be consecrated to the episcopate in New York in 1990 by ROCOR, categorically refused when he heard that Lazarus was going to be a co-consecrator.⁹²

⁸⁸ The full text of this resolution 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 Michael 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 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 consecrated 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.”

The following priests were accepted into communion: Hieromonks Michael, Raphael, Nicholas, Nicholas, Nathaniel, Epiphanius, Michael and Sergius, and Abbots Barsonuphius and Nicholas,

⁸⁹ E. A. Petrova, *op. cit.*

⁹⁰ See his (unpublished) letter to Metropolitan Vitaly, November 21 / December 4, 1992.

⁹¹ V.K., *Kratkij ocherk ekkleziologicheskikh i yurisdiktsionnykh sporov v grecheskoj starostil'noj tserkvi*, St. Petersburg: Izdanie Vestnika I.P.Ts. *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, 1998, pp. 30-31.

⁹² He died on Christmas Day, 1995/96. See *Vozdvizhenie*, № 2 (15), February, 1996; “A Biography of Archimandrite Gury”, *The True Vine*, vol. 3, № 3 (1992).

It was true also of Fr. Michael Rozhdestvensky. He was “the initiator of the complete rejection of the then priest Lazarus Zhurbenko because of the latter’s departing to the MP for his ordination. At a meeting of catacomb clergy in the city of Tambov in 1978, in the presence of the still-flourishing Abbot P, Fr. Vissarion and others, Fr. Michael confirmed this position. This decision was supported in those years by all without exception of the catacomb clergy. But later, when Vladyka Barnabas was searching for a worthy candidate for consecration to the rank of Bishop of the Catacomb Church, Fr. Lazarus (then already a hieromonk) craftily suggested the widowed Fr. Michael and himself was called to invite him to be consecrated to the episcopate. On receiving the invitation with the signature of Hieromonk Lazarus (Zhurbenko), Fr. Michael Rozhdestvensky, naturally, did not go. Vladyka Barnabas was left with neither a choice nor time, and he was forced to consecrate Hieromonk Lazarus to the episcopate. Fr. Michael’s position in relation to Vladyka Lazarus remained unchanging to the very end of his life [in 1988].”⁹³

But not only did ROCOR consecrate Fr. Lazarus instead of eminently more suitable candidates such as Fr. Michael: they used his testimony as their sole guide to the canonicity or otherwise of the other Catacomb bishops in Russia. Thus on May 5/18, 1990 the ROCOR Synod reversed the previous decision of the Synod under Metropolitan Philaret to recognize Archbishop Anthony-Mikhailovsky and his ordinations, and told the priests ordained by him “to regulate their canonical position by turning towards his Grace Bishop Lazarus of Tambov and Morshansk”. Again, on August 2/15, 1990 another Ukaz was distributed (but not published in the Church press) which rejected the canonicity both of the “Seraphimo-Gennadiite” and the “Galynskyite” branches of the Catacomb Church, causing widespread havoc in both. Thus one “Seraphimo-Gennadiite” priest from Moscow took off his cross, saying that he was not a priest according to ROCOR and went to Bishop Lazarus to be reordained. His flock, suddenly abandoned, scattered in different directions.⁹⁴

The main accusation against the hierarchs of these branches was that they could not prove their apostolic succession by producing ordination certificates, as required by the 33rd Apostolic Canon. This was, of course, a serious deficiency; 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 resorting to the punitive measures of a papal curia. And such a charitable, unifying attitude to the various Catacomb groups had been urged – alas, without success – by Bishop Gregory (Grabbe).

⁹³ “Kritika zhurnala ‘Vosvrashchenie’”, *Tserkovnie Novosti*, № 11 (67), November-December, 1997, p. 10.

⁹⁴ Personal testimony of the present writer.

As Archbishop Hilarion has recently admitted 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*). 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."⁹⁵

So Bishop Lazarus used the authority of ROCOR to take his revenge on Catacomb bishops who had displeased him and to have himself exalted above the Russian flock in their place.⁹⁶ He was therefore the first instrument - and the first beneficiary - of ROCOR's policy of "divide and rule" towards the Catacomb Church. As such, he could not afford to break his links with the Synod that had promoted him, and ran back to it with his tail between his legs.

But his return to ROCOR has not meant better times for his flock in the Ukraine. Thus Hieromonk 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?'"⁹⁷

Similar disturbances have taken place in other dioceses of ROCOR inside Russia. Thus Bishop Eutyches has been accused of serious dogmatical errors related to ecumenism.⁹⁸

Thus ROCOR, which had a golden opportunity to gather all the anti-MP Catacomb Church forces under its wing in the early 1990s, only succeeded in creating further divisions and weakening the witness of the True Church. The

⁹⁵ E-mail message, 15 July, 1998. For more on Bishop Lazarus and Archbishop Anthony, see "I vrata adovy nye odoleyut Yeyo", *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti*, № 3, January-February, 1998, pp. 17-18.

⁹⁶ Some years ago, Archbishop Lazarus insisted on renaming his Odessa diocese "the True Orthodox Catacomb Church", thereby laying claim to being the sole heir of the historic Catacomb Church and implicitly separating himself from both ROCOR and the FROC.

⁹⁷ *Suzdal'skij Blagovest'*, № 3, January-February, 1997, p. 3.

⁹⁸ *Suzdal'skij Blagovest'*, № 3, January-February, 1997, p. 3; "Stupenchatij protsess apostasii v Russkoj Zarubezhnoj Tserkvi", *Russkoe Pravoslavie*, № 4 (4), 1996, pp. 8-10.

good it did by consecrating such good pastors as Bishop Valentine was almost outweighed by the harm it did by undermining Bishop Valentine and the Suzdal diocese, by consecrating hirelings and wolves who only brought division to the flock of Christ, and by in general acting like foreign dictators reminiscent of the MP hierarchs. Experienced Catacomb Christians soon discerned the signs, and fled from the spirit of sergianism (and ecumenism) in ROCOR as they had fled from it in the MP.

It has been left to the FROC to take up the burden which ROCOR has failed to carry. Thus it is she, rather than ROCOR, which is now gathering the Catacomb Christians under her wing - but without issuing bans against those groups which do not recognize her authority. In accordance with the Patriarchal Ukaz, she has sought friendly relations with, but not administrative rule over, the other truly Orthodox groups in Russia in the spirit of love that must characterize all relationships within the Church. She claims neither to be the one and only Russian Church, nor to be the administrative centre of the Russian Church. But she has pledged to work towards the convening of that future canonical Local Council of the Russian Church which she, like ROCOR in previous decades, recognizes to be the highest authority in the Church and the only competent judge of the actions of all her constituent parts.

What are the prospects of reunion between the FROC and ROCOR? In the present writer's opinion, this can only take place under one or other of two possible conditions:-

1. A complete change of heart in the ROCOR Synod towards the FROC and repentance for its past canonical transgressions, involving: (a) fitting punishment of those who have wrought such havoc in Russia in recent years, especially Archbishop Mark of Berlin; (b) the removal of all bans on the FROC bishops; (c) the recognition of the FROC's autonomy in accordance with the Patriarchal Ukaz.

Such a change of heart looks unlikely in view of the events of recent years, when the ascendancy of Archbishop Mark over the ROCOR Synod has become more and more marked. His shameful negotiations with KGB Agent "Drozdov", i.e. "Patriarch" Alexis Ridiger, in December, 1996, and his part in forcing Metropolitan Vitaly to expel the confessors of Hebron and Jerusalem and apologize before the PLO President Arafat in July, 1997, have shocked the Orthodox world. In the Sobor of May, 1998, after Mark had been removed from the Synod by the First-Hierarchy, a golden opportunity presented itself to have this evil genius of the Russian Church finally removed from power; but the opportunity was lost.

And so ROCOR's drift towards unity with the MP continues unabated; having rid itself of the "Soviet filth" of the FROC, the majority of its bishops

are now hypocritically ready to unite with the “Mother Church” of the Soviet MP. Indeed, having renounced the great majority of the truly confessing Christians in Russia, it is only logical that ROCOR should seek an alliance with the other side, perhaps on the basis of an autonomous status for ROCOR within the Moscow Patriarchate. After all, Church life does not stand still, but continually moves between the poles of good and evil, life and death; so that a movement away from one pole inevitably involves a movement closer to the other pole...

In view of this there remains the other possibility: 2. A schism in ROCOR allowing the right-thinking Christians in it both inside Russia and abroad, to separate from their Sovietizing hierarchs and be reunited with the confessing Christians of other Russian Church jurisdictions. Already there are many members of ROCOR inside Russia who sympathize with, and by no means reject, their brothers in the FROC. Both they and the FROC are suffering persecution from the MP; both they and the FROC have suffered the effects of ROCOR’s maladministration and (in the case of certain hierarchs) outright treachery. It is only logical, therefore, that these two groups, having an identical faith and being “in identical conditions” (to use the language of the Patriarchal Ukaz), should reunite when the time is right – that is, when the complete failure of ROCOR’s mission inside Russia becomes evident to all.

But there must be no forcing, no exertion of power at the expense of love. That is the primary lesson of these tragic years since the fall of Soviet power. “Lest little by little and without it being noticed, we lose the freedom which our Lord Jesus Christ, the Liberator of all men, has given us through His Blood...”

September 26 / October 9, 1998.
Repose of St. John the Theologian.

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4. THE SERGIANIST CONQUEST OF JERUSALEM

The Moscow Patriarchate's forcible seizure of the Hebron monastery in July this year, and its winning *de facto*, if not yet *de jure* control of the convents of the Russian Church Abroad in Jerusalem, has delivered a serious blow to the forces of True Orthodoxy. The seriousness of the blow resides not so much in the material loss of the monasteries, important though that is, as in the spiritual humiliation of the Russian Church Abroad, and in her perceived weakness in the face of external pressure. Those confessors of the truth who resisted that pressure - Bishop Barnabas, Archimandrite Bartholomew, Abbess Juliana - have been publicly humiliated and banished by their own first-hierarchy, Metropolitan Vitaly. The main traitor and appeaser - Archbishop Mark - has been placed in charge of ROCOR's Mission to the Holy Land only months after the first-hierarchy severely rebuked him for his treacherous fraternization with Alexis of Moscow (alias KGB agent "Drozdov"), saying that he had "lost the gift of discernment". As a result of the abject apology of the first-hierarchy of ROCOR to the Muslim Arafat and Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem on July 13, and the expulsion of the confessors on July 29-30, the last remnants of True Orthodoxy must be deemed to have surrendered to an unholy alliance of "World Orthodoxy", Islam and Communism in the land of the God-Man's Death and Resurrection - and even the tacit support of the Jews has not encouraged ROCOR to undertake a more determined defence of her heritage.

How did this shameful surrender take place? And what are the lessons for the rest of ROCOR that still remains in freedom?

1. On Obedience to the ROCOR Synod.

The main argument of the appeasers in their shameless attack on Abbess Juliana has been "obedience". How often has this argument been used in the history of twentieth-century Orthodoxy as a pious-seeming cloak to justify precisely *disobedience* to the sacred canons of the Church and *surrender* to the enemies of Holy Orthodoxy! Was this not the main weapon used by Metropolitan Sergius to crush the opposition of the Catacomb Church? We shall return to the comparison with Metropolitan Sergius later. In the meantime let us enquire whether Abbess Juliana was really disobedient.

It must be emphasized, first, that abbots, abbesses and elders have considerable authority in the Orthodox Church to decide what is permitted and what is not permitted in their monasteries and in relation to their own spiritual children. As Sister Marina (Chertkova), Abbess Juliana's assistant, rightly says: "Abbesses are the mistresses in their communities." It is known, for example, that St. Ambrose of Optina defied his local bishop with regard to the Shamordino nuns whose spiritual father he was, saying: "There is a Vladyka higher than all vladykas". Bishops can overrule abbots and abbesses

in the running of their monasteries only in extreme cases, when the abbot or abbess is clearly sinning against the dogmatic or moral tradition of the Church. It is obvious that Abbess Juliana was defending, rather than sinning against, the tradition of the Church.

In fact, when 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", it was clearly *they* who were disobeying both the canons of the Church and a whole series of earlier unrepealed orders and testaments of ROCOR's Synod and first hierarchs. The canons do not permit heretics to perform services in the churches of the Orthodox ("Patriarch" Alexis wanted to serve at the tomb of Archimandrite Antonin). And the ROCOR Synod's ukaz of April 19, 1994 was clearly in accordance with the canons when it declared: "The clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate are not allowed to carry out any kind of Divine services (that is: put on an epitachelion, perform a litiya or prayer service, etc.) on the territory of our monasteries."

So Abbess Juliana was clearly acting *in obedience* both to the canons and to the whole tradition of ROCOR in the Holy Land, as well as in complete agreement with ROCOR's own highest authorities in the Holy Land at the time (Bishop Barnabas and Archimandrite Bartholomew), when she refused admittance to KGB Agent Drozdov and his suite. The Synod's ukaz of May 13, 1997 contradicted both the sacred canons, which every clergyman swears to uphold, and the tradition of their own Church. Therefore Abbess Juliana was quite justified in refusing to obey disobedience.

2. On Free Access to the Holy Places.

The critics of Abbess Juliana point to the fact that access to the Holy Places is guaranteed by law for all pilgrims. Actually, while the Oak of Abraham, situated on the grounds of the Hebron monastery, is clearly a Holy Place, the Eleon and Gethsemane monasteries are 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 writes: "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 fulfilment 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 difference from that in Gethsemane... *If you don't want to receive him, that is your business!*' And he added: '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?'

"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.” (Letter of July 19, 1997 to Alexander Ivanovich Musatov).

Even if the law concerning the free access of pilgrims to the holy places were clearer and more strictly applied, it could still not apply 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 an operation that was reminiscent of the similar operations carried out by him with the aid of OMON troops in Vladivostok, Ryazan and other places. 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. The heresy that preaches that one must sacrifice the Law of God in favour of obedience to unbelieving secular authorities is known as *Sergianism* from the name of “Patriarch” Alexis’ predecessor in impiety, “Patriarch” Sergius of Moscow. And it is surely no coincidence that the ROCOR Synod’s punishment of those who so bravely struggled to defend her interests was meted out 70 years to the day from Sergius’s notorious declaration of July 16/29, 1927...

3. On Obedience to Patriarch Diodorus.

What at first sight appears to be the strongest argument advanced by the critics of Abbess Juliana is the fact that ROCOR in the Holy Land commemorates Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem, and was therefore bound to receive his friends and guests. Thus according to Protopriest George Larin, who is now 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 antimens 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!” (Letter of August 18/31, 1997 to Fr. Stefan Krasovitsky).

At the same time Fr. George admits that Patriarch Diodorus “concelebrates with 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 have their own first-hierarchy, but are forced to have another one - who serves with their chief enemy but not with them! Who was it Who said that one cannot serve two masters?...

Now Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem is not a heretic in the way Alexis of Moscow is. He has criticized the ecumenical movement, and in 1989 left the World Council of Churches, although it appears that he has not broken off all contact with the ecumenical organizations. But his opposition to ecumenism lacks the principled character of that of ROCOR; for he remains in full communion with all the ecumenist Orthodox. In so doing he places himself in an uncanonical situation and compels all true zealots of Orthodoxy to break communion with him. For, as St. John Chrysostom says, "he who communicates with an excommunicate is himself excommunicated".

Some people - notably, Archbishop Mark - think we should continue to have close relations with the Jerusalem Patriarchate because, like the Serbian Patriarchate, it was in communion with ROCOR in earlier decades of this century and offered it hospitality. 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 which could apply, without major changes, to the Jerusalem 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 Nikon (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 emigre hierarchs. But times change and life does not stand still. It is already 30 years since Vladyka John died, and almost 20 since Vladyka Nikon. 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."⁹⁹

The present writer remembers how, in the 1970s, the superior of the Hebron monastery, Igumen Ignaty, neither allowed members of the Moscow Patriarchate on the territory of the monastery (he drove them away with a stick!) nor commemorated the Patriarch of Jerusalem (although he had friendly relations with some members of that patriarchate). A former member of the Catacomb Church and a close friend of St. John Maximovich, Fr. Ignaty had the gifts of tears and prophecy and was revered as a saint even by the Muslims. He feared God alone, and therefore even the enemies of the faith, sensing his spiritual power, sought to kiss the hem of his garment as he walked the streets of Jerusalem. His example shows how ROCOR *could* have acted, relying on the power of faith alone.

The whole tone of Fr. George Larin's letter, quoted above, is that *of course* ROCOR should *even now* remain in communion with the Patriarch of Jerusalem. It doesn't seem to disturb him that that the Patriarch is in communion with the whole of ecumenist "World Orthodoxy", including Alexis of Moscow, that in a recent confrontation with Constantinople over its parishes in Australia Jerusalem was forced to submit to the uniate Patriarch Bartholomew, and that the secretary-general of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem,

⁹⁹ Over thirty years ago, Archbishop Averky of Jordanville wrote to Metropolitan Philaret: "With regard to the question of the Serbian Church, whose Patriarch German is a stooge of the communist Tito, as the Serbs themselves are convinced, calling him 'the red patriarch'. We have heard this from many clergy and laity who have fled from Serbia. How can we recognize, and have communion in prayer with, 'the red patriarch', who maintains the closest friendly relations with red Moscow?"

"Cannot our Hierarchical Council make *erroneous* decisions? Do we in the Orthodox Church have a doctrine about the *infallibility of every Council of Bishops*?" (Letter of September 14/27, 1966).

Metropolitan Timothy of Lydda, has 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" (*Service Orthodoxe de Presse*, № 221, September-October, 1997, p. 16).

True, Patriarch Diodorus is reported to have distanced himself from that remark. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that ROCOR has gained precious little by its fawning apology to the Patriarch, and that it is quite possible that she will lose even the limited recognition she now has from the patriarchate.

So what is the point of ROCOR's presence in Jerusalem? To have a quiet life undisturbed by any conflicts with her neighbours? In that case, she would do best to give up her ineffectual pose of pseudo-independence and join either the Patriarchate of Jerusalem or the Moscow Patriarchate's Mission in Jerusalem.

Or 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 break communion with the Patriarch of Jerusalem and firmly resist all attempts of KGB agents in cassocks to "have cups of tea" and "serve Divine services" in her monasteries.

This would undoubtedly lead to confrontation, but with God's help she would undoubtedly succeed - and encourage many other covert opponents of ecumenism in the Holy Land and elsewhere. After all, "the Truth plus one is a majority". Or, 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 has written: "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 has written, "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."

Again, a highly respected protopriest from Russia, while criticizing the Synod for going too far in one direction, criticizes 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.

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, not only on Eleon, but in the Russian Church as a whole, was.

The fact is that the provocation was not on the part of Abbess Juliana, but of KGB Agent Drozdov supported by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. And since this was a matter of principle - a matter of presenting a true confession of faith before the world's media and the world's chief "Orthodox" heresiarch - there could be no place for diplomacy here. For if diplomacy involves giving the impression of a false confession of faith for the sake of property or the friendship of the world, a true Christian can come to no other conclusion than that it is from the evil one. As the Apostle James says: "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (4.4).

4. Quo Vadis, Russian Church Abroad?

Let us turn now from the defence of Abbess Juliana to the truly most shocking aspect of this whole affair - the letter of apology to the Muslims. There can be no doubt that Metropolitan Vitaly was forced to do this by the same man who has already defied his authority in so many ways - Archbishop Mark. In fact, Mark himself admitted to Sister Marina that he had to shout at the metropolitan to make him write the letter. This is the same Archbishop Mark who, in December of last year, without the blessing of the metropolitan, met the false patriarch in Moscow, and was severely rebuked for that. Nor was he sent to the Holy Land in July at the bidding of the Synod - he 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 that December meeting.

Archbishop Mark's position in relation to Moscow is set out in a recent article in *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii* (№ 4, 1997). He begins by affirming that the events in the Holy Land should not stop attempts to overcome the schism with the Moscow Patriarchate - which, however, he says is a "division", not a "schism". Then he reviews the main obstacles to union in a perfunctory and misleading way. Finally, he calls for an All-Emigration Council to review relations with the patriarchate and to consider the question: "Is eucharistic communion possible with complete autonomy?" This shows where his thought is moving - towards making ROCOR a "completely autonomous" Church in communion with the patriarchate, like the Orthodox Church of America!

The failure to be accepted at Eleon was a setback for the MP, as was the initial failure to take over the Hebron monastery. The fact that the monastery was eventually taken over only by force was more than a setback - it was a public relations disaster, which threatened to become an international crisis as American senators, who included several Jews, prepared to berate the Russians for their collaboration with Arafat in the seizure of property belonging to an American-registered Church. However, the Moscow Patriarch's potentially disastrous defeat was deftly turned into a stunning victory through the good services of Archbishop Mark, who forced the metropolitan to apologize, and put the blame for the loss of the Hebron monastery, not on the communists or Muslims, but on - Abbess Juliana!

Protopriest Benjamin makes 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!"*

Actually, there is no hope of ROCOR getting Hebron back again. This is clear from the following report (*Church News*, August, 1997, pp. 1-2): "When two monks from the Holy Trinity Monastery in Hebron (Fathers Elias and Vladislav) expressed a desire to accompany Abbess Juliana to Chile, Archbishop Mark permitted them only to help with transporting her luggage, and then with a definite order that they return within no more than three weeks because he had assigned them to Hebron as soon as the monastery is returned to the Church Abroad! He threatened them that the responsibility for the Church Abroad not receiving back the monastery would be upon their consciences [!!!] precisely because he has no one else to send there. Both of these monks have only Russian passports and Abbess Juliana became very concerned that they might be deported from Israel by force. Therefore she applied to the Director of the Department of the Ministry for Christian Denominations, Mr. Uri Mor, asking him to suggest to Archbishop Mark that he not send those monks to Hebron. He promised this and at the same time expressed his astonishment that the Church Abroad would believe in the highly improbably possibility of Abraham's Oak being returned to her. Mor was also astonished that Archbishop Mark would appoint two monks with only Russian passports and who, therefore, might be very easily deported to Russia due to her friendly relations with the Palestinians.

"Archbishop Mark is not ashamed to be cunning: on the one hand, he fosters among the trusting members of the Church Abroad the unrealizable hope of the return of Abraham's Oak seized by the Moscow Patriarchate and, on the other, he is not afraid to send off to the punishment of the Moscow Patriarchate two monks who happened to oppose it. It seems that he 'falls between two stools', having the intention of delivering to the Moscow Patriarchate all the properties of the Church Abroad, and at the same time he is trying to avoid being called simply a traitor!"

If the idea that Archbishop Mark might actually be planning to hand over the remaining properties of the Church Abroad to the Moscow Patriarchate seems far-fetched, the following remark by his close assistant in this affair, Protopriest Victor Potapov, should convince people that such a betrayal is by no means out of the question. "We declare outright," he said in an interview with *Nezavisimaia Gazeta - Religii*, July 24, 1997), "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.*"¹⁰⁰

Further confirmation of this very real possibility is provided by the news that highly compromised and/or Soviet personnel are being moved into Jerusalem to take the place of the confessors Archimandrite Bartholomew and Abbess Juliana. Thus Archimandrite Bartholomew's position as Head of the

¹⁰⁰ Fr. Victor is also reported to have said that we shall get back Hebron, but we shall have to live together with the Moscow Patriarchate there - "you'll have to make room for them"!

Mission is to be taken by Archimandrite Alexis (Rosenthal), of whom Sister Marina (Chertkova) has written (with Abbess Juliana's approval) that he is "a most crude and insolent man.. who is no worse at administering hidings than the Palestinian police". And Abbess Juliana's place as abbess of the Eleon monastery is to be taken, according to unconfirmed reports, by Mother Moisea, of whom a former Head of the Jerusalem Mission has written: "She was often in the USSR on secular business. On leaving France she settled in Gethsemane. In his time Archimandrite Anthony (Grabbe) was warned by the Israeli police that Sister Nonna [now Mother Moisea] was known to them as a Soviet agent..." (*Church News*, June, 1997, p. 1)

Where, then, is the Russian Church Abroad going? On the evidence of the events in Hebron and Jerusalem, the answer must be: straight into the coils of the Soviet Moscow Patriarchate. Last December, when Metropolitan Vitaly vigorously rebuked Archbishop Mark for his betrayal, saying that he had "lost the gift of discernment" and that the Moscow Patriarchate was "the Church of the Antichrist", the zealots of True Orthodoxy took heart, thinking that in the person of the first-hierarchy of ROCOR, at any rate, there was a man who would withstand the antichristian onslaught coming from the KGB- and Mafia-controlled Moscow Patriarchate. However, the situation has now been entirely reversed, the metropolitan has publicly disgraced his most faithful followers, and Archbishop Mark has become the de facto ruler of ROCOR, giving him a very powerful position from which to negotiate his openly declared desire to enter into communion with the false patriarchate while retaining "complete autonomy" for the Russian Church Abroad.

In July, 1927, a physical earthquake shook Jerusalem, as if heralding the spiritual earthquakes that were to come in the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, through the notorious declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, which placed the Russian Church in de facto submission to the communists. 70 years later, the contemporary leader of the sergianist heresy has come to Jerusalem, and by a naked display of brute violence has obtained from the contemporary leaders of the anti-Sergianists, the Synod of the Russian Church Abroad, another submission to the antitheist powers, another sergianist declaration (on the precise day that the first sergianist declaration was made!) - and another condemnation of the confessors of the truth. The fact that the confessors have not suffered imprisonment or torture, but "only" a physical beating, public humiliation and exile, should not hide from us the fact that the sergianist heresy has now occupied the last bastions of the truly Orthodox Church in her heartland, Jerusalem.

Of course, with God all things are possible, and a resurrection of ROCOR is possible even now. But it will be possible only if ROCOR, on her part, outrightly rejects Archbishop Mark and his Judas-like, neosergianist betrayal of the Church into the hands of her worst enemies. It will be possible only when a return is made to obedience to the testaments of the first three first-

hierarchs of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anthony, Anastasy and Philaret, to the apostolic canons of the Church which forbid praying with heretics or recognizing their sacraments, and to the command of the Apostle of truth and love, who said: *"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds"* (II John 10,11).

*October 2/15, 1997.
Saints Cyprian and Justina.*

5. THE RIGHT WAY OF RESISTING APOSTASY: A REPLY

In the August, 1999 issue of *Uspenskij Listok*, Hieromonk Dionysius (Alferov) offers a tribute to St. John Maximovich with most of which the venerators of St. John can be in full agreement. St. John was indeed one of the miracles of twentieth-century Orthodoxy, a saint and wonderworker to be compared with the greatest hierarchs of antiquity. However, after a few paragraphs it becomes clear that the main reason why Fr. Dionysius wrote this article was not to glorify St. John, but to use St. John as a weapon with which to beat what he calls the “ultra-rightists” in the contemporary Russian Church – that is, those who consider the Moscow Patriarchate to be a graceless organisation. The purpose of this article is to consider what relationship the supposed views of St. John have to the contemporary debate on the status of the MP.

First, what do we know about St. John’s views on the MP? The answer, surprisingly, is: very little. As far as the present writer knows, he never expressed himself in public on the presence or absence of grace in the MP. What we do know is that once, in Shanghai shortly after the last war, St. John commemorated Metropolitan Anastasy of ROCOR together with Patriarch Alexis of the MP. What we also know is that in a letter to Metropolitan Anastasy St. John later very humbly *repented* of this act (the letter was seen by Anastasia Georgievna Shatilova in the archives of the ROCOR Synod).

Some have pointed to a certain “liberalism” practised by St. John in relation to “World Orthodoxy” in general. There seems to be some foundation for believing that St. John was a “liberal”, not so much in his evaluation of the errors of “World Orthodoxy” (in relation to which he could be strict, - cf. his article on the decline of the Ecumenical Patriarchate), as in the method of his reception of people from World Orthodoxy. Thus it is known that he admitted the fledgling Dutch Orthodox Church into communion from the MP without insisting that they immediately change from the new to the old calendar – although he was so attached to the Old Calendar that even in civil letters he always used only the Old Calendar date. Again, Metropolitan Philaret of Blessed Memory recounts in one of his letters that he was forced to rebuke St. John once for making hardly any distinction, in the matter of eucharistic communion, between the flock of ROCOR and that of the Evlogians in Paris – although St. John had strongly condemned the Eulogian heresy of Sophianism.

What conclusion are we to draw from this “liberalism”? I believe that we cannot draw any clear conclusion about St. John’s views on the ecclesiological status of the MP or “World Orthodoxy” in his time. The most we can conclude, it seems to me, is that: (a) he once made a serious error in commemorating the Soviet patriarch, of which he immediately and sincerely repented, and (b) in regard to the laypeople of other jurisdictions he practised

the maximum degree of “economy” or condescension, judging that in our extremely difficult and confusing times such loving condescension was indeed the most appropriate way of building up the Church of Christ.

But let us suppose for a moment that Fr. Dionysius is right, and that St. John was a “liberal”, not only in his method of receiving people from the jurisdictions of “World Orthodoxy”, but also in his estimate of those jurisdictions’ ecclesiastical status. What follows from this in regard to the contemporary debate on the status of the MP?

Again the answer is: very little.

First, let us bear in mind that St. John died in 1966, a full generation ago, when the pan-heresy of ecumenism was only just beginning to penetrate the Slavic Churches (the MP joined the World Council of Churches in 1961, and the Serbian Patriarch became president of the WCC in 1965). It was still some years to ROCOR’s definitive condemnation of ecumenism in 1983. Even if St. John had been a “liberal” in his lifetime, there is no reason at all to believe that he would have dissociated himself from his Synod’s anathema against ecumenism if he had lived to 1983, still less if he had lived to 1999. The heresy and apostasy of the MP, like all apostatical movements in history, developed and deepened over time. What reason can there be for believing that the thinking of such a holy man as St. John would not also have developed in response to the changing situation?

Secondly, the infallible voice of the Church is not to be identified with the voice of any individual father of the Church, however holy, but only with the *consensus* of the Fathers. There are many cases of individual fathers making pronouncements which have not been accepted by the Church as a whole. As Fr. Basil Lurye writes, commenting on the 15th canon of the First-and-Second Council of Constantinople: *“‘The fathers’ are accepted only as the consensus patrum (‘the agreement of the fathers’, ‘the council of the fathers’), that is, those patristic judgements which were not contested in council by other fathers.’*¹⁰¹

If we make the mistake of identifying the opinion of this or that individual father or saint on this question with the infallible voice of the Church, we may find ourselves labelling undoubted saints of the Church as either “ultra-rightists” or “ultra-leftists”, to use Fr. Dionysius’ terminology. For example, let us take the case of holy Hieroconfessor Victor, Bishop of Vyatka, who was recently recommended for canonisation by a commission of the MP on the basis of the incorruption of his relics and the many miracles that have been wrought at his shrine.¹⁰² He was perhaps the very first hierarch to separate

¹⁰¹ “Pravilo 15 sobora dvukratnogo: otvet chitatel'mu”, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 5 (50), May, 1999, p. 40.

¹⁰² Anna Ilyinskaya, “Obretenie chestnykh moschej sviashchenno-ispovednika Viktora Viatskago”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 17 (1638), 1/14 September, 1999, pp. 5-7.

from Metropolitan Sergius in 1927, and his condemnation of Sergius was about as "extreme" as it was possible to be. Thus he called Sergianism "worse than heresy", and in his last known letter, of unknown date, he wrote: "In his destructive and treacherous actions against the Church, Metropolitan Sergius has also committed a terrible blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which according to the unlying word of Christ will never be forgiven him, neither in this life, nor in the life to come.

"'He who does not gather with Me,' says the Lord, 'scatters.' 'Either recognize the tree (the Church) as good and its fruit as good, or recognize the tree as bad and its fruit as bad' (Matthew 12.33). 'Therefore I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto me, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto me' (Matthew 12.31). 'Fulfilling the measure of his sin,' Metropolitan Sergius together with his Synod, by his ukaz of October 8/21, 1927, is introducing a new formula of commemoration.

"Mixing together into one, despite the word of God, the 'faithful with the unfaithful' (II Corinthians 6.14-18), the Holy Church and those fighting to the death against her, in the great and most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the metropolitan by this blasphemy of his destroys the prayerful meaning of the great sacrament and its grace-filled significance for the eternal salvation of the souls of Orthodox believers. Hence the service becomes not only graceless because of the gracelessness of the celebrant, but an abomination in the eyes of God, and for that reason both the celebrant and he who participates in it subject themselves to severe condemnation.

"Being in all his activity an anti-church heretic, as transforming the Holy Orthodox Church from the house of the grace-filled salvation of believers into a graceless, carnal organization deprived of the spirit of life, Metropolitan Sergius has at the same time, through his conscious renunciation of the truth and in his mindless betrayal of Christ, become an open apostate from God the Truth.

"Without a formal external trial by the Church (which cannot be carried out on him), he 'is self-condemned' (Titus 3.10-11); he has ceased to be what he was - a 'server of the truth', according to the word: 'Let his habitation be desolate, and let no one live in it; and his office let another take' (Acts 1.20)."¹⁰³

Now according to Fr. Dionysius' criterion, St. Victor must surely be considered an "ultra-rightist", because, in spite of his living right at the beginning of the Sergianist schism and a full generation before the MP's acceptance of the heresy of ecumenism., he nevertheless has the audacity to call the MP "graceless". But Fr. Dionysius does not call St. Victor an "ultra-

¹⁰³ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Svyatejshego Tikhona, Patriarkha Moskovskogo i Vseia Rossii*, Moscow: St. Tikhon's Theological Institute, 1994, pp. 634-35

rightist", nor the very many new Russian martyrs and confessors who shared his opinion, nor Metropolitan Philaret of Blessed Memory who likewise declared the MP to be graceless. And yet if he is not prepared to call these holy fathers "ultra-rightist", he should withdraw that label from the contemporary zealots of Orthodoxy who assert the same thing, but on even stronger and more extensive evidence than was available to St. Victor or Metropolitan Philaret!

And yet our aim is not to establish the opinion of St. Victor or Metropolitan Philaret as expressing the infallible voice of the Church in opposition to the supposed opinion of St. John Maximovich. The essential point is that it is not the opinion of this or that father that must be accepted by all Orthodox Christians, but only *the consensus of the fathers*. Fr. Dionysius offers no compelling reason to believe that the consensus of the fathers is to be identified with his "moderate" opinion on the status of the MP, even if he could convincingly enlist St. John in his support.

So what is the consensus of the fathers on this matter? That is another question which is too large to be broached within the limits of this small article. What we can assert, however, is that God has both accepted and glorified men and women holding different opinions on the status of the MP but having in common their refusal to have any communion with the traitors who have rent apart the seamless coat of the Russian Church. There may come a time – it may have come already – when such diversity of opinion is no longer permissible. One thing is certain: labelling as "ultra rightists" the zealots of Orthodoxy in a cause for which thousands if not millions of True Orthodox Christians have already given their lives is *not* the right way to resist apostasy.

October 25 / November 7, 1999.

(First published in Russian in *Vertograd-Inform*, N 1 (58), January, 2000, pp. 40-42)

6. THE CHURCH THAT STALIN BUILT

The Church of the living God is founded upon a most solid Rock – and that Rock is Christ (Matthew 16.18; I Corinthians 10.4). The churches of dead gods – that is, of mortals who have been raised to the status of gods by their deluded followers – are founded upon less solid and attractive materials. Thus the Roman Catholic church is founded upon the pride of the eleventh-century Pope Gregory VII, who declared that he could judge all bishops and kings, that he himself was above all judgement, and that all popes were saints by the virtue of St. Peter. The Lutheran church is founded upon the folly of the German monk Martin Luther, who married a nun and declared (very conveniently in his particular case) that good works are not necessary for salvation. The Anglican church is founded upon the lust of the English King Henry VIII, who created his own church in order to grant himself a divorce from his first wife (he married five more and killed several of them). The contemporary Ecumenical Patriarchate is founded upon the ambition of the Greek patriarch Meletius Metaxakis, a Freemason who introduced the new calendar, “deposed” Patriarch Tikhon and died, screaming that he had destroyed Orthodoxy. The contemporary Moscow Patriarchate is founded upon the cruelty and the cunning of Joseph Stalin, “the most wise generalissimo and leader of all the peoples”, but also the greatest persecutor of the Church in the history of Christianity....

Just as the True Church is created in the image and likeness of its Founder, and displays His virtues in its members, so false churches are made in the image and the likeness of those who created them, and display the characteristic vices of their founders. Thus the Moscow Patriarchate is particularly distinguished by its cruelty and its cunning. Its cruelty was particularly evident in the first decades of its existence, when the deaths of many True Orthodox Christians were caused by the denunciations of their pseudo-Orthodox “fathers” and “brothers”. Its cunning has been particularly evident in recent, post-Soviet times, when, not being able to rely on the power of the State to eliminate its rivals as “counter-revolutionaries”, it has come to rely more on clever admixtures of truth and falsehood in order to deceive the believing population. A good example of such cunning is to be found in the article, “A Church for Valentine (Rusantsov)”, by MP Priest Alexander Bragar.¹⁰⁴

Bragar’s target is, of course, Archbishop Valentine of Suzdal and Vladimir, first-hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC) and the leader of the True Orthodox, anti-patriarchal forces in Russia. However, rather than attempting to answer any of the very serious and weighty accusations that ROAC has made against the MP, or draw a comparison between Archbishop Valentine and his main ideological opponent, Patriarch

¹⁰⁴ “Tserkov’ dlia Valentina (Rusantsova)”, *Pravoslavnaia Suzdal’*, № 3 (13), 2000, pp. 8-9.

Alexis (Ridiger), which could only turn out to the disadvantage of Ridiger and the “church of the evil-doers”, Bragar adopts the indirect route and methods of the serpent.

One of these methods is *the misleading association of names*. For example, Bragar at one point links Archbishop Valentine with “odious personalities like Michael Ardov and Gleb Yakunin”. The highly-respected Moscow Protopriest Michael Ardov is indeed under the omophorion of Archbishop Valentine, and his frequent and impressive appearances on television and radio have evidently been a thorn in the side of the MP’s propaganda bosses. But what has he to do with Gleb Yakunin? Nothing at all. Not only does Fr. Gleb not belong to ROAC, but rather to the schismatic “Kievan Patriarchate” of Philaret Denisenko, which ROAC does not recognize: his views are quite different from Fr. Michael’s. Yakunin is a democrat: Ardov is a monarchist. Yakunin is an ecumenist: Ardov is an anti-ecumenist. So what is the purpose of linking two such different men, and both with Archbishop Valentine? *To smear Archbishop Valentine by association with the unpopular democrat and ecumenist Yakunin*. Both are opponents of the patriarchate: but there the resemblance ends. One opposes the patriarchate for one set of reasons: the other for a different set of reasons. But only a few readers will be expected to know these differences. The association has been planted in the readers’ minds, and there, it is hoped, it will fester and bring forth evil fruit...

Another well-tried method of the evil one is: divide and conquer. Thus the recent (1995) schism between ROAC and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCORA) is exploited for all its worth by Bragar. His history of the schism is confused and confusing – whether deliberately or not, it is difficult to tell. However, his purpose is clear: to represent Archbishop Valentine as a power-loving schismatic, whose ambition is to prevent the reunion of ROCORA with the “mother church” of the Moscow Patriarchate. As he writes: “His purpose is by all means to hinder this rapprochement, to deepen the schism in the relations between the two parts of the one Russian Orthodox Church” (p. 9).

What a revealing admission! So Archbishop Valentine and ROAC are seen by the Moscow Patriarchate as the main stumbling-block to the final apostasy of ROCORA through its union with the false church! So Archbishop Valentine stands like a contemporary St. Mark of Ephesus, whose decisive “nyet” to the unia with the contemporary eastern pope of sergianist-ecumenist papism, Alexis Ridiger, is so worrying to the latter that he must first, through his fifth columnists in ROCORA such as Archbishop Mark of Germany and Great Britain (Bragar’s praise of Mark is embarrassingly oleaginous), engineer his expulsion from ROCORA, and then, when ROCORA has been effectively neutralized and the remaining opponents of the unia have regrouped under the banner of ROAC, portray him as a traitor to the glorious traditions of ROCORA!

There are many ironies here. ROCOR, which once was “bad”, is now “good” – because its foreign hierarchs have now all adopted positions of greater or lesser compromise in relation to the MP¹⁰⁵, and, above all, because they have fulfilled the task given them by Moscow of expelling Moscow’s most dangerous enemy from their midst. ROCOR is now “good” for another important reason: in the person of Archbishop Mark it has renounced the Catacomb Church, loyalty to which was ROOR’s *raison d’être* for so many years. Thus he quotes with approval Mark’s unbelievable slander: “The real Catacomb Church no longer exists. It in effect disappeared in the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s... Only individuals have been preserved from it, and in essence everything that arose after it is only pitiful reflections, and people who take what they desire for what is real.”

Even while trying to “whiten” ROCOR and “blacken” ROAC, Bragar makes some very important admissions. Thus he admits that Archbishop Mark, though a foreign bishop, created two deaneries on the territory of Russian bishops inside Russia, and that “the Hierarchical Synod of ROCOR did not object” to this flagrantly uncanonical action (p. 8). Again, he admits that Bishop Barnabas of Cannes, another foreign bishop with no right to interfere in the dioceses of the Russian bishops, “considered himself the first arrival on the Russian land and decided that he had the complete right to subject to his administration all the catacombniks and the newly formed parishes on the territory of the former USSR” (p. 8). Archbishop Mark and Bishop Barnabas were Archbishop Valentine’s chief enemies and slanderers....

Again, Bragar admits that Archbishop Valentine “smelt a rat” in the “Act” that the Lesna Sobor forced him to sign in December, 1994 – and he explains why there was indeed a rat at the bottom of that barrel: “It was proposed that the parishes of ROCOR on the territory of Russia be divided into 6 dioceses, and that at the head of three of them should be placed [the newly ordained] Bishop Eutyches” (p. 9) – which meant a further invasion into the dioceses of the existing Russian bishops and the threat that *all* the parishes would be forced to re-register with the authorities, which in turn meant that the MP would be able to stop the re-registration and even demand that the parish churches be handed over to it!

An intelligent person, even one not well acquainted with the history of these events, might well draw the conclusion – the correct conclusion – from Bragar’s account that Archbishop Valentine was under concerted attack from the foreign bishops, that this attack was orchestrated by Archbishop Mark, and that his expulsion from ROCOR was perfectly in the interests of the MP.

¹⁰⁵ For a detailed justification of this claim, see the recent brochure issued by the former ROCOR parish in Tsaritsyn, “Sol’ obuvayet – tserkov’ perestaet byt’ tserkov’nyu!” (Volgograd, 2000).

So thank you, Fr. Alexander! Unwittingly and unwillingly, you have been a witness to the truth!

And indeed the truth is more powerful than any slander or cunning. Even while under fierce attack from both the MP and ROCOR, ROAC under Archbishop Valentine continues to grow in strength. A steady stream of catacomb and former ROCOR parishes continues to join it. Many now see that ROAC is the true heir of the traditions both of the Catacomb Church inside Russia and of the true ROCOR – the ROCOR of Metropolitans Anthony, Anastasy and Philaret – outside Russia. The church built by Stalin can never prevail against the Church built by God Himself, Whose “strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Corinthians 12.9).

*June 30 / July 13, 2000.
Synaxis of the Holy Twelve Apostles.*

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7. ORTHODOXY, THE STATE AND RUSSIAN STATEHOOD

My Kingdom is not of this world.

John 18.36

*The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ,
and He shall reign for ever and ever.*

Revelation 11.15

Introduction

What is the State? What is its origin and purpose? What are the obligations of the Christian to the State? In what circumstances should the Christian disobey the State? Are there any circumstances in which the Christian should rise up in rebellion against the State?

These questions – and especially the last two – have become particularly important for Orthodox Christians in the last two centuries, often dividing them into bitterly opposed camps. Thus in 1821 the Greeks of Europe rebelled against the Ottoman Turkish empire, for which they were anathematised by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, leading to a schism between the patriarchate and the newly-formed Church of Greece. Again, in 1918 the Russian Orthodox Church anathematised the Bolsheviki and all those who co-operated with them. But in 1927 Metropolitan Sergius initiated a policy of active co-operation with Soviet power, which led to a schism between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Catacomb Church that has lasted to the present day.

Let us try to establish certain principles to help us to orient ourselves in such conflicts, which are likely to intensify as we approach the time of the Antichrist.

1. The Origin and Purpose of the State

In the beginning of human history – that is, in Paradise, - there was no such thing as political life. Some heterodox thinkers, such as Thomas Aquinas, in their concern to demonstrate the essential goodness of the state have argued that the rudiments of the State already existed in the Garden, with Adam ruling like a king over Eve.¹⁰⁶ But this is an artificial schema. The *Church* may indeed be said to have existed in Paradise – as we read in *The Order of Orthodoxy for the Week of Orthodoxy*: “This is our God, providing for and

¹⁰⁶ J.S. McClelland writes: “Thomas argues that there must have been political life before the Fall. Some form of rulership must have existed in the Garden of Eden. Thomas accepts Aristotle’s opinion that men are naturally superior to women, so he infers that God must have wanted Eve to be guided by Adam; only then would life in the garden have been complete” (*A History of Western Political Thought*, Routledge: London and New York, 1996, p. 116).

sustaining His beloved inheritance, the Holy Church, comforting the forefathers who had fallen away through sin with His unlying Word, laying the foundation for Her already in Paradise..."¹⁰⁷ But the *State*, while also from God and therefore good as such, is a product of the Fall and would never have been necessary if Adam had not sinned. As Metropolitan Anastasius (Gribanovsky) of New York writes: "Political power appeared on earth only after the fall of the first people. In Paradise the overseer's shout was not heard. Man can never forget that he was once royally free, and that political power appeared as the quit-rent of sin."¹⁰⁸

The State is necessary to fallen, sinful man because "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6.23), and the purpose of the State is, not to conquer death in man – only Christ in the Church can do that – but to slow down its spread, to enable man to *survive*, both as an individual and as a species. To survive he needs to unite in communities with other men, forming families, tribes and, eventually, states. This process is aided, of course, by the fact that man is social by nature, and comes into the world already as a member of a family. So, contrary to the teaching of some heterodox thinkers, such as Thomas Hobbes, it is not only out of fear that men unite into large groups, but out of the natural bonds of family life. In this sense the state is simply the family writ large.

And since the family naturally has a single head, the father, so the state naturally has a single head, the king. Hieromonk Dionysius writes: "Both the familial and the monarchical systems are established by God for the earthly existence of sinful, fallen man. The first-formed man, abiding in living communion with God, was not subject to anyone except God, and was lord over the irrational creatures. But when man sinned and destroyed the Divine hierarchy of submission, having fallen away from God – he became the slave of sin and the devil, and as a result of this became subject to a man like himself. The sinful will of man demands submission for the limitation of his own destructive activity. This Divine establishment has in mind only the good of man – the limitation of the spread of sin. And history itself confirms that whatever may be the defects of monarchy, they cannot compare with the evil brought upon men by revolution and anarchy."¹⁰⁹

Now states issue *laws*, which determine what is a *crime* and what is to be the *punishment* for crime. To the extent that the laws are good, and well executed, the people can live in peace and pursue the aim for which God placed them on the earth – the salvation of their souls for eternity. To the

¹⁰⁷ Cf. the second epistle attributed to St. Clement of Rome: "The Church does not now exist for the first time, but comes from on high; for she was spiritual, and was manifested in the last days that He might save us" (XIV, 1).

¹⁰⁸ Metropolitan Anastasius, *Besedy s sobstvennym serdtsem*, 1935, p. 159; reprinted in *Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Calendar for 1998*, Jordanville, 1998.

¹⁰⁹ Hieromonk Dionysius, Priest Timothy Alferov, *O Tserkvi, Pravoslavnom Tsarstve i Poslednem Vremeni*, Moscow: "Russkaia Idea", 1998, p. 15.

extent that they are bad, and/or badly executed, not only is it much more difficult for men to pursue the supreme aim of their existence: the very existence of future generations is put in jeopardy.

The difference between sin and crime is that whereas sin is transgression of the law of God only, crime is transgression both of the law of God and of the law of man as defined by the State. The first sin, that of Adam and Eve in the garden, was punished by their expulsion from Paradise, or the Church – that is, from communion with God. The second sin, that of Abel's murder of his brother Cain, was, according to every legal code in every civilised state, a crime as well as a sin. But since there was as yet no state, it was God Himself Who imposed the punishment – expulsion from the society of men (“a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth” (Genesis 4.12)). The paradox is that Cain was the builder of the first state in recorded history, a city, as he fled from the presence of the Lord (Genesis 4.16,17) ...

The fact that the first state was founded by the first murderer has cast a shadow over statehood ever since. On the one hand, the State exists in order to curb sin in its crudest and most destructive aspects, and to that extent it is of Christ, “Who rules in the kingdom of men, [and] gives it to whomever He will” (Daniel 4.17). On the other hand, the greatest and most destructive crimes known to man have been committed precisely by the State, and to that extent it is an evil phenomenon, permitted but not blessed by God – for God sometimes “sets over it the lowest of men” (Daniel 4.17). Moreover, since Cain and at least until Saul and the kings of Israel, all states known to man were not only the main agents both of mass murder and of slavery, but were also worshippers of demons who compelled their citizens to worship demons, too. And if Blessed Augustine, in his famous book, *The City of God*, could see the Providence and Justice of God working even in the most antichristian states and institutions, this could not prevent him from taking a most pessimistic view of the origin and nature of most states (even the Roman).¹¹⁰

St. Augustine traced the history of two lines of men descending from Seth and Cain respectively - the City of God, or the community of those who are saved, and the City of Man, or the community of those who are damned. The City of God is not to be identified with the Church (because the Church contains both good and bad), nor is the City of Man to be identified with the State (because the State contains both good and bad). Nevertheless, the Church is clearly closer to the first pole as the State is to the second....

This is the reason why the history of Church-State relations until Constantine the Great is a history of almost perpetual conflict. Thus until David and the foundation of the state of Israel, the people of God – that is, the Church – was not associated with any state, but was constantly being

¹¹⁰ St. Augustine, *The City of God*, XIX, 15.

persecuted by contemporary rulers, as Moses and the Israelites were by Pharaoh.

And this symbolises a deeper truth: that the people of God, spiritually speaking, have *never* lived in states, but have always been stateless wanderers, desert people, as it were; "for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Hebrews 13.14). We seek, that is, the City of God, the new Jerusalem, which is to be fully revealed only in the age to come (Revelation 21-22).

On the other hand, the people who reject God are spiritually speaking citizens of the kingdoms of this earth, rooted in the earth of worldly cares and desires. That is why they like to build huge urban states and civilisations that enable them to satisfy these desires to the maximum extent. It is not by accident, therefore, that Cain and his immediate descendants were the creators not only of cities, but also of all the cultural and technological inventions that make city life so alluring to fallen man.

For, as New Hieroconfessor Barnabas, Bishop of Pechersk, writes: "In its original source culture is the fruit, not of the fallen human spirit in general, but a consequence of its exceptional darkening in one of the primordial branches of the race of Adam... The Cainites have only one aim - the construction of a secure, carnal, material life, whatever the cost. They understood, of course, that the Seed of the Woman, the Promised Deliverer from evil that is coming at the end of the ages, will never appear in their descendants, so, instead of humbling themselves and repenting, the Cainites did the opposite: in blasphemous despair and hatred towards God, they gave themselves over irrevocably to bestial passions and the construction on earth of their kingdom, which is continually fighting against the Kingdom of God."¹¹¹

The Cainites eventually became the overwhelming majority of mankind, corrupting even most of the Sethites. Thus Josephus writes: "This posterity of Seth continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe, and to have an entire regard to virtue, for seven generations; but in process of time they were perverted...

"But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their disposition, and their actions for the better: but seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of the land."¹¹²

¹¹¹ Bishop Barnabas, *Pravoslavie*, Kolomna: New Golutvin monastery, 1995, pp. 128, 129.

¹¹² Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, I, 3.

He departed, and entered, the Ark. And then God destroyed the whole Cainite civilisation in the Great Flood. So statehood in its first historical examples was demonic and antichristian and was destroyed by the just judgement of God.

Immediately after the Flood God commands Noah to establish a system of justice that is the embryo of statehood as it should be: "The blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man" (Genesis 9.5-6). Commenting on these words, Protopriest Basil Boshchansky writes, that they "give the blessing of God to that institution which appeared in defence of human life" – that is, the State.¹¹³

As Henry Morris explains: "The word 'require' is a judicial term, God appearing as a judge who exacts a strict and severe penalty for infraction of a sacred law. If a beast kills a man, the beast must be put to death (note also Exodus 21.28). If a man kills another man (wilfully and culpably, it is assumed), then he also must be put to death by 'every man's brother'. This latter phrase is not intended to initiate family revenge slayings, of course, but rather to stress that all men are responsible to see that this justice is executed. At the time these words were first spoken, all men indeed were blood brothers; for only the three sons of Noah were living at the time, other than Noah himself. Since all future people would be descended from these three men and their wives, in a very real sense all men *are* brothers, because all were once in the loins of these three brothers. This is in essence a command to establish a formal system of human government, in order to assure that justice is carried out, especially in the case of murder. The authority to execute this judgement of God on a murderer was thus delegated to man."¹¹⁴

But not to every man. The authority to pronounce the judgement of God on a man can only be given to men whom God has appointed to judge – that is, to political rulers. For, as E. Kholmogorov writes, "everywhere in Scripture an opposition is presupposed between the power of the leader and the position of the citizen, of him who is subject to the leader. The work that is done by the leader for the sake of the common good, to preserve order, does not belong to the jurisdiction of the private person, and if it did belong to the private person, there would be no need of leadership...

"What precisely are the obligations laid upon leaders, what constitutes the essence of the power of the leader?

¹¹³ Boshchansky, *Zhizn' vo Khriste*, in *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, №№ 3-4, May-August, 1998, p. 41.

¹¹⁴ Morris, *The Genesis Record*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1976, p. 224.

“The first is the power of discernment – the power of the judge. The essence and meaning of the power of leadership consists in distinguishing between what is good and what is bad, and in rewarding each man in accordance with justice. Leadership is first of all the moral, ethical practice of unceasingly distinguishing that which is in agreement with natural virtue and the commandments of God from that which is contrary to them and dangerous for them. Therefore, as the Apostle Paul says: ‘The leaders are terrible not for good works, but for the evil. Do you not want to fear the authorities? Do good and you will receive praise from them...’” (Romans 13.3). The power of the leader is first of all the power of the judge, the right to say: ‘yes’ and ‘no’, so it presupposes a special responsibility and a special weighing of each decision. For this reason alone it cannot belong to everyone. A remarkable witness to this is given in Scripture in the story about Moses: ‘And he went out the second day and behold, two Hebrews were quarrelling; and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?” Then he said, **Who made you a prince and a judge over us?** Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?’” (Exodus 2.13-14). And truly – there was nowhere Moses could at that time receive power over the people of Israel, he had no right either to judge or to say with authority: “Why are you doing wrong?” And so the one who was doing wrong rejected his authority, he saw in Moses’ claim to judge only one foundation – the threat of using arms, the notorious “right of the mighty”, but with the aid of this right Moses could neither establish justice nor assume leadership over the people. For that reason he fled into the wilderness, and returned already as one having power, having been established as Leader by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... Only with this establishment did he receive both the power to judge and the power to restrain that proceeds from it...

“The second power belonging to the leader is the power of restraining, the power of the sword, which proceeds from the power to discern, the power of judgement. After good and evil have been distinguished and a verdict has been reached – the punishing sword of the leader must fall on the head of the lawless one and crush it. States without the power of punishment that is in accordance with the Christian principles of power, without a death penalty and without the right to wage war, simply do not exist. A power built without the death penalty and war as weapons against evil would be an unchristian and unevangelical power, it would directly contradict the teaching on the essence of power given by the holy Apostle Paul: ‘If you do evil, fear, for he does not wield the sword in vain: he is a servant of God, an avenger to punish him who does evil’” (Romans 13.4). If the authorities refused to apply the sword given them, if their refusal were not motivated by compassion for a particular penitent evildoer, but were principled, it would be a direct refusal of the service for which they had been established by God. That is why the Old and New Testaments are full of witnesses to the necessity of the power of the sword to restrain moral evil from bursting its limits. Only violence is condemned, that is, the power of the sword without the power of judgement,

the sword applied not in accordance with righteousness, not to avenge evil, but to restrict the righteous man.

“We can understand that the power of sword, being bound to the power of judgement, cannot belong to everyone, but only to him who is vested with the power to judge. The power of the sword is placed in the service of judgement and constitutes a special service in society, the service of *restraining*... The very concept of restraining, of him who restrains [II Thessalonians 2.7], is imbued with deep meaning. It leads to the idea of the fence, of the special obstacle which stands in the way of the invasion of evil into everyday life, and of the guard who prevents such an invasion... It is precisely this idea that the Orthodox Church puts into her teaching on the Christian Kingdom and on the Tsar who stands at its head – the one who restrains, ο κατεχων, the one person entitled to bear the power of judging and punishing... The Christian Kingdom constitutes the fence of the Church, the fence of the whole Christian community, the fence whose existence is part of God’s fulfilment of our petition in prayer: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”. Of course, this petition mainly refers to our personal inner spiritual life, to its fencing off from the actions of demons... But it also applies to external life. All states that are well constructed, which are erected in agreement with the given apostolic model, protect each of us from a mass of temptations. The existence of the city watch and our hoping on it guard us from unexpected murders, in which it is sometimes very difficult to draw the line between “necessary defence” and unreasonable “caution” which can cost an innocent his life. Appealing to the authorities makes it possible for us, in hundreds of cases, to avoid defiling our hands with reprisal against one who has done wrong, and not only with reprisal itself, but also with the bad feelings bound up with it – anger, hatred, the temptation to cross the boundary where retribution ends and revenge begins... We who are accustomed to stable state institutions, and who have never really encountered absence of authority and chaos, cannot even imagine the full degree of sinfulness involved in *lawlessness and anarchy* – an existence defined neither by the law nor by the sword of the leader. Every day the Christian would be forced to encounter a situation in which he would be presented with a choice, not between sin and virtue, but between a greater sin and a lesser sin; he would sin, not through passion, not through arbitrariness, but simply through the necessity of living...

“The reason why the army and police exist, and are separate from us, having a special line and form of being, - and are separate from us, moreover, from ancient times, - is in order to deliver us from the many temptations linked with the application of force, to free us from the very heavy occupation of the soldier and the executioner...

"The very idea of leadership and the judging and punishing functions of this leadership are undoubtedly established by God. And the just fulfilment of these functions is a service rendered to God."¹¹⁵

In the Old Testament the Lord established the sacrament of anointing to the kingdom: "I have found David My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed him" (Psalms 88.19). Even certain pagan kings were given an invisible anointing to rule justly and help the people of God, such as Cyrus of Persia (Isaiah 45.1). This was a foreshadowing of the role to be played by the greatest of the pagan kingdoms, Rome...

2. Orthodoxy and the Roman Empire

When the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of heaven, was born as a man on earth, He was immediately enrolled as a citizen of an earthly kingdom, the Roman Empire. In fact, His birth, which marked the beginning of the Eternal Kingdom of God on earth, coincided almost exactly with the birth of the Roman Empire under its first emperor, Augustus. For several of the Holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, this coincidence pointed to a certain special mission of the Roman empire, as if the Empire, being born at the same time as Christ, was Divinely established to be a vehicle for the spreading of the Gospel to all nations. Thus St. Leo the Great, Pope of Rome, wrote: "Divine Providence fashioned the Roman Empire, the growth of which was extended to boundaries so wide that all races everywhere became next-door neighbours. For it was particularly germane to the Divine scheme that many kingdoms should be bound together under a single government, and that the world-wide preaching should have a swift means of access to all people, over whom the rule of a single state held sway."¹¹⁶

The empire was to create a political unity that would help and protect the spiritual unity created by the Church; it was to be *the Guardian of the Ark*. As an epistle accepted by the Seventh Ecumenical Council put it some centuries later, when the empire was already Christian: "The priest is the sanctification and strengthening of the Emperor's power, and the Emperor's power is the power and steadfastness of the priesthood."¹¹⁷

On the face of it, this was a very bold and paradoxical teaching. After all, the people of God at the beginning of the Christian era were the Jews, not the Romans. The Romans were pagans; they worshipped demons, not the True God Who had revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In 63 B.C. they had actually conquered the people of God, and their rule was bitterly resented. In 70 A.D. they destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in a campaign

¹¹⁵ E. Kholmogorov, "O Khristianskom tsarstve i 'voorushennom narode'", *Tserkovnost'*, № 1, 2000.

¹¹⁶ St. Leo, *Sermon* 32, *P.L.* 54, col. 423.

¹¹⁷ *Deyania Vselenskikh Soborov*, volume 7, Kazan, 1891, p. 98.

of appalling cruelty and scattered the Jews over the face of the earth. How could Old Rome, the Rome of Nero and Titus and Domitian and Diocletian, possibly be construed as working with God rather than against Him?

The solution to this paradox is to be found in an examination of two encounters recounted in the Gospel between Christ and two “rulers of this world” – Satan and Pontius Pilate.

In the first, Satan takes Christ onto a high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of this world in a moment of time. “And the devil said to Him, ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will make obeisance before Me, all will be Yours.’ And Jesus answered and said to him: ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, You shall make obeisance to the Lord your God, and Him only will you worship.’” (Luke 4.6-8).

Thus up to that time Satan had control over all the kingdoms of the world – but by might, the might given him by the sins of men, not by right. As St. Cyril of Alexandria exclaims: “How can you promise that which is not yours? Who made you heir of God’s kingdom? Who made you lord of all under heaven? You have seized these things by fraud. Restore them, therefore, to the incarnate Son, the Lord of all...”¹¹⁸

And indeed, the Lord accepted neither Satan’s lordship over the world, nor the satanism that was so closely associated with the pagan statehood of the ancient world (insofar as the pagan god-kings often demanded worship of themselves as gods). He came to restore true statehood, which recognises the ultimate supremacy only of the one true God, and which demands veneration of the earthly ruler, but worship only of the Heavenly King. And since, by the time of the Nativity of Christ, all the major pagan kingdoms had been swallowed up in Rome, it was to the transformation of Roman statehood that the Lord came in the first place.

For, as K.V. Glazkov writes: “The good news announced by the Lord Jesus Christ could not leave untransfigured a single one of the spheres of man’s life. One of the acts of our Lord Jesus Christ consisted in bringing the heavenly truths to the earth, in instilling them into the consciousness of mankind with the aim of its spiritual regeneration, in restructuring the laws of communal life on new principles announced by Christ the Saviour, in the creation of a Christian order of this communal life, and, consequently, in a radical change of pagan statehood. Proceeding from here it becomes clear what place the Church must occupy in relation to the state. It is not the place of an opponent from a hostile camp, not the place of a warring party, but the place of a pastor in relation to his flock, the place of a loving father in relation to his lost

¹¹⁸ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke*, Homily 12, New York: Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 89.

children. Even in those moments when there was not and could not be any unanimity or union between the Church and the State, Christ the Saviour forbade the Church to stand on one side from the state, still less to break all links with it, saying: 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's' (Luke 20.25)."¹¹⁹

Let us now turn to the second time Christ confronted a ruler of this world – His trial before Pilate. While acknowledging that the power of this representative of Caesar was lawful, the Lord at the same time insists that Pilate's and Caesar's power derived from God, the true King and Lawgiver. For "you could have no power at all against Me," He says to Pilate, "unless it had been given to you from above" (John 19.11). These words, paradoxically, both limit Caesar's power, insofar as it is subject to God's, and strengthen it, by indicating that it has God's seal and blessing in principle (if not in all its particular manifestations).

And He continues: "Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." The one who delivered Christ to Pilate was Caiaphas, chief priest of the Jews. For, as is well known (to all except contemporary ecumenist Christians), it was the Jews, His own people, who condemned Christ for blasphemy and demanded His execution at the hands of the Roman authorities in the person of Pontius Pilate. Since Pilate was not interested in the charge of blasphemy, the only way in which the Jews could get their way was to accuse Christ of fomenting rebellion against Rome – a hypocritical charge, since it was precisely the Jews, not Christ, who were planning revolution.¹²⁰ Not only did Pilate not believe this accusation: he did everything he could to have Christ released, giving in only when he feared that the Jews were about to start a riot and denounce him to the emperor in Rome. Thus it was the Jews, not the Romans, who were primarily responsible for the death of Christ.

This has the consequence that, insofar Pilate could have used his God-given power to save the Lord from an unjust death, Roman state power appears in this situation as the potential, if not yet the actual, protector of Christ from His fiercest enemies. In other words, already during the life of Christ, we see the future role of Rome as "he who restrains" the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7) and the guardian of the Body of Christ...

In the trial of Christ before Pilate, Roman power, still spiritually weak, did not use its power for the good; but its sympathies were clearly already with Christ, and this sympathy would later, under Constantine the Great, be turned into full and whole-hearted support.

¹¹⁹ Glazkov, "Zashchita ot liberalizma", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 15 (1636), August 1/14, 1999, p. 10.

¹²⁰ Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), "Christ the Savior and the Jewish Revolution", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 35, no. 4, July-August, 1988, pp. 11-31.

In fact, we do not have to wait that long to see Roman power fulfilling the role of protector of the Christians. Thus already in 35, on the basis of a report sent to him by Pilate, the Emperor Tiberius proposed to the senate that Christ should be recognised as a god. The senate refused this request, and declared that Christianity was an "illicit superstition"; but Tiberius ignored this and imposed a veto on any accusations being brought against the Christians in the future. In 36 or 37 the Roman legate to Syria, Vitellius, deposed Caiaphas for his unlawful execution of the Archdeacon and Protomartyr Stephen (in 34), and in 62 the High Priest Ananias was similarly deposed for executing St. James the Just, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. In between these dates the Apostle Paul was saved from a lynching at the hands of the Jews by the Roman authorities (Acts 21, 23.28-29, 25.19).¹²¹

So for at least a generation after the Death and Resurrection of Christ the Romans, far from being persecutors of the Christians, were their chief protectors against the Jews – the former people of God who had now become the chief enemies of God. It is therefore not surprising that the Apostles, following in the tradition of Christ's own recognition of the Romans as a lawful power, exhorted the Christians to obey Caesar in everything that did not involve transgressing the law of God. Thus St. Paul commands Christians to give thanks for the emperor "and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty" (I Timothy 2.1-2).

And if it be asked how it was possible for Paul to give thanks for a pagan emperor who sometimes persecuted Christians for their refusal to worship idols, including the idol of the emperor himself, then Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow provides the answer: "The Spirit of God in him foresaw and more or less showed him the future light of Christian kingdoms. His God-inspired vision, piercing through future centuries, encounters Constantine, who brings peace to the Church and sanctifies the kingdom by faith; and Theodosius and Justinian, who defend the Church from the impudence of heresies. Of course, he also goes on to see Vladimir and Alexander Nevsky and many spreaders of the faith, defenders of the Church and guardians of Orthodoxy. After this it is not surprising that St. Paul should write: I beseech you not only to pray, but also to give thanks for the king and all those in authority; because there will be not only such kings and authorities for whom it is necessary to pray with sorrow...., but also those for whom we must thank God with joy for His precious gift."¹²²

It is precisely the emperor's ability to maintain law and order, "a quiet and peaceful life", which makes him so important for the Church; for while Christianity can *survive* under any regime, and, in the persons of the martyrs,

¹²¹ Professor Marta Sordi, *The Christians and the Roman Empire*, London: Routledge, 1994, chapter 1.

¹²² Metropolitan Philaret, *Sochinenia*, vol. II, pp. 171-173.

triumph over it, it can spread and become consolidated among the masses of the people only if supported by the State. Therefore "Be subject for the Lord's sake," says St. Peter, "to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and praise those who do right... Fear God. Honour the emperor" (I Peter 2.13, 17). The emperor is to be obeyed, says St. Paul, "not only because of wrath, but for conscience's sake" (Romans 13.5). For he is "the servant of God for good" and "wields not the sword in vain" (Romans 13.4).

St. Isidore of Pelusium explained the importance of submission to the State as follows. "Anarchy is always the worst of all evils... That is why, although the body is a single whole, not everything in it is of equal honour, but some members rule, while others are in subjection. So we are right to say that the authorities - that is, leadership and royal power - are established by God so that society should not fall into disorder."¹²³

At the same time, submission to the emperor was never considered to be *unconditional*. The Christians, unlike the Jews, were loyal subjects of the Roman emperors, paying their taxes, obeying their laws and serving in their armies; but when asked to worship idols they refused, even at the cost of their lives.

One of those who gave his life rather than obey an emperor's decree was Hieromartyr Hippolytus, Pope of Rome in the third century, who wrote: "Believers in God must not be hypocritical, nor fear people invested in authority, with the exception of those cases when some evil deed is committed [Romans 13.1-4]. On the contrary, if the leaders, having in mind their faith in God, force them to do something contrary to this faith, then it is better for them to die than to carry out the command of the leaders. After all, when the apostle teaches submission to 'all the powers that be' (Romans 13.1), he was not saying that we should renounce our faith and the Divine commandments, and indifferently carry out everything that people tell us to do; but that we, while fearing the authorities, should do nothing evil and that we should not deserve punishment from them as some evildoers (Romans 13.4)."¹²⁴

The fruit of the Christians' patience, their refusal, on the one hand, to place the emperor above God, and, on the other, to succumb to the propaganda of revolution, produced its inestimable fruit in the conversion of the empire to Christianity, as a result of which the empire not only tolerated Christianity, but became its active co-worker in that "symphony of powers" which is the hallmark of Orthodox statehood.

¹²³ St. Isidore, *Letter 6* to Dionysius.

¹²⁴ St. Hippolytus in Fomin, S. & Fomina, T., *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem (Russia before the Second Coming)*, Sergiev Posad, 1998, p. 56 ®.

3. Orthodoxy and Heretical Rulers

If the early Christians honoured and (in most cases) obeyed the pagan Roman emperors, we might expect them to have adopted a similarly benevolent attitude towards the heretical Roman emperors. However, the Fathers' language in relation to the Arian emperor Constantius was violent in the extreme: "patron of impiety and Emperor of heresy,... godless, unholy,... this modern Ahab, this second Belshazzar", "the abomination of desolation", like Pharaoh, worse than Pilate and a forerunner of the Antichrist, are just some of the epithets employed by St. Athanasius the Great. In the West, St. Hilary of Poitiers was hardly less violent in his language about the Arian emperor, calling him a forerunner of the Antichrist.

Again, when the Emperor Justinian, a zealot of Orthodoxy, momentarily wavered and tried to force Pope Agapetus to accept a Monophysite Patriarch of Constantinople, the Orthodox pope replied: "I wished to come to the most Christian of all emperors, Justinian, and I have found now a Diocletian. However, I do not fear your threats."¹²⁵ Evidently a new, higher standard was now required of rulers – or, at any rate, Roman rulers. Since the conversion of Constantine and the Christianisation of the empire, the appearance of a heterodox emperor constituted a retrograde step and extreme danger for the flock of Christ and possibly heralded the coming of the Antichrist. It therefore had to be resisted with the greatest force and boldness.

In general, however, while severely criticising the heretical emperors, the holy Fathers did not call on the faithful to rebel against them. For this would have threatened the institution of the Roman empire itself, which everyone accepted was established by God.

However, there are two partial exceptions to this rule. The first was Julian the Apostate (361-363). Although the Church did not initiate or bless any armed rebellion against him, St. Basil the Great did actively pray for his defeat in his wars against the Persians - and it was through his prayers that the apostate was in fact killed, as was revealed by God to the holy hermit Julian of Mesopotamia.¹²⁶ Not only St. Basil prayed in this way: his friend, St. Gregory the Theologian, who had called Julian not only an "apostate", but also "universal enemy" and "general murderer", now, on his death, called the Christians to "spiritual rejoicing".

This raises the interesting and important question: what was different about Julian the Apostate that made him so much worse than previous persecutors and unworthy even of that honour and obedience that had been

¹²⁵ Quoted in A.A. Vasiliev, *A History of the Byzantine Empire*, Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1958, p. 151.

¹²⁶ V.A. Konovalov, *Otnoshenie khristianstva k sovetskoj vlasti (The Relationship of Christianity to Soviet Power)*, Montreal, 1936, p. 35 ®.

given to them? Two possible answers suggest themselves. The first is that Julian was the first – and last – of the Byzantine emperors who openly trampled on the memory and legitimacy of St. Constantine, declaring that he “insolently usurped the throne”.¹²⁷ In this way he questioned the legitimacy of the Christian Empire as such – a revolutionary position that we do not come across again in Eastern Orthodox history (if we except the short interlude of the political zealots in Thessalonica in the 1340s) until the fall of the Russian Empire.

A second reason for ascribing to Julian an exceptional place amongst the forerunners of the Antichrist was his reversal of the Emperor Hadrian’s decree of the year 135 forbidding the Jews from returning to Jerusalem and, still worse, his helping the Jews to rebuild the Temple, in defiance of the Lord’s prophecy that “there shall be left not one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down” (Mark 13.2). By a miracle from God the rebuilding of the Temple was forcibly stopped. But if Julian had succeeded, then, wondered the Christians, what would have prevented him from sitting in the Temple as God – in other words, taking the place of the Antichrist himself?

Another exception to the rule of submission to heretical rulers was the rebellion of St. Hermenegild, prince of Spain, against his Arian father, King Leogivild. Most of Spain was ruled at that time by the Visigoths, a Germanic tribe which had adopted the Arian faith. However, the majority of the Spanish population were Romans by race and Orthodox by religion. Hermenegild was converted by his Frankish Orthodox wife, and by St. Leander, bishop of Seville, who lived in the Byzantine part of Spain. He then rebelled against his father, but in spite of support from the Byzantines his rebellion was crushed, and he himself was imprisoned and then killed at Pascha, 585 for refusing to accept communion from an Arian bishop.

The Spanish Church did not hail Hermenegild as a martyr, because the Orthodox had not been persecuted by their Arian overlords and there was not much support, even in the Orthodox population, for the rebellion of a son against his father. However, he was immediately hailed as a martyr by the holy Pope Gregory the Dialogist, the writer of his *Life*; and by the Orthodox Church in the East.

Moreover, within a very few years, at the great Council of Toledo in 589, the new king, Reccared and the whole of the Gothic nobility accepted Orthodoxy. Arianism never again lifted its head in Spain. Thus, in the words of St. Dmitri of Rostov, “the fruit of the death of this one man was life and Orthodoxy for all the people of Spain”.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ See his dialogue with St. Artemius in the *Life* of the great martyr, in St. Dmitri of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, October 20.

¹²⁸ St. Dmitri of Rostov, *The Great Collection of the Lives of the Saints*, November 1.

The abortive, but nevertheless ultimately successful, rebellion of St. Hermenegild appeared to establish the principle that *legitimate political power was either Roman power, or that power which, while independent of the Roman, shared in the faith of the Romans, Orthodoxy*. A power that was not Orthodox could legitimately be overthrown from without or rebelled against from within as long as the motive was truly religious – the establishment or re-establishment of Orthodoxy. This did not mean, however, that Christians were *obliged in all cases* to rebel against pagan or heterodox régimes; for, as Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) points out, civil war is one of the worst of all evils and is to be undertaken only if the alternative is likely to be even worse in terms of the salvation of souls.¹²⁹

When the people of God fall under the power of a pagan or heterodox ruler, the reason is their sinfulness, which makes them unworthy of an Orthodox king and in need rather of the chastisement that the harsher rule of the heterodox brings upon them. For “If My People had heard Me, if Israel had walked in My ways, quickly would I have humbled their enemies, and upon their oppressors would I have laid My hand.” (Psalm 80. 12-13). A believing people will not rebel against this situation, knowing that, in submitting to a pagan or heterodox ruler, they are in fact submitting to the Lord and that He, in Whose hand are the hearts of all kings, and Who rules “over all the kingdoms of the heathen” (II Chronicles 20.6), will protect them from evil.

In such cases, as St. Isidore of Pelusium writes, the ruler “has been allowed to spew out this evil, like Pharaoh, and, in such an instance, to carry out extreme punishment or to chastise those for whom great cruelty is required, as when the king of Babylon chastised the Jews.”¹³⁰ Or, as St. Irenaeus of Lyons puts it: “Some rulers are given by God with a view to the improvement and benefit of their subjects and the preservation of justice; others are given with a view to producing fear, punishment and reproof; yet others are given with a view to displaying mockery, insult and pride – in each case in accordance with the deserts of the subjects. Thus... God’s just judgement falls equally on all men.”¹³¹

However, such submission must never turn into sympathy with the aims or faith of the heterodox ruler, otherwise they will receive the same rebuke that King Jehoshaphat of Judah received from the Prophet Jehu: “Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord” (II Chronicles 19.2).

¹²⁹ Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), *The Christian Faith and War*, Jordanville, 1973, p. 12.

¹³⁰ St. Isidore, Letter 6, quoted in *Selected Letters of Archbishop Theophan of Poltava*, Liberty, TN: St. John of Kronstadt Press, 1989, p. 36.

¹³¹ St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V, 24, 3; translated in Maurice Wiles & Mark Santer, *Documents in Early Christian Thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 226.

Moreover, in certain situations the danger presented by submission to a heterodox ruler may be so great that a certain point God commands His people to rebel.

In practice, rebellion against pagan or heterodox rulers for the sake of Orthodoxy has been very rare in Orthodox history since the time of St. Hermenegild. One example sometimes cited is the rebellion of Moscow under Great Prince Demetrius Donskoj against the Tatar prince Mamai in 1380, which was undertaken with the blessing of St. Sergius of Radonezh. This example is the more striking in that the Tatars had been recognised as the lawful rulers of Russia by the Russian Church for nearly 150 years.

However, it needs to be borne in mind, first, that Mamai was himself a rebel against the Horde, so that in resisting him the Russians were not rebelling against their lawful sovereigns, but rather supporting them. In any case, two years later the lawful khan came and sacked Moscow; so there was not, and could not be, any radical change from the policy of submission to the Tatars (it was not until a century later, in 1480, that the Muscovites refused to pay any further tribute to the khans).

Secondly, St. Sergius in fact blessed the Grand-Prince to fight only when all other measures had failed. Thus, as I.M. Kontzevich writes, "the *Chronicle of St. Nikon* has preserved for posterity the description of Prince Demetrius Donskoy's visit to St. Sergius before his campaign against the Tatars. In the ensuing conversation with the Grand Prince, the holy Elder first advised him to respect the evil Tatar Mamai with gifts and honor, following the example of St. Basil the Great, whose gifts appeased Julian the Apostate: 'You, too, my Lord, pay your respects to them, give them gold and silver, and God will not allow them to destroy us: He will elevate you, seeing your humility, and will bring down the pride of the enemy.' 'All this I have done already,' answered Demetrius, 'but my enemy becomes even more conceited.' Having heard these words, the Saint of God made the sign of the Cross over him and was inspired to pronounce: 'Go, my Prince, without fear! The Lord will help you against the godless enemies.' Then, lowering his voice, he said to the Prince alone to hear: 'You will conquer your enemy.'"¹³²

A clearer example is provided by the refusal of the best of the Russian people to accept a Catholic tsar in the Time of Troubles.

Most of the Russian clergy accepted the first false Demetrius, who was anointed and crowned by Patriarch Ignatius. However, writes Fr. Lev Lebedev, "in relation to the second false Demetrius [they] conducted themselves more courageously. Bishops Galacteon of Suzdal and Joseph of Kolomna suffered for their non-acceptance of the usurper. Archbishop

¹³² Kontzevich, *The Acquisition of the Holy Spirit in Ancient Russia*, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1988, pp. 178-179.

Theoctistus of Tver received a martyric death in Tushino. Dressed only in a shirt, the bare-footed Metropolitan Philaret of Rostov, the future patriarch, was brought by the Poles into the camp of the usurper, where he remained in captivity. Seeing such terrible events, Bishop Gennadius of Pskov 'died of sorrow...'”¹³³

In February, 1610 the protagonists of the second false Demetrius switched their support to the Polish crown. They presented King Sigismund with a set of conditions on which they were prepared to accept his son Vladislav as Tsar. The first was that the Orthodox faith should remain inviolate. The second was that supreme authority in the state should be shared between the tsar and a combined boyar assembly and zemskii sobor. In other words, they were seeking the establishment of a kind of constitutional monarchy in Russia.

However, their plans fell through, for Vladislav did not come to Moscow to claim his throne, and when his father Sigismund declared his intention of taking his place, Patriarch Hermogen issued a stern command that the Russian people were not to “kiss the cross before a Catholic king”. Hermogen was killed by the Poles in the dungeon of the Kremlin. However, his refusal to recognise the legitimacy of a Catholic tsar was decisive in arousing the Russians to expel the Poles and restore Orthodoxy. And his canonisation just before another, still more terrible time of troubles in 1914 would be a sign: now, too, you must reject the State that wars against Christ...

4. Orthodoxy and Nationalism

The lives of the holy martyrs Hermenegild of Spain and Hermogen of Russia show that in extreme cases, when Orthodoxy is at stake, even civil war for the sake of the reestablishment of Orthodoxy is permitted and blessed by God. However, it is essential that the aim should be precisely *Orthodoxy* and not some secondary value which, while good in itself, cannot justify the destruction of civil peace and the suffering and death, often on a vast scale, that inevitably ensues. Such secondary values include *national independence* and *freedom from tyranny*.

National independence was the primary value that motivated the rebellion of the Jews against Roman power in 66-70 A.D. – and they were terribly punished for it. A similar danger threatened the Greek Church and nation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Influenced by nationalist ideas emanating from the French Revolution, which spread in Greece through the quasi-masonic organisation called the philiki hetairia, the Greeks of Europe rose up against their Turkish overlords. But the Greeks of Constantinople and Asia Minor remained loyal to the Sultan, whose legitimacy they had recognised since the fall of Constantinople in 1453. At this point the

¹³³ Lebedev, *Moskva Patriarshaia*, Moscow: “Veche”, 1995, p. 14.

frightened Turks pressurised Patriarch Gregory V and his Synod to anathematize the insurgents.

Some have argued that the patriarch secretly repudiated this anathema and sympathised with the insurgents; which is why the Turks, suspecting him of treachery, hanged him on April 10, 1821. However, the evidence does not support this view. The patriarch had always refused to join the philiki hetairia, to which the leader of the insurgents, Metropolitan Germanos of Old Patras, belonged. Moreover, the righteousness of his character precludes the possibility that he could have been plotting against the Sultan to whom he had sworn allegiance.

The true attitude of the Church to the revolution had been expressed in a work called "Paternal Teaching" published in Constantinople in 1789, and which, according to Charles Frazee, "was signed by Anthimus of Jerusalem but was probably the work of the later Patriarch Gregory V. The document is a polemic against revolutionary ideas, calling on the Christians 'to note how brilliantly our Lord, infinite in mercy and all-wise, protects intact the holy and Orthodox Faith of the devout, and preserves all things'. It warns that the devil is constantly at work raising up evil plans; among them is the idea of liberty, which appears to be so good, but is only there to deceive the people. The document points out that [the struggle for] political freedom is contrary to the Scriptural command to obey authority, that it results in the impoverishment of the people, in murder and robbery. The sultan is the protector of Christian life in the Ottoman Empire; to oppose him is to oppose God."¹³⁴

Certainly, the Greeks had to pay a heavy price for the political freedom they gained. After the martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory (whose body was washed ashore in Odessa, and given a splendid State funeral by the Russian Church), the Turks ran amok in Constantinople, killing many Greeks and causing heavy damage to the churches; and there were further pogroms in Smyrna, Adrianople, Crete and especially Chios, which had been occupied by the revolutionaries and where in reprisal tens of thousands were killed or sold into slavery. When the new patriarch, Eugenios, again anathematized the insurgents, twenty-eight bishops and almost a thousand priests in free Greece in turn anathematized the patriarch, calling him a Judas and a wolf in sheep's clothing, and ceasing to commemorate him in the Liturgy.

As for the new State of Greece, it "looked to the west," writes Charles Frazee, "the west of the American and French Revolutions, rather than to the old idea of an Orthodox community as it had functioned under the Ottomans. The emotions of the times did not let men see it; Orthodoxy and Greek nationality were still identified, but the winds were blowing against the

¹³⁴ Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1853*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 8.

dominant position of the Church in the life of the individual and the nation..."¹³⁵

Thus, forgetting the lessons of the council of Florence four hundred years earlier, the new State and Church entered into negotiations with the Pope for help against the Turks. Metropolitan Germanus was even empowered to speak concerning the possibility of a reunion of the Churches. However, it was the Pope who drew back at this point, pressurised by the other western States, which considered the sultan to be a legitimate monarch. The western powers helped Greece again when, in 1827, an Allied fleet under a British admiral destroyed the Turkish-Egyptian fleet at Navarino. But after the assassination of the president of Greece, Count Kapodistrias, in 1832, the country descended further into poverty and near civil war.

Then, in 1833, the western powers appointed a Catholic prince, Otto of Bavaria, as king of Greece, with three regents until he came of age, the most important being the Protestant George von Maurer. Maurer proceeded to work out a constitution for the country, which proposed autocephaly for the Church under a Synod of bishops, and the subordination of the Synod to the State on the model of the Bavarian and Russian constitutions, to the extent that "no decision of the Synod could be published or carried into execution without the permission of the government having been obtained". In spite of the protests of the patriarch of Constantinople and the tsar of Russia, and the walk-out of the archbishops of Rethymnon and Adrianople, this constitution was ratified by the signatures of thirty-six bishops on July 26, 1833.

The Greek Church therefore exchanged the admittedly uncanonical position of the patriarchate of Constantinople under Turkish rule for the even less canonical position of a Synod anathematized by the patriarch and under the control of a Catholic king and a Protestant constitution! In addition to this, all monasteries with fewer than six monks were dissolved, and heavy taxes imposed on the remaining monasteries. And very little money was given to a Church which had lost six to seven thousand clergy in the war, and whose remaining clergy had an abysmally low standard of education.

The dangers posed for Orthodoxy by nationalist passions can most clearly be seen in the controversial question of the Bulgarian schism. Already in 1860, before the liberation of their country by the Russian armies in 1877-78, the Bulgars had succeeded in obtaining the status of a millet, or autonomous national-religious community, and therefore the right to have an autocephalous Church independent of the patriarch of Constantinople. However, not content with having an autocephalous Church for the territory of Bulgaria, in 1870 the Bulgars, with the active cooperation of the Turkish government, set up a bishop in Constantinople with the title of Exarch, who was to have jurisdiction over all the Bulgars in Turkey itself. This

¹³⁵ Frazee, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

undoubtedly uncanonical act was resisted with fury by Patriarch Anthimus VI and his Synod, who in 1872 excommunicated the Bulgarian exarch and all those with him, branding them as schismatics and heretics, their heresy being the newly-defined one of "phyletism", that is, nationalism, the invasion of the national principle into the affairs of the Ecumenical Church.¹³⁶

Now such a condemnation of nationalism was certainly timely. For the Bulgarians' attempts to achieve ecclesiastical independence had given rise to another danger - the Vatican's attempt to introduce a uniate movement into Bulgaria. However, for many Orthodox the conciliar condemnation of nationalism carried little weight because it came from the patriarchate which they considered the first sinner in this respect. For, as D.A. Khomyakov wrote: "Is not 'pride in Orthodoxy' nothing other than the cultural pride of the ancient Greek? And, of course, the true 'phyletism', formulated for the struggle against the Bulgarians, is precisely the characteristic of the Greeks themselves to a much greater extent than the Bulgarians, Serbs, Syrians and others. With them it is only a protest against the basic phyletism of the Greeks. The contemporary Greek considers himself the exclusive bearer of pure Orthodoxy..."¹³⁷

For a brief moment, in 1912, the Greeks joined with the Bulgarians and the Serbs against the Turks in the First Balkan War. But this brief unity among the Orthodox nations was shattered when war broke out between them in 1913 for the control of Macedonia. An attack on Greece and Serbia by Bulgaria was met with firm resistance by the other nations, including Turkey. And the war ended in defeat for Bulgaria - and, still more tragically, for the ideal of Orthodox Catholicism....

Every attempt by an Orthodox or formerly Orthodox nation in modern times to achieve regeneration, not through a return to purity of faith and good works, but through national self-aggrandisement, has been severely punished by the Lord. Thus when Georgia tried to break away from Russia in 1917, she soon found herself, first under a Menshevik, and then under a Bolshevik government. When the Greeks tried to capitalise on the defeat of Turkey in the First World War in 1922, they were defeated and the whole of the Greek population of Asia Minor (and, in 1974, northern Cyprus also) was expelled. When the Serbs tried to achieve a "Greater Serbia" by war against all the other republics of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, the result was a lesser Serbia - lesser in size, in economy and, above all, in spiritual stature.

¹³⁶ See K. Dinkov, *Istoria na B'lgarskata Ts'rkva*, Vratsa, 1953, pp. 80-96; D. Kosev, "Bor'ba za samostoyatel'na natsionalna tserkva", in *Istoria na B'lgaria*, Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1987, vol. 6, pp. 124-188; Fr. Basil Lourié, "Ekklesiologika otstupayushchej armii", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 10 (43), October, 1998, 1999, pp. 25-27, 28-29; E. Pavlenko, "Eres' i filetizma: istoria i sovremennost'", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 9 (54), September, 1999, pp. 17-24.

¹³⁷ Khomyakov, *Pravoslavie, Samoderzhavie, Narodnost'*, Minsk: Belaruskaya Gramata, 1997, p. 19. Cf. Glubokovsky, N.N. "Pravoslavie po ego sushchestvu", in *Tserkov' i Vremia*, 1991, pp. 5-6.

The Jews in the time of Nebuchadnezzar had similar strivings for national independence and greatness, but were met with the words: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?... I will acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land..." (Jeremiah 27.12-13, 24.5-6).

Thus captivity, national humiliation at the hands even of pagans, is sometimes *for the good* of the people of God, and should not be resisted. For God's will is worked even in the pagan kingdoms.

But why, then, did the Jews resist Antiochus Epiphanes some centuries later, and this time succeed in winning their national independence? Was Nebuchadnezzar any less of a pagan than Antiochus? No, he was not. But God knew that Nebuchadnezzar's captivity would be for the good of the Jews, whereas Antiochus struck at the very heart of the Jewish faith. Moreover, the motivation of the Jews in the latter case was better and purer in the former: whereas in the time of Nebuchadnezzar they were fighting for national independence and not for the faith, in the time of Antiochus they were fighting for the faith first of all...

5. A Hierarchy of Political Loyalties

The nineteenth century threw up other difficult problems of political loyalty. One of these arose during the Crimean War of 1854-56, when the Russian armies were fighting the Turks and their western allies on Russian soil. The question was: which side were the Orthodox of Greece and the Balkans to support?

The Ecumenical Patriarch ordered all the monasteries on Mount Athos to pray for the triumph of the Turkish armies during the war. On hearing this, the Georgian elder, Hieroschemamonk Hilarion said of the patriarch: "He is not a Christian", and when he heard that the monks of Grigoriou monastery had carried out the patriarch's command, he said: "You have been deprived of the grace of Holy Baptism, and have deprived your monastery of the grace of God." And when the abbot came to the elder to repent, he said to him: "How did you dare, wretched one, to put Mohammed higher than Christ? God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ says to His Son: 'Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet' (Psalms 109.1), but you ask Him to put His son under the feet of His enemies!"

Again, in a letter to the head of chancellery of the Russian Holy Synod, Elder Hilarion wrote: "The other peoples' kings [i.e. not the Russian Tsar] often make themselves out to be something great, but not one of them is a king in reality, but they are only adorned and flatter themselves with a great name, but God is not favourably disposed towards them, and does not abide in them. They reign only in part, by the condescension of God. Therefore he who does not love his God-established tsar is not worthy of being called a Christian..."¹³⁸

A hierarchy of political loyalties appeared to be established here. At the top of the hierarchy was loyalty to the Orthodox Christian Emperor, who, since at least the late sixteenth century, had been the Russian Tsar. The greater authority of the Russian Tsar over all other political authorities did not reside in his purely political power, but in the mystical anointing that he received from the Church. Other authorities might be powers in the Apostles' understanding of the word, in that they in general punished evildoers and rewarded the good (I Peter 2.14; Romans 13.3), but the grace to protect the Church of God was given to the Russian Empire alone. That is why it was incumbent upon all Orthodox Christians to pray and give thanks for the Russian Tsar, even if they lived in other States. For, as St. Seraphim said: "After Orthodoxy, zealous devotion to the Tsar is the Russian's first duty and the chief foundation of true Christian piety."¹³⁹

Nor was this only a *Russian's* duty. Already in 1562 the Ecumenical Patriarch Joasaph called the Tsar "our Tsar", applying to him the same epithets, "pious, God-crowned and Christ-loving" as were applied to the Byzantine Emperors.¹⁴⁰, and ascribing to him authority over "Orthodox Christians in *the entire universe*". Again, in 1589 the Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah II confirmed that the Russian Tsardom was "the Third Rome" and declared, addressing the Tsar: "Thou alone under heaven art Christian emperor for *all* Christians in the world."¹⁴¹

Strictly speaking, according to Elder Hilarion, only the Orthodox emperor had full political authority and legitimacy. Other states could be said to share in that gift of the Holy Spirit which is political government (I Corinthians 12.27) only relatively, depending on the closeness of their relationship to the Orthodox empire. According to the Byzantine theory of statehood, which the elder inherited, this would include, first of all, other Orthodox Christian rulers who had received the true anointing of the Holy Church, and then

¹³⁸ Hieromonk Anthony of the Holy Mountain, *Ocherki zhizni i podvigov startsa ieroskhimonakha Ilariona gruzina*, Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, 1985, pp. 68-74, 95.

¹³⁹ St. Seraphim, in Sergius Nilus, "Chto zhdet Rossiu?", *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, № 68, 1905.

¹⁴⁰ Fomin, S. & Fomina, T., *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem*, Sergiev Posad, volume I, p. 230.

¹⁴¹ Sir Steven Runciman, *The Orthodox Churches and the Secular State*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 51.

allies or friends of the empire.¹⁴² Further down the hierarchy, a certain, though lesser, degree of political legitimacy could also be said to belong to other, non-Christian rulers who maintained the basic principles of law and order against the forces of anarchy and revolution. However, such rulers, being heterodox, could support Orthodoxy only indirectly, while by their confession of heterodoxy they inevitably harmed it to some degree.

The Ottoman empire was a clear example of this kind of power. It aided Orthodoxy indirectly by preserving the Balkan Orthodox peoples in existence and defending them from the incursions of western missionaries and heresies (including nationalism). But by its killing of the new martyrs and restrictions on Orthodox education and church-building it showed itself an enemy of Orthodoxy. Such rulers were to be honoured for the sake of their positive contributions, and even their oppressions could be seen as chastisement for sin; which was why Divine Providence allowed them to rule over the Orthodox. But this fact was not to be allowed to obscure the higher honour in which the Orthodox emperor was to be held by Orthodox Christians – *all* Orthodox Christians.

¹⁴² “This doctrine,” writes I.P. Medvedev, “found practical expression in.. a hierarchical system of States...The place of each sovereign in this official, hierarchical gradation of all the princes of the world in relation to the Byzantine Emperor was defined by kinship terms borrowed from the terminology of family law: father-son-brother, but also friend... The use of kinship terms by the Byzantine Emperor in addressing a foreign Sovereign was not a simple metaphor or rhetoric, but a definite title which was given on the basis of a mutual agreement, that is, bestowed by the Emperor... And so at the head of the oikoumene was the Basileus Romanon, the Byzantine Emperor, the father of ‘the family of sovereigns and peoples’. Closest of all ‘by kinship’ among the politically independent sovereigns were certain Christian rulers of countries bordering on the Empire, for example Armenia, Alania and Bulgaria; they were spiritual sons of the Byzantine Emperor. Less close were the Christian masters of the Germans and French, who were included in this ‘family of sovereigns and peoples’ with the rights of spiritual brothers of the Emperor. After them came the friends, that is, independent sovereigns and peoples who received this title by dint of a special agreement – the emir of Egypt and the ruler of India, and later the Venetians, the king of England, etc. Finally, we must name a large group of princes who were ranked, not according to degree of ‘kinship’, but by dint of particularities of address and protocol – the small appanage principalities of Armenia, Iberia, Abkhazia, the Italian cities, Moravia and Serbia (group 1), and the appanage princes of Hungary and Rus’, the Khazar and Pecheneg khans, etc. (group II)... As a whole the idea of a centralised hierarchical structure of the world was preserved throughout the existence of the Byzantine Empire. (Proof that this system existed not only in the minds of the Byzantines is provided by, among other things, decrees of Turkish sultans which still, in the 14th century, called the Byzantine Emperors Emperors of Bulgaria, Alania, Russia, Iberia, Turkey, etc.) The Byzantine Emperors were unwilling to make any changes in the accepted titles. The most curious deviations from the rules were represented by the attempts to include in this system, in the 14th century – the Russian Great Prince with the rights of...‘a related brother’ of the Byzantine Emperor, and in the 15th century – the Turkish sultan with the rights of a son, and then also of a brother... In the opinion of Ostrogorsky, one can speak only of an ‘idealized submission’ to the Empire, which by no means excluded the complete independence of the State in a political sense.” (S. Fomin & T. Fomina, op. cit., pp. 138-139).

How was this higher honour to be expressed by those Orthodox living outside the Orthodox empire, or in states like Turkey that were at times hostile to it? Again, active rebellion in favour of the empire, even if it were a practical possibility, could not be an *obligation* for citizens of other states. In this sense political allegiance has a much more pragmatic connotation, in the Orthodox understanding, than ecclesiastical allegiance. If one's *ecclesiastical* lord is a heretic, one *must* leave him, according to the Law of God, and find an Orthodox one, whatever the cost. But if one's *political* lord is a heretic or a pagan, there is no such obligation – only the obligation to pray and long for “the peace of Jerusalem”, the prosperity and final victory of the Orthodox Christian empire.

Thus the holy martyrs Manuel, Sabel and Ismael, on reaching maturity, enrolled in the armies of the Persian King Alamundar, although he was a pagan and Persia was often at war with the Byzantine empire.¹⁴³ Again, during the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05, St. Nicholas, archbishop and apostle of Japan, allowed his Japanese Orthodox spiritual children to pray for the victory of the pagan Japanese armies in the war against the Russian empire in 1904-05. But he himself, as an Orthodox Christian and a Russian subject, felt unable to join in those prayers...

The problem is: if we compare these cases with the above-cited judgement of Elder Hilarion, we appear to have two contradictory principles: the principle that loyalty must be demonstrated above all to that State which stands for Christ in the Orthodox Faith, the Orthodox Empire, and the principle that loyalty must be shown to one's native land, whether or not it is Orthodox, because Christ came, not to destroy the existing worldly structures, but to transfigure them.

Abstract principles cannot always be reconciled, or placed neatly in a hierarchical order. Dilemmas arise in which there is only one solution: to seek the will of God for the individual person in the concrete situation. Let us consider the case of the Russo-Japanese war. Here it was not the will of God that the Orthodox Empire should triumph, in spite of the fact that paganism was seen to triumph over Orthodoxy, and the foundations of the Orthodox Empire were shaken. We can only speculate why – God's judgements are a great abyss. However, knowing what God's judgement turned out to be in this particular case, we can see the wisdom of the Russian Orthodox pastor in his care for his Japanese Orthodox flock. He himself could not possibly pray for what was a victory both of paganism over Orthodoxy and of foreigners over his native land. But, perhaps knowing of the eventual outcome, and also perhaps that his flock was not strong enough to defy their own government over what was a matter of politics rather than faith, he allowed them to express their natural patriotic feelings...

¹⁴³ *Orthodox Life*, vol. 29, № 3, May-June, 1979, p. 3.

6. Orthodoxy and the Soviet Antichrist

So far we have considered only political authorities which, whether Orthodox, heretical or pagan, can all be called “authorities” in St. Paul’s definition of the word – that is, which *in general* “are not a terror to good works, but to the evil” (Romans 13.3). As such, and insofar as they are willing and able to maintain a minimum level of law and order, these authorities can be said to be “of God” (Romans 13.1), even if many of their individual actions are carried out in defiance of God. However, the Holy Scriptures speak of another “authority” that receives its power, not from God, but from “the dragon” – that is, from Satan (Revelation 13.2). This is that lowest level of political authority – if it should not rather be called “anti-authority” – which does not even have the minimal quality of preserving law and order, but actively wars against all that is good and pure and simply *normal* in human society. This power is the power of the Antichrist.

It fell to the lot of the Russian people in 1917 to be the first nation in history to fall under the yoke of the Antichrist, in that collectivist form called Soviet power. For a long time – at least ten years – the Russian Church wavered in her estimation of this power. At the beginning, in the Church Council of 1917-18, she anathematised it, forbade her children to have any relations whatsoever with it, and in general ignored all its decrees. This first, completely uncompromising, instinct of the Russian Church in the face of Soviet power was never permanently extinguished. It continued to manifest itself both at home and abroad, in both the early and the later decades of Soviet power.

Thus the All-Emigration Council of the Russian Church in Exile, which opened its first session on November 8/21, 1921, called on the Genoa conference to refuse recognition to the Bolshevik regime, to arm its opponents, and restore the Romanov dynasty. In defence of this call, which provoked the frenzy of the Bolsheviks and which many regarded as dangerous dabbling in politics, the First-Hierarch of the Church in Exile, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev, 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."¹⁴⁴

However, the sheer weight of the terrorist machine in Russia, and, still more, the lack of unanimity of the Church herself, compelled the Church in the person of the Patriarch to adopt a more neutral, apolitical stance. 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 the renovationists, by contrast, accepted). In essence, this new attitude involved accepting that the Soviet State was, contrary to what the Local Council of 1917-18 and the Russian Church Abroad had in effect declared, not Antichrist, 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 for the early Bolsheviks, at any rate, 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 (which, as we have seen, the Christians were very 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*.

The point is that a neat division between politics and religion, which is hard enough to make in a normal state, is out of the question in the state of

¹⁴⁴ Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Boston, *A History of the Russian Church Abroad*, Seattle: St. Nectarios Press, 1961, p. 24; Archbishop Nikon, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievsakgo i Galitskago* (*A Biography of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich*), New York, 1960, vol. VI, p. 36.

the Antichrist. For the Antichrist, *everything* is politics – or religion, whichever way you like to look at it. *Everything* is assessed in relation to whether it aids or hinders the fundamental aims of the antichristian state. But how can Christianity be neutral with regard to the aims of antichristianity? How can the Church of Christ deny that her fundamental aims, and the whole purpose of her existence and of everything she does, are totally, diametrically opposed to those of “the Church of the evildoers”?

In view of this, it is not surprising that many Christians came to the conclusion that it was less morally debilitating to reject the whole 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. For the Patriarch, in particular, the dilemma was unbearable. While willing to become a martyr personally, he was not prepared to place this burden on the whole Church, and so began to negotiate with the authorities - with, it must be admitted, 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. For, as 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!"¹⁴⁵

The decision to negotiate and compromise with the Bolsheviks - in transgression of the decrees of the 1917-18 Council - 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..."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Matushka Evgenia Grigorievna Rymarenko, "Remembrances of Optina Staretz Hieroschemamonk Nektary", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 36, № 3, May-June, 1986, p. 39.

¹⁴⁶ *Russkaia Mysl (Russian Thought)*, № 3143, March 17, 1977.

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 kept their flock, if not themselves, out of the morally debilitating swamp of compromises with the Antichrist; 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*.

Everything changed, however, with Metropolitan Sergius' notorious declaration of 1927. By declaring that the Soviet regime's joys were the Church's joys, and its sorrows the Church's sorrows, Sergius in effect declared an *identity of aims* between the Church and the State. And this was not just a lie, but a *lie against the faith*, a concession to the communist *ideology*. In fact, it implied that communism as such was good, and its victory to be welcomed.

Moreover, Sergius followed this up by committing *the sin of Judas*; he placed all those who disagreed with him under ban and in effect handed them over to the GPU as "counter-revolutionaries". Far from "saving the Church", as he claimed, he condemned its finest members to torture and death. And then his successors in the present-day Moscow Patriarchate followed this up with *the sin of Pilate* - the criminal indifference to the truth manifest in their participation in the "heresy of heresies", ecumenism.

In order to protect the flock of Christ from Sergius' apostasy, the leaders of the True Church had to draw once more the line between politics and religion in such a way as to recognise that Soviet "politics" could not but be antireligious in essence. One approach was to distinguish between *physical* opposition to the regime and *spiritual* opposition to it. Thus Archbishop Barlaam of Perm wrote that physical opposition was not permitted, but spiritual opposition was obligatory.¹⁴⁷

Again, Hieromartyr Bishop Mark (Novoselov) wrote: "I am an enemy of Soviet power - and what is more, by dint of my religious convictions, insofar as Soviet power is an atheist power and even anti-theist. I believe that as a true Christian I cannot strengthen this power by any means... [There is] a petition which the Church has commanded to be used everyday in certain well-known conditions... The purpose of this formula is to request the overthrow of the infidel power by God... But this formula does not amount to a summons to believers to take active measures, but only calls them to pray for the overthrow of the power that has fallen away from God."¹⁴⁸ This criterion allowed Christians quite sincerely to reject the charge of "counter-

¹⁴⁷ Cited in William Fletcher, *The Russian Orthodox Church Underground, 1917-1970*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 64.

¹⁴⁸ Novoselov, quoted in I.I. Osipova. "Istoria Istinno Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po Materialam Sledstvennago Dela", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 5.

revolution" - if "counter-revolution" were understood to mean *physical* rebellion. The problem was, as we have seen, that the Bolsheviks understood "counter-revolution" in a much wider sense...

Another, still more basic problem was that it still left the question whether Soviet power was from God or not unresolved. If Soviet power was from God, it should be counted as Caesar and should be given what was Caesar's. But bitter experience had shown that this "Caesar" wanted to seat himself in the temple as if he were God (II Thessalonians 2.4). So was he not in fact Antichrist, whose power is not from God, but from Satan (Revelation 13.2), being *allowed*, but by no means *established* by God for the punishment of sinners? If so, then there was no alternative but to flee into the catacombs, rejecting totally the government of Satan on earth.

In the early years after Metropolitan Sergius' declaration, many Catacomb Christians, while *in practice* not surrendering what was God's to the Soviets, *in theory* could not make up their minds whether the Soviet regime was Caesar or Antichrist. Thus Hieromartyr Joseph (Gavrillov), superior of Raithu Desert (+1930), confessed at his interrogation: "I have never, and do not now, belong to any political parties. I consider Soviet power to be given from God, but a power that is from God must fulfil the will of God, and Soviet power does not fulfil the will of God. Therefore it is not from God, but from Satan. It closes churches, mocks the holy icons, teaches children atheism, etc. That is, it fulfils the will of Satan... It is better to die with faith than without faith. I am a real believer, faith has saved me in battles, and I hope that in the future faith will save me from death. I firmly believe in the Resurrection of Christ and His Second Coming. I have not gone against the taxes, since it says in Scripture: 'To Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'"¹⁴⁹

From this confession, impressive though it is, it is not clear whether Hieromartyr Joseph recognised the Soviet regime as Caesar, and therefore from God, or as Antichrist, and therefore from Satan. In the end the Bolsheviks resolved his dilemma for him. They shot him, and therefore showed that they were precisely- Antichrist.

In the Russian Church in Exile, meanwhile, a consensus had emerged that the Soviet regime was not Caesar, but Antichrist. This was the position of, for example, Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava, Metropolitan Innocent of Peking and Archbishop Averky of Jordanville. As Archbishop Theophanes put it in the same critical year of 1927: "The Bolshevik authorities are in essence antichristian, and there is no way in which they can be recognised as being established by God."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ *Novie Prepodobnomuchenki Raifskie*, publication of the Kazan diocese, Moscow, 1997, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ *Pis'ma Arkhiiepiskopa Feofana Poltavskogo i Pereyaslavskogo*, Jordanville, 1976. However, in recent years the ROCOR leadership has appeared to adopt a "softer" attitude towards Soviet power. This appeared particularly in 1990, in a dialogue between Metropolitan Vitaly, first-

The canonist of the Russian Church Abroad, Bishop Gregory Grabbe, pointed out the similarity between Soviet power and that of Julian the Apostate: "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."¹⁵¹

Protopriest Michael Polsky, who was on Solovki for the faith, but then fled abroad, explains how Metropolitan Sergius' declaration opened his eyes to the impossibility of the "apolitical" approach in the conditions of the Soviet Union.

"How can I, a believing person," he asked, "recognise a godless power? What does it mean – not to be its political enemy? In a joint life with pagans I could recognise Caesar, while rejecting Caesar's gods. But now, being a believer, I inescapably, necessarily fight against the authorities, whether I like it or not – I undermine its foundations, I destroy the spirit of the revolution, I hinder the socialist construction of the state. If religion in its essence is counter-revolutionary, then I am a counter-revolutionary. My counter-revolution is my struggle for the faith. If I am for religion, I am organically already against the Bolshevik power. And how shall I separate godlessness from the Bolshevik power?"

"If humanity has in the Bolsheviks a completely godless power for the first time, then is this not the first and only case in history when religion is inseparable from politics for the believer?"¹⁵²

hierarchy of ROCOR, and representatives of the "passportless" branch of the Catacomb Church (E.A. Petrova, "Perestroika Vavilonski Bashni", Moscow samizdat, 1991 (in Russian)). The metropolitan compared citizenship of the Soviet Union to citizenship of the Roman Empire in the time of the Apostle Paul, who was actually proud of his Roman citizenship and used it to protect himself against the Jews. However, the passportless categorically rejected this comparison, insisting that the Soviet Union must be considered to be, in effect, the Antichrist, being that power which is established, not by God, but by the devil (Rev. 13.2), and that citizenship of the Antichrist is nothing to be proud of, but rather entails promises to uphold anti-theist legislation that no Christian can agree to.

Paradoxically, the passportless position is here closer not only to Patriarch Tikhon's anathema against the Bolsheviks in 1918, which called on Christians to have *nothing whatsoever* to do with the Bolsheviks, and even urged Christian wives to leave their Bolshevik husbands, but also to the position of the first president of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), who in 1921, as we have seen, called for an armed invasion of Soviet Russia and a general insurrection against Soviet power.

¹⁵¹ Bishop Gregory, *Pis'ma*, Moscow, 1998, p. 85.

¹⁵² Polsky, "Polozhenie Tserkvi v Sovetskoj Rossii", in *Putevoditel' po pravoslavnoj asketike*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 203.

The Catacomb Church was not able, of course, to define her position in an official manner because of the near impossibility of convening a Council representing the whole Church in the catacombs. However, her relationship to the Soviet State was defined in a catacomb document dating from the Brezhnev years as follows:

"Authority is given by God in order to preserve and fulfil the law... But how should one look on the Soviet authority, following the Apostolic teaching on authorities [Romans 13]? In accordance with the Apostolic teaching which we have set forth, one must acknowledge that the Soviet authority is not an authority. It is an anti-authority. It is not an authority because it is not established by God, but insolently created by an aggregation of the evil actions of men, and it is consolidated and supported by these actions. If the evil actions weaken, the Soviet authority, representing a condensation of evil, likewise weakens... This authority consolidates itself in order to destroy all religions, simply to eradicate faith in God. Its essence is warfare with God, because its root is from satan. The Soviet authority is not authority, because by its nature it cannot fulfil the law, for the essence of its life is evil.

"It may be said that the Soviet authority, in condemning various crimes of men, can still be considered an authority. We do not say that a ruling authority is totally lacking. We only affirm that it is an anti-authority. One must know that the affirmation of real power is bound up with certain actions of men, to whom the instinct of preservation is natural. And they must take into consideration the laws of morality which have been inherent in mankind from ages past. But in essence this authority systematically commits murder physically and spiritually. In reality a hostile power acts, which is called Soviet authority. The enemy strives by cunning to compel humanity to acknowledge this power as an authority. But the Apostolic teaching on authority is inapplicable to it, just as evil is inapplicable to God and the good, because evil is outside God; but the enemies with hypocrisy can take refuge in the well-known saying that everything is from God.

"This Soviet anti-authority is precisely the collective Antichrist, warfare against God..."¹⁵³

Thus we come to the conclusion that the confessing Christians of the Soviet Union suffered and died precisely for Christ and against the Antichrist. This was not a political struggle because the Soviet Antichrist was not a purely political power. It was a power whose raison d'être was war against God, the works of God and the God-established order in every sphere of life. And since, for Soviet power, "he who is not with me is against me", anyone who was not with Soviet power in its God-fighting ends was also necessarily against it in

¹⁵³ Andreyev, *Russia's Catacomb Saints*, Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1982, pp. 541-42.

general. For in the kingdom of the Antichrist there is no sustainable boundary between religion and politics; everything is *both* religion *and* politics; for he claims to be both *lord* (of the bodies) and *god* (of the souls) of his subjects. This being so, it is impossible to resist the Antichrist in one sphere while co-operating with him in another - the totalitarian man-god must be rejected *totally*. It is the glory of the holy new Martyrs and Confessors of Russia that, having exhausted all attempts to achieve some kind of honourable modus vivendi with the Antichrist (more often than not, for the sake of others rather than themselves), when they were finally presented with the stark choice between the man-god and the God-Man, they boldly and unswervingly chose the latter, proclaiming: "*Thou art my Lord and my God*" (John 20.28).

7. Orthodoxy in the Post-Soviet Period

Just as the world was never the same again after the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the world, so it can never be the same since the appearance of the Antichrist in the form of Soviet power. Although Soviet power collapsed in 1989-91, this can in no way be considered its final defeat, but rather its temporary *wounding*, as one horn of the first beast of the Apocalypse was "wounded", but then recovered and was healed (Revelation 13.3,12). For if one politico-religious institution of the Antichrist has fallen, his spirit continues to live and continues to seek to incarnate itself in political and religious institutions. The Church has been given a temporary "breathing space" in which to gather her forces in preparation for a still more subtle and powerful assault, just as the Christians of the Roman empire were given a breathing space of relative peace before the final persecution of Diocletian.

However, no effective defence of Orthodoxy can be undertaken unless the lessons of the previous era are learned. Unfortunately, these lessons appear to have been learned by very few. Some see in the increased veneration for the Tsar-Martyr, and in the rise of monarchist parties, a sign that the main lesson implicit in the fall of the Orthodox empire is beginning to be learned - the lesson, namely, that the Orthodox empire was a gift from God second in value only to Orthodoxy itself, and therefore needed to be cherished and supported rather than undermined and destroyed.

This is true. And yet the Empire existed for Orthodoxy, and not Orthodoxy for the Empire - but the great majority of contemporary Russian monarchists support the Moscow Patriarchate, which bowed down to the Soviet Antichrist, is still reluctant to recognise the sanctity of the Tsar-Martyr, and has now become in many ways the chief corrupter of the Russian people, both in faith and in morals.

Even some monarchist writers of the Russian Church Abroad appear to have fallen into this trap. A recent unsigned article in a ROCOR publication¹⁵⁴ argues that Russia already has a true Empress – Maria Vladimirovna Romanova, the widow of Great-Prince Vladimir Kirillovich, who in 1991 apostasised from ROCOR to the Moscow Patriarchate, dying shortly thereafter.¹⁵⁵ The writer of this article forgets that the very first condition for any candidate to the throne of the Orthodox Empire is *true Orthodoxy*. Even supposing that Great-Princess Maria Vladimirovna fulfilled every other condition (which is disputable), the single fact that she is a member of the Moscow Patriarchate and is therefore in heresy, disqualifies her.

Let us remember that after, during the Time of Troubles, when the Poles and renegade Russians forced Tsar Basil Shuisky to abdicate and installed a Catholic tsar in the Kremlin, Patriarch Hermogen not only anathematised the new “tsar” and all who followed him, but called on the Orthodox to rise up in armed rebellion against the usurper. *Such a step was completely unprecedented in Church history.* It signified that, *for an Orthodox nation, a ruler who takes the place of a truly anointed ruler – and, moreover, does not confess the Orthodox faith, as all truly anointed rulers must – is not simply a bad ruler, but an “anti-ruler” – an “anti-christ”, since he was “in the place of” the truly anointed one (the Greek word “christ” means “anointed one”).*

While the Moscow Patriarchate that was created by Sovietism still lives, Soviet power still lives, and the position of the True Church in the State is likely to be precarious. Therefore those who long for the re-establishment of a true State, a State with which the Church can not only do business but with which it can enter into a true symphony for the sake of the salvation of all, must work in the first place for the triumph of truth over heresy. For only when the Kingdom that is not of this world has taken its residence in our hearts through the sanctification that comes through the truth can we realistically hope for that blessed moment when that other-worldly Kingdom will also conquer the kingdom of this world.

March 11/24, 2001.

Martyrdom of Emperor Paul I of Russia.

¹⁵⁴ “Nasledstvennost’ ili Vybory?”, *Svecha Pokaiania* (Tsaritsyn), № 4, February, 2000, pp. 11-13.

¹⁵⁵ See the article by Grand-Duke Vladimir's former spiritual father, Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, “Velikij Knyaz' Vladimir Kirillovich i ego poseshchenie SSSR”, *Pravoslavnij Vestnik*, (Montreal), №№ 60-61, January-February, 1993.

8. WHEN DID THE MP APOSTASISE?

(A Report prepared at the Request of the First-Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church for the Church Sobor scheduled for October, 2001 in Suzdal)

Your Eminence, Your Graces, President and Members of the Holy Council of the Russian Orthodox Church!

Give the blessing!

With your permission, I would like to express my opinion with regard to the question of the gracelessness of the Moscow Patriarchate, and on the closely related question of how people seeking to join our Church from the MP should be received.

I have no doubt that the Holy Synod will declare that the MP is graceless, because to say otherwise would be to contradict the anathema against the Sergianists proclaimed by our own Church in 1999, and would mean to step on that broad path which is leading the Church Abroad into the abyss of Church's condemnation. But to raise the question: is the MP graceless?, and to reply simply: yes – is of course insufficient. If we reply to the one question, we must immediately reply to another: When approximately did the MP fall away from the True Church? I would like to discuss three possible answers to this latter question: 1. The period 1938-45, corresponding to the triumph of sergianism and the organisation of the sergianist Moscow Patriarchate, 2. The period 1961-71, corresponding to the fall of the MP into the heresy of ecumenism, and 3. the period 1990-2000, corresponding to the fall of Soviet power until the anathematisation of the sergianist ecumenists by our Church.

1. **1938-45.** The last link binding the True Orthodox, Catacomb Church to the sergianist church was the commemoration at Divine services of the name of the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Peter. But Metropolitan Peter was shot on October 10, 1937. And so after this date, if not earlier, the sergianist church was schismatical, having no communion with any true bishop of the True Orthodox Church and commemorating only the usurper Sergius Stragorodsky. At some time in the next few years the largest and most authoritative branch of the Catacomb Church, the Josephite, whose centre was Petrograd, introduced into the rite of the Triumph of Orthodoxy the following anathema: "To those who maintain the mindless renovationist heresy of sergianism; to those who teach that the earthly existence of the Church of God can be established by denying the truth of Christ; and to those who affirm that serving the God-fighting authorities and fulfilling their godless commands, which trample on the sacred canons,

the patristic traditions and the Divine dogmas, and destroy the whole of Christianity, saves the Church of Christ; and to those who revere the Antichrist and his servants and forerunners, and all his minions, as a lawful power established by God; and to all those... who blaspheme against the new confessors and martyrs (Sergius of Nizhni-Novgorod, Nicholas of Kiev and Alexis of Khutyn), and to... the renovationists and the other heretics – *anathema*.”¹⁵⁶.

In my view, if our Church seriously considers herself to be the successor of the Catacomb Church, the largest and most authoritative branch of which was the Josephite, then we must accept this Josephite anathema as valid and as expressing the authentic tradition of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It follows that from the date of this anathema we must consider the schismatic and heretical MP to have been graceless. But since we do not know the exact date of this anathema, we must content ourselves with saying: not later than 1943. Why? Because the anathema refers to the three bishops Sergius, Nicholas and Alexis, who from the beginning of the Second World War and until 1943 constituted three quarters of the episcopate of the MP that was in freedom. However, in September, 1943 these three bishops entered into a pact with Stalin, as a result of which Sergius was made “patriarch” and the ranks of the MP’s episcopate was filled up with new bishops, mainly ex-renovationists, who transformed the character of the MP in a radical way. It is therefore almost certain that the Josephite anathema dates to the period before September, 1943.

In any case, there are other reasons for considering the year 1943 to have been a fateful watershed in the history of the Russian Church. Before 1943 the MP could consider itself to possess at least formal, external succession from the Church of Patriarch Tikhon and hence the pre-revolutionary Church of Russia. However, from 1943 the MP recreated itself on a new foundation, that foundation being, not Christ and the traditions of the pre-revolutionary Church, but Stalin and the traditions of the communist God-fighting revolution. For it was in this very year that the MP received a new, official status from Stalin himself within the God-fighting state of the USSR. Hence in 1943 the MP became not simply the official church *in* the Soviet Union, but the official church *of* the Soviet Union – “the Soviet church”, in a precise sense.

The new status of the Soviet church manifested itself in many ways. In 1944 it received a “patriarch”. In 1945 it stepped onto the international arena, persecuting the True Christians everywhere. For example, during the civil war between the Orthodox and the communists in Greece, “Patriarch” Alexis publicly, on Greek radio, call on the Greeks to fight on the side of the communists – that is, kill True Christians in the name of the communist revolution. As regards the situation inside Russia, the Josephite theologian

¹⁵⁶ Quoted from S. Verin, “A Witness of the Russian Catacombs”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, №14 (1563). July 1/14, 1996, pp. 11-12.

and confessor I.M. Andreyevsky wrote: "The Underground or Catacomb Church in Soviet Russia suffered its heaviest tribulations after February 4, 1945, that is, after the enthronement of the Soviet patriarch Alexis. Those who did not recognise him were condemned to new terms of imprisonment and were sometimes shot. Those who did recognise him and gave their signatures to that effect were often released before the end of their terms, and were given appointments. All the secret priests discovered in the Soviet zone of Germany, and who did not recognise Patriarch Alexis, were also shot..."¹⁵⁷

Can we really admit that this completely schismatical and heretical, openly pro-communist and bloodily anti-Orthodox organism was a part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church even in the post-war period?

Before considering other possible dates for the fall of the MP, I should like to consider some common objections to the above-expressed position.

The first relates to the fact that not all the holy new hieromartyrs and confessors of Russia expressed themselves categorically with regard to the gracelessness of the MP. In this connection particular attention is paid, especially by such pro-patriarchal hierarchs as Archbishop Mark of Germany, to the position of Hieromartyr Metropolitan Cyril of Kazan, who in the early 1930s expressed the view that the sergianist sacraments were valid, but that those who received them knowing of the sin of Sergius received them to their condemnation. However, this is what Hieromartyr Cyril wrote in a letter dated February 23 / March 8, 1937: "With regard to your perplexities concerning Sergianism, I can say that the very same questions in almost the same form were addressed to me from Kazan ten years ago, and then I replied affirmatively to them, because I considered everything that Metropolitan Sergius had done as a mistake which he himself was conscious of and wished to correct. Moreover, among our ordinary flock there were many people who had not investigated what had happened, and it was impossible to demand from them a decisive and active condemnation of the events. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge. The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius 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 nature of Sergianism. We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgivable craftiness to close one's

¹⁵⁷ Quoted from V. Moss, *Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' na Perepute (1917-1999)*, St. Petersburg, 2001, p. 221.

eyes to this unrighteousness and seek there for the satisfaction of one's spiritual needs when one's conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin..."¹⁵⁸

Several points need to be emphasised here. First, St. Cyril rejects "the argument from ignorance" as an excuse for remaining a sergianist, considering that by the time of writing, 1937, "much water has flowed under the bridge", "there has been enough time for the formerly ignorant members of the Church, enough incentive and enough opportunity to investigate what has happened". Secondly, he considers Sergianism to have have been renovationist in nature. Now renovationism was an already condemned heresy; Patriarch Tikhon declared in 1923 that the renovationists were outside the Church and deprived of the grace of sacraments. So if Sergianism is a form of renovationism, it, too, is outside the Church and deprived of the grace of sacraments. And thirdly, St. Cyril unites himself unreservedly with St. Joseph, the leader of the Catacomb Church, whose rejection of grace among the sergianists is well-known. Therefore it seems clear that by the end of his life St. Cyril had united himself to the opinion of the Josephites and the consensus of the hieromartyrs of the Catacomb Church, which consensus must represent for us the criterion of Orthodoxy.

A second argument sometimes produced in favour of the present of grace in the MP is the fact that the Russian Church Abroad, from which our Church derives her hierarchy and apostolic succession, has never made a formal, unambiguous and universally binding statement concerning the gracelessness of the MP. This is true, but cannot be considered a powerful argument for several reasons.

First, three out of the four first-hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCOR) – Metropolitans Anthony, Philaret and Vitaly – have at different times expressed the opinion that the MP is graceless. Especially authoritative in this respect is the encyclical of Metropolitan Anthony dated 22 July, 1928, which declared that the sergianist Moscow Synod was not recognised as having any ecclesiastical authority whatsoever because it had entered into union with the enemies of God, and called it an unlawful organisation of apostates from the faith, similar to the ancient *libellatici*, who, while refusing openly to blaspheme against Christ or perform sacrifices to the idols, nevertheless obtained certificates from the pagan priests witnessing to their full agreement with them."¹⁵⁹ This encyclical is especially significant in view of the fact that it expressed, not simply the personal opinion of Metropolitan Anthony, but also "the completely definitive declaration of our Hierarchical Synod".

¹⁵⁸ Quoted from Danilushkin, M.B (ed.), *Istoria Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi*, St. Petersburg, vol. 1, 1917-70, 1997, pp. 982-983.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted from Moss, *op.cit.*, p. 158.

Other distinguished hierarchs of ROCOR echoed this judgement. Thus in 1955 Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of Jordanville, who had already been in prison for the faith in Bolshevik Russia, declared: "The patriarchate has violated the essential dogma of the Church of Christ and rejected its essential mission – to serve the regeneration of men, putting in its place the service of the atheist ends of communism, which is unnatural for the Church. This apostasy is bitterer than all the previous Arianisms, Nestorianisms, Iconoclasms, etc. And this is not the personal sin of one or another hierarchy, but the root sin of the Moscow patriarchate, confirmed, proclaimed and sealed by an oath in front of the whole world. It is, so to speak, *dogmatised apostasy...*"¹⁶⁰

Secondly, if ROCOR later showed some hesitation in relation to the gracelessness of the MP, it never showed hesitation about its unlawfulness, declaring the elections of all four Soviet "patriarchs" – Sergius, Alexis I, Pimen and Alexis II – to be uncanonical. It is very doubtful whether a Church organisation that is uncanonical over such a long period, and makes no attempt to return to canonicity, but on the contrary plunges ever deeper into sin, can be said to have the grace of sacraments.

Thirdly, it is precisely the hesitation that ROCOR showed, and the compromises it made with its pro-patriarchal members, that has led to its present catastrophic situation, in which it is not only the grace-filled nature of the MP that is being recognised, but its canonicity and the necessity of joining it! This should warn us that what seem like small compromises at the beginning can, in a comparatively short period of time, lead to spiritual death if not corrected. There can be little doubt that if we, the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church (ROAC), make such compromises, the punishment will be no less and probably much quicker in coming.

Let us turn now to the other dates that have been proposed:-

2. **1961-71.** The Patriarchate entered the World Council of Churches (WCC) at the 4th General Assembly in New Delhi in December, 1961. Entrance into the WCC involves the formal, official acceptance of the teaching that the Orthodox Church is *not* exclusively the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. It therefore involves a denial of the dogma of the One Church and the confession of the heresy of ecumenism – that heresy, which, in the words of Metropolitan Vitaly, is in fact «the heresy of heresies, because up to now every heresy in the history of the Church has striven to take the place of the true Church, while the ecumenical movement, in uniting all the heresies, calls them to consider themselves, all together, as the one true Church."¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Maximenko, *Motivy moej zhizni*, Jordanville, 1955, p. 25.

¹⁶¹ Quoted from Moss, *op.cit.*, p. 281.

Some believe that the falling away of the MP must be dated from this time, when its official confession of the ecumenist heresy was confirmed by ever-increasing numbers of concelebrations and inter-communion with Roman Catholics and Protestants. Certainly, there can be no question that the MP cannot be considered a true Church from the time it began to confess «the heresy of heresies». Thus Archbishop Averky (Taushev) of Jordanville commented as follows on the 1969 decision of the MP to allow Orthodox clergy to give the sacraments to Roman Catholics: «If anyone had any doubts about how we should relate to the contemporary Moscow patriarchate, whether it was possible to consider her as Orthodox in consequence of her close union with the God-fighters and persecutors of the faith and Church of Christ, these doubts must finally fall away now that they have entered into communion with the papists. The Moscow patriarchate has hereby *fallen away from Orthodoxy*, and can no longer be considered to be Orthodox...»¹⁶²

However, ecumenism was imposed on the MP by the head of the Council for religious affairs of the Soviet Union.¹⁶³ According to the words of Metropolitan Vladimir (Kotlyarov) of St. Petersburg, who was present at the Assembly in New Delhi, all the representatives of the Russian clergy who came there “were agents of the KGB”¹⁶⁴. Thus the MP’s ecumenism was simply the most terrible fruit of the earlier illness of sergianism. For apostates do not have their own will. Having given their will into the hands of the antichrist, they will say and do everything that is demanded of them, up to and including the most disgusting blasphemy. So the real fall of the MP must be dated, not to the date of its entrance into the WCC, but to the time when it lost its free will and became a slave of atheism.

3. **1990-2000.** Millions of people had great hopes that when communism would fall in Russia, the patriarchate would repent. This did not happen, in spite of the fact that a huge quantity of horrific facts about the MP during the Soviet period now became generally available, and that it was now possible to be a member of the True Church without risking one’s life or freedom.

At this point, the argument that the MP was not truly apostate, only weak, and that with the fall of Soviet power it would naturally reveal again its true, Orthodox self collapsed completely. It became clear that the MP was not only apostate “for fear of the Jews” (although this, of course, is still apostasy), but even when it had nothing to fear from the Jews. From this is evident the power of the lie, which is first accepted against one’s will but then becomes natural for the liar. Having convinced himself that it is right to lie for the sake

¹⁶² Archbishop Averky, *Sovremennost' v svete Slova Bozhia*, Jordanville, vol 3, p. 216.

¹⁶³ Fr. Sergius Gordun, “Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Svyatejshikh patriarkhakh Sergii I Aleksii”, *Vestnik Russkogo Khristiansokogo Dvizhenia*, № 158 (1990), pp. 133-134.

¹⁶⁴ See his interview to the newspaper *Smena*, in *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*. № 5 (1554). March 1/14, 1996. p. 11.

of saving his life, the liar then begins to believe his own lie, even to love it. It becomes a "holy lie", even more noble than the truth, and elicited by the purest, most self-sacrificing of all possible motives.

And yet there are many, especially in the contemporary Russian Church Abroad, who believe that the MP miraculously recovered grace immediately Soviet power fell, as if the truth and grace of a confession depends, not on the faith and works of the members of the confession, but on external political events. As if the sin of Judas could be removed simply with the death of Annas and Caiaphas and without the necessity of any repentance on the part of Judas himself! Moreover, it must be remembered that Judas did repent, but not before Christ, not before Him Whom he had betrayed – and so his "repentance" proved to be empty and fruitless.

There can be no question, alas, that in the decade since the fall of communism in Russia, the MP has not only not repented of its sins, but has plunged ever deeper into apostasy and corruption of all kinds. Ecumenism, in particular, has taken giant strides forward. In 1990 there was the Chambesy accord, whereby the anathemas on the so-called "Oriental Orthodox" – that is, the Monophysite heretics – were removed. Then in 1991 came the "patriarch's" shameful speech to the Jewish rabbis of New York. Then, in 1992, in Constantinople, the MP, together with all the Local Orthodox Churches, officially renounced missionary work among the Western heretics. Then, in 1994, came the Balamand agreement, whereby the Orthodox and the Catholics recognised each other to be the "two lungs" of the single Body of Christ. Ecumenism has also continued with the Protestants, with the Muslims, and even with the Buddhists...

However, let us remind ourselves once again, that however terrible the ecumenist excesses of the MP, its root sin, the sin which tore it away from unity with the True Church, was sergianism. And in this connection we must examine the claims made by certain pro-patriarchal members of ROCOR that the MP, in its Sobor in August, 2000, somehow repented of sergianism through its acceptance of the document entitled "The bases of the social doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church".

Attention has been drawn in particular to the following passages in the document: "The Christian must openly speak out in a lawful manner against an undoubted violation, by society or the state, of the decrees and commandments of God, and if this lawful speaking out is impossible or illegal or ineffective, take up the position of civil disobedience". And again: "The Church must point to the inadmissibility of spreading convictions or actions that lead to the establishment of complete control over the life of a person, his convictions and relationships with other people."

Fine words! But has the MP ever in her existence carried them out? And if not, do not such statements merely deepen her guilt and hypocrisy? Moreover, while the statements may be correct, there is not a hint of repentance for the sergianism of the past. On the contrary, the same Council canonised several sergianist pseudo-martyrs, together with some true martyrs of the Catacomb Church, thereby expressing her incapacity to discern between good and evil, truth and heresy, martyrs and apostates. Even Sergius himself has been proposed for canonisation. Thus in 1993, on the eightieth anniversary of the "restoration" of the Patriarchate, when the "patriarch" said: "Through the host of martyrs of 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."¹⁶⁵

My conclusion, therefore, is that the MP fell away from the True Church of Christ and lost the grace of sacraments in the period 1938-45, when its root heresy of sergianism reached its mature and fixed form.

One or two qualifications should be made this conclusion. First, although, as I have stated, I believe that we have the full canonical right to declare the MP graceless since 1945, this does not mean that God in His mercy may not have preserved some "islands of Orthodoxy" in the prevailing sea of apostasy for some time after that. However, if there were such islands, they are known to God alone; and the Church on earth, in the absence of a Divine revelation, must draw the conclusion which follows inexorably from the holy canons. God, as the Supreme Lawgiver, can make exceptions to His own laws. But we, as fully subject to His Law, cannot presume to know what those exceptions, if they exist, are. We will not be condemned for following the Law of God: we may well be condemned for having the pride to think that we know better than the Law.

Secondly, the judgement that the MP has been graceless for this last half-century is not the same as the judgement that everyone who died in the MP in that period is lost for eternity. Certainly, we cannot be confident of the salvation of someone who has died outside the True Church. But neither can we categorically deny the possibility, but must content ourselves with the words of the Apostle Peter: "It is time for the judgement to begin from the house of God; but if first from us, what shall be the end of those who disobey the Gospel of God. And if the righteous one scarcely is saved, where shall the ungodly one and sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4.17-18). As Hieromartyr Cyril of Kazan wrote: "We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgiveable craftiness to close one's eyes to this unrighteousness and seek

¹⁶⁵ Quoted by Fr. Peter Perekrestov, "The Schism in the Heart of Russia (Concerning Sergianism)", *Canadian Orthodox Herald*, 1999, № 4.

there for the satisfaction of one's spiritual needs when one's conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin..."

Let us now turn to the question of how people coming to our Church from the MP should be received. The normal way of accepting heretics and schismatics into the Church is by baptism (if they have not received even the correct external form of baptism) or chrismation (if they have received the correct external form of baptism). The Third Rite, reception by repentance only, is also sometimes used.

Up to now, if I am not mistaken, our Church has followed the practice of ROCOR in receiving people in most cases by the Third Rite. This has facilitated the reception of larger numbers of people into our Church. However, it has some serious disadvantages, which I should like to outline now, basing my observations mainly on my experience in ROCOR:-

First, many of those received into the Church from the MP do not fully realise that they are coming from darkness into light, from heresy into truth, from the world that lies under the condemnation of God into the Church that is the only Ark of salvation. They think they are coming from a "worse" Church into a "better" Church, no more. Some of them later come to realise the real nature of what they have been rescued from; others never come to realise this, but instead become propagandists for the view that the MP is "the Mother Church", that it has grace, that we should return to it, etc. In my view, one of the major reasons for this is the relative ease with which they can enter the True Church. In ROCOR the almost universal application of the Third Rite, and the reception of clergy with the minimum of formality and examination, has led over the years to a dilution of its witness and nothing less than the corruption of its confession of faith. A somewhat stricter approach, with the use of the Second Rite as the norm rather than the exception, would help to correct such a tendency from developing in our Church.

Secondly, in other True Orthodox Churches, a stricter practice has prevailed in the reception of heretics for a long time now. Thus the Romanian Old Calendarists – by far the largest jurisdiction of the True Orthodox in the world – and all the major branches of the Greek Old Calendarist Church except the Cyprianites receive new calendarists by chrismation. Or, if they have not received a proper immersion baptism in the new calendarist church, by baptism. Now it may be argued that the Russian Church is not obliged to follow the practice of the Greek and Romanian Churches, and that is true. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that uniformity of practice among the True Orthodox would greatly strengthen our witness to the world. As it is, the Greek Old Calendarists often do not fully trust us because we receive people from the MP in a way which they think is illegitimate. "Why do you

not receive them by chrismation?" they ask. "Does this not mean that you accept the heretics as Orthodox?"

Thirdly, many people have not received even the correct external form of baptism in the MP. Such people, if they have been received into the True Church by the Second or Third Rite, often begin to have doubts about the validity of their reception, or simply long for a proper baptism. The former head of the Seraphimo-Gennadiite branch of the Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Epiphany (Kaminsky), regularly baptised converts from the MP who had not received an immersion baptism in the MP. In this he claimed that he was following the practice of his spiritual father, the great confessor Archbishop Anthony Galynsky-Mikhailovsky. Again, St. Philaret of New York regularly blessed baptisms of people who had already been received into ROCOR, but then asked for baptism because they had never received an immersion baptism. Again, four members of our own parish, including myself, were received into the MP by the Second Rite. We were then received into ROCOR by the Third Rite. However, when we petitioned to be baptised, since we had never had an Orthodox baptism, Archbishop Nicodemus of Great Britain agreed – as did St. Philaret.

To summarise: I believe that all those who entered the MP since 1945 and now seek to be joined to our Church should be treated as entering the True Church for the first time, and therefore should either be baptised (if they have not received even the correct form of threefold immersion in the MP) or chrismated (if they have received immersion baptism). Of course, such a practice should in no way be seen as casting doubt on the validity of those many people who have already been received into our Church by the Third Rite. Nor does it impair the right of bishops to use economy (i.e. the Third Rite) in individual cases if they think fit. But in my opinion these cases of economy should become the exception rather than the rule. For it is right and proper that, as the apostates body of the MP falls ever further away from True Orthodoxy, the practice of the True Church should become stricter in order to reflect this fact, in order to raise the ecclesiological consciousness of her members, and in order to prevent the infiltration of spies and covert heretics into our midst.

September 9/22, 2001.

9. EMPIRE OR ANTICHRIST?

Or: On Ecclesiastical Stalinism

1. The Soviet Antichrist

According to the Holy Fathers, the Orthodox Christian Empire is a weapon of God defending the people of God from the Antichrist. The fall of the Christian Empire inevitably leads to the appearance of the anti-empire of the Antichrist. And so the fall of the Russian Empire and the enthronement of Soviet power in 1917 was seen by the believing Russian people as the beginning of the end of history, the enthronement of precisely – the Antichrist.

However, the renovationists and sergianists had a different point of view. The renovationists welcomed Soviet power as rescuing them from the “curse” of Tsarism and enthusiastically offered their services to it in building the “brave new world” of the socialist paradise. Consequently, they quickly fell away from the paradise of the Church and under the Church’s anathema of January, 1918 condemning all those who cooperated with Soviet power.

The sergianists did not so enthusiastically welcome Soviet power. However, they did not refuse to cooperate with it, and emphatically refused to see it as the Antichrist. This is clear from the famous interview between Metropolitan Sergius and the delegation from Petrograd led by Hieromartyr Demetrius, Archbishop of Gdov in December, 1927:

Archbishop Demetrius. Soviet power is in its basis antichristian. Is it then possible for the Orthodox Church to be in union with an antichristian state power, and pray for its successes and participate in its joys?

Metropolitan Sergius. But where do you see the Antichrist here?

Many of the more “moderate” sergianists agreed that Soviet power was an evil regime, but they refused to see in this evil anything deeper or different in principle from the evil of so many other tyrannical regimes in history. According to them, Soviet power was established by God, for “all power is from God” (Romans 13.1); it was Caesar, and the Lord said: “give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s”. And so the suffering that came from it was to be endured patiently as a purification from sin.

There was an element of truth in this attitude which obscured a very dangerous lie. The truth consisted in the recognition that we are sinners, so that the suffering that comes to us in the course of our lives, whatever its source from a human point of view, is ultimately sent to us from God, in order that by enduring it patiently we may receive the forgiveness of our sins. Consequently, we cannot deny that Soviet power was a kind of punishment from God on the sinning Russian people.

But to believe that the suffering caused by Soviet power was a punishment from God is not the same as to believe that Soviet power was established by God and hence to be obeyed as “the servant of God” (Romans 13.3). On the contrary: Soviet power was established by the devil (albeit with God’s permission), and it was *not* to be obeyed, because it was the servant of the devil. There is a fundamental difference between living under a regime which is evil, but which has a certain, albeit low-level legitimacy and can be said to have been established by God, and living under a regime which is the (collective) Antichrist, having no legitimacy at all because it has been established by the devil. In the former case, it is possible, though difficult, to live a Christian life while remaining loyal to the regime: in the latter case, it is simply *not possible*. To survive as a true Christian under the regime of the Antichrist it is necessary to reject the Antichrist precisely as the Antichrist, and, in the words of Patriarch Tikhon’s famous anathema, “not to enter into any kind of communion with these outcasts of the human race”.

This difference can be better understood by comparing Soviet power with the regime of the Ottoman Turks. In 1453 the Turks came to wield power over the Christians through the destruction of the New Rome of the Byzantine Empire. As such, there was a certain logic in considering their state to be the Antichrist. However, the Orthodox Empire did not die: it was translated north to Russia, the Third Rome. Moreover, the Turks, while “antichrists” in the sense that they denied the Divinity of the Son of God, did not try and impose this antichristian faith on their Christian subjects. Even when they interfered in the elections of the Ecumenical Patriarchs, they demanded only money, not the confession of heresy. Therefore it was possible to live a fully Christian life while remaining a loyal subject of the Sultan.

However, it was a very different story in 1917. The fall of the Third Rome was not mitigated by the translation of the Empire to a fourth kingdom, and the last remnants of Orthodox monarchical statehood, in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, were overwhelmed by the Red Army. From the very beginning war was declared on Orthodox Christianity, and the whole military, political, economic, juridical and cultural apparatus of the new state was directed at forcing the Christians to accept the new faith of communism. From the time of Sergius’ declaration in 1927 nobody was allowed to exert authority in the Church unless he confessed that he identified his joys with the regime’s joys and his sorrows with the regime’s sorrows, which presupposed acceptance, not only of the Soviet state, but also *the aims* of the Soviet state.

The Bolsheviks, while paying lip-service to the separation of Church and State, in fact sought to abolish the line between them. For them, *everything* was ideological, everything had to be in accordance with their anti-theist religion, there could be no room for disagreement, no private spheres into which the state and its ideology did not pry. Most of the Roman emperors

allowed the Christians to order their own lives in their own way so long as they showed loyalty to the state (which the Christians were very eager to do). However, the Bolsheviks insisted in imposing their own ways upon the Christians in every sphere.

Thus in family life they imposed civil marriage only, divorce on demand, children spying on parents; in education - compulsory Marxism; in economics - dekulakization and collectivisation; in military service - the oath of allegiance to Lenin; in science - Darwinism and Lysenkoism; in art - socialist realism; and in religion - the ban on religious education, the closing of churches and requisitioning of valuables, the registration of parishes with the atheist authorities, the commemoration of the authorities at the Liturgy, and the 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*.

For the true Christian, therefore, there was no alternative except to reject the State that rejected him and everything that he valued. He was forced either to accept martyrdom or flee into the catacombs. The attempt to find a "third way" in practice always involved compromises unacceptable to the Christian conscience.

2. The Second World War

Principled rejection of a State logically leads either to war against that State or to passive disobedience. The Whites in the Civil War had fought against the Soviet State because of their principled rejection of it; and the Russian Church in Exile led by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev blessed their attempt. But the attempt failed, and after the consolidation of Soviet power in the 1920s rejection of the Soviet State expressed itself, not so much in the call to arms, as in passive disobedience and non-cooperation, or, as Hieromartyr Archbishop Barlaam of Perm put it, in spiritual as opposed to physical resistance.

In this connection the words of Hieromartyr Bishop Mark (Novoselov) at his interrogation are noteworthy: "... I was not a friend of Soviet power because of my religious convictions. Insofar as Soviet power is an atheist power and even anti-theist, I consider that as a true Christian I cannot strengthen this power by any means... To it there applies a prayer which the Church has commanded us to use every day in certain conditions... The purpose of this formula is to ask God to overthrow an infidel power... But this formula does not call believers to active measures, but to pray for the overthrow of the apostate power... Churchmen are being repressed not

because of their political counter-revolutionary activity, but as bearers of the wrong ideology... The only way out for the Church in these conditions is passive resistance and martyrdom, but in no way active resistance to Soviet power".¹⁶⁶

This criterion allowed Christians quite sincerely to reject the charge of "counter-revolution" - if "counter-revolution" were understood to mean *physical* rebellion. The problem was, as we have seen, that the Bolsheviks understood "counter-revolution" in a much wider sense...

In 1941 Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union, and once again the prospect of the overthrow of the power that had fallen away from God beckoned. Millions of people in the western borderlands welcomed the invaders; and there can be little doubt that from a purely religious point of view the new authority was more attractive than the Soviets. For it not only offered freedom of religion to all, including the True Orthodox Christians: it also promised the final overthrow of the hated Soviet power.

In the East, where Soviet power still ruled, the situation was more complicated. Refusal to fight "for the achievements of October" meant certain death. Some were prepared to pay that price, and they are counted among the martyrs of the Church.¹⁶⁷ The great majority, however, were prepared to fight, with a greater or lesser degree of enthusiasm, for Stalin and Soviet power. They justified this decision, in most cases, on the grounds of patriotism. Soviet power, however evil, was still "Russian", still "ours". And the enemy, as became clearer with the passing of time, was cruel and anti-Russian.

The theme of patriotism was emphasised both by the State and by the State Church of the Soviet Union, the Moscow Patriarchate. The State began to tone down its earlier rabidly anti-Russian and cosmopolitan propaganda. It was again permitted publicly to mention certain names of Russian cultural figures and even figures of religious-political history, such as Pushkin, Suvorov and St. Alexander Nevsky. In 1943 the Church, with its strong associations with Russian history and national feeling, was given a limited legitimacy in exchange for unqualified support for the State in its external and internal struggles. Metropolitan (later "Patriarch") Sergius seized upon this opportunity with enthusiasm. He issued several patriotic broadcasts on Soviet radio. And he announced a collection for the creation of a special tank column in the name of Demetrius Donskoj.

Later propagandists - even Orthodox propagandists - built on this foundation to weave a fantastic myth about the "Great Patriotic War". It became a glorious war waged, not only for Russia, but also for Orthodoxy, a

¹⁶⁶ Novoselov, in I.I. Osipov, "Istoria Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi po materialam sledstvennogo dela, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 14 (1587), July 15/28, 1997, p. 5.

¹⁶⁷ Schema-Monk Epiphany (Chernov), *Tserkov' Katakombnaia na Zemle Rossijskoj* (MS), 1980.

holy war that witnessed the resurrection of Holy Russia. The heroic exploit of the Russian people in this war, according to some, even wiped out the sin of its earlier support of the revolution! Stalin himself was no longer the greatest persecutor of the Church in history, but some kind of saviour, a new Constantine the Great!

The falseness of this myth is easily exposed. For the first two years of the war, before Hitler's invasion of Russia in 1941, the Soviet Union was actually fighting on Hitler's side, sharing in the division of Poland and the Baltic States. And if Hitler had not chosen to turn against his ally, there can be little doubt that Stalin would have continued to support him.

The State's exploitation of Russian national feeling was cynical in the extreme. Its continued hatred for everything truly Russian and holy was evident both during the war and immediately after it: in the killing of all prisoners in Soviet jails as the front approached, in the continued persecution of True Orthodox Christians both at home and abroad, in the imprisonment of millions of soldiers who had been prisoners-of-war under the Germans on their return home, in the imposition of communist regimes and pro-communist churches on the East European countries of Romania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Only extreme naivety – or a willing refusal to see the truth – could see in the imposition of militant atheism with renewed strength over a quarter of the world's surface from Berlin to Beijing as in any sense a triumph of Orthodoxy. Rather it was the fulfilment of the prophecy: "I looked and behold, a pale horse, and a rider on it whose name was death; and hell followed after it, and power was given to it over a quarter of the earth – to kill with sword and hunger, with plague and with beasts of the earth" (Revelation 6.8).

Of course, even in what seem to be the greatest triumphs of Satan the providential hand of God is to be seen; for "we know that all things work for the good for those who love God" (Romans 8.28). And there can be no doubt that the Soviet triumph had its good effects: most obviously in the destruction of Fascism and in the punishment of the Soviet regime for its unprecedented crimes of the previous decades, less obviously but even more importantly in the protection it afforded Soviet citizens for the next 45 years or so from some of the corrupting influences of western civilisation. But the recognition that God can bring good out of evil, even the greatest evil, should not lead us to praise the evil as if it were good. Thus God used the betrayal of Judas to work the salvation of the world on the Cross of Christ. But, as St. John Chrysostom explained in his homily on this event, this in no way justified Judas or saved him from eternal condemnation.

A particularly cynical attempt to justify the evil of the Soviet victory in the Second World War can be seen in the recent article entitled "Two Victories"¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ *Spetznaz Rossii*, May, 2001.

by Egor Kholmogorov, in which the antichristian empire of the Soviet Union is raised to quasi-Christian status.

The aim of Kholmogorov's article is to contrast the celebration of the victory over Nazism in 1945 in the West and in Russia. "For the West," he writes, "it was a civil war, already not the first battle in the history of western civilization between two forces presenting their expression of the western expansionist spirit. The European democracies under the patronage of the American super-democracy tried to force Nazism, the offspring of the same western civilized subconscious, back like a genie into its bottle. The basis of the western world-view is 'the survival of the fittest races in the struggle for existence', as Darwin, the spiritual father of western civilization, called his treatise. The market democracies prefer 'social' mechanisms of competitive struggle, Nazism decided to stake all on arms. It was a difference in tactics, but both tactics had been described by Machiavelli as the behaviour of the 'lion' and the 'fox': that is why May 8 is celebrated in most European capitals bashfully; they honour it somehow unwillingly."

On the other hand: "For Russia this 'feast with tears in the eyes' is above all a festival of life that had been all but completely stamped out by Hitler's jackboot on the whole expanse of Russia, and a festival of Russian destiny, from which there we can in no way escape. Confined in the chains of the ideology of 'world revolution' the Russian knight, so it would seem, would never have to act in accordance with his nature. But Hitler's sword without wishing it itself destroyed these chains to its own destruction – the Russian soldier stood out in his customary imperial role of saviour of the peoples from enraged bandits. It is not by chance that during the war the Red army both psychologically and in fact was to a large extent turned into an imperial army, with lofty self-consciousness, with an officer corps knowing the value of honour and duty, with marshal-strategists of genius. Whether Stalin wanted it or not, under his leadership Russia did not allow the West to give birth to that spectre with which it had been pregnant already for more than a thousand years, since the time of Charlemagne – the Western Empire, the Anti-empire. In the 9th century, on the initiative of the Frankish emperors, Roman Catholicism broke away from Orthodoxy for the first time in order to sanctify a usurpation – the assumption by one of the German kings of the title of Roman Emperor and universal autocrat. It took several centuries to form a schism of faiths, of civilizations and of empires: more precisely, a schism from the Empire, for however hard the West tried, it did not succeed in creating a real Empire, they just couldn't pull off the theft. And then again, twice in the 20th century, in two world wars, Russia, the heir of Rome and Byzantium, had to crush new pretenders to the creation of an anti-Roman Empire – first Kaiser Wilhelm, and then the "Third Reich" of the Nazi Führer. But since the Empire is one, and since the West just could not create anything more closely resembling the ideal than the unrestrainedly self-satisfied cowboy America, there is a hope that the Russian Idea will not remain simply a Russian idea,

but a hope that it will also become English, and Spanish, and Syrian, and Mozambiquean or Chilean."

Nobody denies that the Second World War was in a certain sense a war between two opposing tendencies inherent in the post-Orthodox civilization of the West: universalism and nationalism. No Orthodox Christian will quarrel with the thesis that insofar as the democratic states were not fighting for Orthodoxy, their struggle did not have that sacred character which the wars of the Orthodox emperors had against their enemies, the pagans and heretics. But was not the Soviet Union also a product of western (and Jewish) civilization? Were its doctrines not worked out in the reading room of the British museum with the use of western sources and on the basis of almost exclusively western experience? Truly, the Second World War was a civil war, but between *three* tendencies in western civilization, not two. And each of these three tendencies was rooted in the enlightenment and anti-enlightenment ideologies of the 18th and early 19th centuries: totalitarian nationalism (or fascism), liberal universalism (or democracy), and totalitarian universalism (or communism).

True Orthodoxy played no role in this war, and the true Orthodox Christian cannot rejoice in the spread of false "Orthodoxy" by means of Soviet tanks throughout Eastern Europe, nor at the further spread of militant atheism throughout the whole expanse of Eurasia from Berlin to Peking. Many Orthodox belonging to the Catacomb Church refused to fight on the side of one demon against another, on the side of Babylon against Egypt or of Egypt against Babylon, rejecting citizenship in any earthly state and preferring to fight only for "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6.6), the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. For they knew that Russia without her head, the God-anointed Tsar, would not be Russia, but, as St. John of Kronstadt said, "a stinking corpse", and they were not so naïve as to believe, with the Moscow Patriarchate, that Stalin was "the new Constantine".

Khomogorov's thesis is analogous to that of the Cretan historian, George Trapezuntios, who in 1466 told the Ottoman Sultan and conqueror of Constantinople, Mehmet II: "No one doubts that you are the Emperor of the Romans. Whoever is legally master of the capital of the Empire is the Emperor and Constantinople is the capital of the Roman Empire... And he who is and remains Emperor of the Romans is also Emperor of the whole earth."¹⁶⁹ However, just as Greek Orthodoxy has rejected this thesis with horror, so, and with still stronger reason, does Russian Orthodoxy reject the idea that the Soviet Union was in any way and at any time a lawful successor of the Russian Empire. Just as Julian the Apostate rejected Constantine the Great, and therefore was not his successor, so Lenin rejected (more exactly: murdered) Nicholas II, and therefore cannot be counted as his successor.

¹⁶⁹ Trapezountos, in Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin*, London: Phoenix Press, 2001, p. 215.

Khomogorov's thesis is thoroughly sergianist and blasphemous. Are we to suppose that God needed the devil in order to realise His Providence! As if the most impious regime in human history – and the only one anathematized by the Orthodox Church – could lead to the Triumph of Orthodoxy! Of course, as we have already noted, Divine Providence can turn evil to good, as he turned the betrayal of Judas to the salvation of mankind. But the good here does not arise “thanks to” the evil, but in spite of it, and we are in no way permitted to thank or praise the evil because God used it for the good. And so just as we cannot rejoice at the betrayal of Judas, still less thank him for his unintended services to mankind, similarly we cannot rejoice at the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War (which was the “Great Patriotic” war only for those whose homeland was not Holy Russia), still less give thanks to that state which the Church of God has cursed and anathematized as being an anti-authority and anti-empire.

St. John Chrysostom used to say: “Glory to God for *all things*”. Therefore it is not only possible, but even essential, to thank God both for those temporal goods that the Soviet victory provided – for the saving of some people from death, for the preservation of the Russian language and to some degree Russian culture, – and for those longer-term benefits which are not so immediately obvious but which will become clearer as the mystery of Divine Providence reveals itself. But *only* God must be thanked, and only in giving thanks to God is there virtue and blessedness. This blessedness is immediately lost, however, when gratitude is offered to the Party and Stalin or the USSR. It is lost even if it is offered to “the Russian Liberator-People”.

Does it follow from this that it was possible to fight in the Red Army with a good conscience, without betraying Christ and His Holy Church? The answer to this question depends on the answer to the further question: is it possible to confess one's faith in Christ while fighting for the Antichrist? It should be pointed out here it is not only the individual soldier's private motivation which is relevant here, but also his public allegiance. In his heart the individual may believe that he is fighting, not for communism, but for Russia, or for his loved ones who are in danger of physical extermination. But to what extent can this private motivation justify him if in his public behaviour he gives every impression of fighting for Stalin and the Communist Party?

We shall not attempt to answer this question in a general sense, but shall confine ourselves to recalling the words Hieromartyr Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow, in 1918: “I adjure all you, faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ, not to enter into any kind of communion with these outcasts of the human race”, and of Hieromartyr Bishop Mark (Novoselov): “By virtue of my religious convictions, insofar as Soviet power is an atheist, and even an antitheist power, I consider that as a true Christian I cannot strengthen it in any way” ...

Before leaving this theme, it is worth noting that even non-Russians and non-Orthodox Christians understood the evil of fighting on the side of the Soviet Antichrist. An Anglican priest (now an Orthodox Christian) was on a British cruiser on the Mediterranean Sea when the news came that Britain had acquired a new ally in her struggle with Nazi Germany - the Soviet Union. There was a short pause while the priest digested this news. Then he turned to his friend and said: "Until now, I thought we were fighting for God, King and Country. Now I know that we are fighting for King and Country..."

3. Repentance and the Triumph of Orthodoxy

It is an axiom of Orthodoxy that the only path from evil to good is through repentance. Works without repentance cannot save; faith without repentance cannot save. For repentance is the first fruit of faith, the first work of the truly Christian conscience. This truth is more or less understood in relation to the individual Christian. But in relation to societies it is often forgotten. Few Orthodox Christians would argue that the fall of the Orthodox Empire in 1917 and its replacement by the anti-empire of the Soviets was not a terrible tragedy, a terrible sin on the collective conscience of the people. And yet many would argue that this sin can be - or already has been - washed away, not by repentance, but by patriotism, or by suffering, or simply by the passage of time. But time destroys only material, not spiritual realities; and patriotism that is not informed by, and subject to, the higher Patriotism of the Heavenly Kingdom is simply another form of fallenness. As for suffering, if accompanied by faith and repentance, as in the case of the wise thief, this does indeed wipe out sin. But if accompanied only by cursing and swearing, as in the case of the bad thief, it only leads further into hell.

The sin to be repented of here is the sin of actively supporting, or passively tolerating, the imposition of a power established by Satan in place of a power established by God. Today, more than 80 years since the tragedy, the Russian people as a whole - with the important and significant exception of the Catacomb, or True Orthodox Church - has not repented of this sin. Neither the persecutions of the 20s and 30s, nor the hot wars of the 40s, nor the cold war of the 50s to 80s, nor even the relative freedom of the 90s, has brought the people to a consciousness of what they have done. That is why its sufferings continue with no clear sign of relief on the horizon. For "If My people had heard Me, if Israel had walked in My ways, quickly would I have humbled their enemies, and upon their oppressors would I have laid My hand" (Psalm 80.12-13). Hence the words of the All-Russian Sobor on November 11, 1917 are as applicable now as they were then: "To our great misfortune, there has not so far been born a power that is truly of the people, and worthy of receiving the blessing of the Orthodox Church. And it will not appear in the Russian land until with sorrowful prayer and tears of repentance we turn to Him without Whom those who build the city labour in vain."

Regeneration is still possible, the rebirth of the Orthodox Empire is still possible. But only if the lessons of the past 80 years are learned, and the mirage of an “Orthodox Empire” that is based, not on true faith and repentance, but on pride and self-deception, is rejected finally and completely. Concerning such pseudo-empires and anti-empires we must pray to the Lord with fervour: “Let not the throne of iniquity have fellowship with Thee, which maketh mischief in the name of the law” (Psalm 93.20).

*Moscow.
September 16/29, 2001.*

10. THE TRAGEDY OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ABROAD

Save thyself, O Sion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.
Zachariah 2.7.

In 1990 communism began to collapse in Russia. The communist party gave up the monopoly position it had previously enjoyed in political life, and in March the party candidates in the main cities were routed in the first genuinely free elections in Soviet history. Still more important, a law on freedom of conscience was passed, and believers of all religions were allowed to confess their faith without hindrance.

It was as if the clock had been turned back to the period just before October, 1917, when a large measure of freedom existed under the Provisional Government. Of course, this was not the Holy Russia of the right-believing Tsars; and if the October revolution had been reversed to some degree, the same could not be said of the February revolution. But there were grounds for believing that the restoration of Holy Russia was not “beyond the mountains”.

In many respects, as we shall see, these were de jure rather than de facto changes; and it must be admitted 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. Nevertheless, the changes were significant enough to indicate the beginning of a new era in Church history. 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.

Russian Orthodox Christians reacted to these changes in different ways. The True Orthodox Christians of the Catacomb Church were cautious, fearing deception, and in general remained in the underground, not seeking to register their communities or acquire above-ground churches. 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 open many churches (1830 were opened in the first nine months of 1990 alone) and to receive all the money budgeted for church restoration by the Russian parliament. The third force in Russian Orthodox life, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (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.

In this article, the roots of the eventual failure of ROAC's mission will be examined, with suggestions as to how a similar failure can be avoided by her successor-church on Russian soil, the Russian Orthodox (Autonomous) Church.

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The return of ROCOR to Russia was undoubtedly one of the most significant events in Church history, comparable to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem after the seventy-year exile in Babylon. And yet this momentous step was taken almost casually, without sufficient forethought or a clearly defined strategy. Hence difficult problems arose, problems that ROCOR in the end found insuperable.

These problems can be divided into three categories: (A) ROCOR in relation to her own flock at home and abroad, (B) ROCOR in relation to the Catacomb Church, and (C) ROCOR in relation to the MP and the post-Soviet Russian State.

A. ROCOR in relation to herself. The problem here is easily stated: 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 would appear to have been obvious: change the Polozhenie! And this was in fact the solution put forward by ROCOR's leading canonist, Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), who possessed unparalleled experience of ROCOR life since his appointment as Chancellor of the Synod by Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kiev in 1931. However, the ROCOR episcopate declined that suggestion, and the Polozhenie remains unchanged to this day.

Why? Although we have no direct evidence on which to base an answer to this question, the following would appear to be a reasonable conclusion from the events as they unfolded in the early 1990s. A change in the Polozhenie that removed the spatial and temporal limitations of 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 were not prepared to accept these consequences. After all, they were well-established abroad, increasingly dependent economically on contributions 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 (to this day ROCOR's first-hierarchy, Metropolitan Vitaly, has not set foot on Russian soil since the fall of communism, 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...

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: this people saith: the time hath not come, it is not time to build the house of the Lord. And the word of the Lord came through the Prophet Haggai: But is it time for you to live in your decorated house when this House is lying waste? (Haggai 1.2-4)

B. ROCOR in relation to the Catacomb Church. Since 1927, when ROCOR had broken communion simultaneously with the Catacomb Church from Metropolitan Sergius' MP, she had looked upon the Catacomb Church as the True Church inside Russia with which she remained in mystical communion of prayer and sacraments, even if such communion could not be realised in face-to-face meeting and concelebration. Indeed, after the death of Metropolitan Peter, the last universally recognised leader of the Russian Church, in 1937, ROCOR commemorated "the episcopate of the persecuted Russian Church", by which was undoubtedly meant 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 (Archbishop Mark of Berlin declared in the 1990s, when catacombniks were pouring into ROCOR, that the Catacomb Church had died out in the 1950s!).

On the other hand, 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 not unnatural perception that the leadership of True Russian Orthodoxy had now passed from inside Russia to outside Russia, to ROCOR. 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 condescending attitude towards the Catacomb Church 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. In particular, Bishop Lazarus rejected the canonicity of the groups of Catacomb clergy deriving their apostolic succession from Bishop Seraphim (Pozdeyev), Schema-Metropolitan Gennady (Sekach) and Archbishop Anthony (Galynsky-Mikhailovsky). Basing themselves on this information, on August 2/15, 1990 the ROCOR Synod issued an ukaz, signed by Bishop Hilarion of Manhattan, rejecting the canonicity of these groups (although St. Philaret, had recognised the clergy of Archbishop Anthony in 1977 and taken several of them under his omophorion!), and declaring that they would have to seek reordination from Bishop Lazarus if they wished to be recognised by ROCOR.¹⁷⁰

In evaluating this statement, it should be pointed out that all the Catacomb groups here excommunicated at the stroke of a pen were venerators of ROCOR, even considering her to be in some sense their “Mother Church”. Of course, it was perfectly reasonable and correct that ROCOR should first seek to check their canonical status before entering into communion with them. However, even assuming that the main canonical charge brought against them was valid (that they did not have ordination certificates, in violation of Apostolic Canon 33), the way in which they were rejected without the slightest consultation or attempt to come to some kind of agreement was harmful in the extreme.

First, the possibility of correcting the canonical anomalies of these groups in a peaceful manner and with their complete cooperation was lost.

Secondly, the news that ROCOR had rejected them produced catastrophic effects in these Catacomb groups. Thus the present writer remembers coming to a catacomb gathering in Moscow on the eve of the Feast of 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 immediately went to Bishop Lazarus and

¹⁷⁰ *Spravka iz Kantseliarii Arkhierejskogo Sinoda*, № 4/77/133, 2/15 August, 1990.

was reordained. Meanwhile, his flock, abandoned by their shepherd and deprived of any pastoral guidance, scattered in different directions...

Thirdly, the impression was created that ROCOR had come into Russia, not in order to unite with the Catacomb Church and work with her for the triumph of True Orthodoxy in Russia, but in order to *replace* her, or at most to gather the remnants of the catacombs under her sole authority. And 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”.¹⁷¹

Moreover, in the years to come the ROCOR Synod sometimes described 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!

ROCOR later came to believe that she had made a mistake. Thus Archbishop Hilarion 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*). 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.”¹⁷²

Such repentance was admirable, but unfortunately the fruits of it have yet to be seen. ROCOR continued to look on the humble catacombniks, serving, not in the splendid cathedrals of the emigration, but in poor, dingy flats, if not as contemptible, at any rate as unimportant. How could the Russian Church, so splendid in its pre-revolutionary glory, be resurrected on the basis of such poverty?

Who hath remained among you that has seen this House in its former glory, and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes as it were nothing? But take heart now... (Haggai 2.3-4)

¹⁷¹ “Zaiavlenie Arkhierejskago Sinoda Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi Zagranitsej”, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 18 (1423), 15/28 September, 1990, p. 6.

¹⁷² Private e-mail communication, July 15, 1998.

C. ROCOR in relation to the MP. The Catacomb Church might have forgiven such arrogance if ROCOR had shown herself capable of fighting resolutely against the MP. But here the compromising tendencies developed abroad and noted above bore bitter fruit that was to lead to schism and the collapse of ROCOR's mission inside Russia. For the ROCOR 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 help her!¹⁷³

The roots of this indecisiveness 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.¹⁷⁴ 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 – 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 Maximovich) were lured back into the arms of the Soviet "Fatherland" and its Soviet "Church".

Another reason for this diminution in zeal proceeded from the fact that ROCOR did not break 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 depended on the Church in question. Thus communion continued with the Serbian Church because of the debt of gratitude owed to 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 the 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.

This ambiguous relationship towards "World Orthodoxy" in general inevitably began to affect ROCOR's zeal in relation to the MP in particular.

¹⁷³ See Fr. Timothy Alferov, "O polozhenii rossijskikh prikhodov RPTsZ v svete itogov patriarkhijnogo sobora", *Uspensij Listok*, № 34, 2000.

¹⁷⁴ This forced the ROCOR Synod to take special measures to "ferret out" potential spies. See Bishop Gregory (Grabbe), *Pis'ma*, Moscow, 1999.

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 Ritualists.

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*. This was bound to fail as a weapon against the MP. For 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 of all this, at the very moment that ROCOR was called by God to enter into an open war with the MP for the souls of the Russian people on Russian soil, she found herself tactically unprepared, hesitant, unsure of her ability to fight this great enemy, unsure even whether this enemy was in fact an enemy and not a potential friend, sister or even "mother". And this attitude guaranteed the collapse of the mission. For "if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will rise up and prepare for battle?" (1 Corinthians 14.8). Looking more at her enemies than at the Lord, she 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 and by the middle of the 90s had recovered her position in public opinion.

Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who are thou, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel? You shall become a plain... (Zachariah 4.6-7).

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The problems began on May 3/16, 1990, when the ROCOR Synod issued a statement that was in general strongly anti-MP, but which contained the qualification that there might be true priests dispensing valid sacraments in the patriarchate nevertheless. 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.

Worse was to follow. Bishops and priests visiting Russia from abroad often showed an extraordinary inability to distinguish between the true Church and the false. Thus Archbishop Lavr, on visiting a village in which there existed a ROCOR priest, chose instead to stay with the local MP priest! Another bishop proposed entering into union with the Ukrainian samosvyaty and the fascist organization "Pamyat"! A third shared some holy relics with – the MP Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk (KGB agent "Ostrovsky")!

The veneration shown by some foreign ROCOR clergy for the MP was very difficult to understand for Russian believers, for whom ROCOR represented purity and light in the surrounding darkness, and who thought that ROCOR's mission in Russia was to rescue them from the MP.

Still more shocking was the way in which visiting ROCOR bishops publicly slandered their colleagues in Russia. Thus Archbishop Mark of Germany publicly called Bishop Valentine (Rusantsov) of Suzdal, the most active and successful of the newly ordained Russian bishops, "a wolf in sheep's clothing". Then, - together with Bishop Barnabas of Cannes, who in 1992 had been appointed, completely uncanonically, as the Synod's representative in Russia with authority over all its parishes there, - Mark proceeded to do everything in his power to undermine the very constructive work of Vladyka Valentine.

Later it became clear who was the wolf. In 1997 Archbishop Mark had a secret meeting with "Patriarch" Alexis. Soon after, with the very active support of Mark, the "patriarch" took over ROCOR's monastery in Hebron, Israel. Could all this be linked, wondered believers, with the fact that in 1979 Mark was detained at Leningrad airport for more than 24 hours for the possession of anti-Soviet literature, and was then released unharmed, claiming that "nothing had happened"?¹⁷⁵

The destructive work of Archbishop Mark and Bishop Barnabas elicited a series of protests from the episcopate within Russia. But no reply came. Eventually, in order to protect their own flocks from this invasion by supposed "friends" and "colleagues" from abroad, the Russian bishops were forced to form their own autonomous Higher Church Administration, on the basis of the same patriarchal ukaz no. 362 which had formed the basis for ROCOR's formation as an independent Church body in the 1920s. At this point (1994), the writing was already on the wall for ROCOR in Russia. If she

¹⁷⁵ Retired KGB Colonel Constantine Preobrazhensky has recently accused Mark of having been enrolled in the KGB at precisely that time. Moreover, Agent Arndt helps "the organs" "to subject the Church Abroad to Moscow, so as to take control of the Russian emigration" ("Dve Tajny arkhiepiskopa Marka", *Portal-credo*, 12 May, 2004). Archbishop Mark immediately responded: "I have never and nowhere been arrested, and I will not comment on every absurdity".

repulsed even the most loyal and successful of her leaders on Russian soil, treating them as enemies and traitors, how could she claim to be the leader of True Russian Orthodoxy anywhere in the world?

At the Lesna Sobor in November, 1994, the Russian bishops Lazarus and Valentine made a last despairing effort to restore unity with the bishops abroad. Unity was restored, but only for a short time. In February, 1995, seizing on some false information provided by Bishop Evtikhy, the ROCOR Synod banned five of the Russian bishops, expelling them from their midst without even an investigation or trial. The banned bishops had no choice but to resurrect their autonomous administration – but this time not in communion with ROCOR. And so there came into being the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church, whose task was to gather together what remained of ROCOR's mission in Russia and start the rebuilding process, with a clear strategy and a well-defined, strictly canonical attitude towards the MP.

As the Scripture says, pride goes before a fall. The fall of the ROCOR's position in Russia, which was confirmed by the catastrophic Sobor of October, 2000, was the result of pride – pride in her own past virtues, pride in relation to the other bearers of True Russian Orthodoxy, pride in her ability and right to claim the leadership of the whole of Russian Orthodoxy. The tragedy of ROCOR's failure by no means excludes the possibility of a recovery. But that recovery must now come from within Russia, and not from abroad. And must it come with a full understanding of the causes of the past failures, and a determination not to repeat them.

And the Lord said to satan: the Lord rebuke thee, O satan, the Lord rebuke thee Who hast chosen Jerusalem! Is this not it a brand plucked from the fire? (Zachariah 3.2)

*Moscow.
October 9/22, 2001.*

11. IN SEARCH OF NEVER-LOST RUSSIA

Introduction. In his article, “In Search of Lost Byzantium”, Hieromonk Gregory (Lourié) has argued that “in Synodal Russia a special *teaching* on the Church was formed that does not conform with the patristic one. This teaching – already to be found in the edition of Theophan Prokopovich or Philaret Drozdov, and not only Sergius Stragorodsky – cannot be theologically qualified in any other way than as ecclesiological *heresy*. The essence of this heresy does not lie in the idea of submitting the Church to some especially bad secular power, but in the very idea of making the Church administration a part of the State administration. This denies the idea of the Church as an unearthly (precisely a theanthropic) ‘organization’, albeit dwelling on the earth, and in this way we really have in this conception the ecclesiological analogue of Arianism, in the bosom of which this conception was born.”¹⁷⁶

In this short paragraph Fr. Gregory accuses the whole of the Russian Church since the time of Peter the Great’s *Spiritual Regulation* (1721) of ecclesiological heresy, the same heresy as that proclaimed by Sergius Stragorodsky and the Sovietised Moscow Patriarchate from 1927 and known by the Orthodox under the name of *Sergianism*.¹⁷⁷

“Let us recall,” he writes, “that all the decrees of the Synod, including the ordination of bishops, necessarily began with the formula: ‘By order of His Imperial Majesty the Most Holy Governing Synod has commanded...’ – and compare this formula with the text of the canon (the 30th of the Holy Apostles): ‘If any bishop acquires Episcopal power in the Church by the use of secular bosses, let him be defrocked and excommunicated, and all those who gather together with him’...

“Thus the whole Russian hierarchy, and, through it, all the clergy, was subject to defrocking and complete excommunication from the Church. Of course, ‘is subject to’ defrocking and excommunication and ‘is’ defrocked and excommunicated are not one and the same thing. But it is absolutely clear that the system of ‘ecclesiastical’ administration based on the criminal (from a canonical point of view) *principle* can in no way put into practice a real Church administration... This means that in Synodal Russia a special *teaching* on the Church was formed which did not conform with the patristic teaching.”

¹⁷⁶ Lourié <http://www.russ.ru/politics/meta/20010618-lour.html> (italics in original). All quotations are from this work unless otherwise indicated.

¹⁷⁷ In another place, Fr. Gregory writes: “I will not link sergianism as an ecclesiological heresy particularly with the name of Sergius Stragorodsky” (“Sergianism: a parasynagogue changing into a schism”), Unofficial web-forum of ROAC, <http://web.referent.ru/nvc/forum/0/co/BC415C9E/179> (07/08/01).

We shall not dispute the judgement that Peter the Great's abolition of the patriarchate and introduction of the *Regulation* was both anti-canonical and deeply harmful to the Church. Instead, the following three questions are posed: (1) Was the theory and practice of the Russian Church as sharply different from the Byzantine theory and practice as Fr. Gregory claims? (2) Did this distortion of Church-State relations produced by the *Regulation* constitute an ecclesiological *heresy* or simply a violation of the canons? and (3) Is Fr. Gregory's own theory of Church-State relations patristic? Since the last question is the most fundamental, we shall begin with it.

1. Fr. Gregory's Political Manichaeism. Fr. Gregory's attempt to prove that the Russian Church fell into ecclesiological heresy centuries before the revolution proceeds from his general understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world. Briefly put, his idea amounts to the belief that the Church as such is an exclusively heavenly organism and therefore she must in no way be drawn into earthly politics, nor submit in any way to the influence of earthly rulers. The Church is not of this world whereas the State is of this world, so there can be no real meeting between them even in the best case, that is, in the case of "symphony" with an Orthodox ruler. "At the base of *symphony* (which literally means 'agreement'), there lies the idea of the ontological distinction between the Empire and the Church... In the Church as an earthly organization there is really present the Church as the Body of Christ... But in the Empire there is nothing of the sort: it, by contrast with the Church, does not contain within itself the *reality* of the Heavenly Kingdom."

We may call this idea *political manichaeism*. It is closely linked in Fr. Gregory's writings with *sexual manichaeism*, the idea that marriage (unless it is virginal) is not part of the reality of the New Testament. Neither marriage nor politics are occupations of the True Christian, who lives, not according to the law, but by grace.¹⁷⁸

Fr. Gregory's sexual manichaeism has been discussed by the present writer in other works.¹⁷⁹ Here attention is concentrated on his *political* manichaeism. And we may agree immediately that earthly politics very often *is* dirty. In no sphere of human life, perhaps, is it more difficult to avoid serious sin. Therefore the Church jealously guards her independence from earthly rulers, as expressed above all in the famous 30th Apostolic Canon.

However, the Church is *both* "heavenly" *and* "earthly", and the heavenly and earthly aspects of her existence cannot be radically separated, any more than the soul and the body. The very attempt to do this is dangerous. After all, the separation of the soul from the body is the definition of death. Besides, what *is* politics if not human life on the broadest, most public scale? And who

¹⁷⁸ Lourié, *Prizvanie Avraama*, St. Petersburg, 2000 (in Russian).

¹⁷⁹ See Protopriest Michael Makeev, Vladimir Moss, Anton Ter-Grigorian, Ilia Grigoriev, *Supruzhestvo, Blagodat' i Zakon*, Moscow, 2001.

would dare to say that the Church cannot touch this sphere of life also with her grace?

According to Fr. Gregory (at this point he refers to St. Methodius of Olympus, but without any quotations), the relationship of the Church to the world is one of co-existence, no more: 'The Church of the New Testament wanders in the desert of the world, accomplishing her New Exodus into the promised land – the life of the future age, which is the eighth millennium of years, that is, eternity. The whole history of the world is six thousand years of creation. While this history is continuing, the New Testament church has already departed beyond its borders, and therefore for the Church herself (but not for the world around her!) the seventh millennium has already come – the thousand-year Kingdom about which the Apocalypse speaks (Revelation 20.4); this is also eternity, but it is distinguished from the eighth millennium in that it continues to coexist with the world.'

In fact, however, the relationship of the Church and the world, including politics, was always closer than that, even when the Roman empire was still pagan. Thus as early as the second century, writes Fr. Dionysius Alferov, St. Melito of Sardis, a disciple of St. John the Theologian, "foreseeing the inevitable union of the Church and the empire, turned to the emperor and proved to him all the beneficial effects of Christianity for the State. [Moreover,] we see many Christians among the soldiers, including the most brilliant, who accepted martyrdom for refusing to sacrifice to the idols and renounce the faith, but not at all for desertion, nor for defeatist propaganda, nor for spying, nor for blatant pacifism. Saints George the victory-bearer, Andrew the General, Great-Martyr Procopius, Theodore the General and many others, without doubting served the Roman State and Emperor with their sword."¹⁸⁰

If the early Christians served the pagan Emperor with such zeal, it is hardly surprising that the relationship should have become closer when the Emperor became a Christian. And indeed, why should the Church not have cooperated with the Emperor (and not only "co-existed" with him), when the Emperor himself helped the Christians to fulfil the commandments of God? After all, St. Constantine punished the persecutors of Christianity, built churches, convened Christian councils to protect the Church from heresy and schism, raised the status of priests, freed Christians from working on Sundays, equipped and defended Christian missions...

The Protestants, however, declare that the Church "lost her purity" when she entered into union with the Christian Empire. According to them, with the conversion of St. Constantine it was not the Empire that became Christian, but the Church that became pagan. It simply substituted quantity for quality, a large number of mediocre Christians for the little flock of the true Christians.

¹⁸⁰ Hieromonk Dionysius, Alpherov, *O Tserkvi, Pravoslavnom Tsarstve i Poslednie Vremena*, Moscow, 1998, p. 10.

Fr. Gregory has a similar idea, but in a more Judaizing form. The Imperial Church was not a mass of nominal, semi-pagan Christians, but a mixture between the "elite" New Testament Christians and the mass of seeming, Old Testament "Christians". The grace of the Church is for the elite, and the laws of the State – inescapably Old Testament in form and spirit – for the mass. Thus he writes: "Some complication of the structure was inevitable with any increase in the number of Christians. The question was only: did the given complication correspond to the Christian teaching?"

"The 'pre-imperial' Christian society was reminiscent of a comet: those who chose the New Testament path of life constituted its fiery core, as it were, and the rest – its comparatively diffusely scattered tail, which sometimes became shorter (in times of persecution), and sometimes longer (in times of peace. In the conditions of the Christian Empire, that which used to be the 'tail' was converted into a solid, thick atmosphere..."

"The problems of regulating the relations between the elements of this 'atmospheric layer' began to be decided in the only possible way – within the bounds of the civil legislation. There arose a new organization, the civil society of Christians, and this organization was not a matter of indifference for the Church. The Church had to guarantee its life in accordance with the life of the Old Testament. But not only that. A new system of legislation was also required, a system that described (albeit partially) the life of the New Testament as a social institution – and this became institutionalized monasticism.

"In the earthly Church there are two paths of life, the Old Testamental and the New Testamental, while the door from the lower to the higher must always be kept open and known to all. For this there was also created that description of the external contours of New Testamental life – it goes without saying, only the contours, and not the life itself, – which turned into the special institution of Christian monasticism, which was taken account of in both the ecclesiastical and the secular legislation..."

"And so the two forms of Christian life, lay and monastic, corresponded to the ever-existing, pre-Christian alternatives of the Law and Grace. These alternatives also exist in Christian society, where both possible paths of life need each other: the Old Testamental needs the New Testamental as its aim, without which it would have no meaning, while the New Testamental needs the Old Testamental as its preparation, without which nobody would be able to receive it. If Christian society becomes larger and – the most important thing – not very 'diffuse' (that is, if its 'Old Testamental' part does not fall away from the Church too often or in too large a proportion; it is precisely those conditions that are provided by the Christian Empire), then the two

paths of life need corresponding legislation. With this no antagonism arises between the two parts of Christian society: they need each other as before.”¹⁸¹

This teaching is more than “Christian” elitism, which violates, apart from anything else, the spirit and the letter of the canons of the Council of Gangra on marriage. It constitutes *ecclesiological heresy*. There are not *two* paths of life in the Church, one New Testamental and the other Old Testamental. There is only one: the path of the New Testament, by which both monastics and married Christians live. The fact that both marriage and the kingdom existed already in the Old Testament does not mean that they must abolish themselves at the appearance of the New. On the contrary: they are filled with a new content, acquire a new aim, become wholly new through the sacraments of the New Testament. The Judaizing idea that Christians can continue to live according to the law of the Old Testament was anathematized by the holy Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians: “Ye who seek to justify yourselves by the law are left without Christ, ye have fallen away from grace” (5.4).

As regards Fr. Gregory’s teaching that the Empire as it were helped the “Old Testamental” part of Christian society, “the diffuse tail of the comet”, “not to fall away from the Church too often or in too large a proportion”, there is a certain measure of truth in this. Truly, the Empire gave its subjects the opportunity to learn Christian doctrine and go to church freely, without fear of persecution, which helped the less strong Christians not to fall away from the Church. But this role cannot be called “Old Testamental”, nor can the weaker members of the Church be called “the Old Testamental part of society”. On the contrary, the help which the Christian Empire gave the weaker Christians was in the highest degree “New Testamental”. So not without reason were the true Christian Emperors called “pastors” and even “bishops” (in the sense of overseers of the Christian flock), as, for example, in the epistle of Pope Gregory II to the iconoclast emperor Leo the Isaurian...

But is it true that “the New Testamental part of Christian society”, as being “the fiery core of the comet”, did not need the service of the Christian emperors? Hardly. For if so, why did St. Sabbas the Sanctified appeal for help to the Emperor Justinian? And why did Egyptian monasticism truly flourish only after the Christianization of the Empire? And Russian monasticism reach its apogee only under the Great Princes of Kiev and Moscow? And why did the quenching of monasticism so often coincide with the fall or spiritual weakening of the Orthodox kingdoms: Russian monasticism with the westernizing tsars and tsarinas of the 18th century, Greek monasticism with the heterodox Bavarian kings in the 19th century, and Orthodox monasticism everywhere under the communist and democratic regimes of the 20th century?

¹⁸¹ Lourié, *Prizvanie Avraama*, *op.cit.*, pp. 158-159.

The spiritual distance between the desert and the royal palace is less, and their interdependence greater, than one might expect. The emperors often sought the prayers of the monks, and the monks – the support of the emperors. Of course, the best Christians can remain faithful to Christ in conditions of the greatest anarchy and persecution. But *all* Christians pray “for the kings... that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life” (I Timothy 2.2), which is a priceless gift for *all*.

Therefore there are no more tragic moments in the history of the Church than the fall of the Three Romes in 476, 1453 and 1917. “It could not be otherwise,” writes St. John Maximovich. “He who united everything, standing on guard for the truth, was overthrown. Sin was accomplished, opening the path for sin...”¹⁸²

Fr. Gregory writes: “There is no difference in principle between the State of the People of God in the form of the Christian Empire and the same State in its Old Testament form – the State whose basic laws were given by Moses long before its own coming into existence... The law of Moses remains the basis also of Christian secular legislation”.¹⁸³

This is not true. The foundation of Christian secular legislation was *not the law of Moses, but the Gospel of Christ*. If “the list of the basic [Old Testament] laws enters into the Byzantine canonical collections, including the Slavonic *Rudder*”, as Fr. Gregory says,¹⁸⁴ this unquestionably took second place to the specifically Christian content of those collections – the dogmas and decrees of the Ecumenical and Local Councils of the Orthodox Church. Moreover, significant parts of the Old Testament law – everything that relates to rites, circumcision, animal sacrifices, etc. – found no place in the Christian collections. The Christian Emperor’s first duty was the defence of Christian dogma; and from the time of Justinian it was specifically asserted that no law which contradicted the Holy Dogmas and Canons had any legal force (*Novella* 131). The best Christian rulers always tried to incarnate the spirit of Christianity through Christian laws. And they succeeded: “Through him we have become deified, we have known the true life,” said Metropolitan Hilarion of Kiev about the holy equal-to-the-apostles Great Prince Vladimir. But how was it possible for the Russians to know the true life in God through St. Vladimir if he stood at the head of an Old Testament institution, distributing only the deadness of the Old Testament law?

Fr. Gregory writes: “According to Byzantine tradition, which was formed already during the course of the fourth century, the power of the Christian Emperor exists temporarily, until the Second Coming of Christ. It was thereby

¹⁸² St. John, “Sermon before a pannikhida to the Tsar-Martyr”, *Arkhipiskop Ioann, Molitvoennik i Podvizhnik*, San-Francisco, 1991, p. 125.

¹⁸³ Lourié, *Prizvanie Avraama*, p. 155.

¹⁸⁴ Lourié, *Prizvanie Avraama*, p. 155.

recognized that in the Christian Empire there ruled laws (albeit God-inspired ones) and an Emperor (albeit God-crowned), but not Christ Himself directly. But in this way it turns out that the Christian monarch led the Empire precisely to the New Testament, after the reception of which the monarchy itself would have to abolish itself... As was fitting for an Old Testament institution, the Christian Empire prepared to give way to the life of the New Testament..."¹⁸⁵

However, the life of the New Testament does not begin with the Second Coming of Christ, but with the First. And the Christian Empire will not give way to the life of the New Testament, but itself participates in it immediately and directly, *on this side* of the resurrection of the dead. And if the power of the Christian Emperor exists only temporarily, this power is nevertheless sacred and includes in itself the unfading, immortal grace of God, which unites it unto the ages with the power of the King of kings in the heavens... Moreover, it can hardly be coincidental that St. Constantine himself was baptised at the Feast of Pentecost, 337 as if to emphasise that the grace of Pentecost had now finally overcome the last and most stubborn bastion of the pagan world, the institution of the imperator-pontifex maximus, and had enlightened him to become "equal of the apostles".

2. Fr. Gregory and the Symphony of Powers. In his search for proofs that the Christian Emperor is by his post not inside the Church, but outside her, Fr. Gregory rejects the conception of the Emperor as an earthly icon of the Heavenly King. And he undermines the classical conception of the symphony of powers. Let us study this more closely.

Soon after Pentecost and the founding of the Church, the apostles said: "It is not good for us to abandon the word of God and worry about tables" (Acts 6.2), and ordained seven deacons, so that they should care for the material needs of the Church. Similarly, in the fourth century the Church entrusted the Christian Emperor with "worrying about tables" – that is, the punishment of criminals, the waging of wars against pagans, the collection of taxes, the guaranteeing of a minimal level of material prosperity. In recognition of this, the Byzantine Church gave the Emperor a rank within the Church equivalent to that of deacon.¹⁸⁶

However, the *real* power and obligations of the Orthodox Emperor in the Church far exceeded the power and obligations of any deacon. Moreover, they related not only to the material needs of his subjects, but also to their deepest spiritual needs. Thus the Fathers of the First Council welcomed the Emperor as follows: "Blessed is God, Who has chosen you as king of the earth, having by your hand destroyed the worship of idols and through you bestowed peace upon the hearts of the faithful... On this teaching of the

¹⁸⁵ Lourié, *Prizvanie Avraama*, pp. 156-157.

¹⁸⁶ M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw, 1931, vol. I, pp. 133, 139.

Trinity, your Majesty, is established the greatness of your piety. Preserve it for us whole and unshaken, so that none of the heretics, having penetrated into the Church, might subject our faith to mockery... Your Majesty, command that Arius should depart from his error and rise no longer against the apostolic teaching. Or if he remains obstinate in his impiety, drive him out of the Orthodox Church." As A. Tuskarev observes, "this is a clear recognition of the divine election of Constantine as the external defender of the Church, who is obliged to work with her in preserving the right faith, and in correspondence with the conciliar sentence is empowered to drive heretics out of the Church".¹⁸⁷ In recognition of this, the Byzantine Church allowed the Emperor to vest in vestments similar to those of a *bishop*.

Was the Emperor in fact a "bishop" in some sense? In his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebius Pamphilus, the arianizing bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, wrote that Constantine, "like a general bishop established by God, united the servants of God in Councils", and that he called himself "bishop of those outside the Church" while "you are bishops of those inside the Church". That is, he was not a bishop in the proper, liturgical and sacramental sense, but in the sense that he "oversaw [επεσκοπεῖ] all the subjects of the Empire" and led them to piety.¹⁸⁸

In accordance with this conception, Eusebius said of the Christian Emperor that "the kingdom with which he is invested is an image of the heavenly one. He looks up to see the archetypal pattern and guides those whom he rules below in accordance with that pattern."¹⁸⁹ "The ruler of the whole world is the second Person of the All-Holy Trinity – the Word of God, Who is in everything visible and invisible. From this all-embracing Reason the Emperor is rational, from this Wisdom he is wise, from participation in this Divinity he is good, from communion with this Righteousness he is righteous, in accordance with the idea of this Moderation he is moderate, from the reception of this highest Power he is courageous. In all justice one must call a true Emperor him who has formed his soul with royal virtues, according to the image of the Highest Kingdom".¹⁹⁰

Fr. Gregory rejects the teaching of Eusebius as follows: "According to Eusebius both the (Christian) Empire and the Church are 'icons' of the Heavenly Kingdom. The head of the Empire is the Emperor, who is himself an 'icon' of Christ. Hence it is evident that the Emperor is both the head of the Church on the universal (but not on the local) levelscale. It goes without saying that we are talking about the Church on earth. This is the conception which lay at the base of Byzantine 'Caesaropapism'".

¹⁸⁷ Tuskarev, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

¹⁸⁸ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, I, 44; 4, 24.

¹⁸⁹ Eusebius, *Oration in Honour of Constantine*.

¹⁹⁰ Eusebius, *Church History*.

“Hence it is evident...” But it is *not* evident. From the fact that the Emperor is the head of the Empire it does *not* follow that he is also the head of the Church on the universal level. The Emperor is the head of all Christians in the political sphere, as the episcopate as a whole is the head of all Christians in the spiritual sphere. If the Emperor is more powerful in the State than any individual bishop in the Church, this reflects the different natures of the Church and the State, their asymmetry, but it by no means follows from this that the Emperor must impose both the structure of the State, and himself as the head of the State, on the Church as her head.

Fr. Gregory continues: “It is important to understand what in these theological presuppositions was Arian... Of course, the most important thing was the whole subordinationist perspective created by Arianism: God (the Father) – then (that is, lower down) the Son (considered as a creature) – and still further down, the Church. But secondly, the ontological abysses between all three levels of this hierarchy: between God and the Son, between the Son as the firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1.15), and the Church as a creature. Yes, these levels are linked between themselves by projection (the lower here is always an image of the higher), but Eusebius’ teaching on the ‘image’ does not presuppose any ontological communion between that which is different by nature...”

“In this situation there can be no teaching about the Church as the Body of Christ in the most literal, physical sense – the Body whose life even on earth takes place in eternity. Correspondingly, the teaching on the Church’s otherworldliness, her ‘wandering’ and Exodus in the wilderness of this world, is also lost. Ontologically the Church is equated (with some qualifications) with another completely earthly organization of Christians – the Empire.”

As so often with Fr. Gregory, here much is asserted with minimal proof. But the most important question for us is not: is his description of Eusebius’ teaching accurate? but: is the conception of the Christian Emperor as an icon of the Heavenly King necessarily linked with Arianism? The answer to this is clear: *no*. Thus the completely Orthodox St. Cyril of Alexandria wrote to the Emperor Theodosius II (who convened the Third Ecumenical Council): “In truth, you are a certain image and likeness of the Heavenly Kingdom”.¹⁹¹

Turning now to the conception of the Symphony of Powers, the Empire and the Priesthood, as classically expressed in Justinian’s *Sixth Novella*, Fr. Gregory finds himself in agreement with the conception, and recognizes that it contains within itself the idea of the Empire as an image of the Heavenly Kingdom. But he insists that the Empire and the Church are “images” of the Heavenly Kingdom in different senses: “At the base of the symphony (which literally means ‘agreement’) there lies the idea of the ontological difference

¹⁹¹ Quoted by Sergius and Tamara Fomin, *Rossia pered vtorym prishestviem*, Sergiev Posad, vol. I, p. 72.

between the Empire and the Church (albeit taken only within the bounds of the earthly organization). Both the Church and the Empire are 'images' of the Heavenly Kingdom (which is why Eusebius never ceases to be topical, but is only reinterpreted), but they are not 'images' in one and the same sense. In the Church as an earthly organization there is really present the Church as the Body of Christ – but this is not simply an image, but the very reality of the Kingdom of Heaven. But in the Empire there is nothing of the sort: it, by contrast with the Church, does not contain within itself the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven. If we can compare the Empire with an icon of the Heavenly Kingdom painted in oils, then the Church on earth must correspond to the Eucharist. Only on the basis of such a delimitation can the possibility of a symphony between the Church and the Empire arise. Hence the principles of the autonomy of their inner structures, legislation, etc."

There can be no argument: the Church and the Empire are ontologically different, if only because not all the subjects of the Empire are members of the Church, and not all the members of the Church are subjects of the Empire. But what if the boundaries of the Church (albeit taken only within the bounds of the earthly organization) and the boundaries of the Empire coincided? Would this not be the fulfillment of the prophecy: "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and He will reign unto the ages of ages" (Revelation 11.15)? Of course, the difference between the Empire and the Priesthood would remain. But it would be impossible to say then, when God has become "all in all", that the Empire "by contrast with the Church, does not contain within itself the reality of the Kingdom of Heaven".

It goes without saying that this vision represents an ideal. But in a theological ideal we contemplate the possibilities of reality, its ontological essence and depth. And it is on the basis of such a possibility of the *union* of the Church and the Empire, and not – or not only – on the basis of their *delimitation*, that "the possibility of the *symphony* of Church and Empire arises".

Correspondingly, the Holy Scriptures and Patristic Tradition underline the similarity of the partners in the symphony of powers. Thus the Emperor and the Hierarchy are "the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4.14). They are like "two olive trees" communicating His grace to the Christian people (Zechariah 4.3). Of the one it is written: "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and shall bear royal honour, and shall sit upon his throne" (Zechariah 6.13). And of the other it is written: "And there shall be a priest by his throne, and peaceful understanding shall be between them both" (Zechariah 6.14).

Fr. Gregory still insists on a more radical difference, not two olive trees in the House of the Lord, but one inside and one out: "It is absolutely correct to say that the Emperor is – according to his post, but not as a person – *outside*

the organization of the Church. The classical text is the *Sixth Novella* of the holy Emperor Justinian, which simultaneously has the significance of ecclesiastical and secular law." However, Justinian's *Sixth Novella* says that the Kingdom and the Priesthood "proceed from one source", that is, God. And the *Seventh Novella* declares: "The difference between the priesthood and the Empire is small". Therefore, as Fr. Alexis Nikolin writes, "The Church and the State constitute as it were one whole, one organism in a single service to the work of God, albeit 'unconfusedly', nevertheless 'inseparably'".¹⁹²

Another classical text, the *Epanagoge* of St. Photius the Great, states: "The State is constituted of parts and members like an individual person. The greatest and most necessary parts are the Emperor and the Patriarch. Therefore unanimity in everything and symphony (συμφωνία) between the Kingdom and the Priesthood (constitutes) the spiritual and bodily peace and prosperity of the subjects" (*Titulus* III, 8). And so, like the soul and body of a man, the Kingdom and the Priesthood are created from different substances and have different functions, but constitute parts of a single organism. And if the *Epanogoge* calls this organism "the State", and not "the Church", this only goes to prove how closely related these concepts were in the consciousness of the Byzantines. For, as Patriarch Anthony IV wrote in 1393: "The Empire and the Church are in a close union and communion between each other, and it is impossible to separate the one from the other."

As Professor A.V. Kartashev writes: "The hierarchy of the relationships between spirit and flesh, and therefore also of the Church and the State, has its foundation in the creation itself. Just as the body must be the obedient and perfect instrument of the spirit, so the State is ideally thought of as the obedient and perfect instrument of the Church, for it is she that knows and reveals to mankind its higher spiritual aims, pointing the way to the attainment of the Kingdom of God. In this sense the Church is always theocratic, for to her have been opened and handed over the means of the power of God over the hearts of men. She is the ideal active principle, and the role of the State in comparison with her is secondary. The Church leads the State and the people, for she knows where she is going. The Orthodox State freely submits to this leadership. But just as in the individual person the harmony of spirit and flesh has been destroyed by the original sin, so is it in the relationship between the Church and the State. Hence it is practically difficult to carry out the task of Church-State symphony in the sinful world. Just as the individual Christian commits many sins, great and small, on his way to holiness, so the people united in the Christian State suffer many falls on the way to symphony. Deviations from the norm are linked with violations of the hierarchical submission of the flesh to the spirit, the State to the Church. But these sins and failures cannot overthrow the system of the symphony of Church and State in its essence."¹⁹³

¹⁹² Nikolin, *Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo*, Moscow, 1997, p. 17.

¹⁹³ Kartashev, *Sviatia Rus' i Sud'by Rossii*, Paris, 1956; quoted in Tuskarev, *op.cit.*, pp. 34, 35.

3. Church and State in Muscovite Russia. Let us now turn to Fr. Gregory's theory that "the transfer of the centre of the Christian Empire to Russia, which was completed in the 16th century, was immediately marked by the violation of that 'dynamic balance' which had been established in Byzantium. We are talking about that radical disruption of the canonical order of the Russian Church that was elicited by the second marriage of Basil III (1525), and by the substitution for the canonical ecclesiastical administration of a puppet one that turned out to be necessary for this marriage. This quite quickly led to the denial of symphony not only in practice, but also in the theory of state and ecclesiastical law."

A Byzantine prophecy of the 8th or 9th century from St. Sabba's monastery in Palestine foretold: "The sceptre of Orthodox statehood will fall out of the weakened hands of the Byzantine emperors, *because they will have turned out to be incapable of attaining true symphony of Church and State*. Therefore, by the Providence of God a third God-chosen people will be sent to take the place of the chosen, but spiritually weakened Greek people".¹⁹⁴ The third God-chosen people was the Russian; and the natural conclusion from it, contrary to Fr. Gregory, is that it was not the Russians, but the Byzantines who destroyed the "dynamic balance" between the Empire and the Priesthood.

Fr. Gregory considers that all the Russian hierarchs should have broken communion already from the time of Metropolitan Daniel, since it was he who allowed the unlawful marriage of Basil III. "Why did they not separate from the Synod? Well, in the 19th century it was understandable (in part): by that time things had already gone so far that any movement could have led to catastrophe. In the 20th century they began to separate, but the alternative was the Old Believer Belokrinitsky hierarchy, and this did not elicit great enthusiasm. In the 18th century? Yes, there was the case of St. Arsenius Matseevich (who refused even to make an oath of allegiance to the Empress Elizabeth at his ordination, which that empress completely forgave him). Also, there were cases of savage repressions against the hierarchs in the 1720s. But there was no real separation. The reason is obvious: all those who had enough powder at that time were already Old Believers (by the way, the majority of the Old Believers were a completely canonical formation, albeit without bishops, until the 1740s or thereabouts). It would be better to ask why they did not separate from Metropolitan Daniel in the 16th century. At that time they both could and should have separated. This, in my view, is the key tragedy of Russian Church history."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ Archbishop Seraphim, "Sud'by Rossii", *Pravoslavnij Vestnik*, № 87, January-February, 1996, pp. 6-7.

¹⁹⁵ Lourié, <http://web.referent.ru/nvc/forum/0/co/BC415C9E/179>

Since the Russian hierarchs did not separate from heresy, according to Fr. Gregory, Russia, “the Third Rome”, was merely a “crude surrogate” for the New Rome of Byzantium....¹⁹⁶

“They should have excommunicated – not even Ivan IV [the Terrible], but his father, Basil III, for his adulterous ‘marriage’, which gave Russia Ivan the Terrible. Then we would not have had Peter I. That is how they acted in Byzantium in such situations...”¹⁹⁷

Is it true that that is how they acted in Byzantium? Sometimes, yes. Thus the holy Patriarchs Tarasius and Nicholas I Mysticus opposed the unlawful marriages of the Emperors Constantine VII and Leo VI respectively. But not always. Thus Patriarch Euthymius did *not* oppose the fourth marriage of Leo VI, saying: “It is right, your Majesty, to accept your orders and receive your decisions as emanating from the will and Providence of God!”

Moreover, very many Byzantine Emperors literally got away with murder (according to I. Solonevich, “in seventy-four cases out of one hundred and nine, the throne passed to a regicide by right of seizure”¹⁹⁸) and were not excommunicated for it. St. Photius the Great excommunicated the Emperor Basil I, the murderer of the Emperor Michael III, but this was an exception. K.N. Leontiev tried to soften the significance of this fact, writing: “They expelled the Caesars, changed them, killed them, but nobody touched the holiness of Caesarism. They changed *people*, but nobody thought of changing *the basic organization*.”¹⁹⁹ But an organization cannot fail to be weakened by such crimes; and the comparative indifference of the Byzantines to “the holiness of Caesarism” shows that it was not so deeply venerated by them.

¹⁹⁶ Lourié, unofficial forum of ROAC, “edinaia i edinstvennaia khrist. Imperia”, <http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=3328036&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=> (08/04/02).

¹⁹⁷ Lourié, “Sergianstvo: parasynagoga, pereshedshaia v raskol”, *op. cit.* In another place he writes: In Rus’ in the 16th century that which was unheard of before took place: the recognition of certain blatant iniquities (like Ivan the Terrible’s 7 marriages) by all the hierarchs: nobody broke communion with anybody, nobody declared that Ivan the Terrible was excommunicated from the Church... The same should have been done with his father Basil III. It is absolutely clear that in Byzantium such a thing did not take place, and could never have taken place, ever...” (Unofficial ROAC forum, “Razum Tserkvi”, <http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=3133196&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=> (17/05/02). Cf.: “the fact that they did not kill the Terrible one is an indirect witness to the unhealthy relationship to the person of the monarch” (Lourié, Unofficial ROAC forum, “Re: Otcu Grigoiu”, <http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=3907022&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=> (03/07/02)!!!

¹⁹⁸ Solonevich, *Narodnaia Monarkhia*, Minsk, 1998, p. 77.

¹⁹⁹ Leontiev, “Vyzantinizm i Slavianstvo”, in *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo*, Moscow, 1996, p. 97.

St. Nicholas the Mystic said: "He who tries by force to acquire for himself the Imperial dignity is no longer a Christian".²⁰⁰ But history shows that the Russians believed more deeply in this truth than the Byzantines. Until the Time of Troubles at the beginning of the 17th century, not one Muscovite Great Prince or Tsar was killed. This fact is not pleasing to Fr. Gregory, and he writes: "By Byzantine standards, such a tsar [Ivan the Terrible] should have been killed like a dog."²⁰¹ It seems that he has forgotten the word of God: "Touch not Mine anointed ones" (Psalms 104.15). And that King David, when he had his enemy King Saul in his power, refused to kill him precisely because he was the anointed of God. Indeed, so great was such a crime in David's eyes that when Saul was killed, David killed his killer – in spite of the fact that Saul had evidently lost the grace of God by the time of his death...

What was the reason for this lack of respect for the sacred person of the Emperor in Byzantium? L.A. Tikhomirov points to the fact that Byzantine imperial power was based on two distinct and mutually incompatible principles, the Christian and the Old Roman (Republican). According to the Christian principle, supreme power in the State (but not in the Church) rested in the Emperor, not in the People. However, while supreme, his power was not absolute in that it was limited by the Orthodox Faith and Church; for the Emperor, while supreme on earth, was still the servant of the Emperor of Emperors in heaven²⁰². According to the Old Roman principle, however, which still retained its place in the Justinian's legislation alongside the Christian principle, supreme power rested, not in the Emperor, but in the Senate and the People. But since the Senate and the People had, according to the legal fiction, conceded all their power to the Emperor, it was the Emperor who concentrated all executive power in himself, and his will had the full force of law: Quod Principi placuit legis habet vigorem, et in eum solum omne suum imperium et potestatem concessit.²⁰³

This pagan-democratic-absolutist concept of royal power was exemplified in several of the emperors before the first fall of Constantinople in 1204. Thus Isaac Angelus deposed several patriarchs and declared: "On earth there is no difference in power between God and the Emperor. The Emperors are

²⁰⁰ St. Nicholas, quoted in Medvedev, I.P. "Imperia i suverinet v srednie veka", *Problemy otnoshenij mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenij. Sbornik statej pamiati akademiku*, Leningrad, 1972, p. 421.

²⁰¹ Lourié, unofficial forum of ROAC, "Re: Kazhetsa", [http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=2668143&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=\(05/01/02\)](http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=2668143&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=(05/01/02)). Cf.: "The fact that they did not kill the Terrible one is an indirect witness to an unhealthy attitude toward the person of the monarch" (Lourié, unofficial forum of ROAC,, "Re: Otcu Grigoriu", [http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=3907022&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=\(05/01/02\)](http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=3907022&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=(05/01/02))).

²⁰² As Emperor Constantine VII's body was being carried to its sepulchre, a herald proclaimed: "Arise, O king of the world, and obey the summons of the King of kings!" (Edward Gibbon, *A History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: The Folio Society, vol. VI, p. 117)

²⁰³ Tikhomirov, *Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'*, St. Petersburg, 1992, p. 163.

allowed to do anything and can use the things of God on a par with their own, since they received the royal dignity itself from God, and there is no distance between themselves and God”.

The Russians, by contrast, had a purely Christian concept of royal power. And none of the Russian tsars, not even Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, ever claimed to be God on earth. As for the last of them, the meek and humble Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, there is simply no comparison...

Of course, Ivan the Terrible was a cruel and unjust tsar in the second half of his reign. But the Orthodox attitude to rulers who are cruel and unjust, but nevertheless do not compel their subjects to heresy or apostasy from God, is one of obedience. As St. Barsanuphius of Optina writes: “Our Tsar is the representative of the will of God, and not of the will of the people. His will is sacred for us, as the will of the Anointed of God; we love him because we love God. If the Tsar gives us glory and prosperity, we receive it from him as a Mercy of God. But if we are overtaken by humiliation and poverty, we bear them with meekness and humility, as a heavenly punishment for our iniquities. And never do we falter in our love for, and devotion to, the Tsar, as long as they proceed from our Orthodox religious convictions, our love and devotion to God.”²⁰⁴

This is not to say that there were not times when the leaders of the Russian Church should not have rebuked the tsar, in the manner of the holy prophets. And the Russian hierarchs should probably have resisted Ivan the Terrible more strongly. But the honour of the Russian Church was saved by the holy Hieromartyr Metropolitan Philip of Moscow, who rebuked the tsar as follows: “Sovereign Tsar, you are endowed by God with the highest rank and therefore must honour God above all. But the sceptre of earthly power was given to you so that you should observe justice among men and rule over them lawfully. It is not fitting that you, a mortal, should become arrogant. Nor should you, as the image of God, become angry, for only he who is in control of himself and does not indulge his shameful passions, but conquers them with the aid of his mind, can truly be called a ruler. Has it ever been heard that the pious tsars disturbed their own kingdom? Never has anything of the sort been heard, not only among your ancestors, but even among foreigners... You have been appointed by God to judge the people of God in righteousness, and not to present yourself as a torturer.”

Here there is not a trace of that “Caesaropapism” (or rather: “Sergianism”) which Fr. Gregory accuses the Russian Church of already in the 16th century. And generally speaking, although there were cowardly hierarchs in the 16th century in Russia, there were not heretical ones. In Church-State relations they followed the teaching of St. Joseph of Volokolamsk, who on the one hand ascribed the leading role in the struggle against heresy to the tsar, but on the

²⁰⁴ St. Barsanuphius, *Kelejnié Zametki*, Moscow, 1991.

other hand did not give him the status of an infallible authority: "The holy apostles said concerning the kings and hierarchs who did not care for or worry about their subjects: the king who does not care for his subjects is not a king, but a torturer; and the evil bishop who does not care for his flock is not a shepherd, but a wolf."²⁰⁵ Power is given to the king in the Church *for the sake of Orthodoxy*, and it is precisely for that reason that *his power in the Church is conditional on his Orthodoxy*. If he falls away from Orthodoxy, his subjects have the right to rebel against him – which is what took place at the beginning of the 17th century, when the holy Patriarch Hermogen called on the Russian people to rebel against the crypto-papist tsar, the false Demetrius.

The tradition of great, independent Patriarchs continued to live in the Russian Church. Not only in St. Hermogen, but also in Patriarch Philaret, the father after the flesh of Tsar Michael, the first of the Romanovs, and especially in Patriarch Nikon, who in a completely unambiguous way defended the freedom and dignity of the Church from Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich. One might have expected that for Fr. Gregory Nikon would be a hero of the faith, but for some reason he refrains from praising him...

In the affair of the unlawful deposition of Patriarch Nikon at the Council of 1666-67, the most zealously disposed against the Patriarch and for the right of the Tsar to rule the Church were not the Russian, but the Greek hierarchs. The Eastern Patriarchs sent their *Tomos* or *Patriarchal Replies* to Moscow. According to M.V. Zyzykin, "they said that 'the Patriarch must be obedient to the Tsar, as having been appointed to the highest place. The Russian hierarchs accepted Nikon's theory on the spiritual superiority of the priesthood and the juridical equality and parallelism of the royal and ecclesiastical powers, but until the condemnation of Nikon they did not raise this question, since they wished to be rid of him. But when he had been condemned, Metropolitan Paul of Krutitsa and Metropolitan Hilarion of Ryazan obtained a review of the answer to the question of principle concerning the relationships of the royal and patriarchal power, for they were afraid that the *Patriarchal Replies* would place the hierarchs at the complete disposal of the royal power, and so 'a Tsar not as pious than Alexis Mikhailovich might turn out to be dangerous for the Church'... The Council came to the unanimous resolution: 'Let the conclusion be recognized that the Tsar has pre-eminence in civil matters, and the Patriarch in ecclesiastical matters, so that thereby the harmony of the ecclesiastical institution should be kept whole and unshaken.' *This was the triumph in principle of the Nikonian idea.*"²⁰⁶

4. Church and State in Synodal Russia. Unfortunately, the son of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, Peter, turned out to be that very "not as pious" Tsar, who destroyed the harmony of the ecclesiastical institution, abolishing the

²⁰⁵ St. Joseph, *Prosvetitel'*, Sermon 16.

²⁰⁶ Zyzykin, *op. cit.* vol. III, p. 274.

patriarchate and by his *Spiritual Regulation* making the administration of the Church into a department of the State.

As we have already noted, Fr. Gregory lays special emphasis on the fact that all the decrees of the Synod, including those on the ordination of bishops, began with the obligatory formula: "According to the command of His Imperial Majesty the Most Holy Governing Synod has ordered..." However, one must not forget that in the last period of Byzantine history, which for Fr. Gregory is the model of Orthodoxy, patriarchs were appointed with a very similar formula: "Divine grace *and my imperial will* appoint this most worthy man as patriarch".²⁰⁷ Why does Fr. Gregory not see heresy here, but only in the Russian Church?

Few would deny that the *Regulation* was a serious violation of the "dynamic balance" that was the norm of Church-State relations, not only in Byzantium, but also in Russia until the eighteenth century. However, in order to prove that the Russian Church from that time began to confess a *heresy*, it is necessary to prove that the Church officially preached that "the Church *must* be ruled by laymen", and that the Tsar is her head in questions of the faith. But this cannot be proved except, perhaps, in the case of Theophan Prokopovich. The majority of bishops always remained Orthodox, and they submitted to the *Regulation* only in order to avoid something worse. As Hieromonk Dionysius (Alferov) writes: "Neither the people nor the Church renounced the very ideal of the Orthodox Kingdom, and, as V. Klyuchevsky noted, continued to consider as the law that which corresponded to the ideal, and not Peter's decrees. Therefore even during the period of the widowhood of the royal throne because of the absence of a lawful Anointed Tsar during the 'women's kingdom' (18th century), the significance of tsarist power as 'that which restrains' was not wholly lost. Even the German in Russian service Minich noted with amazement that 'Russia is the only state which is ruled directly by God'. By dint of this it turned out to be possible, albeit with no little difficulty, to restore a lawful Anointed Tsar with an Orthodox self-consciousness in the person of the Emperor Paul Petrovich and his descendants by the end of the 18th century".²⁰⁸

The Russian hierarchs made several attempts to restore the patriarchate and return the Church-State relationship to the "symphonic" standard. Nor were these attempts wholly unsuccessful. Thus with the coming to the throne of Elizabeth Petrovna (1741-1760), as Nikolin writes, "the administration of Church property was returned to the Synod, for which a Chancellery of Synodal economic administration was established within it".²⁰⁹ True, the

²⁰⁷ Demetrius Kapustin, unofficial ROAC internet-forum, <http://webforum.land.ru/mes.php?id=3500299&fs=0&ord=0&1st=&board=12871&arhv=> (06/05/02).

²⁰⁸ Alpherov, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

²⁰⁹ Nikolin, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

Empress “did not decide to satisfy the petition of two members of the Holy Synod, Archbishop Ambrose (Yushkevich) and Metropolitan Arsenius (Matseevich) to restore the patriarchate or at least give the Synod a president and decree that the Synod should consist only of hierarchs”.²¹⁰ But the important point is that the hierarchs made the attempt, which demonstrates the Orthodoxy of their thinking.

The reign of Paul I witnessed the beginning of a slow but steady return to the Orthodox norm of Church-State relations. During the reign of his son, Alexander I, the Church, under the leadership of Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, rejected ecumenical overtures from Napoleon and the Catholic Church. And in the latter part of the same reign, Metropolitans Michael (Desnitsky) and Seraphim (Glagolevsky), and Archimandrite Photius (Spassky) led the Church’s successful struggle to have the heterodox Minister of Spiritual Affairs and Popular Enlightenment, Prince Golitsyn, removed from his post. De jure the situation remained as before, with the Church in subjection to the State. But de facto the Church had a considerable degree of internal freedom.

According to Fr. Gregory, however, “in the situation of the 19th century a break was inevitable between the real life of the Church (deprived of a correct system of administration) and the chimerical administrative structure ruled by ‘the Most Holy Synod’. Belonging to the chimerical structure could not longer guarantee belonging to the Church.” In other words, according to Fr. Gregory, it was possible to be a member of the administration of the Russian Church in the period 1721-1917 without being a member of that Church!! A strange conclusion, and one that makes us suspect that accusations of “ecclesiological heresy” are more fittingly applied to Fr. Gregory than to the hierarchs of the Synodal Church. For according to the Orthodox teaching on the Church, “the real life of the Church” cannot exist under the omophorion of false, unreal, “chimerical” bishops. Such a disjunction is possible only in Protestantism or among the priestless Old Believers.

Fr. Gregory passes over in silence the fact that the last tsar of the Synodal period, Nicholas II, was a most pious ruler, helped the Church in every way, lightened the State’s pressure on the Church, was for the restoration of the patriarchate and removed the hierarchical oath to the Tsar as “the supreme judge” It is not relevant, in Fr. Gregory’s view. For the 30th apostolic canon, he says, has nothing to say about the quality of the secular rulers, but only about the fact of their interference in the appointment of hierarchs...

Such a point of view is judaizing, Old Testamental. The canons of the New Testament Church should not be viewed only according to the letter, without attention being paid to the spirit, their inner aim. New Hieromartyr Joseph, Metropolitan of Petrograd, replying to a similar attempt to interpret the

²¹⁰ Nikolin, op.cit., p. 97.

canons according to the letter, wrote: "You know, there was much that the canons did not foresee".²¹¹ And New Hieromartyr Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan, replied to the very founder of the sergianist heresy: "This is an attempt [of mine]... to melt the lead of the dialectical-scribal use of the canons and preserve the holiness of their spirit".²¹² In any case, as we have shown above, the scribal (if not pharisaical) approach of Fr. Gregory to the holy canons, if applied consistently, leads inevitably to the conclusion that almost all the leading hierarchs not only of the Russian Church, but also of the Byzantine, were subject to defrocking for violating the 30th apostolic canon...

It is paradoxical that when, for the first time in the history of Synodal Russia a real heresy, the heresy of name-worshipping, appeared, and the Most Holy Synod, acting completely independently from, and even to some extent against the secular authorities (for the over-procurator Sabler, incited, as it would seem, by Rasputin, was on the side of the name-worshippers), openly condemned the heresy in 1913, 1914, 1916 and 1918, Fr. Gregory's anger knows no bounds! He accuses the Holy Synod itself of the heresies of "name-fighting", "Barlaamism", "magism", etc., and says that it is "a power not from God"! In essence we are listening here to the voice of a real church revolutionary, who under the pretext of the defence of the liberty and independence of the ecclesiastical administration, is by all means undermining its authority among the Orthodox Christians.

That the Synodal period was in general a period of decline in comparison to the best periods of both the Russian and the Byzantine Churches is indisputable. Westernism and secular humanism were making inroads into the body of the Church through a variety of avenues, including the secular authorities. This was pointed out and lamented by the best churchmen of the time, men such as Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, Bishop Theophan the Recluse, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Ambrose of Optina and St. John of Kronstadt. But none of these holy men accused the Russian Church of their time of heresy, and none of them either separated from the Church themselves or called on others to separate. On the contrary, they called on the people to display greater loyalty to both the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. We are therefore presented with a clear choice. Do we believe that the Holy Spirit spoke in those holy men, or in Fr. Gregory Lurye? For those who believe in *the Church*, and in the unbroken life of Holy Tradition, the answer is obvious. Fr. Gregory does not join himself to the unbroken life of Holy Tradition as represented by these holy men, but to that pernicious tradition of rebellion and renovation (albeit with a "right"-leaning, pseudo-conservative pathos) that brought forth such catastrophic fruits in the revolution of 1917...

²¹¹ St. Joseph, in M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviateishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, p. 563.

²¹² St. Cyril, in Gubonin, *op. cit.*, p. 655.

5. Church and State in the Soviet Period. We can compare the Russian Church of the Synodal period to a wounded man who is forced to walk on crutches. The critics of the Synodal system and future renovationists said: "The Church should not be using the crutch of State power. It is against the canons!" Yes indeed! But what was the solution? Kick away the crutch? Or wait for the injury to be healed, and only then remove it – gently? God's Providence preferred the latter approach; the renovationists – the former. And then, paradoxically, they did exactly what they had so bitterly accused the pre-revolutionary Church of doing: they entered into a union with the State. And what a State! A State far worse than any in history! A State which the "tragicomic" (as Fr. Gregory calls it²¹³) Local Russian Council of 1917-18 completely justly anathematized! Moreover, in 1922 these same "knights of freedom", having knocked the "crutches" out of the hands of the pre-revolutionary Church, and accepted them again from the hands of the Soviet authorities, used them to create a new, renovationist false-church and to beat up the prostrate True Church.

One of the most fervent critics of the Synodal system was Metropolitan Sergius.²¹⁴ In 1922 and again in 1927, he re-established the Synodal structure, in effect abolished the patriarchate by his usurpation of the patriarchal locum tenancy, Metropolitan Peter, and submitted the Church in an unqualified manner to the Soviet authority that had already been anathematized by Patriarch Tikhon. By 1943, when all the hierarchs who disagreed with him had been liquidated or driven into the catacombs, Sergius, by command of Stalin, founded "the Soviet church", the present-day Moscow Patriarchate...

Paradoxically, Fr. Gregory considers that it was precisely then, in 1927, that "the reform course triumphed – but with intensive support 'from outsiders', which took place after 1917, and only in the confines of the Catacomb Church". And so "Sergianism" (as Fr. Gregory defines it) was defeated at the appearance of, and with the support of, real Sergianism (in the ranks of its opponents)! In a certain sense he is right, of course: the Catacomb Church not only defeated real Sergianism, but also removed from itself the whole burden of the sin of the compromise that the Synodal Church made with the secular authorities from 1721 – more precisely, from 1667, when the Russian hierarchs followed the Tsar in unjustly condemning Patriarch Nikon. However, it should be pointed out that the Catacomb Church, by contrast with Fr. Gregory, nevertheless venerated the Synodal period of the Russian Church, did not consider the hierarchs of that period to be "heretics", and accepted the

²¹³

Lourié,

http://www.vestris.com/cgi-agnes/twenty-eight/agnes?PoetAgnes+PoetAgnesHTMLArticle+archive+Архив_номер_5+127.3.1

eight/agnes?PoetAgnes+PoetAgnesHTMLArticle+archive+Архив_номер_5+127.3.1

²¹⁴ Before the revolution "the future patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Sergius (Stragorodsky), appeared on various committees in St. Petersburg in the leadership position of chairman. From amongst all the clergy who participated in these committees, Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky) always held the most radical position and recognised freedom of worship and the need for the separation of Church and State" (*V ob'iatikh semiglavago zmiia*, Montreal, 1984, p. 14) (in Russian).

decisions of the Council of 1917-18, especially the anathematisation of Soviet power, as the corner-stone of her own existence. Consequently, they understood the essential *difference* between the pre- and post-revolutionary periods in the history of the Russian Church, the fact that although the pre-revolutionary Church violated the canons, she did not betray Christ, whereas the post-revolutionary sergianist church not only violated the canons, but also betrayed Christ, immersing herself in the heresy of real Sergianism.

What is the essence of this heresy? A distorted understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world, whereby the Church is to serve the world, not as its conscience, as the salt which preserves it from final corruption and destruction, but by conforming herself to it, by pandering to its fallen desires and antichristian world-views. As such, Sergianism is closely akin to Ecumenism, so that the way in which Sergianism has evolved into Ecumenism in the present-day Moscow Patriarchate should come as no surprise. Both propose a wholesale surrender of the Church's freedom and dignity to the dominant forces in the contemporary world – political forces in the case of Sergianism, religious forces in the case of Ecumenism (although both kinds of forces are in fact directed towards a single goal: the complete *secularization* of the human race). Both heresies are movements of apostasy, and both attempt to justify this apostasy, “dogmatize” it, as it were – in the case of Sergianism, by claiming that only such apostasy can “save the Church”, and in the case of Ecumenism by claiming that only such apostasy can “recreate the Church”. Essentially, therefore, they are two aspects of a single ecclesiological heresy, a single assault on the existence and the dogma of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Sergianism was defined as a heresy against the dogma of the Church by several of the Holy New Hieromartyrs, including Fr. Theodore (Andrejev), Archbishop Demetrius of Gdov, and Archbishop Nicholas of Vladimir and Suzdal.²¹⁵

This understanding of Sergianism led to its formal anathematisation by the Josephite Catacomb parishes of Petrograd, as follows: *“To those who maintain the mindless renovationist heresy of Sergianism; to those who teach that the earthly existence of the Church of God can be established by denying the truth of Christ; and to those who affirm that serving the God-fighting authorities and fulfilling their godless commands, which trample on the sacred canons, the patristic traditions and the Divine dogmas, and destroy the whole of Christianity, saves the Church of Christ; and to those who venerate the Antichrist and his servants and forerunners, and all his minions, as a lawful power established by God; and to all those... who blaspheme against the new confessors and martyrs... - Anathema.”*²¹⁶

²¹⁵ See V.V. Antonov, “Otvét deklaratsii”, *Russkij Pastyr'*, 24, I-1996, p. 78.

²¹⁶ S. Verin, “Svidetel'stvo iz nashikh russkikh katakomb”, *Pravoslavnaiá Rus'*, № 14 (1563), July 1/14, 1996, pp. 11-12.

Archbishop Vitaly (Maximenko) of Jordanville adopted the same position: "The patriarchate destroyed the dogma constituting the essence of the Church of Christ, and renounced its essential mission, that of serving the renewal of man, substituting for it its service to the atheist aims of communism, which is unnatural for the Church. This falling away is more bitter than all the previous Arianisms, Nestorianism, Iconoclasm, etc. And this is not the personal sin of one or another hierarchy, 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..."²¹⁷

Conclusion. It is clear that Sergianism, according to this definition, is not that "Sergianism" which Fr. Gregory claims to find in the Russian Church centuries before the revolution. There was no real Sergianism before Sergius. Therefore the thesis that the Russian Church fell into heresy in 1721 (if not two centuries before that date) is false and must be rejected by all Orthodox Christians.

In fact, *Fr. Gregory does not believe in the Russian Church* (not to speak of the Empire). For centuries, according to him, the administration of this Church was "chimerical", that is, essentially *non-existent*. And at the very moment that it supposedly began to come to life, and became independent of the State, it again fell into heresy – this time the pseudo-heresy of "name-fighting"! And since the Russian Church to this day condemns the real heresy of name-worshipping, we can conclude that for Fr. Gregory the Russian Church is still in the grave of heresy, that is, in spiritual death. With the exception, perhaps, of the "little flock" looked after personally by him...

However, the spiritual illness of Fr. Gregory is still more serious: he thinks in a heretical manner about the Church *as a whole*. In order to "cleanse" the Church from the "tares" of sexuality and politics, he has divided it into the "clean" and the "unclean", the monastics and the married, those who need the support of the State and those who do not, the New Testament Christians and the Old Testament Christians. "In the earthly Church," he writes, "there are two paths of life, the Old Testamental and the New Testamental."

In this way, as Ilya Grigorenko writes, he "declares the Church not to be *one* God-established, Theanthropic organism in the New (that is, Christ's) Testament, but a *double* organism, in spite of the word "One" in the Symbol of faith... Moreover, he calls a part of the New Testamental Church of Christ "Old Testamental", thereby denying the possibility of many Christians who have been baptized and who participate in the Church's one Eucharist abiding in the Grace of the New Testament of Christ."²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Archbishop Vitaly, *Motivy moej zhizni*, Jordanville, 1955, p. 25.

²¹⁸ Grigoriev, in *Supruzhestvo, Blagodat' i Zakon*, op.cit., p. 54.

Fr. Gregory claims to prove the superiority of the Byzantine Empire over the Russian, and thereby the superiority of the Byzantine *Church* over the Russian. In fact, by his manicheistic theories, he denies *both* the Byzantine *and* the Russian Empires *and* Churches, and together with them the Orthodox understanding of Church-State relations as a whole. For if the Church cannot sanctify politics and, in a certain sense, include it into her own grace-filled, New Testamental life, then there is nothing to be done, we must “flee to the mountains” and lead a purely monastic life without any kind of politics or family life – and call on the Empire “to abolish itself”.

However, the Church did not accept this eschatologism, and the Christian Empire, fortunately, refused to abolish itself. Thereby it “withheld” the coming of the Antichrist (II Thessalonians 2.7), and gave new generations of Christians the chance to join the Church and be saved. For the Priesthood in the image of Christ the High Priest cannot live long on earth without the Empire in the image of Christ the King.

And so only the Orthodox Christian Emperor, said Hieroschemamonk Hilarion the Georgian of Mount Athos, “is in the image of Christ the Anointed One, like him by nature and worthy of being called Emperor and the anointed of God... Other kings of the peoples... imagine great things of themselves, but God’s good will does not rest on them; they reign only in part, by the condescension of God. Therefore he who does not love his God-appointed Emperor is not worthy to be called a Christian.”²¹⁹

Unfortunately, Fr. Gregory loves neither the Empire nor the Church of Russia. He does not consider them worthy to be called in full measure Orthodox and grace-filled, but prefers to use the words: “Old Testament”, “chimerical”, “heretical” in relation to them. He is going “in search of lost Byzantium”, but what he is fact doing is slandering Russia, and finds himself outside the saving enclosure of the Greco-Russian Church as a whole.

May 31 / June 13, 2002.
The Ascension of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

(First Published in *Vernost'*, № 34)

²¹⁹ Hieromonk Anthony, *Ocherki zhizni i podvigov Startsa Ilariona Gruzina*, Jordanville, 1985, p. 95 (in Russian).

12. TWO ROBBER COUNCILS: A SHORT ANALYSIS

The Council of the Moscow Patriarchate (MP) in August, 2000 and the October, 2000 Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) can without exaggeration be called epochal in the history of Russian Orthodoxy. Here is offered a summary of the main decisions of these Councils, and of the reactions to them on the part of the Orthodox clergy and laity.

I. The August, 2000 Council of the MP

In August, 2000 the MP held a Hierarchical Council which seemed to be 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 previous ten years, 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, few concessions were made on the issue 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..." Moreover, immediately after the Council, on August 18, "Patriarch" Alexis prayed together with the Armenian "Patriarch".

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).

2. Sergianism. In its council the MP approved a "social document" which, among other things, recognised that "the Church must refuse to obey the State" "if the authorities force the Orthodox believers to renounce Christ and His Church". As we shall see, enormous significance was attached to this phrase by ROCOR Council. 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". If we relate this phrase to the

immediately preceding Soviet phase of Russian Church history, then we come to the conclusion that for the MP it remains the case that 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.

Moreover, sergianism as such was not mentioned, 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 Communist Party of the USSR. 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. The consequent lack of a clear, single policy is especially evident in the decisions of the Jubilee council.

In this connection Protopriest Vladimir Savitsky, Hieromonk Valentine (Salomakh) and Deacon 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 word, it is necessary to condemn the very practice and ideology of the transformation of the MP into a Church 'of all the people'."

This analysis has been confirmed by events since the former KGB chief 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. This has also meant a reversion to the doctrine of sergianism. Thus on July 18, 2002, the

Moscow Synod ratified a document entitled “The relationships between the Russian Orthodox Church and the authorities in the 20s and 30s”, which justified sergianism as follows: “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).”

However, Soviet power was very different from the Golden Horde or the Ottoman empire, and “bilateral relations” with it, unlike with those powers, involved the betrayal of the Orthodox Faith and 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.

3. The New Martyrs. After nearly a decade of temporising, the MP finally, under pressure from its flock, glorified the Royal New Martyrs, together with many other martyrs of the Soviet yoke. This 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 ordinary layman stripped of his anointing rather than the Anointed of God fulfilling the fearsomely difficult and responsible role of “him who restrains” the coming of the Antichrist. Of course, even if the Tsar had committed the terrible sins he was accused of (nobody denies that he made certain political mistakes), this would in no way affect his status if he was truly, as all the Orthodox believe, martyred for the sake of the truth. After all, many of the martyrs lived sinful lives, and some even temporarily fell away from the truth. But their sins were wiped out in the blood of their martyrdom. However, this elementary dogma was ignored by the MP, which wished, even while glorifying the Tsar, in a subtle way to humiliate him at the same time.

As regards the other martyrs, the ROCOR activist Sergius Kanaev writes: "In the report of the President of the Synodal Commission for the canonisation of the saints, Metropolitan Juvenaly (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 care 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 conscious 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."

Other Catacomb martyrs were "glorified" by the patriarchate because their holiness was impossible to hide. Thus the relics of Archbishop Victor of Vyatka have recently been found to be incorrupt and reside in a patriarchal cathedral – in spite of the fact that 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 the successors of those who had persecuted them, remembered the words of the Lord: "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 subtly downgrading the exploit of the true martyrs without denying it completely, 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."

The essential thing from the patriarchate's point of view was that their own founder, Metropolitan Sergius, should be given equal status with the catacomb martyrs whom he persecuted. A significant step in this direction had been taken in 1993, when 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." By the time of the council in 2000, the patriarchate 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 – which 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!"

For in the last resort, as Fr. Peter points out, for the Moscow Patriarchate this whole matter is not one of truth or falsehood, sanctity or impiety, 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."

The documents of the Jubilee council were well summarised 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 of the present".

II. The October, 2000 Council of ROCOR

Two months later, 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 Moscow 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 13/26, contained the amazing statement 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 the ecumenists, 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! 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 has 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 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 without exception – 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”.

The second of the epistles, dated October 14/27, 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 goes to the MP, then, even if the spiritual state of the MP were brilliant, this would hardly constitute “awakening” on any significant scale. However, as Dmitri 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)."

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*."

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". As if 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) could *blot out* a Declaration which caused the greatest schism in Orthodox Church history in 900 years and incalculable sufferings and death - without even mentioning that Declaration or its author by name! In any case, as we have seen, the Moscow Synod in July, 2002 declared 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.

The epistle - which was signed by all the bishops except Barnabas of Cannes - obliquely recognised this 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*?!

The third epistle, addressed to the Old Believers without distinguishing between those with “bishops” and “priests” (the Popovtsi) and those without (the 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 Believers to the persecutions of St. John Chrysostom, and begs forgiveness of the Old Believers 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 Believers in the 17th century should not all be laid on the Church of the time, which primarily condemned the Old Believers not for their adherence to the Old Rites (which even Patriarch Nikon recognised to be salutary), but for their disobedience to the Church. To lay all the blame for the schism, not on the Old Believers but on the Orthodox, even after the Old Believers 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 Believers, 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 Believers 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... Alas, [it] is composed in such a way that it is not actually clear who has really fallen into schism from the Church: we or our errant Old Believer brothers!’”

The October Council elicited a storm of protest from both inside and outside Russia. The feelings of the protestors were summed 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...”

January 30 / February 12, 2003.

13. CAN THE LEOPARD CHANGE HIS SPOTS?

As we witness the sad decline of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia under Metropolitan Laurus (ROCOR) into the embraces of the Moscow Patriarchate (MP), it may be worth reviewing some of the arguments that members of the MP (and now even many members of ROCOR) produce when challenged by members of the True Russian Church. These arguments have varied considerably with time, and even the MP would no doubt be ashamed of some of the arguments used in Soviet times, when respect for both the Church and the State of the Soviet Union was much higher than it is now. We shall not review these “old” arguments that even the MP is now ashamed of, but shall turn to the “new” ones that have appeared since the fall of communism – although sometimes they are simply the “old” ones souped up in a more contemporary, subtler form.

1. The Leopard and his spots.

One argument employed by contemporary advocates of the MP, and even by the MP Patriarch Alexis himself is that since ROCOR was formed as a *temporarily* autonomous organization until the fall of communism, it must now dissolve itself insofar as communism fell nearly twelve years ago.

Two questions are immediately elicited by this argument. First, has communism really fallen? And secondly, even if it has fallen, why should ROCOR dissolve itself *by joining the MP*?

I think we cannot deny that in 1991 communism fell in the particular statist form that we know as the Soviet Union, or Soviet power. I think it is equally undeniable that, at least since New Year's Day, 2000, when KGB Colonel Putin came to power, it has been in the process of being reconstructed.

The evidence is manifold. KGB men – and let us recall Putin's remark that “there is no such thing as an ex-KGB man” - now occupy about 50% of the top governmental posts in the Soviet – sorry, Russian - federation.²²⁰ The Soviet anthem has been re-established as the country's national anthem; the red flag has been restored to the armed forces. Putin has toasted Stalin, and recently a new monument to Stalin was unveiled before a huge and enthusiastic crowd in Ishim, Siberia (the see of ROCOR Bishop Eutyches). It goes without saying that Lenin's mummy remains in its pagan mausoleum in Red Square. The Chechen war continues to be waged in a hideously cruel, typically Soviet manner. The media are once again coming under tight state control (witness the way in which the independent NTV station was simply taken over). Even the fledgling capitalist economy is under threat, and its stock market is plunging, as a result of the recent imprisonment of Khodorkovsky and the

²²⁰ Nicholas Kazantsev, “Nel'zia ob'edinit'sa s patriarkhie!” *Nasha Strana*, № 2739, 1 November, 2003 (in Russian).

State's seizure of a large part of his company's shares. So if there was a time for ROCOR to dissolve itself, it was in 1991, *but not now*.

In any case, what is ROCOR to do after its self-dissolution? The Fathers of ROCOR always spoke of an All-Russian Council assembling after the fall of communism, which would sort out the problems of the Russian Church, elect a canonical patriarch, etc. Obviously by such an All-Russian Council they did not mean a Council just of the MP, but a Council in which ROCOR and the Catacomb Church would be included. In fact, probably a Council from which the MP would be *excluded*, but to which individual hierarchs of the MP would come to offer their repentance, on the model of the iconoclasts at the Seventh Ecumenical Council. It is strange how little talk about such a Council there has been since the supposed fall of communism...

Since no one seems to want to talk about an all-Russian Council, let us consider some other alternatives. One is for ROCOR to proclaim itself the one and only Russian Orthodox Church. This was actually suggested by Protopriest Lev Lebedev in the early 1990s, and appears to have been adopted to some extent by ROCOR at that time. However, this was never done with much conviction (except when dealing with "dissidents" inside Russia), and by the late 1990s the talk was rather of a "reunification" of the different parts of the Russian Church – by which was meant the reunification only of ROCOR and the MP.

But on what basis? On an equal basis, as if ROCOR and the MP were both equally legitimate parts of the Russian Church, two "sisters" of the same mother who had just had a quarrel and were now prepared to forgive and forget? But this "ecumenist" solution was not really acceptable to either side, since the MP resolutely calls itself (and is believed by many even in ROCOR to be) the sole "Mother Church", to which ROCOR must "return" like a naughty child to her parents, while ROCOR believes that the MP must repent of certain dogmatic and canonical errors – sergianism, ecumenism – before it can be forgiven.

However, it is becoming more and more obvious – if it was ever really in doubt – that the MP, at least in its upper reaches, will not and cannot repent. At most it will bend a little to pressure coming, not from ROCOR, but from its own people, as in the case of its half-hearted and qualified canonization of the Tsar-Martyr. The MP had a golden opportunity to repent in 1991, when the chains imposed by its Soviet masters fell away, and there was a danger of a large-scale exodus from the patriarchate. But it did not repent. And now, when it is in a much stronger position than in 1991, and ROCOR is much weaker, it is less likely than ever to repent.

Not only is it not repenting: like the dog of the proverb, it is returning to its own vomit. Thus ecumenism continues unabated since the fall of communism.

The patriarch's incredible speech to the Jewish rabbis in November, 1991 has not been repented of, membership of the WCC continues as before, and while there are complaints about Catholic proselytism it looks as if the Pope is going to visit Russia with the MP's agreement.

The MP today, amazing to tell, is no less enthusiastically pro-Soviet than the civil government. Priests regularly praise Stalin - and now these panegyrics cannot be excused on the grounds that they are made under duress. The idea that the MP has repented of sergianism is laughable. Consider the patriarch's latest statement on Metropolitan Sergius' notorious declaration, on November 9, 2001: "This was a clever step by which Metropolitan Sergius tried to save the church and clergy."²²¹

The ROCOR leadership knows all this perfectly well. But it also knows that it is weak, and has therefore come to the conclusion: "If you can't beat them, join them." The leopard, they try and persuade us, has changed its spots; the tree with an evil root is now bringing forth good fruits. But as we know from the Holy Scriptures, a leopard *cannot* change its spots, and "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them..." (Matthew 7.17-19).

In order to make sure of this point, let us briefly look at fruits of the six most powerful metropolitans of the MP, one of whom is likely to be the next patriarch:-

- (1) Metropolitan Yuvenaly of Kolomna and Krutitsa was described in 1994 by the OCA Bishop Basil (Rodzianko) of Washington as "not only a scoundrel, but, perhaps, something much worse than that" (testimony of Michael Rodzianko). Sergei Bychkov wrote in 1999 that he "has never served a day in a parish. He knows the problems and needs of the clergy only by hearsay. Although he came up through all the ranks, he spent the most difficult years for the Russian church abroad. He served in Berlin, Jerusalem, Prague, and even in Japan. He headed OVTsS [the Department of External Church Relations] for almost ten years. He thought that he would be elected patriarch in 1990 after the death of Patriarch Pimen. But he did not make it even to the second round. This so upset him that he suffered a heart attack. But after recovering, he reconciled himself to the situation and began to support the rise of Master [Cyril] Gundiaev. Metropolitan Yuvenaly is notorious in church circles for his nontraditional sexual orientation. A number of monasteries in the area around Moscow have already been turned into annexes of Sodom."

²²¹ <http://www.ripnet.org/besieged/rparocora.htm?>

- (2) Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk, the friend of Metropolitan Yuvenaly and head of the Department of External Church Relations, is an extreme ecumenist and an importer of tobacco and spirits duty-free. Bychkov writes of him that "until recently he was absolutely certain that after the death of Patriarch Alexis II he would undoubtedly become primate of the Russian church. True, events of this year have shaken Master Gundiaev's assurance.... Metropolitan Kirill's tobacco and alcohol scandals have undermined his authority on the international level. Nevertheless he has held onto his positions in the synod. He knows very well the weaknesses of members of the synod and he skillfully manipulates them. This is the great talent of the metropolitan. His impudence and frankness befuddle weak minds. Synod members who know about his ties with high places are not about to withstand his unbearable pressure. His close friendship with Berezovsky also has brought its fruits; the metropolitan has compromising information not only about all of the episcopacy but even about the patriarch and he occasionally leaks it to the press." According to the witness of an MP priest, Metropolitan Cyril once came into his church and saw an icon of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas on the anoly. "*Get the Tsar out of here!*" he said severely!
- (3) Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg, another extreme ecumenist who is in favour of introducing the new calendar into the Russian Church was, writes Bychkov, "a representative of the Moscow patriarchate at the World Council of Churches in Geneva. At the end of the 1960s he was patriarchal exarch of western Europe and served in Berlin. He is notorious for his aristocratic manners (if he wears cuff links then they must be jeweled). Emulating Catherine II's favorite Grigory Potemkin, he enjoys fresh oysters which are brought to him from Paris and London. But his guests are most affected by his wine cellars. Metropolitan Vladimir Sabodan, who replaced him in Rostov on Don, nearly lost consciousness when he caught sight of and tasted the wines from the metropolitan's cellars. In the 1970-1980s his career rise halted and he was shuttled from one episcopal see to another. Patriarch Pimen was not well disposed toward him. Only after his death did Vladimir come into favor again. From 1995 he has ruled the St. Petersburg diocese, thereby becoming a permanent member of the Holy Synod. In Petersburg he began restoring order with an "iron hand," primarily in financial matters, overturning traditions that had arisen over decades (oysters are expensive nowadays). Metropolitan Vladimir's ministry has been constantly accompanied by scandals. Their causes are his inability and lack of desire to get along with clergy. His administrative style is authoritarian."
- (4) Metropolitan Methodius of Voronezh was until recently one of the strongest candidates to succeed the present patriarch. But in 1992 he

was described by his colleague, Archbishop Chrysostom of Vilna, as “a KGB officer, an atheist, a liar, who is constantly advised by the KGB”. An atheist for patriarch? All things are possible in the MP!

(5), (6). Metropolitans Philaret of Minsk and Vladimir of Kiev are both, according to Bychkov, homosexuals who “share one thing in common: under their administrations the largest monasteries--the Kiev caves lavra and the Zhirovitsy monastery--have become examples of Sodom and Gomorra. ‘Gay families’ coexist peacefully in them, concealed by monastic garments.”

Are things any better in the lower ranks?

Well, on July 19, 1999, according to Bychkov, the Synod “devoted much time to the scandals involving the homosexual conduct of two bishops, Nikon Mironov of Ekaterinburg and Gury Shalimov of Korsun. The press devoted so much attention to poor Bishop Nikon that he is notorious throughout Russia. The behaviour of Bishop Gury was just as scandalous. The Holy Synod sent both into retirement, that is, it dismissed them, confirming thereby the justice of the journalistic accusations. But it dismissed them in conditions of strictest secrecy!”²²²

2. The Leopard and his cubs

Ah, but then there are the wonderfully holy village priests and old women that the supporters of the MP like to talk about! Personally, I have not met any holy priests in the MP. And as for the old women, I know of people who were put off Orthodoxy for years by the appallingly boorish behaviour of the old women in MP churches.

Of course, I may be missing something. But even if I am, what does that prove? What does the presence of good, sincere people in the MP (and I have no doubt that there are many) prove about the MP? No more than the presence of good and sincere people among the Roman Catholics or Protestants about their churches. That is to say: *nothing*. For is the truth and grace of a Church defined by the quality of some of its junior members, or by the confession of faith of its leaders? The latter, of course...

But the supporters of the MP are very fond of this “bottom-up” ecclesiology of theirs. They love to assert that even if the older generation of bishops are all KGB agents (not even the patriarch denies that he is, and has been for a long time!), the next generation are going to be wonderful.

²²² Bychkov, “The Synod against a Council”, *Moskovskii komsomolets*, August 20, 1999, quoted by Joseph Legrande, “Re: [paradosis] Re: Solovki (WAS: Dealing with Heresy)”, orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, 31 August, 2002.

But why? Why should those appointed by KGB agents, ecumenists and homosexuals be anti-sergianists, anti-ecumenists and irreproachable chaste? Is it not much more likely that they will be at least partially tainted by the vices of their teachers, whom they chose to follow knowing their vices? "Know ye not," says the Apostle Paul, speaking about precisely such vices, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (I Corinthians 5.6).

According to his brother Michael, the OCA Bishop Basil of Washington said, after a trip to Moscow: "Now I agree with you: amongst the young folks there, there are many wonderful Orthodox people," and, briefly remaining silent, he added, "but it will require yet another entire generation, or perhaps even longer, before everything gets back to normal". So, if we accept the testimony even of this pro-Moscow witness, the ROCOR bishops should wait at least another generation before thinking of joining the MP.

And yet even this pessimistic estimate seems to me to be unreasonably optimistic. It depends on several assumptions, viz.: (1) that these "wonderful Orthodox people" will remain in the corrupt MP, and will not feel compelled by their conscience to leave it, (2) that the present leaders of the MP will choose to promote precisely these "wonderful Orthodox people" and not corrupt time-servers like themselves, and (3) that even if, by some extraordinary coincidence, some of these "wonderful Orthodox people" are promoted to positions of power in the church, they will still be wonderful and Orthodox by that time, and will not have been corrupted by the terrible environment they find themselves in.

The fact remains that, while a certain degree of regeneration can take place in a Church from below, that regeneration cannot go far, and will in time peter out, until and unless it is supported and strengthened by regeneration *from above*. For it is a basic principle of Orthodox ecclesiology that the faith of a Church is defined by the faith of its hierarchs. And if those hierarchs are heretical, then all those in obedience to them share, to a greater or lesser degree, in their heresy. You cannot be an Orthodox Christian while remaining knowingly under the omophorion of a heretical bishop.

"But no," said one pious MP layman to me recently. "This is the ecclesiological equivalent of the Filioque heresy! Grace does not come from God *and* the hierarchs. It comes from God alone! It can bypass the heretical hierarchs and go straight to the people!"

Then there is hope for the Roman Catholics, who don't have to worry about the heresy of their Pope! And hope for the Protestants, who said all along that the hierarchy and the priesthood were unnecessary! And hope for all those "Orthodox" individualists (and there are very many of them) who construct their spiritual lives independently of the church organization to

which they belong, justifying themselves on the grounds that they have a direct line to God that does not pass through the hierarch's office!

Yes, we do have a direct line to God. And God can certainly give grace to a believer directly, independently of any hierarch or priest. But nobody can receive the grace of baptism, or of chrismation, or of the Body and Blood of Christ, without which salvation is impossible, except at the hands of a canonically appointed and rightly believing priest. That is the order God has ordained. And He has also ordained that this channel of sacramental grace does *not* pass through the hands of heretics or those who represent them...

3. The Leopard and his tamer

Another, not dissimilar argument that is sometimes heard is that the rapid building of churches and monasteries in contemporary Russia shows that, whatever the defects of the leaders, the resurrection of Russia is taking place, and that, this being the case, instead of standing aside and carping, it is necessary to have a more positive attitude, to join in the renewal process. And that involves entering into communion. After all, they assert, perhaps we (the ROCOR hierarchs) can have a good influence on the hierarchy, perhaps we can put a brake on the negative aspects of patriarchal life, perhaps we can help to tame the leopard...

It is difficult to believe that anyone actually believes this argument. As Nicholas Kazantsev has recently pointed out, ROCOR has acted as a brake on the MP only so long as it has existed *outside* the MP as a genuinely independent force.²²³ Once the tiny ROCOR pond has been poured into the MP ocean, it will cease to have any influence at all.

As it is, such influence as it has had has been rapidly declining in recent years in exact proportion to its *rapprochement* with the patriarchate. Surveys show that the influence of ROCOR was at its greatest immediately after the fall of communism, in the early 1990s, when ROCOR actually fought against the MP and the MP was seriously rattled. But then came the 1994 conciliar decision to enter into negotiations with the MP, the expulsion of the Suzdal dissenters in 1995, and Archbishop Mark's meeting with the patriarch in 1997, as a direct result of which the MP felt emboldened to seize Hebron and Jericho, and the Oak of Abraham at Hebron died after four thousand years of life...

No, the leopard has not been tamed, and it will not be tamed by ROCOR, in whatever form it may continue to exist after the unia with the MP...

There are in fact strong grounds for believing in a future resurrection of the Russian Church. These strong grounds consist in the prophecies of the

²²³ Kazantsev, *op.cit.*

saints, which speak precisely about such a resurrection. But it is important to note that these prophecies do not state that the MP will gradually evolve into the True Church – that is, that good fruit will gradually begin to appear on the corrupt tree, transforming the tree from bad to good, from corrupt to life-giving.

On the contrary, St. Seraphim of Sarov says that at that time “the Russian hierarchs will become so impious that they will not even believe in the most important dogma of the Faith of Christ – the resurrection of Christ and the general resurrection. That is why it will be pleasing to the Lord God to take me from this very temporary life for a time and then, for the establishment of the dogma of the resurrection, to raise me, and my resurrection will be like the resurrection of the seven youths in the cave of Okhlon...”

And then, continues the saint, he will begin the process of world-wide *repentance*; for the absolutely necessary condition of true resurrection is repentance.

The prophecies speak, not of an evolution of the MP from evil to good, nor of the repentance of the bishops, but of a more or less *complete removal of the higher clergy* of the Church. The initiative for this will not come from well-known bishops, but from people unknown to the world, according to Elder Porphyrius of Glinsk (+1868): "In due course, faith will collapse in Russia. The brilliance of earthly glory will blind the mind. The word of truth will be defiled, but with regard to the Faith, some from among the people, unknown to the world, will come forward and restore what was scorned."

And the instrument of this restoration will be a True Orthodox Tsar. Thus Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava, passing on the tradition of the Valaam elders, wrote: "... The Lord will have mercy on Russia for the sake of the small remnant of true believers. In Russia, the elders said, in accordance with the will of the people, the Monarchy, Autocratic power, will be re-established. The Lord has forechosen the future Tsar. He will be a man of fiery faith, having the mind of a genius and a will of iron. First of all he will introduce order in the Orthodox Church, *removing all the untrue, heretical and lukewarm hierarchs. And many, very many - with few exceptions, all - will be deposed*, and new, true, unshakeable hierarchs will take their place. He will be of the family of the Romanovs according to the female line. Russia will be a powerful state, but only for 'a short time'... And then the Antichrist will come into the world, with all the horrors of the end as described in the Apocalypse."

As for the lower ranks, Catacomb Eldress Agatha of Belorussia, who was martyred by the Bolsheviks at the age of 119 (!), counselled them not to go to the MP: "This is not a true church. It has signed a contract to serve the Antichrist. Do not go to it. Do not receive any mysteries from its servants. Do not participate in prayer with them." They were to wait for the triumph of

Orthodoxy, when the people will show their true repentance *by being baptised by True Orthodox clergy*: “There will come a time when churches will be opened in Russia, and *the true Orthodox faith will triumph*. Then people will become baptized, as at one time they were baptized under St. Vladimir.”

4. The Leopard as a protected species

When Putin met the ROCOR hierarchs in New York, he used the argument that ROCOR should join with the MP in “serving the homeland”, its culture and traditions. This is a powerful emotional argument for Russians and those who love Russia. After all, who would not want to serve his homeland? Who would want to appear unpatriotic? And especially now that the homeland is beginning to take on the appearance, externally at any rate, of an Orthodox country, and Orthodoxy is being protected by the State as an inalienable part of the national culture of Russia.

But what is the ultimate value here – the State or the Church, the earthly homeland or the Heavenly Homeland, God or Mammon? If Orthodoxy is to be protected because it serves the Homeland, or the State, or culture, or any other value whatsoever apart from eternal salvation with God, then it is no longer Orthodoxy but at best an exhibit in a museum or a zoo, at worst *an idol*.

In early, Kievan and Muscovite Russia, the Church was protected, not because it helped to support the State (although it did do that), and not because it constituted a part of Russia’s cultural heritage (although it was that), but because the State of Russia and Russia as a whole existed *in order to serve the Church*, without which neither the State nor the Nation had more than an ephemeral significance. The earthly homeland, in Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow’s phrase, was the “antechamber” of the Heavenly Homeland. Membership of the earthly homeland was treasured and was fought for because it served as a stepping-stone to membership of the Heavenly Homeland, the Kingdom of Heaven – *and for no other reason*.

Russia was “Holy Russia” precisely because she served something higher than herself, the ideal of holiness, the ideal of union in faith and love with God. And she began to descend to the far lesser ideal of “Great Russia” under Peter the Great only when she began to serve herself rather than God, when the Church became a tool in the hands of the State, serving the State’s this-worldly aims. However, under the later Romanov Tsars the great ship that was Russia began to return to her heavenly calling, to become holy again. This process accelerated under Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, who led Russia into World War I, not for the sake of her and his greater earthly glory, but *to save Orthodoxy in her sister-nation of Serbia*. And when the Tsar abdicated, dooming himself and his family to ignominy and death, he did so in order that this war-effort should continue – in other words, for the sake of Orthodoxy in the true sense.

But in today's Russia, as Protopriest Lev Lebedev writes, "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 being it is the ideological idol 'fatherland' that holds sway..."²²⁴

If ROCOR wishes to serve the Fatherland, she must wait for the true Fatherland to appear above the horizon, like the submerged city of Kitezh. To embrace the semi-Soviet, pseudo-Orthodox Fatherland that is Putin's Russia would be a betrayal of her calling, a betrayal of the true Russia.

There is still time to draw back!

November 4/17, 2003.

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²²⁴ Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 655 (in Russian).

14. LAZARUS SATURDAY, THE CHICAGO DIOCESE AND THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

Today is Lazarus Saturday. I remember this day especially because on it I was supposed to be baptized in the Russian Church Abroad – and Archbishop Averky reposed in the Lord. Even at that time, nearly 30 years ago now, Archbishop Averky was insisting that the Moscow Patriarchate was a *graceless* organization, and lamenting the way in which the Russian Church Abroad's relationship towards it was weakening. Archbishop Averky and his writings have a high reputation both in Russia and abroad. And yet how few people heed his anguished warnings today!

Fortunately at just the time that Archbishop Averky died, another zealot for True Orthodoxy took over as the “watchman of the Lord” (Ezekiel 33), warning the people against the coming of the enemy. This was Metropolitan Philaret. In 1977 he warned me: “Vladimir, I advise you to obey the anathema of the Catacomb Church against the Soviet church.” He was one of the very few who were not taken in by Fr. Dmitri Dudko, the dissident Soviet priest, warning in 1980 that although his courage was to be admired, since he was “confessing” from within a false church, he would fail. And sure enough: Dudko “repented” of his confession, and is now issuing passionate dithyrambs in praise of Stalin! Metropolitan Philaret sealed his righteous confession against both the MP and World Orthodoxy by heading the list of hierarchs that anathematized ecumenism and the ecumenists in 1983, and years later his body was discovered to be incorrupt. Two jurisdictions deriving their orders from the Russian Church Abroad have now glorified him among the saints. But not, alas, the Russian Church Abroad, whose present chief-hierarchy buried his relics under concrete...

The next chief-hierarchy, Metropolitan Vitaly, was not known to be a zealot in the mould of Archbishop Averky and Metropolitan Philaret; and his period as chief hierarchy was characterized by uncertainty and wavering and several bad decisions which the consciousness of the True Church has not accepted. Nevertheless, he authorized the founding of parishes of the Russian Church Abroad within Russia in 1990, thus providing a priceless lifeline for thousands of people inside Russia who wished to abandon the falsehood of the MP and confess the True Faith under a true hierarchy. Moreover, in recent years he has asserted, in line with his predecessor, that the MP is a graceless organization (he even called it “the church of the Antichrist”), and led the Russian Church Abroad to reaffirm the anathema against ecumenism and the ecumenists in 1998 (it is he who coined the famous and accurate phrase to describe ecumenism: “the heresy of heresies”).

However, things have changed sharply for the worse under his successor, Metropolitan Lavr, the man who buried St. Philaret's relics under concrete and attempted to drive Metropolitan Vitaly into an early grave through his

law-suits. At the robber council of 2000, he and his fellow hierarchs officially applied to enter into communion with the heretical MP, asking the equally heretical Serbian patriarch to intercede for them in this. He has entered into negotiations with and praised KGB agent Putin, who toasts Stalin and says "there are no ex-KGB agents", and who has turned the clock back to Soviet times. Lavr has buried the confession of the Russian Church Abroad under concrete, attempting to consign it to the tomb as thoroughly and as deeply as Lazarus' body. He holds his nose at what he considers to be the stinking corpse of the Russian Church Abroad's previous confession, calling it "pharisaical".

But Lazarus is not dead: he is only sleeping...

Let us now turn to a recent communiqué of the Chicago and Detroit diocese of the Russian Church Abroad, as published in A.V. Soldatov's *Vertograd* for April 1, 2004. This communiqué is moderate in its language, more moderate in its pro-MP pathos than other statements by clergy of the Russian Church Abroad. Nevertheless, an examination of those parts of the communiqué which relate to the MP will reveal just how dangerously ROCOR is walking now, just how blindly it is sleep-walking into the abyss...

"This year," says the communiqué, "has been a good one. As we noted in our resolution of October 2003, we are comforted by the possibility of reconciliation between the two parts of the one Russian Church."

Let us pause here. Why only two parts (it is obvious that ROCOR and the MP are meant)? What about ROCiE, ROAC, the Lazarites, the Seraphimo-Gennadiites, all of which were at one time in communion with ROCOR? Is no olive branch to be offered to them, but only to the completely apostate, thoroughly heretical MP? Why reconciliation only to the left, and not to the right? The schisms between ROCOR, on the one hand, and ROCiE, ROAC, the Lazarites and the Seraphimo-Gennadiites are all comparatively recent (the earliest was in 1990); none of them involve dogmatic issues; all of them involve blatantly uncanonical acts on the part of ROCOR and well-justified and extremely serious grievances on the part of the other jurisdiction; so ROCOR has an extra moral reason to seek reconciliation with them. On the other hand, the schism between ROCOR and the MP is exactly the opposite in nature: it is old (going back to 1927); it involves serious dogmatic issues, Sergianism and Ecumenism in particular, which, in view of Russia's return to Sovietism and the MP's stubborn continuance in the WCC and other ecumenical activities, are far from irrelevant today; and it is the MP which committed the serious uncanonical acts, while it is ROCOR which has the well-justified and extremely serious grievances.

To any unprejudiced observer (and I speak as a member of none of these jurisdictions, although I have had contacts with all of them), it is obvious that

the schisms between ROCOR and the jurisdictions on its right are more easily resolved than that between ROCOR and the jurisdictions on its left (which includes, of course, not only the MP, but also all those it is in communion with – for example, the new calendarist Greeks, the Monophysite Antiochians, etc.).

“The realization of this possibility has had a positive effect on the life of our parishes.”

But the possibility – of the reconciliation between ROCOR and the MP – has not been realized yet. So how can it have had any effect, whether positive or negative *yet*? It is still an open question what effect such a reconciliation, when realized, will really have.

“From the time of the October congress, we can note the success of the journey of our delegation of our Church to Russia...”

Is the shameful trip of Archbishop Mark, Archbishop Hilarion and Bishop Kyrill meant?! The one in which Archbishop Mark asked forgiveness of the KGB in the person of Agent Drozdov (for let’s not beat about the bush: that’s what the “patriarch” is) on behalf of ROCOR, and then kissed his hand in public?! Shame!

“... the broadened pastoral convention in Nayak, the warm response of our Hierarchical Council to the epistle of his Holiness Patriarch Alexis II, and the projected official visit of our First Hierarch, Metropolitan Lavr, to Russia in May.”

No comment.

“Recently, some believers have expressed perplexity or anxiety with regard to ecclesiastical reconciliation.”

And with reason!

“However, when it was explained to them that what was in mind was not a merging or submission, but precisely a reconciliation and mutual recognition, eucharistic concelebration, then their anxiety was replaced by a calm approach.”

This is naivety at best, casuistical craftiness at worst. The writers of this communiqué consider the MP to be the “other half” of the one Russian Church, with themselves as the other half. But the MP is headed by a Patriarch, who with his Synod considers himself to be the head of the whole of the Russian Church. If ROCOR considers him to be a canonical Patriarch, then if it enters into communion with him as with the head of the Russian

Church, it *must* be in submission to him - and the MP would be completely within its "canonical" rights to demand submission!

Moreover, what about the parishes of the Church Abroad inside Russia? Is there any chance that they will not be placed *immediately* in complete submission to the patriarchate? None at all. These believers sacrificed much when they left the MP in order to join the Church Abroad. Now they are going to be thrown back to the lions by people who sit safely outside, thinking vainly that they themselves will remain autonomous in some way.

The Catacomb Church used to be betrayed by the MP and informers sent by the MP into their midst. Now they are being betrayed by ROCOR. Not for nothing was, and is, their password: "I will not give Thee a kiss as did Judas..."

"We recognize both the Church Abroad and the Patriarchate to be heirs of the historical Russian Church."

Yes, make sure the stone is securely sealed over the tomb....

"The events of the past year have reassured us that complete reconciliation is possible in the nearest future between the Church Abroad and the Patriarchal Church, as also complete communion in prayer and the Eucharist on all levels of ecclesiastical life. There has for long existed a de facto communion for laypeople, and now we can hope for such a communion for the clergy."

How can there be one rule for laypeople and another for clergy, even if the situation is envisaged as being only temporary? In any case, why say that "the realization of this possibility has had a positive effect on the life of our parishes" if it is still only possible "in the nearest future" - that is, is not a present reality? And why not be honest with your flock about the obstacles that still remain - Ecumenism, for example? Why not be honest with them and say: "Reconciliation will involve our entering the World Council of Churches with the MP"? Why not admit openly that you will then be in full communion with all the heretics anathematized in 1983 and 1998 by the Russian Church Abroad?

"We recognize that there still remain certain obstacles..."

Which are?.....

"However, at the same time many of the reasons frequently encountered against reconciliation seem to us to be only emotional reactions issuing from misunderstandings, from a lack of knowledge of the history and mission of our Church."

Which are?....

The communiqué does not describe which are the real obstacles that still remain (for presumably there must be real obstacles) and the merely “emotional reactions” to reconciliation. Clearly its signatories want to forget about these real obstacles, and imply that the opponents of reconciliation (which clearly still exist in large numbers even within the Lavrite Church Abroad) are simply being emotional.

Well, I do not believe that the opponents of “reconciliation” with evil are simply being emotional. And in any case, emotion in defence of the true faith is not necessarily such a bad thing, while cool, hard-hearted dismissal of well-founded objections is, as St. Joseph of Petrograd once said to a Soviet archimandrite, equivalent to schism. Martha and Mary wept when their brother died and his corpse was buried.

And Jesus wept too.

And through His weeping and groaning and praying, the stinking body of the four-days-dead Lazarus was raised from the dead. The confession of the True Church will also be resurrected. But how many people will perish before then?...

Jesus said to her: Your brother will rise again. Martha said to Him: I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

Lazarus Saturday, 2004.

(First published in *Vernost'*, N 27)

15. THE FORKED TONGUE OF ARCHBISHOP KYRILL

In the recent interview given by Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco²²⁵ we see exactly why the very first words of the Psalms are: "Blessed is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the pestilent" (1.1). The ungodly in this case are the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate, the sinners are the fifth columnists who have been talking up the supposed virtues of the ungodly, and the pestilent are the KGB men such as Vladimir Putin who have been behind the whole process of the unification of the MP and ROCOR. Blessed is the man who keeps away from such men and their counsel, for his mind will not be darkened by the fumes of false doctrines and lies. He will know what the will of God is and will have strength from God to fulfil it. Alas, in this interview Archbishop Kyrill has shown himself to have fallen away from the blessed and numbered himself with those of whom the Angel in Revelation says: "Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and every who loves and practises falsehood" (22.15).

Let us examine his interview in more detail.

He begins by discussing the document, "On the Relationship between the Church and the State" – one of the four documents now officially agreed upon at the highest level by the Synods of the MP and ROCOR. In this document Archbishop Kyrill regrets only that "the mistakes of the Synodal period of our history were not noted: when Peter the Great, disposing of the patriarchate and forming the "Holy Ruling Synod" with an ober-procurator, in fact placed the Russian Church into an extremely strange, and, strictly speaking, uncanonical situation, turning it into a government institution... Other errors and sins were committed by monarchs who had a negative view of the Church, but they did not cause the bitter division which occurred in the 20th century, when the atheists seized power. That is probably why these moments in our history were not touched upon."

No, Archbishop Kyrill, the reason they were not touched upon is that the *errors* of the pre-revolutionary period *cannot be compared with the apostasy* of the post-revolutionary period. But of course it is a useful ploy: to pretend that the unconditional surrender of the Church into the hands of enemies who have openly vowed to destroy it is the same as the partial surrender of the freedom of the Church in some spheres to a State which both professed and protected Orthodoxy, built thousands of churches, promoted missionary work to the heathen and died in a terrible struggle to save Orthodoxy against the heretical West. This ploy has been used for decades by the MP to justify Sergianism; so it is perhaps not surprising that Archbishop Kyrill, who is now *de facto* if not yet *de jure* a MP hierarch, should be using it.

²²⁵ <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/guest/050712124610>

The same argument was also recently used by the heretic Fr. Gregory Lourié in an article that argued that the pre-revolutionary Church had fallen into "Sergianism before Sergius", and that the pre-revolutionary Synod was not only uncanonical in the sense that its establishment involved the breaking of certain canons, but "anti-canonical" and even "chimerical"! And in fact this is what Archbishop Kyrill is doing: following Lourié, he is slandering the pre-revolutionary Church, accusing it of Sergianism before Sergius. The question then arises, however: if ROCOR was right to break with Sergius because of Sergianism in 1927, should not the masses of the Russian faithful have broken communion with the Synod in the time of Peter the Great? But neither St. Demetrius of Rostov nor St. Metrophanes of Voronezh, neither St. Seraphim of Sarov nor St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, broke communion with the pre-revolutionary Holy Governing Synod. This leads to one of two possible conclusions, given Archbishop Kyrill's premises: either the whole of the pre-revolutionary Russian Church fell into Sergianism before Sergius, or ROCOR and the Catacomb Church were in fact *wrong* to break with Sergius in 1927...

But Archbishop Kyrill accepts neither conclusion. What he wants to say is that it was alright to reject the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius, and alright to accept it, and that you could be a martyr whichever side of the fence you were on. And in fact he *has* to adopt such a position, because this is what was agreed in point 7 of the document on Church-State relations: "The martyrs and confessors who gave their lives for Christ and the Church were numerous, both among those who accepted the 'Declaration' and among those who rejected it."

This reminds me of an article in the Anglican *Church Times* some years ago, which described both those who died for Catholicism in the period of the Reformation and those who died for Protestantism as "martyrs". How wonderfully ecumenical! You suffer for the truth, or you suffer for the lie – it doesn't matter, you get the crown of martyrdom anyway!

Archbishop Kyrill claims that the document on Church-State relations "rejected... any attempt to justify the unnatural relationship between the Church and the God-battling state through use of Holy Scripture." The document may have not used Holy Scripture (because Holy Scripture does not agree with it), but it certainly attempted to justify the relationship in other ways. In fact, the whole document is one long justification of this "unnatural" relationship, this "morbid" compromise.

Thus in point 3 we read: "The ecclesiastical policies of Metropolitan Sergius were doubtless aimed towards the preservation of the Church hierarchy, which was the target of destruction by the militant atheists, and also aimed towards the possibility of administering the Mysteries."

What a lie! Everybody who has studied the career of Metropolitan Sergius knows that long before the declaration of 1927, he trimmed his sails to the prevailing political wind and looked *only after his own interests*. Already at the beginning of the century he took a very active part in the work of the society for the rapprochement of the Orthodox and Anglican Churches. This sympathy for the ideas of the West manifested itself also in his active participation in the activities of the liberal religious-philosophical society of St. Petersburg, from whose bosom there came the heretics S. Bulgakov and N. Berdiaev and the future renovationist leader Antonin (Granovsky).

Sergius' political sympathies were also leftist. 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.'"²²⁶ 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; and 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.²²⁷

Sergius was in favour of many of the innovations that were later to be introduced by the heretical "living church" renovationists. Thus among the suggestions made to the Pre-Conciliar Commission preparing for the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church that eventually took place in 1917-1918, we read of "a suggestion of the clergy of the cathedral of Vyborg on the longed-for reforms, presented by Archbishop Sergius of Finland to the Holy Synod on January 18, 1906:

- 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 read aloud the secret prayers during the Liturgy.

²²⁶ "Preemstvennost' Grekha", publication of the parish of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, Tsaritsyn, p. 7.

²²⁷ In 1915 the Empress wrote to the Emperor that Sergius "must leave the Synod" (A. Paryayev, "Mitropolit Sergij Stragorodskij: Neizvestnaia Biographia", *Suzdal'skie Eparkhial'nie Vedomosti*, № 1, September, 1997, pp. 12-15).

- It must think of giving priests [who have been widowed before the age of 45] the right to remarry."²²⁸

Sergius also called for another popular aim of the liberals - the complete separation of Church and State.²²⁹ It was logical, therefore, that he should welcome the February revolution and support the Provisional Government. But less logical that he should support the October revolution and the Bolsheviks, who tried to engulf the Church in the State...

Sergius also supported the organisation, founded in Petrograd on March 7, 1917, called "The All-Russian Union of the Democratic Clergy and Laity". This was to be the embryo of the future renovationist schism. As Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) testified, "already in 1917 he was dreaming of combining Orthodox Church life with the subjection of the Russian land to Soviet power..."²³⁰

Then, in April, 1917, Sergius was the only hierarch of the Synod who was not forcibly retired by the new masonic government...

On April 29, the new Synod headed by Archbishop Sergius accepted an Address to the Church concerning the establishment of the principle of the election of the episcopate, and 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.

Worse was to follow. On June 16, 1922 Metropolitan Sergius, with two other hierarchs, joined the heretical renovationists, declaring: "We,..., having studied the platform of the [renovationist] 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."²³¹

²²⁸ *Suggestions of the Diocesan Hierarchs on the Reform of the Church*, St. Petersburg, 1906, vol. 3, p. 443.

²²⁹ See Anonymous, *V ob'iatikh semiglavago zmiia*, Montreal, 1984, p. 14.

²³⁰ *Preemstvennost' Grekha*", *op. cit.*, p. 7.

²³¹ Text in M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatishago Patriarkha Tikhona*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 218-219.

The Sergianist Metropolitan John (Snychev) wrote about this act: "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.'"²³²

Nor did Metropolitan Sergius quickly repent of his heresy. As Hieromartyr Damascene of Glukhov pointed out, he "took his time" over repenting, and did not rejoin the True Church until 1924.

Then, in 1926, Metropolitan Sergius indulged in a naked struggle for power – the power of the first hierarch of the Russian Church – with the locum tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, the future Hieromartyr Metropolitan Agathangel of Yaroslavl. Eventually, having the backing of the OGPU, Sergius prevailed and Metropolitan Agathangel gave up his much stronger claim "for the sake of the unity of the Church". But already many were looking at Metropolitan Sergius with suspicion. Had not the famous Optina Elder Nectarius declared: "Metropolitan Sergius has repented, but the poison of renovationism is in him still"? Little more than a year later, after the publication of the infamous "Declaration", most of the senior hierarchs of the Russian Church, as well as Elder Nectarius, had broken communion with him...

Metropolitan Sergius' "Declaration" was not aimed at "the preservation of the church hierarchy" for the simple reason that it *destroyed* the church hierarchy – only four bishops were left at liberty in the whole of the USSR by 1939. Was this merely a miscalculation, an action that was intended for the good but turned out for the worse? But how could the "wise Sergius" have made such a terrible miscalculation? And why, when he saw that things were not working out as he hoped and expected, did he not change course, as his superior, Metropolitan Peter, and so many of his colleagues urged him to? And why, if he simply wanted to preserve the church hierarchy, did he send so many of them to their deaths by branding them "counter-revolutionaries"?!

The document says in point 5: "The publication of the 'Declaration' did not mean that the Church was of one mind with the ideology of the atheist state". The *Church*, of course, was not – but Metropolitan Sergius was. If not, why did he praise the revolution and condemn all those who opposed it, including all the opponents of his "Declaration" as "counter-revolutionaries"? Why did he say that the joys and sorrows of the revolution were his sorrows? Sergius set a terrible precedent: innumerable statements of support by MP hierarchs for the Communist Party can be quoted. As late as July 4/17, 1990 Patriarch

²³² Snychev, "Mitropolit Sergij i Obnovlenneskij Raskol".

Alexis II said that he was praying for the preservation of the Communist Party!

But let us return to Archbishop Kyrill: "For us the most important thing is to condemn the course of church-state relations that he chose, which has already been accomplished. Orthodox Christians cannot condemn an individual. For the Holy Fathers and the teachers of the Church always said that one can condemn sin and untruth, but not the sinner. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said this in His Gospel. That is why we cannot judge Patriarch Sergius, for he has already appeared before God."

Strange... A hierarch who has been given the power to bind and to loose, and who is committed by his hierarchical oath to condemn everyone and everything that the Church has condemned, suddenly absolves himself from any such responsibility! So what of all the heretics who were condemned and anathematized by name by the Ecumenical Councils? What of the individuals that the Russian Church has condemned in various Councils down the ages? What of Archbishop Kyrill's own condemnation of his own first-hierarchy, Metropolitan Vitaly? Is Archbishop Kyrill going to be squeamish and withdraw himself from all these Councils, saying: "I judge only the sin, but not the sinner"? Well, we will not force his so tender conscience: let him withdraw from all such condemnations – and resign his bishopric at the same time!

He goes on: "Are there any analogous cases in the history of the Orthodox Church by which we can judge the actions of Patriarch Sergius?"

But why worry about "analogous cases", Archbishop Kyrill, if you have already resolved to judge the sin, but not the sinner (unless the sinner happens to be your own first hierarchy)? Or perhaps you want to say that the sin of Sergianism was not a sin after all? Yes, that is what you are trying to do...

"I personally feel that the situation of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 is similar to the situation in which Patriarch Gregory V of Constantinople found himself in 1821, when the Greeks, seeking the overthrow of the Mohammedan yoke and the reestablishment of an independent Orthodox state, rose up against the Turks. Right after the Greek revolt, the Turks destroyed the Church of the Live-Bearing Source in Constantinople, desecrating holy icons, looting churches and monasteries, wandering through the streets during Passion Week and killing Orthodox people. In his "decree of excommunication," issued by order of the Mohammedans, Gregory V invoked "eternal anathema" to those who revolted, and defrocked the clergymen and monks of Mt Athos who supported them, and deemed them "worthy of the fires of Gehenna." This patriarchal damnation frightened no

one. Still, the Greeks, including the clergy, did not condemn their patriarch, seeing that his terrible decree was coerced."

This is not an analogous case at all. Let us first ask the question: was the Ottoman sultan a legitimate authority, and were Orthodox Christians bound to obey him in everything that did not directly contradict the commandments of God? The answer to this question is: yes. The second question is: was Soviet power a legitimate power, and were Orthodox Christians bound to obey it as such? The answer to that question is: *no*. For the Russian Church Council of 1917-1918 had anathematized Soviet power, and Patriarch Tikhon had forbidden the children of the Church to have anything to do with such "outcasts of the human race".

So when Patriarch Gregory anathematised the insurgents against Ottoman power, whether sincerely or not, he undoubtedly had good reasons for his action. After all, the insurgents had sworn to obey the Sultan as their legitimate political ruler, and even commemorated him at the Liturgy. The Church's attitude to the revolution – the French revolution in the first place, and then all other revolutions against legitimate political authorities – was expressed in a work called *Paternal Teaching*, which appeared in the revolutionary year of 1789, and which, according to Charles Frazee, "was signed by [Patriarch] Anthimus of Jerusalem but was probably the work of the later Patriarch Gregory V. The document is a polemic against revolutionary ideas, calling on the Christians 'to note how brilliantly our Lord, infinite in mercy and all-wise, protects intact the holy and Orthodox Faith of the devout, and preserves all things'. It warns that the devil is constantly at work raising up evil plans; among them is the idea of liberty, which appears to be so good, but is only there to deceive the people. The document points out that [the struggle for] political freedom is contrary to the Scriptural command to obey authority, that it results in the impoverishment of the people, in murder and robbery. The sultan is the protector of Christian life in the Ottoman Empire; to oppose him is to oppose God."²³³

The bad fruits of the Greek revolution, which was anathematized by Patriarch Gregory and his successor, were plain to see: a schism in the Church that lasted until 1852, terrible reprisals by the Turks against the civilian population, a great increase in western influence with a Catholic king and Protestant constitution, the closure of most of the monasteries... Constantine Nikolayevich Leontiev described the bad fruits of the Greek revolution, and succeeding revolutions, in his excellent essay, "The Fruits of the National Movements". Patriarch Gregory therefore stood *against* the revolution and was essentially a victim of that revolution.

²³³ Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1853*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 8.

"Patriarch" Sergius was quite the opposite: he threw in his hand with the revolution, and so died peacefully in his bed while thousands of his brothers, banned and branded by him, were tortured to death. There is no analogy here. Don't slander the name of a true martyr, Archbishop Kyrill, by comparing him with the greatest Judas in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church!

"No one can forget the horror experienced by the representatives of the Church during the godless repressions of the 20th century. Some things were done only after lengthy, brutal persecutions, and not from free will. That is why I think that Patriarch Sergius himself should not be condemned, although we did condemn the "Declaration" so that this mistake would not be repeated in the future."

I have already shown that "Patriarch" Sergius had a long history of compromise and betrayal even before his notorious "Declaration", and that according to St. Nectarius of Optina he had "the poison of renovationism in him still". Another saint, Hieromartyr Victor of Glazov, prophesied as early as 1911 that Metropolitan Sergius would "shake the Church" through his false teaching on redemption. So it was not "lengthy, brutal persecutions" that propelled him to betray the Church, but his own inner heretical cast of mind.

Moreover, as I have shown, the "Declaration" has not been condemned by the MP. On the contrary, the document on Church-State relations has tried to excuse it in every possible way. As for seeing "that this mistake [is] not repeated in the future", how can we have any confidence in that, when the leading hierarchs of the MP are all long-term KGB agents who have repeated Sergius' sin in much less difficult circumstances?...

"At one time," continues Archbishop Kyrill, "some individual bishops and clergymen here in the diaspora said that the Church in Russia is "without grace," that She was "not a Church," but this does not correlate with the actual position of the entire fullness of the Russian Church Abroad. This was not said by our previous First Hierarchs: Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky), Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky). This was never stated by a single Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. We do not have the right to say this; this would be canonically and ecclesiastically ignorant. In general, the question of "grace" belongs to God, and mortals cannot judge this."

Once again, Archbishop Kyrill absolves himself from the responsibility of answering the questions he is put in office to answer. On this feast of the holy Apostles, we should remember that the Apostles and their successors not only have the right, but also the *duty*, to define where the Church and where it is not. 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?" Consider also what the ROCOR itself proclaimed in 1983 and again, with Archbishop Kyrill's signature, in 1998: "To those 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... **Anathema.**"

But Archbishop Kyrill, alas, no longer acts with the authority of an Orthodox bishop; he no longer wishes to distinguish between true mysteries and false mysteries, let alone anathematise those who fail to make that distinction (for that would mean anathematising himself)...

In any case, what Archbishop Kyrill is wrong about Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky). In 1927 Metropolitan Anthony issued an encyclical in which he 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 Eulogius, 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, even though they have departed far from the Russian land."²³⁴

So Metropolitan Sergius "fell away from the saving unity of the Church". Does this not mean that he lost grace? Nor were these words of Metropolitan Anthony a "flash in the pan". On August 22, 1928, he 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

²³⁴ Protopriest Vladislav Tsy-pin, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov'*, 1925-1938, Moscow: Izdanie Sretenskogo Monastyria, 1999, pp. 383-384.

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..."²³⁵

Archbishop Kyrill goes on: "At the Council of 1938... the Bishops... admitted that only Metropolitan Sergius himself is excluded from communion with ROCOR and that his sin does not extend to his successors, which Holy New Martyr Kyrill of Kazan said also."

Metropolitan Kyrill said nothing of the sort. What he did say, in March, 1937, was: "The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius 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 nature of Sergianism. We cannot know whether those believers who remain in Sergianism will be saved, because the work of eternal Salvation is a work of the mercy and grace of God. But for those who see and feel the unrighteousness of Sergianism (those are your questions) it would be unforgiveable craftiness to close one's eyes to this unrighteousness and seek there for the satisfaction of one's spiritual needs when one's conscience doubts in the possibility of receiving such satisfaction. Everything which is not of faith is sin..."²³⁶

So there we have it, from a supposed "moderate": as early as 1937, long before ecumenism, Sergius was already "departing from that Orthodox Church which the Holy Patriarch Tikhon entrusted us to guard, and consequently there can be no part or lot with him for the Orthodox." Moreover, no believer who understands the "unrighteousness" of Sergianism is allowed to "seek [in the MP] the satisfaction of his spiritual needs". For that would be "unforgiveable craftiness".

Need we say more? Does not the voice of the most respected and widely quoted of all the new hieromartyrs of Russia, the most senior hierarch of the Russian Church after the death of St. Peter, blow to pieces all the "unforgiveable craftiness" of the MP-ROCOR joint statement, as well as Archbishop Kyrill's own craftiness?

The Prophet Ezekiel said that false pastors are like dogs who can't bark. Archbishop Kyrill has forgotten how to bark, how to protect his flock against

²³⁵ *Pis'ma Blazhenneishago Mitropolita Antonia (Khrapovitskogo)*, Jordanville, 1988, pp. 105-106.

²³⁶ Letter of Metropolitan Cyril to Hieromonk Leonid, February 23 / March 8, 1937, *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 16, August 15/28, 1997, p. 7. Italics mine (V.M.).

the wolves of heresy. Instead, he goes up to them with his tail behind his legs and licks their hands in the most abjectly servile manner. Such hirelings have been rejected by the conciliar voice of the Russian Church. May God protect us from this Judas sin as we say: “Nor will I give Thee a kiss, as did Judas...”

*June 30 / July 13, 2005.
Synaxis of the Holy Apostles.*

16. THE SPIRITUAL DARWINISM OF FR. ALEXANDER LEBEDEV

The title of Fr. Alexander Lebedev's recent posting on the internet: "It's Time to Get Real" tells us much about the nature and quality of its content. This is not going to be an exhortation to follow the straight and narrow path, to struggle harder against the world, the flesh and the devil. This is not going to be a warning about the end of the world and the coming of the Antichrist and the possibility of losing everything through carelessness at the last moment. No: "it's time to get real", that is, stop trying to run against the tide of the modern world. Be realistic: you're too small, too insignificant, above all too *out-dated*.

"One is bound to come to the conclusion," he begins, "that most people are pretty set in their attitudes toward rapprochement between the two parts of the Russian Church." So right from the beginning we get the subtle insistence: there are only two parts of the Russian Church – the MP and ROCOR. Don't even dare to think that there might be other parts! Don't even dare to think that the Russian Church jurisdictions that have broken away – or, more usually, been thrown out – by Archbishop Mark and company since 1990: the Seraphimo-Gennadiites, ROAC, ROCiE, RTOC, not to mention those Catacomb Christians whom up till recently we have been taught to consider the most heroic members of the Russian Church, can even be considered as alternatives to the MP-ROCOR union! Besides ROCOR and the MP, Fr. Alexander is saying, there is *nobody*. So if you reject the union between them you'll be completely on your own!

Since when did such an argument count for anything at all to a consciously confessing Orthodox Christian?! Did it count for anything to St. Maximus the Confessor in the 7th century? Or St. Mark of Ephesus in the 15th century? Or St. Hermogen of Moscow in the 17th century? Did they not rather follow other advice, advice such as: "Strive even to death for the truth, and the Lord God will fight for you " (Sirach 4.28), "Follow not a multitude to do evil" (Sirach), "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that set themselves against me round about" (Psalms 3.6), "Fear not, *little* flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12.32)?

Having tried to frighten us with the prospect of isolation, Fr. Alexander goes on to frighten us with the prospect of medieval fanaticism: "Some who criticize the documents, especially the ones on Church-State relations, attack them for not openly criticizing Metropolitan Sergius personally. It is as if the demonization of Metropolitan Sergius is of the utmost importance. It seems that some people will not be satisfied unless the remains of Metropolitan Sergius are exhumed, and then burned in the middle of Red Square, while all the clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate are made to kneel on broken glass, while scourging themselves on their backs with whips of barbed wire."

Eloquent stuff, but can we really take it seriously? I know nobody who makes such demands (kneeling on broken glass even – what will he think of next!). Fr. Alexander is raising a straw man and delighting in pulling it down. No, our demand is simple: that those who followed the narrow path, the path of God’s commandments, continue to be praised, while those who veered away from that path, continue to be condemned. That is what we do every year on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, when we praise the confessors of Orthodoxy and condemn the heretics and apostates. Among the latter is Metropolitan Sergius. That has been the teaching of ROCOR and the Catacomb Church for many decades. It is not ROCOR’s teaching now – because the MP has put its foot down and will brook no opposition. And since ROCOR fears isolation, fears being alone in the middle of this big, cold world, it has surrendered. It’s as simple and brutal and *shameful* as that.

“And some of our people simply have no understanding of the mindset of people who suffered from 80 years of totalitarian oppression. Just about everyone in the former Soviet Union suffered enormously from the Red Terror - and learned how to survive and live and raise families in those circumstances. This required that people make compromises, sometimes significant compromises, in order to survive. People were forced to pretend that they kowtowed to the party line--and woe to the one who would fall out of step.”

We might call this the doctrine of Spiritual Darwinism. That is, when times get hard and the world, the flesh and the devil compel us, at the cost of our lives, to make compromises, “sometimes significant compromises”, in order to survive, then we must make the compromises! Because we must survive at all costs! We must survive and “raise families”! Never mind that we shall then survive at the cost of our eternal souls. Never mind that we shall survive in this life only in order to suffer eternal condemnation in the next. Never mind that those families raised at the cost of so many lies and compromises may later come to regret their parents’ weakness and despise the evil society it created and they have to live in. The important thing is that the race should survive!

The martyrs, of course, did not survive. Many of them didn’t live to raise families. Many took their families with them into the camps and torture-chambers. Evidently, from Fr. Alexander’s point of view, they made the wrong choice. For if it is the fittest who survive, then those who did not survive could not have been the fittest...

Or perhaps I am being unjust to Fr. Alexander here. He may say he admires the martyrs. But he is determined not to follow their example. And in any case since “just about everyone in the Soviet Union” supposedly did not follow their example – a lie, since until 1945 a staggeringly high proportion of

the population did suffer for Christ – it is necessary to follow the majority. Fr. Alexander, as well as being a spiritual Darwinist, is also a spiritual democrat – the majority is always right.

“This is the reason why people who grew up in such circumstances are willing to see the compromises made by Metropolitan Sergius and the succeeding bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate as understandable, and, in fact, necessary to ensure the survival of at least the structure of the Church and some number of churches and monasteries.”

Yes, of course. “The sinner praiseth himself in the lusts of his soul” (Psalm 9.23), so he will praise and “understand” those who sin like him. To do otherwise would be hypocritical – and there’s no need to be hypocritical in today’s climate, when sin is praised on all sides. Moreover, we, too, can understand the compromises made by Sergius and the MP. Sin is easily understandable because we all live in it – it is holiness that is more difficult to understand.

But, Fr. Alexander, you didn’t really mean to say that these compromises were also “*necessary*”?! But this is the purest Sergianism! I expected you to make excuses for Sergius, but not to say that his sin was no sin at all! Have you forgotten God? Have you forgotten that without God it is impossible even to cross a field, as the Russian proverb says? No church stands or falls without God willing it to stand or fall – and God’s will is inclined to mercy towards the Church to the extent that the Church follows His will. Man’s efforts to shore up his existence without God and in despite of His commandments only hasten his downfall. And this is precisely what happened in the case of Sergius and his declaration – it had the most catastrophic consequences possible, not only for the souls of the sergianists, but even as regards the survival “of at least the structure of the Church”.

Consider the words of St. John of San Francisco: “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 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.”²³⁷

²³⁷ St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29. Italics mine (V.M.). Even a recent biography of Sergius by an MP 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.*” (Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia*, Moscow, 2003, p. 262)

“One must also recognize the enormous part that the victory over the Nazis in World War II and the entire war effort has on the formation of the psyche of the people who lived in the Soviet Union. Some 50 million people [sic] died as a result of that war. Entire areas of the country were devastated. In some regions, after the war, women outnumbered men by a factor of 8 to 1. Just think what *that* does in creating normal demographics!”

“Normal demographics”. Yes, of course, that is a very important consideration for the Spiritual Darwinist. It’s all a question of numbers and ratios. Not enough women, and the race will not survive! Funny, then, that now, in time of peace, when this wonderful religious renaissance is supposedly taking place, the population of Russia is continuing to decline at an alarming rate! How do you explain that, Fr. Alexander?

In any case, what does the figure of 50 million dead in World War II – the usually accepted figure is 20 million, very many of whom died as a result of Soviet action against their own population – have to do with the rights or wrongs of Sergius’ actions? Nothing whatsoever, in my opinion. Unless such staggering losses are seen as *the punishment of God against a people that has apostasised from Him*, which was the opinion of the Catacomb saints, including some, like Elder Theodosy of Minvody, who have been glorified also by the MP.

About one thing we must be absolutely clear when discussing World War II and the role of Metropolitan Sergius and the Russian Church in it: *the victory of the Soviet Union was a most terrible disaster for the Orthodox Church throughout the world*. We know from the writings of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and others that most of believing Russia at the time was hoping for a German victory. For the Germans, evil though they were, could not be compared as regards antichristian zeal with the Soviets. If they had won, then communism would have been destroyed. Of course, it would have been necessary then to liberate Russia from the Germans. But very many true Russian patriots viewed such a prospect with much less alarm and foreboding than the continuation of the Soviet regime. For what was the result in actual fact? The consolidation of the power of militant atheism from Berlin to Vladivostok and, a little later, to Peking; the enormously enhanced power and prestige of communism throughout the world, the destruction of the Churches of Eastern Europe and the enslavement of Eastern Europe to communism; the Greek civil war between the monarchist and communists, which claimed one million victims; the fleeing of the ROCOR Synod from Europe to America; the falling away of the American Metropolia and the Russian Church in China to the Soviets, etc.

In this terrible, world-wide victory of Satan, Metropolitan Sergius and the MP played a very important part by their unstinting support for the militant

atheists and in their loathsome worship of Stalin. 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 Anastasius, first-hierarch 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 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*." ²³⁸

"So," continues Fr. Alexander, "if there are efforts in some places to raise a monument to Metropolitan (later Patriarch) Sergius in his birth city of Arzamas - it is perfectly understandable."

Of course, perfectly understandable. Just as it was perfectly understandable that the Soviets should have raised a monument to Judas Iscariot in the city of Tambov in 1919! Sin, as I said before, is always perfectly understandable. *But not excusable...*

"What matters is not Metropolitan Sergius himself - but the course of subservience to the atheistic government that needs to be condemned - and that was clearly and unequivocally done in the approved Joint Documents."

It was not. There was no study of what this subservience to the atheist government actually led the MP to, nor any unequivocal condemnation of it, but only "excuse for excuses in sins".

"Some critics of the process have brought out fiery denunciations of the Moscow Patriarchate by some of the renowned clerical representatives of the Church Abroad--all made during the time when the Church in the Soviet Union was under totalitarian oppression - as expressing the attitude that we must have toward the Moscow Patriarchate today. This is just the same as if one were to bring out fiery speeches made by the President or other political leaders of the United States during World War II denouncing Nazi Germany or Japan - and say that they reflect the attitude that we should have today toward the German or Japanese governments or people. At that time,

²³⁸ I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God present in the Soviet Church?* Wildwood, Alberta, pp. 32-33.

Germans and Japanese were demonized--and called "gooks" and "krauts" and other offensive names.

"Times change..."

Ah yes, that favoured argument of the Darwinists: *times change*. Just as the biological Darwinists, having failed to provide any direct evidence for evolution, resort to the "argument": "billions of years passed, and in that period new species *must* have evolved", so it is with the spiritual Darwinists. Times have changed, so the MP must have changed for the better.

But has it?

Fr. Alexander tries to show that both the MP has changed by a long series of statistics: "20,000 new churches! 600 new monasteries! 60 new seminaries and pastoral schools! Thousands of parochial schools! Thousands of religious newspapers, web sites, magazines, radio and television programs!" He even tells us how much more he rakes in from his parishioners in Los Angeles, as if his parish were already part of the MP!

All very impressive, but just what does it prove? *Nothing*, if all this external activity is not matched by inner holiness and the inner regeneration of the people. Of course, the possibility of such a regeneration cannot be excluded, and in fact several prophecies talk about the regeneration and resurrection of Russia – but only after the enthronement of a truly Orthodox tsar and the removal of almost all of the bishops of the official Orthodox Church.

But *now*, when polls show that fewer people believe in God in Russia than in America or Western Europe, and most of those who believe entertain all sorts of false beliefs and superstitions (especially prevalent is the belief in reincarnation and the idea that abortion is permissible), it is much more likely that it is the following prophecy of Bishop Theophan the Recluse that is being fulfilled: "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..."²³⁹ And the Antichrist, according to another prophecy of St. Seraphim of Sarov, will be a Jew born in Russia...

Fr. Alexander cites the following example in support of his thesis that the MP really has changed: "Archbishop Vikenty clearly states in his answers that women should not wear slacks. Period. Not just in Church, but anywhere..."

Well now, that is an achievement! And how typical of the pharisaical hierarchs of the MP, who strain at a gnat (slacks on a woman outside church) while swallowing many enormous camels! Thus as against this enthusiasm

²³⁹ Bishop Theophan, *Tolkovanie na Vtoroe Poslanie sv. Apostola Pavla k Soluniam*, 2.3-5.

for getting women out of trousers, we can cite the following facts: the MP hierarchs are deeply immersed in the pan-heresy of ecumenism; they kow-tow to the neo-Soviet government of the Freemason Putin in a disgracefully servile manner; they allow some priests to idolise Stalin publicly, and others to agitate for the glorification of Rasputin and Ivan the Terrible, and yet others to build sectarian communes that destroy families; they build churches on Mafia money and import alcohol and tobacco duty-free; they allow widespread homosexuality both amongst themselves and in the monasteries; they persecute and slander True Orthodox Christians and steal their property...

Enough said. The fact of the matter is that the shining cupolas and trouser-free churches of the MP hide an inner corruption and shamelessness that is frightening in its depth and extent. There has been *no* repentance, and what change there has been since the time of Metropolitan Sergius has been undoubtedly *for the worse*.

But one thing we can follow Fr. Alexander in congratulating them on: *they have survived*. Like the “fitter” species of the biological Darwinists, and like the “superior” races of the social Darwinists, they have survived by a process of natural selection – that is, by selecting *out* of their midst all the true confessors of the faith, and selecting *into* their midst assorted apostates, criminals, bouncers, KGB agents, sexual perverts and unscrupulous business men. And now, through the mouths of turncoats like Fr. Alexander, they are propounding the cardinal doctrine of spiritual Darwinism, otherwise known as Sergianism: *might is right!* We have the numbers, the money, the churches, and the political power, *therefore we are right*, and therefore you must join us on our terms or be cast ignominiously into the “dustbin of history”!

As in the original debates on Darwinism, we have to choose our ancestors, the race to which we wish to belong. “The question is this,” said Benjamin Disraeli in Oxford in 1864: “Is man an ape or an angel?” And we must answer with him: “My Lord, I am on the side of the angels.” That is, we are on the side of the martyrs and confessors who, living as if without bodies, confessed the truth of the Orthodox Faith even to the shedding of their blood. We are not on the side of the apes, the beast-like men who think only of physical survival, and of whom the Prophet-King David said: “Man, being in honour, did not understand; he is compared to the mindless cattle, and is become like unto them” (Psalm 48.21).

July 2/15, 2005.
Deposition of the Robe of the Most Holy Mother of God.
St. Swithun, Bishop of Winchester.

17. ON TRUE AND FALSE MARTYRS

The 20th canon of the Local Council of Gangra declares: "If anyone shall, from a presumptuous disposition, condemn and abhor the assembly [in honour of] the martyrs, or the services performed there, and the commemoration of them, let them be **anathema**...." And again, Canon 34 of the Council of Laodicea decrees: "No Christian shall forsake the martyrs of Christ, and turn to false martyrs, that is, to those of the heretics, or those who formerly were heretics; for they are aliens from God. Let those, therefore, who go after them, be **anathema**."

These canons show that the question of who is a true martyr is important to the Church, and getting the answer wrong carries a very severe penalty.

Unfortunately, Fr. John Shaw has got the answer wrong with regard to the new martyrs of Russia. Abandoning the criterion of the True Church, and adopting that of the neo-Soviet Moscow Patriarchate, he has argued that "the new Martyrs did not suffer 'for resisting the MP'."

Of course, the early martyrs up to the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927 did not suffer for resisting the MP, because the MP was Orthodox up to that time. But from 1927 a very large number of martyrs suffered *precisely* because of their resistance to the Sergianist MP. One example: Bishop Sergius of Buzuluk, who was martyred on May 3/16, 1930 by being thrown to hungry rats. He could have avoided this punishment if he had accepted Metropolitan Sergius. He refused, and so was killed.

The Jordanville publication *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* has over the years published a large number of articles by historians of the Church, such as I. Osipova and M. Shkarovsky, which document in detail the sufferings of those who were imprisoned, condemned and shot for belonging to "the counter-revolutionary monarchist organization, the True Orthodox Church". Only a few days ago I received its issue for July 15/28, 2005, which describes the sufferings of one such martyr, Hieromartyr Victorin of Petrograd. Now the True Orthodox Church, as everyone knows, was the Church which rejected Metropolitan Sergius and the MP; it was a separate organization from the MP precisely because it rejected the latter's claim to being Orthodox. So these Christians were martyred precisely for their resistance to the MP.

Shaw's reasons for his manifestly false thesis are strange and barely ecclesiastical.

First: "Virtually all the clergy under Metropolitan Sergius suffered the same fate as those who suffered." How does suffering the same fate as the true martyrs make you into a martyr if you do not share their *faith*?

Let us take a historical example. In Nero's persecution of the Church in the 60s of the first century, many Christians were martyred by crucifixion. Only a few years later, in 70 A.D., about a million Jews were crucified by the Roman army that conquered and destroyed Jerusalem. These Jews "shared the same fate" as the Christians, but can they be said to be martyrs because of that? Of course not. The Jews and the Christians were enemies, just as the True Orthodox and the Sergianists were enemies. And just as only the Christians, and not the Jews, won crowns for their sufferings, so only the True Orthodox, and not the Sergianists, won crowns for their sufferings.

Secondly: "In 1936, the main cathedral [in Odessa]... was destroyed, even though it was under Metropolitan Sergius."

And so? Jewish synagogues, Catholic churches, Protestant prayer houses and renovationist churches were also destroyed. In fact, there was a general persecution against *all* religion in the USSR. But does that mean that all those who went to any of these destroyed temples were martyrs, whatever their religion? Of course not... Again, let us recall the Jews, the *former* people of God, whose temple in which Christ Himself preached, was destroyed amid scenes of appalling carnage and suffering. They won no crowns for their suffering.

Thirdly: "Most of the thousands of New Martyrs did follow Metropolitan Sergius, but they still died for their faith." The antichristian Jews also died for their faith in 70 AD. So did the Jews and Catholics and Protestants and renovationists who perished in the gulags of the Soviet Union. But they won no crowns for their suffering...

The lesson from all this is: suffering alone, together with the name of Orthodox Christian, does not win a crown, unless that suffering has been within the True Church and for the sake of the True Faith.

The Sergianists did not have the True Faith. What faith, then did they have? That faith was expressed by Metropolitan Sergius in his infamous declaration, as well as in later statements. In essence it was the same faith as that of the renovationists, whom Patriarch Tikhon had anathematised in 1923 (let us remember that Metropolitan Sergius was a leading renovationist, as was the second Soviet "Patriarch", Alexis). This was the faith that the Soviet Union, the most explicitly antichristian State in history, the "collective Antichrist", which had been anathematised by the Church of Christ in 1918, was established by God and should be obeyed as such. It was the faith that Christians who did not accept this faith (the Catacomb Church, ROCOR) were worthy of defrocking and excommunication and of being denounced to the antichristian authorities as "counter-revolutionaries". In short, it was *the faith of Judas*.

"I will not give Thee a kiss as did Judas," we say just before receiving communion. But Sergius kissed Christ – in the persons of His true followers, the True Orthodox – in the same way as did Judas. He called the true bishops "Vladyko", "Master", and then handed them over to their murderers. It would have been better for that man if he had never been born...

"But not all the Sergianists betrayed the True Orthodox as did Sergius," one will object. True; but they followed Sergius, and shunned the True Orthodox, and in this way showed their agreement with Sergius and disagreement with the True Orthodox. They showed their faith – in Sergius and the rightness of his path – by their works – their following him.

Or perhaps they did not share Sergius' faith, and followed him only in order to avoid persecution, "only lest they should be persecuted for the Cross of Christ" (Galatians 6.12). That makes them marginally better than Sergius – but not worthy of crowns, of course. Little Judases rather than big ones...

But in fact there was not so much difference between the big Judases and the little ones. For the motivation that was common to almost all of them was the desire to save their skins. And if some had nobler motives, – perhaps the desire to save their families rather than themselves, – God is their judge, I do not judge them. But I cannot call them martyrs. Because they neither suffered with the martyrs nor for the faith of the martyrs.

Metropolitan Sergius made his pact with Stalin and Lucifer in order to preserve the physical existence of himself and the people who followed him – but mainly himself, since many of those who followed him, as Fr. John correctly points out, still died. And so, 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..."²⁴⁰ Even a recent biography of Sergius by an MP 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.*"²⁴¹

Let me give an example of how the faith of the True Orthodox and the faith of the Judas-Sergianists differed in the intertwining lives of Hieromartyr Sergius Mechiev and Sergianist Bishop Manuel of Orenburg.

²⁴⁰ St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29.

²⁴¹ Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia (Guardian of the House of the Lord)*, Moscow, 2003, p. 262.

Protopresbyter Michael Polsky writes: "In essence, a huge majority of the Moscow churches belonged to the secret adherents of Fr. Sergius Mechiev. Among them,... the proclamations of the Soviet government were not followed."

On October 29, 1929, Fr. Sergius was arrested and exiled to the northern town of Kadnikov for his refusal to accept Metropolitan Sergius' declaration. He was released in 1937 and began to serve in secret.

Once, being without a bishop, Fr. Sergius followed the advice of one of his spiritual sons and opened his heart to Bishop Manuel Lemeshevsky, and in confidence explained to him his church position, thinking that he shared his views. Bishop Manuel was soon arrested, and betrayed Fr. Sergius. During questioning at his trial, the arrested hierarch said that Fr. Sergius was the main instigator of the opposition to Metropolitan Sergius. He also said that he wished to be a loyal Soviet citizen and wanted no trouble. The prosecutor tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"Don't worry and be upset, Vladyka: you will be of some use to us later."

After this, he was released and was given the diocese of Orenburg by Metropolitan Sergius... So he was of some use to the Soviets... But Fr. Sergius was shot in 1941...

Both men suffered, both suffered for their faith. Manuel suffered for his faith in Sergius, and because "he wished to be a loyal citizen and wanted no trouble". Hieromartyr Sergius suffered for his faith in Christ...

Fr. John's attempt to place a mark of equality between the true martyrs and the Judases is not his own strategy: it is that of the MP, which in 2000 "canonised" a long list of true martyrs and false ones. It canonised the true ones because their holiness in many cases could not be concealed even though they condemned the MP and died outside it. For example, Hieromartyr Victor of Glazov, whose relics are incorrupt and wonderworking, and who said that Metropolitan Sergius' betrayal was "worse than heresy"... And it canonised the false ones because it had to pretend that you could be a Sergianist and a martyr. In this way the MP fulfilled a prophecy made several years ago 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."²⁴²

²⁴² "Ierei o. Oleg otvechaet na voprosy redaktsii", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 23 (1452), December 1/14, 1991, p. 7.

Of course, canonising true and false martyrs together has absurd consequences. For example, the KGB Patriarch Alexis wrote: "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." Then in another publication the same Patriarch Alexis stated that the Russian Church Abroad was a schismatic church, and added: "Equally uncanonical is the so-called "Catacomb" Church." In other words, he recognized the martyrs of the Catacomb Church, many of whom were betrayed to the godless authorities by Metropolitan Sergius' church organization., and at the same time declares that these martyrs were schismatic and uncanonical!"²⁴³

As the Kaliningrad parish of ROCOR wrote on November 1/14, 2000: "What throng of new martyrs was canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate if, in that multitude, there are "saints" who fought against the Church, and who later suffered at the hands of their masters - but not for Christ, having become, rather, victims who were offered up upon the altar of the revolution, just as were thousands of other bolsheviks and liberal dreamers? A throng of new martyrs in which victims and executioners, holy martyrs and "Christians" (at whose orders these new martyrs were shot and sent to prisons and labour-camps), find themselves side by side?"

That the patriarchate's canonisation of even the true martyrs is not pleasing to God was demonstrated 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 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..."

This act of canonising both the true and the false martyrs has further absurd consequences. First, it means that, if any one was still tempted to consider that the official acts of the MP had any validity at all, he can now be assured that even the MP itself does not believe in them. For consider: Archbishop Victor, Metropolitan Cyril and the whole host of Catacomb confessors were defrocked, excommunicated and cast out of the community of the "faithful" by official acts of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod. But if these "defrocked" and "excommunicated" people are now saints in the Heavenly Kingdom, this only goes to show, *as the MP now implicitly admits*, that the actions of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod were completely uncanonical and invalid!

²⁴³ Perecrestov, "Why Now?" *Orthodox Life*, vol. 44, № 6, November-December, 1994, p. 44.

Secondly, it also shows that *the MP does not know what martyrdom is, and looks upon it in an essentially ecumenist spirit which deprives it of all meaning.* Some years ago, a writer for the *Anglican Church Times* was reviewing a book on the “martyrs” of the Anglican Reformation. In the spirit of that ecumenism that has been at the root of Anglicanism for centuries, this reviewer claimed that both the Catholics who died for their faith at the hands of the Anglicans and the Anglicans who died for their faith died at the hands of the Catholics died for the truth as they saw it and so were martyrs! For it was not important, wrote the reviewer, who was *right* in this conflict: the only thing that matters is that they were *sincere* in their beliefs. And he went on to deny that heresy in general even exists: the only real heresy, he said, is the belief that there is such a thing as heresy!

The act of the MP presupposes a very similar philosophy. It presupposes that you can be a martyr whether you oppose the Antichrist or submit to him, whether you confess the truth or lie through your teeth, whether you imitate the love of Christ or the avarice of Judas. The perfect philosophy for our lukewarm times!

If the Lord Himself spews such lukewarmness out of His mouth, then so should we. And if the anathema on those who venerate false martyrs does not frighten us, let us at least pay heed to the words of St. Paul: “If a man strive for mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully” (II Timothy 2.5). And to the words of the Lord left by Metropolitan Philaret of New York in his typewriter just before he died: “Holy fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Revelation 3.11).

October 12/25, 2005.

18. THE CANONICAL POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH ABROAD

In reply to accusations that some people are “rewriting the history of the Church Abroad”, Fr. Alexander Lebedev has said²⁴⁴ that he would appreciate hearing some substantive comments on a text of the ROCOR Synod of 1966 relating to the canonical status of ROCOR.²⁴⁵ This article is an attempt to provide such a commentary.

“What shall we say about the canonical status of the Russian Church Abroad?” begins the quoted text.

“First of all, that she may exist only on condition of horrible persecution of the Russian Church in the USSR on the part of militant atheists, who have set themselves the aim of totally annihilating the Church and striving by all means to achieve this.

“Under normal conditions of life, we repeat once again, an *independent* state of existence of a part of the Russian Church outside the borders of Russia would be *impossible* and *unthinkable*. But even now there is a limit to this (i.e. independent) existence - the cessation of persecutions of the Church and her freedom in Russia.

“From this we conclude, that the existence of the Russian Church Abroad is a *temporary* phenomenon, *conditional upon* persecutions of the Russian Church. If you like, *an abnormal* condition.” (p. 61).

I find nothing controversial in this text - nor anything that would help to resolve the conflict between those in favour and those against the union of ROCOR with the Moscow Patriarchate. In fact, it is strictly *irrelevant* to that conflict.

Let me explain...

*

There is no question that the original foundation of the Church Abroad in 1921 was caused by the persecution of the Russian Church inside Bolshevik-controlled Russia, and that from a canonical point of view, this persecution constituted the only possible justification for the independent existence of the Church Abroad on the territory of other Autocephalous Churches *at that time* (the significance of this qualification: “at that time” will become clear later).

²⁴⁴ On the “Paradosis” discussion group on October 29, 2005.

²⁴⁵ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'*, April-June, 1966.

The canonical argument was expounded by Fr. George Grabbe, who cited the example of the flight from persecution of the bishops of the Church of Cyprus to the Hellespont, where they were allowed to retain their independent Church organisation by the Sixth Ecumenical Council. The MP claims (or claimed in the past) that the ROCOR hierarchs fled from their flocks out of cowardice, so that their re-establishment of diocesan administrations outside Russia was uncanonical. However, it is not forbidden for a bishop to flee in all circumstances, and the Lord Himself said to His apostles: “When they persecute you in this city, flee to another” (Matthew 10.23) – which is precisely what they did during the persecution under the Emperor Claudius (Acts 11.19). Moreover, the MP ignores the rather important fact that the bishops did not flee *away from* their flock, *but in pursuit of* them, as it were, in order to provide spiritual nourishment in their own language and culture to hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Of course, the ROCOR bishops could do this only so long as the Autocephalous Churches on whose territory they settled blessed them to do so. This blessing they did not obtain from the Ecumenical Patriarchate (which is why the Higher Church Administration, the forerunner of ROCOR, left Constantinople in 1920), but did obtain from the Serbian, Alexandrian and Jerusalem Patriarchates. As for the territories of North and South America, Western Europe, China and Australia, these did not “belong” to any Autocephalous Church, and so the ROCOR bishops were able to settle there without transgressing the bounds of any other Church.

Having said all that, there is no doubt that the idea of a part of one Local Church having jurisdiction in almost every corner of the world *except* its own Homeland (Point 1 of the Polozhenie of ROCOR) – that is, a quasi-global jurisdiction that depended for its canonicity on its link with Russia, the only land in which it could have *no* jurisdiction – was canonically unprecedented. It could only be supported on the following conditions: (1) that the ROCOR bishops were intending to return to their sees within Russia at the first opportunity, and (2) the canonical link with the Church inside Russia was maintained. The fulfilment of both these conditions came under threat quite soon in ROCOR’s existence, from the late 1920s.

First, the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War, and the consolidation of their power in the years that followed, meant that a return to Russia became less and less feasible. In some cases, the sees of ROCOR bishops were no longer within the boundaries of Russia or the USSR – for example, Archbishop Anastasy’s see of Kishinev, which became part of Romania. In other cases, the flocks of the ROCOR bishops put down roots in the countries of the emigration. So if they were to look after their flocks, the bishops would have to stay with them. The upshot was that a canonical position that was de jure temporary was rapidly becoming de facto permanent.

Secondly, the canonical link with the Church inside Russia became, if not weaker, at any rate *less visible* from 1927, when ROCOR broke communion with the Synod created by Metropolitan Sergius because of the latter's submission of himself and his Church administration to the power of the militant atheists in his notorious "Declaration". From now on, the canonical link with the Church inside Russia on which ROCOR's canonical status depended could only be with those bishops who separated from Metropolitan Sergius – in other words, with the Catacomb Church. Until 1937, ROCOR commemorated Metropolitan Peter, the locum tenens of the patriarchal throne, who was certainly closer in spirit to ROCOR than to Metropolitan Sergius. But after Metropolitan Peter's martyric death in October, 1937, and those of Metropolitans Cyril and Joseph in November of that year, ROCOR had no leading bishop to commemorate, and so resorted to commemorating "the persecuted episcopate of the Russian Church". As time passed, although Catacomb bishops continued to exist right until the fall of communism in 1991 and beyond, they were not known to ROCOR. Nor were they known to many Catacomb priests inside Russia, which is why many of these priests started commemorating Metropolitan Anastasy, first hierarch of ROCOR, albeit without his knowledge. And in 1977 Metropolitan Philaret, Metropolitan Anastasy's successor, received fourteen Catacomb hieromonks inside Russia under his omophorion.

So from 1977 at the latest the canonical relationship between ROCOR and the True Church inside Russia began to be reversed: instead of ROCOR basing its canonical status on its links with the bishops *inside* Russia, part of the clergy of the Church inside Russia was basing its canonical status (expressed in the formula of commemoration at the Liturgy) on its links with the bishops *outside* Russia. Clearly, as with the original Polozhenie of ROCOR, this was an unprecedented situation from a canonical point of view. Unprecedented, but not for that reason unjustified; for the spirit, if not the letter of the canons was being preserved, insofar as the commemoration of Metropolitan Philaret enabled priests of the Russian Church inside Russia to remain in mystical communion with the only rightly confessing hierarch and Synod known to them, and thereby *out* of communion with the heretical bishops of the MP.

Justified though this arrangement was, it clearly required a reworking of ROCOR's Polozhenie. For, on the one hand, ROCOR's situation outside Russia was *permanent* – it was no longer a Church "in exile", implying an imminent return to the Homeland, since its bishops were clearly not going to pack their bags and return to Russia even if communism fell the next day. And on the other hand, it was now a truly global Church – the first in Orthodox history – having jurisdiction on almost every continent, and within as well as outside of Russia.

However, as far as I know, no reworking of ROCOR's Polozhenie was undertaken. Even when ROCOR began receiving whole parishes inside Russia in 1990, and started consecrating bishops for them, the need for a reworking of ROCOR's canonical status was apparently not felt, or not felt to be urgent. The only significant change was that, for a short period in the early 1990s, ROCOR started calling itself the *only* Church of Russia, both for those living inside and those living outside it. However, this change was unacceptable, not only because it contradicted the first point of ROCOR's Polozhenie, which, as we have seen, decreed that ROCOR had no jurisdiction *inside* Russia, but also because it contradicted Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz no. 362 of November 7/20, 1920, the second canonical pillar of ROCOR's existence, which blessed the existence of different autonomous groups of bishops in the event of the absence of a central ecclesiastical authority – by which authority a canonically elected Patriarch and Synod was clearly meant. The change was considered unacceptable for another, less worthy reason: because a majority of the bishops of ROCOR were coming round to the view that the *only* Church of Russia was not in fact ROCOR, but the MP...

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It should be noted that what has been stated above in no way strengthens the case for ROCOR joining the MP, because at no time in ROCOR's history has the Church inside Russia with which ROCOR has considered itself in communion been the Sergianist MP, but rather the "Tikhonite" MP before 1927 and the Catacomb Church after 1927. Differences of opinion have existed over whether the MP did or did not have the grace of sacraments, and over the degree and depth of the corruption within it. But at no time was ROCOR in communion with the MP, and at no time did it consider that its patriarchs were the canonical successors of Patriarch Tikhon.

However, Fr. Alexander would have us believe that the mere cessation of persecution of the faith in 1991 (or thereabouts) was sufficient reason for rushing into communion with the MP. But this is illogical, unecclesiastical thinking. The MP was not made better or worse by the purely political event of the cessation of persecution - assuming it has indeed come to an end, which ROCOR parishes inside Russia deny (and with reason!). If the MP was uncanonical before 1991, it did not suddenly become canonical in 1991 just because the red flag was lowered over the Kremlin. Everything depended on how the MP reacted to the changed political situation, on whether it repented of its sins and heresies and sought admission to the True Church in that spirit, or stubbornly continued in its old ways.

I have argued in several articles that the MP has not only has not repented of its sins and heresies: it has actually substantially added to them since 1991. But that is not the point I wish to stress here. The point I wish to make is that the alleged cessation of persecution, while it might make some difference to

ROCOR's perception of herself and her future role inside and outside of Russia (although the situation, as we saw in the last section, is complicated), is strictly irrelevant to the question whether or not the MP since 1991 is a canonical Church.

I shall now quote at some length from Fr. Alexander himself in an article of his dating to 1987 to show that when considering the question of the MP, he, too, *at that time* did not mention the presence or absence of persecution, but rather much more relevant matters, such as Sergianism:-

"The [ROCOR] Synod cannot and will not have anything to do with the Moscow Patriarchate and will not recognize its authority as long as the Moscow Patriarchate continues its two great sins: its slavish subservience to the militant atheist government, and its refusal to speak the truth about the persecution of the Church. [Why not also the great sin of ecumenism? However, we shall pass this omission over for the time being...]

"On the first question, the Moscow Patriarchate violates the very essence of the Church, which is based on the concept of truth. Our Lord said that there can be no concord of truth with falsehood, as there can be no concord of light with darkness. By making itself subservient to the Godless regime under which it exists, the Moscow Patriarchate is accepting falsehood as its ruling principle. When we remember how strongly the hierarchs of the Russian Church of the past stood up in defense of the Church before those in power (for example, Metropolitan Philip before Tsar Ivan IV or St. Mitrophan before Tsar Peter I) and then see the current hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate calmly spouting the line set by the communist party, we see how far they have gone on the path of falsehood. This slavish obedience to the party line is also the root of the ecumenical adventures of the Moscow Patriarchate, since they are needed by the party for the purpose of international propaganda. [Good – something about ecumenism. And yet it should be given greater emphasis.]

"On the second question, the sin of the Moscow Patriarchate is even greater – by denying any persecution of the Church, the Moscow Patriarchate turns its back on the tens of millions of the New Martyrs of Russia. By ignoring the cry of their blood, the Moscow Patriarchate shows itself unworthy of their sacrifice. And by denying this sacrifice and aligning itself with the persecutors of the Church of Christ, the Moscow Patriarchate shares the burden of responsibility for these terrible deeds.

"The Synod will never change its views on this. It considers itself the only free voice of the Russian Church, and it will never cease its denunciations of the Moscow Patriarchate. [Never say "never" ...]

"The Synod continues to keep in force the policy of Metropolitan Anastassy forbidding not only joint prayer with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate, but even casual contact. But, as declared by Metropolitan Anastassy himself, the final judge of the Moscow Patriarchate can only be a freely convened All-Russian Council, representing all the Bishops in the homeland and abroad, including the voice of all the confessor bishops languishing in Soviet prisons and concentration camps or hiding in secret catacombs. Until such a Council, free of any political pressure, is convened, the Synod will not make any changes in its positions regarding the Moscow Patriarchate."²⁴⁶

Here, in Fr. Alexander's own words, we come to the real answer to our question: *whether and how ROCOR returns to Russia or into communion with any other Russian jurisdictions is not to be determined by political events, such as the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, but only as the result of a freely convened All-Russian Council, including all the Catacomb and True Orthodox Russian bishops, which has not yet taken place.* Why, then, is Fr. Alexander not agitating for the convening of such a Council? First, because, as he well knows, no Council in which the majority of bishops belong to the MP can possibly be "the final judge of the Moscow Patriarchate", for then the defendants will be the judges in their own case, contrary to all judicial procedure, both secular and ecclesiastical. Secondly, because the godfather or convener of any such Council in present conditions will be KGB agent Colonel Putin, who, far from judging his KGB comrades in the Moscow Patriarchate, justifies them in every way and will certainly not allow them to be judged by "anti-Soviet elements". And thirdly because any such Council will have excluded in advance – with the full cooperation of ROCOR as well as the MP – all those Russian bishops who, unlike ROCOR itself, "never cease in [their] denunciations of the Moscow Patriarchate" – that is, the Seraphimo-Gennadiites, the Lazarites, ROAC and ROCiE.

For the uncomfortable fact is that *Russia is still ruled by the KGB* (now called the FSB) – and especially since KGB Colonel Putin came to power. For, as the intelligence expert Constantine Preobrazhensky writes, "the FSB is a restored KGB of the Soviet epoch. 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 is successfully managing the operation 'ROCOR'"²⁴⁷ – that is, the absorption of ROCOR into the MP.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Lebedev, "Second Open Letter to Fr. Nektas Palassis", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 37, № 2, March-April, 1987, p. 31.

²⁴⁷ Preobrazhensky, "Ecumenism and Intelligence".

²⁴⁸ Preobrazhensky, "Hostile Absorption of ROCOR".

If we are talking about political conditions facilitating or making difficult the union of ROCOR with the MP, then this continuing rule by the KGB is surely the most important factor, not the presence or absence of crude and large-scale persecution. If the KGB continues to rule Russia, then the KGB continues to rule the MP. And if the KGB continues to rule the KGB, the Moscow Patriarchate continues to “violate the very essence of the Church, which is based on the concept of truth”, in Fr. Alexander’s words. And that is why it continues to participate in the ecumenical movement, “the heresy of heresies”, in the words of Fr. Alexander’s cast-off first hierarch, Metropolitan Vitaly. For it is “this slavish obedience to the party line [that] is also the root of the ecumenical adventures of the Moscow Patriarchate, since they are needed by the party for the purpose of international propaganda” – and international espionage, as Preobrazhensky has explained.

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To summarise:-

While the persecution of the faith in Russia was the original reason for the creation of ROCOR as an independent ecclesiastical organisation, there very soon appeared other, and still stronger reasons.

These reasons included: (a) ROCOR’s sending down roots in the countries of the emigration, making it no longer an “exile” Church; (b) the apostasy of the official Church inside Russia, making a return to Russia problematic even in the event of the fall of communism; and (c) the present-day impossibility, in the conditions of Putin’s Russia, of convening a truly free and representative Council that would judge the apostasy of the official Church, the essential condition for the flourishing of true Church life in the country.

In a deeper sense, therefore, the persecution of the faith continues, making the continued independence of ROCOR both possible and necessary from a canonical and dogmatic point of view.

Finally, I should like to draw attention to an element of the holy tradition of ROCOR that the present fever for union with Moscow has obscured: the fact that, as St. John of Kronstadt said, “without a Tsar Russia is stinking corpse”. Without the restoration of the True Orthodox Tsardom to Russia a true spiritual regeneration is unthinkable – nobody in his right mind can think that KGB Colonel Putin or anyone appointed by him for “holy anointing” could be the Tsar Russia so desperately needs. Only a True Orthodox Tsar raised to power by God Himself will be able to cleanse the Church by convening the free and representative Church Council discussed above.

That Tsar and that Council will come. For, as Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava said: “I do not speak from myself. But that which I have heard from the God-inspired elders, that I have passed on... The Lord will have mercy on

Russia for the sake of the small remnant of true believers. In Russia, the elders said, in accordance with the will of the people, the Monarchy, Autocratic power, will be re-established. The Lord has forechosen the future Tsar. He will be a man of fiery faith, having the mind of a genius and a will of iron. First of all he will introduce order in the Orthodox Church, removing all the untrue, heretical and lukewarm hierarchs. And many, very many - with few exceptions, all - will be deposed, and new, true, unshakeable hierarchs will take their place. He will be of the family of the Romanovs according to the female line. Russia will be a powerful state, but only for 'a short time'... And then the Antichrist will come into the world, with all the horrors of the end as described in the Apocalypse...."

October 19 / November 1, 2005.

St. John of Kronstadt.

Canonisation of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

19. "OIKONOMIA" AND THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

In a report to the Conference on the History of the Russian Church in November, 2002 entitled "The Ecclesiastical Principle of oikonomia and ROCOR under Metropolitan Anastassy" (now on the ROCOR website), Nun Vassa (Larin) has, without saying so explicitly, sought to justify ROCOR's unia with the MP on the basis of an examination of Metropolitan Anastassy's use of oikonomia in the period 1938 to 1962. In this article I propose to examine her argument in some detail.

Both at the beginning and at the end of the report, Nun Vassa quotes MP authors declaring that canon law as presently formulated is unable to resolve the problems of the Russian Church in the 20th century. This immediately sets one on one's guard; for what, if not the dogmatic and canonical inheritance of the Church, can serve as a basis for the resolution of her problems? Nun Vassa's answer to this question appears to be: oikonomia, understood not as a certain weakening of the strictness of canon law, that is, as the opposite of *akriveia*, but rather in its original sense as God's "house-building", that is, the administration and building up of the Church on the basis of love for the sake of the salvation of souls.

I have no quarrel with Nun Vassa's definition of oikonomia, and therefore pass over the first half of her report, coming straight to her much more controversial application of Metropolitan Anastassy's supposed practice of oikonomia.

It should be pointed out, first, that whatever the rights or wrongs of Metropolitan Anastassy's practice in this period, as Nun Vassa describes it, it did not correspond to the practice either of Metropolitan Anthony before him, at the beginning of the Sergianist schism, nor, still more clearly, of Metropolitan Philaret after him, nor of the majority of the hierarchs of the Catacomb Church of Russia. Therefore it is impossible to identify Metropolitan Anastassy's course as *the* one and unchanging course of ROCOR, still less of the True Russian Church as a whole. And in fact Nun Vassa provides no argument that it is; for she does not contrast Metropolitan Anastassy's course with those of his predecessor or successors, nor attempt to explain or justify the differences. It may well be possible to explain these differences; for the whole essence of oikonomia is a certain flexibility in relation to changing circumstances. But the point I wish to make here is that, even if such changes of course could be justified, Nun Vassa has not in fact done so. And this is important; for if we are to draw any conclusion in relation to the present proposed ROCOR-MP unia, we *must* explain these differences. Too often people say such things as: "Metropolitan Cyril said this in 1929, so we must take exactly the same attitude in 2005," completely forgetting (if it is only a failure of memory involved) to mention that Metropolitan Cyril said something considerably different in 1937, when

circumstances had changed, and would almost certainly have something different again in 2005, when circumstances have again changed – almost out of all recognition.

Another preliminary point that needs to be made is that the material Nun Vassa uses is not fairly representative even of Metropolitan Anastassy's views and actual practice.

Let us now look at some of this material, under Nun Vassa's headings.

1. The Attitude of Metropolitan Anastassy to other Jurisdictions Abroad

In relation to the American Metropolia Metropolitan Anastassy said in ROCOR's 1953 Hierarchical 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 Metropoliate, 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."

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. It is arguable whether this was the right policy at that time. Perhaps it could be justified in view of the fact that the Metropolia had not yet been absorbed into the MP. However, the important point is that ROCOR later abandoned it – when the Metropolia was absorbed into the MP. Thus in 1971 the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR under Metropolitan Philaret declared: "Viewing this illicit act with sorrow, and acknowledging it to be null and void, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which has hitherto not abandoned hope for the restoration of ecclesiastical unity in America, sees in the declaration of American autocephaly a step which will lead the American Metropolia yet farther away from the ecclesiastical unity of the Church of Russia. Perceiving therein a great sin against the enslaved and suffering Church of Russia, the Council of Bishops *DECIDES*: henceforth, neither the clergy nor the laity [of the Russian Church Abroad] are to have communion in prayer or the divine services with the hierarchy or clergy of the American Metropolia."

So here we have a clear example of a *change of course* in response to changing circumstances. Oikonomia in the sense of a weakening of the strict letter of the canons in relation to the schismatics of the American Metropolia was no longer felt to be applicable; they were now to be treated as schismatics. But this is fully consistent with oikonomia in Nun Vassa's sense, that is, the administration of the Church in love for the salvation of souls.

"These last words," comments Nun Vassa, "reflect the great sobriety and foresight of Metropolitan Anastassy's prudence, which, without wandering irresponsibly in ponderings of love, has in view the real situation of the Church and takes measures to thwart certain dangers. Metropolitan Anastassy stresses the destructiveness of the printed word for the Church in certain cases, mentioning the press, and in particular the articles in *Pravoslavnyaya Rus'* that irritate its opponents. The importance of avoiding sharpening enmity, first and foremost through the printed word, for the sake of ecclesiastical constructiveness probably has great meaning at the present time for the *oikonomia* of the Russian Church. It is interesting to ponder whether Metropolitan Anastassy would say now about the Moscow Patriarchate what he said in 1953 about the Metropoliate: 'Now, when in [the Moscow Patriarchate], many extremes were abandoned, we still sharpen the question and speak of them as heretics with whom we can have no contact.'"

Well, we know exactly what Metropolitan Anastassy said about the MP. He did *not* repeat what he had said with reference to the Metropolia: "It is fair to say that all unity begins with personal contact". On the contrary, in 1957, in his last will and testament, he said: "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..."

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

adamantine 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.”

In the 1953 Council, according to Nun Vassa, Metropolitan Anastassy “touches upon the question of concelebration with those jurisdictions (the American and Parisian)—and here, one can say, he ‘taps on the brakes.’ Feeling that the time for full liturgical communion had not yet arrived, Metropolitan Anastassy stressed that in the area of the Sacraments, a ‘broad view’ cannot be without its limits, although in certain circumstances he saw the possibility of leniency for the sake of the good of the Church, that is, for *oikonomia*. ‘It is fairly said that a broad viewpoint cannot be unlimited and uncontrolled. One must set certain standards. There was the question of concelebration. At the last Council, this question remained unresolved. But it turned out that sometimes such contact was unavoidable for the sake of the good of the Church. We must establish limits to such communion. Since ancient times, the concelebration of Liturgy was considered more important than that of molebens and pannikhidas. It must be decided whether the time has come for full communion or not. The President thinks that the time has not yet come, from the point of view of either side. Metropolitan Leonty often says this himself. Prayerful communion is possible, but with discernment. Until now, priests have been allowed to concelebrate with priests. The time for concelebration between bishops has hardly come yet, having the ‘little ones’ in mind” (*ibid*).

“In these last words we see an interesting example of acrivia for the sake of oikonomia, that is, non-concelebration for the sake of the good of the ‘little ones,’ who might be troubled by such an act. In the post-war period, inter-jurisdictional passions were of course well-stoked, so concelebration with other jurisdictions would hardly have incurred sympathy within the flock.”

Nun Vassa’s concept of acrivia - that is, strictness in the application of the canons - is very strange here! How can it be “strict” practice to allow communion at the level of the priesthood with condemned heretics?! For condemned heretics is exactly what the Parisians were (and are) - and condemned, moreover, not only by ROCOR under Metropolitan Anthony, but also by the MP under Metropolitan Sergius).

Let us recall the historical facts.

On January 13/26, 1927 the ROCOR Synod suspended Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris and his vicar bishops pending an ecclesiastical trial that was to take place at the next Council. On January 22 / 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 13/26 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.

On August 26 / September 8, the Council of Bishops convened an Episcopal Tribunal comprising twelve bishops to judge the case of Eulogius. 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 vacillating clergy of the Western European diocese, threatening them with canonical penalties if they did not submit to the conciliar decision. 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 Eulogius, Archbishop Vladimir, Bishop Sergius and their clergy, since the Mysteries administered by them are devoid of benefit."

In 1935, Metropolitan Eulogius was reconciled with ROCOR. But he never renounced the sophianist heresy of his priest, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, which was officially condemned by both ROCOR and the MP in 1935. Moreover, he again broke communion with ROCOR and eventually joined Constantinople.

At ROCOR's 1956 Council, continues Nun Vassa, Metropolitan Anastassy "apparently rejected the notion expressed in 1953 that 'certain standards' for concelebration needed to be made. In response to the comment made by Bishop Leonty of Chile that Evlogians were to be dealt with [in the same way] as members of the Living Church [obnovlentsy], and that 'no concelebrations' could be allowed, 'The President explains that the obnovlentsy are another matter. They are in essence heretics. But attitudes towards them changed in different periods. When they weakened, greater condescension was employed in the practice of receiving them. The Church behaved this way in the past, too. We are not talking about the obnovlentsy in this case. The principle of oikonomia was always adhered to in the Church. Its goal is to save the person, not push him away. No law or rule can envelop all the multitude of circumstances of ecclesiastical practice. That is why the principle of ecclesiastical oikonomia was established, that is, of ecclesiastical benefit. That is why each bishop must be guided in difficult circumstances by this principle'."

This is confusing. Is Nun Vassa asserting that Metropolitan Anastassy no longer considered the Evlogians to be heretics, and that concelebration with them, in his opinion, was now permissible, not only at the priestly, but even at the episcopal level? Or only that he considered that Evlogians could be received back into the True Church more leniently than before, in accordance with the principle of *oikonomia*? In either case, we need to know what considerations motivated the metropolitan in departing to some degree from his position of only three years earlier, and to a large degree from his position, and the position of his predecessor, Metropolitan Anthony, in 1927 and 1935. Moreover, we are given no reasons why Bishop Leontius' perfectly reasonable comments should simply be dismissed.

The fact is that not only did ROCOR *not* follow the course apparently suggested by Metropolitan Anastassy, but his successor, Metropolitan Philaret, advocated adopting a stronger position, in accordance with Bishop Leontius' view: "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..."²⁴⁹

This shows, once again, that Metropolitan Anastassy's attitude to the Parisians was not in accord with the policies either of his predecessor or of his successor. But more importantly, it shows that when it comes to communion with condemned heretics there can be no question of *acrivia* or *oikonomia*: *any form or degree of communion is simply forbidden*. The question of the application of *acrivia* or *oikonomia* arises only in relation to the method of receiving repentant heretics into the True Church: whether to receive them strictly (by the first or second rite) or with condescension (the third rite), which question may be resolved in different ways at different times, depending on changing circumstances and tactical considerations.

2. The Attitude of Metropolitan Anastassy to the MP

Nun Vassa quotes the following from the Protocols of ROCOR's 1938 Council: "DISCUSSED: concelebration with the clergymen of the jurisdiction of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod. METROPOLITAN ANASTASSY points out that clergymen arriving from Russia from this jurisdiction are immediately admitted into prayerful communion, and refers to the opinion of Metropolitan Kirill of Kazan in his epistle, published in *Tserkovnaya Zhizn'* [Church Life], that Metropolitan Sergius' sin does not extend to the clergymen under him. DECREED: To recognize that there are no obstacles to prayerful communion and concelebration with clergymen of Metropolitan Sergius."

²⁴⁹ Metropolitan Philaret to Fr. George Grabbe, July 12/25, 1975, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 11 (68), November, 2000, pp. 52-53.

Nun Vassa comments on this: "In this section, Metropolitan Anastassy gives little argument for his position, referring only to the opinion of Holy Martyr Metropolitan Kirill... The very fact of Metropolitan Anastassy's unity of mind with Metropolitan Kirill in this ecclesiastical question is very interesting for us. For the foundation of his ecclesiastical position of St Kirill was not the letter of the law, but the real meaning of the Holy Canons constructive for the Church, opposing his understanding to the formalism of Metropolitan Sergius."

However, there are several major problems with Nun Vassa's interpretation here. First, Metropolitan Cyril never, even in his earlier, more "liberal" epistles, expressed the view that "there are no obstacles to prayerful communion and concelebration with clergymen of Metropolitan Sergius". On the contrary, in his earliest epistle, that of 1929, he wrote: "I acknowledge it as a fulfillment 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 Sergius 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 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 Anastassy did not know) that by 1937 Metropolitan Cyril's position had hardened considerably: "With regard to your perplexities concerning Sergianism, I can say that the very same questions in almost the same form were addressed to me from Kazan ten years ago, and then I replied affirmatively to them, because I considered everything that Metropolitan Sergius had done as a mistake which he himself was conscious of and wished to correct. Moreover, among our ordinary flock there were many people who had not investigated what had happened, and it was impossible to demand from them a decisive and active condemnation of the events. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge. The expectations that Metropolitan Sergius 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..."

It follows that Metropolitan Anastassy's position was weaker than that of Metropolitan Cyril's position at the end of his life. In fact, it was much weaker also than that of Metropolitan Anthony in his encyclical of 1928, which proclaimed "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..."

Again, in 1933 Metropolitan Anthony wrote to Sergius: "Here we offer you the salutary oil of faith and loyalty in the Holy Church. Do not refuse it, but *reunite with it*." This clearly implies that Sergius was outside the Church...

It should be noted that Metropolitan Anthony's 1928 epistle was quoted in the Archpastoral Epistle of the Synod of Bishops of ROCOR under Metropolitan Philaret in 1969. So it could be said that in 1969 ROCOR returned to the "zealot" position she had adopted at the beginning of the Sergianist schism, and which was adopted by the leading hierarchs of the Catacomb Church, abandoning the supposedly "moderate" position of Metropolitan Anastassy in the intervening years. As for Metropolitan Philaret himself, his zealot position in relation to the MP was expressed many times, as is well-known, in the period that he was first hierarch.

It cannot be denied that some of Metropolitan Anastassy's statements on the MP were at times exceedingly liberal – so much so that they caused considerable distress to Catacomb Christians in ROCOR.²⁵⁰ However, Nun

²⁵⁰ 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

Vassa is subtly distorting the evidence; for for every “moderate” statement of Metropolitan Anastassy it is possible to find a much more “zealous” one. Thus in the same 1938 Council ROCOR under his presidency declared: “If the Church of God is destined to live in the wilderness through the Providence of the Almighty Creator, the judgement of history, and the legislation of the proletarian state, it follows clearly that she must forego all attempts to reach a legalization, for every attempt to arrive at a legalization during the epoch of apostasy inescapably turns the Church into the great Babylonian whore of blasphemous atheism.” Since the Moscow Patriarchate *was* legalized by the proletarian state, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that, in the official opinion of Metropolitan Anastassy in 1938, the MP became “the great Babylonian whore of blasphemous atheism”!

Again, in 1950 – that is, under the leadership of Metropolitan Anastassy - ROCOR consecrated holy chrism in Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville. This is traditionally the act of a completely autocephalous Church. ROCOR would not have been expected to carry out such an act if it regarded the MP as her “Mother Church”...

Again, 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 Anastassy 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 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*.”²⁵¹

In view of the fact that the MP continues to this day to glorify Stalin, it would be interesting to know Nun Vassa’s opinion of Metropolitan Anastassy’s words. Are they not also a manifestation of oikonomia? Do they not preclude any union with the MP at the present time?

find out about this betrayal!” (*Russia’s Catacomb Saints*, Platina, CA: St. Herman of Alaska Press, 1982, p. 49).

²⁵¹ I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God present in the Soviet Church?* Wildwood, Alberta: Monastery Press, 2002, pp. 32-33 (with some changes in the translation).

Nun Vassa quotes again from Metropolitan Anastassy's words at the 1953 Council: "Metropolitan Anthony 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 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 had 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."

Metropolitan Anastassy'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 Anastassy's assertion that the MP took "very strict measures with regard to the obnovlentsy", this, unfortunately, is 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, they received into the episcopate a whole series of renovationist protopriests with the minimum of formalities.

As Catacomb Church Bishop A. writes: “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 ‘hierarch of the Russian Church’.”²⁵²

This acceptance of the renovationists was dictated in the first place by the will of the Bolsheviks, who now saw the Sergianists as more useful to them than the renovationists. Thus on October 12, 1943 Karpov, Stalin’s “over-procurator”, 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 Sergiite 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, Sergiite church.”²⁵³ On October 16 Karpov sent secret instructions to the regions not to hinder the transfer of renovationists to the Sergianist church.²⁵⁴

Since Karpov wanted the renovationists to join the state church, the rules for their reception were relaxed. Thus in 1944 Metropolitan (and future “Patriarch”) 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.²⁵⁵

²⁵² “Pis'mo 2-oe Katakombnogo Episkopa A. k F.M.” (The Second Letter of Catacomb Bishop A. to F.M.), *Russkij Pastyr'* (*Russian Pastor*), № 14, III-1992; *Russkoe Pravoslavie* (*Russian Orthodoxy*), 1996, № 2 (2), pp. 10, 11.

²⁵³ Karpov, in Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 194-195.

²⁵⁴ Roslof, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

²⁵⁵ See Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, *Mitropolit Manuil (Lemeshevsky) (Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky)*, St. Petersburg, 1993, p. 185.

As Edward 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."²⁵⁶

However, the penetration of the patriarchate by these "red priests" meant that the new, post-war generation of clergy was quite different from the pre-war generation in that they had already proved their heretical, renovationist cast of mind, and now returned to the neo-renovationist 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. The way in which the renovationist-sergianist hierarchs sharply turned course at a nod from the higher-ups was illustrated, in the coming years, by the MP's sharp change in attitude towards ecumenism, from strictly anti-ecumenist in 1948 to pro-ecumenist only ten years later.

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 Anastassy was unfortunately contradicting the teaching of the Orthodox Church, which considers 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 metropolitan then goes on to say: "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."

The clear implication of these words is that it is impossible to have communion with the present-day MP insofar as all its leading bishops have been proved to be KGB agents, and therefore "worse than Simon the Sorcerer"...

²⁵⁶ Roslof, op.cit. p. 196.

3. Metropolitan Anastassy and the Greek Old Calendarists

Having tried to justify Metropolitan Anastassy's lenience towards KGB agents and renovationists, Catholics, Anglicans and Armenians, Nun Vassa now tries to justify his *strictness* towards the Old Calendarist Greeks, in refusing to consecrate bishops for them: "At the Council of 1959, following the opinion of Metropolitan Anastassy, the Council decided to once again decline the request of the Old Calendarists. While considering this matter, the opinion was expressed that through the principle of oikonomia, they could help their Greek brethren. Metropolitan Anastassy rejected this oikonomia, finding that the ordination of a bishop in this instance would not be constructive but destructive for the Church, first of all because of the condemnations such an act would invoke among the other Local Churches and the Moscow Patriarchate."²⁵⁷

So vital brotherly help to the Orthodox and persecuted Greek Old Calendarists was refused on the grounds that it would irritate the heretics of World Orthodoxy...

However, other hierarchs of ROCOR – notably Leontius of Chile, Seraphim of Chicago, John of Western Europe and Averky of Jordanville – took a different view of what constituted oikonomia. The result was that the Greeks obtained their desired consecrations. Metropolitan Anastassy refused to accept the canonicity of these acts since they were done without his approval. From a strictly canonical point of view he was right. But from the point of view of oikonomia in the sense that Nun Vassa wishes to emphasise – that is, love acting for the salvation of souls – there can be little doubt that the other bishops were right.

An interesting point of view on this controversy was expressed by Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Jordanville during the session of the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR on November 17/30, 1962: "I myself would not have decided to carry out the consecration of the Greek Old Calendarists. But at the same time, in the depths of my soul, I cannot help being delighted at the boldness with which Archbishop Leontius carried out this act to which his conscience called him.

"We emphasize that we do not recognize Patriarch Alexis, while all the patriarchs recognize him. We talk about communion with these patriarchs, and thereby we turn out paradoxically to be in communion with Moscow. A vicious circle is the result. In view of this irrational position, it is especially important for us to stand on a firm canonical foundation, preserving the essence, and not the letter, which can lead to the worship of Satan...

²⁵⁷ Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition (Cyprus) told the present writer that when he visited New York in the 1960s, Metropolitan Anastassy had refused his request on the grounds that it would upset Constantinople...

"He [Vladyka Leontius] carried out a courageous act of assistance to a fraternal Church, which is now the closest to us in spirit. The Greek Church is now attacked and persecuted. It was a great mistake that we in our time were too condescending to the introduction of the new style, for its aim was to introduce schism into the Orthodox Church. It was the work of the enemies of the Church of Christ. Its fruits are already evident. Even in America there are Greek clergy whose conscience torments them for accepting the new style. The keeping of various traditions in various spheres is bound up with following the old style. With the expulsion of the old style from the church the ascetic principle is also expelled. The Old Calendarists are the closest to us in spirit. The only 'but' in the action of Archbishop Leontius consists in the fact that he acted as it were in a non-fraternal manner, contrary to the decision of the council, although from good motives."²⁵⁸

At the same session Archbishop John Maximovich noted: "... The Old Calendarists have been knocking on our doors for six years. The Hierarchical Council cannot take the decision upon itself, since it recognizes that this is an internal matter of the Greeks. We must accept Archbishop Leontius' explanation [that the Greek Church is persecuted in the same way that the Catacomb Church is in Russia, so we must support it] as satisfactory, and with that bring our arguments to an end."

Vladyka John also recalled that in the past century there had been similar disturbances in the Antiochian Church. Then the Constantinopolitan Church had intervened. In the same way the Greek Church had helped the Church of Cyprus.

In 1969, the Synod of ROCOR under Metropolitan Philaret officially recognised the consecrations of the Greek Old Calendarist bishops, thereby reversing the policy of Metropolitan Anastassy...

In parenthesis, we should note that the ROCOR Synod under Metropolitan Anastassy also rejected the application of the Free Serbs to join them. And once again, Archbishops Averky of Jordanville and John (Maximovich) of San Francisco were among the dissidents...²⁵⁹

²⁵⁸ Andrei Psarev, "Vospominania Arkhiepiskopa Leontia Chilijskago" (Reminiscences of Archbishop Leontius of Chile), *Pravoslavnaia Zhizn'* (Orthodox Life), № 5 (557), May, 1996, pp. 11-12.

²⁵⁹ On September 14/27, 1967, Archbishop Averky wrote to Metropolitan Philaret: "With regard to the question of the Serbian Church, whose Patriarch German is a stooge of the communist Tito, as the Serbs themselves are convinced, calling him 'the red patriarch'. We have heard this from many clergy and laity who have fled from Serbia. How can we recognize, and have communion in prayer with, 'the red patriarch', who maintains the closest friendly relations with red Moscow? Cannot our Hierarchical Council make *erroneous* decisions? Do we in the Orthodox Church have a doctrine about the *infallibility of every Council of Bishops*?"

Conclusion

In conclusion, we may agree with Nun Vassa that “ecclesiastical structure is closely bound to the understanding of oikonomia, or the oikonomia of the Holy Fathers”. But we cannot agree that Metropolitan Anastassy’s application of oikonomia provides a solution for the present ecclesiological crisis in the Russian Church. Even if Metropolitan Anastassy’s policy of extreme leniency to the MP and World Orthodoxy (and other heretics) were the right one for his time (approximately fifty years ago, before the “heresy of heresies”, ecumenism, had become a major problem), it agreed neither with the policy of his predecessor, Metropolitan Anthony, nor with that of the Catacomb Church as represented by Metropolitan Joseph and Metropolitan Cyril, nor with that of his successor, Metropolitan Philaret, and therefore does *not* provide a model for the projected union of ROCOR with the MP today unless we are to argue – which Nun Vassa has not even attempted to do – that Metropolitans Anthony, Joseph, Cyril and Philaret were all wrong in the comparatively stricter positions they adopted.

It should also be pointed out that, for all his “extreme leniency” as I have called it, Metropolitan Anastassy never seriously considered *union* with the MP, and in his last will and testament *forbade* any communion, even everyday, with its servants. Moreover, he was absolutely opposed to accepting any KGB agent in a cassock, whom he called “worse than Simon the Sorcerer”. In that respect, at any rate, we can well take him as our model and guide...

November 11/24, 2005.
St. Theodore the Studite.

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20. ROCOR AUTONOMY – A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE?

Recently, the idea of eucharistic communion between ROCOR and the MP, but without administrative submission of the former to the latter, has been raised in ROCOR circles. As Dimitri Gontscharow writes: “In his recent letter to the dioceses of Australia and New Zealand, Met. Lavr... assures us that the talk is not of a ‘merger’, a ‘coming together’ or even ‘union’ with [the] MP. That once all the issues dividing us are resolved, we will be able to have Eucharistic communion from one chalice, but retain separate church administrations. That ROCOR will continue to maintain autonomy and decide all its internal business.”²⁶⁰

This idea was first raised, to my knowledge, by Archbishop Mark of Berlin (*Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii*, 1997, № 4) shortly after he had assisted in the seizure by the MP and MGB agent Yasser Arafat of ROCOR’s monastery in Hebron in July, 1997. This coincidence reveals what ROCOR “autonomy” will actually mean in practice: complete control of ROCOR by the MP.

However, let us look more closely at the idea of ROCOR autonomy, leaving aside for the moment the question of how and whether eucharistic communion could ever be justified. Is the proposed autonomy canonical? Is there any way in which, if certain conditions were met in reality and not simply on paper, it could guarantee true spiritual life for ROCOR?

The autonomy of ROCOR within the MP could be considered canonical only if the MP bishops who now occupy the same territories as the ROCOR bishops were voluntarily to resign their sees and go back to Russia, or accept to become vicar-bishops subject to their ROCOR counterparts. For it is a fundamental principle of canon law that two bishops of the same Local Church – or two bishops of different Local Churches who recognise each other and are in communion with each other – cannot occupy one and the same see.

The question is, then: has either ROCOR or the MP raised the possibility of the MP bishops in, say, Berlin or London or New York, resigning their sees in favour of their ROCOR counterparts? The answer to this question is a clear: no. In fact, the idea of MP bishops resigning their sees, has never, to my knowledge, been mentioned once in public by the MP.

Nor is that surprising. For the MP is negotiating from a position of overwhelming strength, and has no desire or need to disenfranchise its own favoured sons in favour of foreign upstarts whom only a short time ago it was calling “schismatics”. Even when it granted the Orthodox Church of America autocephaly – and “autocephaly” implies a much larger degree of

²⁶⁰ Gontscharow, “On Met. Lavr’s Letter to the Dioceses of Australia and New Zealand”.

independence than “autonomy” – it did not merge its own sees and parishes on the American continent into the OCA.

This brings us to the related problem of relations with the OCA. After the union with the MP, who will be the canonical bishop of San Francisco – Bishop Kyrill of ROCOR, or Bishop Tikhon of the OCA? One thing is certain: they cannot *both* be, according to the holy canons which all bishops and priests solemnly swear to uphold and observe.

More fundamentally, as Gontscharow points out, “if Eucharistic communion occurs between ROCOR and the MP, it is a violation of the canons for ROCOR to exist as an autonomous church on the same territory as the OCA. We would have to recognize OCA as the legitimate, canonical church of America and drop all our pretenses at sovereignty.” To do otherwise would be schismatic, for according to the MP, the OCA is the one canonical Local Orthodox Church of America. The fact that the MP itself retains parishes on American soil in violation of the OCA’s autocephaly does not alter this fact, but only shows that the MP itself is schismatic!

Will the MP allow Metropolitan Lavr to be the first-hierarchy of the whole of ROCOR throughout the world? Gontscharow thinks not. “The MP may allow Met. Lavr to remain in charge of North America, but if they need to, they can reduce that to the United States and assign someone else to Canada. The documents of the joint commissions hint at this arrangement, when they say all our bishops will be members of the MP synod in Moscow. Their synod will simply increase with new bishops and land areas.”

Moreover, there are several parts of the world in which the MP has bishops while ROCOR has only priests and parishes. Consider my native England, for example. There are two MP bishops resident in England, but no ROCOR bishops. Of course, Archbishop Mark bears the title of Germany and Great Britain. But can even the most naïve person believe that he would become the sole Russian Orthodox bishop in both Germany and Great Britain? No: the best he can hope for is to become Bishop of Germany alone – and that will be very difficult (unless he can use the KGB connections he is suspected of having acquired in 1983).

So ROCOR flock in England, if it does not flee to another jurisdiction, is almost certainly destined to be swallowed up in the MP diocese of Sourozh – perhaps the most liberal and ecumenist in the whole of that ecumenist organisation! If ROCOR leadership cared for their flock in England, they should consecrate a bishop for England now, and then they would at least have a further piece to bargain with in the final end-game. However, the only possible candidate for the episcopacy in England, Archimandrite Alexis (Pobjoy), has remained an archimandrite now for nearly 30 years; so for

reasons best known to themselves the ROCOR bishops have evidently passed him over...

Another point to be considered is the fact that autonomous Churches are usually created to "accommodate", as it were, a foreign nationality, or the flock of the Local Church in a single foreign State. ROCOR is neither of these. It is not confined to a single State, such as the Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia or Poland, but is spread over several continents. And, unlike the autonomous Churches of Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia or Poland, it does not consist, in the main, of believers of a different nationality. On the contrary, the whole "pathos" of the movement for the union between ROCOR and the MP has been patriotic feeling: we are all Russians together, so we have to be united in a single church organisation, the "Mother Church" of the MP!

Of course, ROCOR has existed since the early 1920s as an autonomous Church on the basis of Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz of November 7/20, 1920, which envisaged the existence of autonomous groups of Russian bishops for as long as a central church administration did not exist or could not be contacted. But *that* kind of autonomy will cease to exist immediately ROCOR enters into eucharistic communion with the MP and recognises the MP Patriarch as its canonical head. ROCOR cannot have it both ways: it cannot have the kind of complete control of its own affairs (more like autocephaly than autonomy) that it had as long as it considered Patriarch Tikhon's ukaz to be in force and the MP Patriarch to be uncanonical, while at the same time being in eucharistic communion with the "Mother Church" and recognising the MP Patriarch to be its canonical head.

Gontscharow goes on to point out that "the documents produced by the joint commissions... do indeed described this self-styled 'autonomy' that ROCOR will enjoy, but they also include very specific language that is important to remember. The documents state that all matters outside ROCOR's purview will be decided by the MP's synod in Moscow. Clerics usually do not have much experience with contracts, but the MP delegation seems to, for they did not accidentally include that clause in the statements. They know it can provide Moscow with the upper hand in the future, as when any large firm absorbs a smaller company. That the clause can be used for a large variety of circumstances, where it might be useful to Moscow to declare a matter outside of the competencies of ROCOR and impose its will on the church."

Let us speculate what matters may be considered by the MP to be "outside ROCOR's purview": ownership of church property, choice of liturgical language and liturgical practice in general, including liturgical calendar, sacramental practice (e.g. immersion or sprinkling at baptism), membership of the WCC, communion with the Catholics, Monophysites and others, confirmation of the election of a new chief-hierarchy, perhaps all important

church appointments, support both open and covert for the KGB-FSB, *loyalty to the Russian government at all times, including time of war.*

I have emphasised the phrase *loyalty to the Russian government at all times, including time of war* to show that those living outside Russia should not expect to be free of political demands from the MP inside Russia. Of course, it was Metropolitan Sergius' demand that the ROCOR bishops swear allegiance to the Soviet Union which constituted, even more than his notorious declaration, the immediate cause of the rupture between ROCOR and the MP. And there is no reason why the same conflict should not arise again.

For even as I write the neo-Soviet regime of Putin has begun to flex its political muscles by increasing the price of gas exported to the Ukraine fourfold, which is likely to have an enormous knock-on effect on energy prices throughout the world. If this conflict escalates into another cold, or even hot war, then ROCOR will have to choose its loyalties: to the Western States in which it lives, or to neo-Soviet Russia, including the neo-Soviet MP. Only this time the decision to break with Russia and the MP will be much more difficult than in 1927: first, because ROCOR will just have joined the MP, and secondly, because it is already much more thoroughly infiltrated and controlled by Putin's men.

Then, perhaps, we shall see the fulfilment of the prophecy of Elder Ignaty of Harbin: "What began in Russia [in 1927] will end in America [in 2006]..."

*December 21 / January 3, 2005/2006.
St. Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow.*

(First Published in *Vernost'*, № 31)

21. A PROPOSAL TO THE MAY, 2006 SOBOR OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH ABROAD

Dear Delegates to the Sobor, and all those await its outcome in the fear of God and with sincere hopes for the true unity of the Russian Church!

“Let us stand well, let us stand with fear,” chants the deacon at the beginning of the sacred Anaphora. You, too, are called to stand well and stand with fear at the forthcoming Sobor of the Russian Church Abroad. And we who watch from the sidelines, we too stand and pray; for the Church of Christ is one Body, and we cannot and must not remain indifferent to what is happening in any part of that Body.

We wish to make a constructive proposal to you, a proposal that may, we believe, help to bring a measure of unity to the faithful remnant of the Russian Church Abroad rather than the further disintegration that, as many fear, will be the result of the forthcoming Sobor. For from the accounts we have received, its leaders are proposing to bring the Russian Church Abroad into union with Patriarch Alexis of Moscow, the Eastern Pope, who, like the Western Pope, lies under many curses and anathemas. But we fervently hope that this council will not seal a false unia in the manner of the false unias of Florence in 1439 or Brest in 1596.

The basis of our hope is the fact that a holy remnant of dissenters opposed to union with Moscow appears to be gathering strength. Two or three bishops are rumoured to be against the false unia. Some districts – Russia, South America – appear to be solidly against it; and significant numbers in other districts – Eastern America, Australia – are also against. And dissenters have made their voices heard even in Jerusalem, in Western Europe and in Western America... The question is: what will this holy remnant do if and when the unia is signed? Exchange recriminations with the uniates, and then scatter off into various jurisdictions of the True Orthodox Church? Or form yet another jurisdiction of the Russian Church having no communion with the others?

We propose another alternative. We are convinced that the gathering of such a large number of Russian Christians in one place presents the opportunity of doing something more bold, more constructive and more pleasing to God – the opportunity to call on *all* past and present members of the Russian Church Abroad, to whichever jurisdiction they may belong, who are opposed to the unia with Moscow to reunite in One Church on the basis of Holy Orthodoxy.

The rest of this letter is a proposal addressed to you and all lovers of the Russian Church Abroad on how to grasp this opportunity.

A Programme for an Anti-Uniate Sobor

1. Repentance. The Prophet-King David says: “Turn away from evil, and do good” (Psalm 33.14). It is impossible to do a truly good work until one has thoroughly cleansed oneself from evil. To that end, refusal to join the Sovietised Moscow Patriarchate is a necessary step, but only a first step. We – and here we include ourselves, the signatories of this Proposal, as well as the delegates to the Sobor, and all those who have been members of, and taken part in the destinies of the Russian Church Abroad – must *repent* that by our sins, individual and collective, we have allowed the evil one to creep into our Church to such an extent that now, after many completed schisms, it stands on the threshold of yet another schism and almost complete self-destruction. St. John Maximovich and Archbishop Averky of Jordanville used to say that every Russian Christian was responsible to a greater or lesser extent for the betrayal of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas that started the whole catastrophic train of events that has brought us to this pass. All the more should we, who have been closely involved in the destinies of the Russian Church Abroad for the last generation and more, repent that we have allowed it to fall so far.

But repentance needs to be specific and unsparing if it is to be effective and pleasing in God’s eyes. So we would limit our proposal at this stage to the event that we think we can all agree on as having been the decisive and disastrous turning-point in the recent history of ROCOR: the false council of 2000. This council, we believe, must be formally and in a conciliar manner declared to be false, its decisions must be officially repealed, and sincere repentance must be offered not only that it took place, but that we all, whether or not we actually took part in it, by our criminal actions and/or inaction made it possible for it to take place.

The Prophet Isaiah said: “How is the faithful city become a harlot!” But the Lord did not abandon the harlot: “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall the good of the land” (1.21, 18). Let us hope that by our sincere repentance before the Lord our sins can be washed white as snow, and we can again eat of the good of the land, that land of which the Prophet-King says: “Thy good Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness” (Psalm 50.12).

2. A Confession of Faith. Having laid a good foundation in repentance, we can go forward to a confession of faith. In our opinion, this should not be too ambitious; that is, it should not attempt to resolve all the questions that divide Russian Christians, but only those that relate to the historic confession of the Russian Church Abroad in relation to Sergianism and Ecumenism, to the Sovietised Moscow Patriarchate and so-called “World Orthodoxy” – that is, those Local Churches who take part in the ecumenical movement and in the World Council of Churches.

In our opinion, this end is best attained, following the example of the Ecumenical Councils and other God-inspired Councils, in two ways: (a) by quoting and reaffirming a selected number of documents expressing the faith of the Russian Church Abroad, and (b) by anathematising certain specific teachings and individuals. Some may object to anathematisations, as being too aggressive and confrontational. However, we believe that the practice of the great Church Councils of antiquity and also of more recent times (for example, the Russian Church Council of 1918, which anathematised the Bolsheviks, and Patriarch Tikhon's 1923 anathematisation of the renovationists, the anathematisation of the sergianists by the Catacomb Councils, as well as the anathematisation of the ecumenists by the 1983 Council of ROCOR) should be followed in order to avoid ambiguities and attempts to reinterpret or distort the Sobor's confession of faith. Moreover, we believe – again, in accordance with the practice of the Ecumenical Councils – that specific individuals, the leaders of the heresies of Sergianism and Ecumenism, should be anathematised by name. Then there will be no doubt about where the Sobor stands in relation to these individuals.

With regard to (a), we believe that only two documents need to be singled out for specific commendation and reaffirmation:

(1) Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky's never-repealed and therefore still authoritative encyclical of July 28 / August 10, 1928 expressing "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", calling it an illegally formed organization of apostates from the faith like 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..."

(2) The ROCOR Synod's never-repealed and therefore still authoritative anathema against ecumenism of July 28 / August 10, 1983.

With regard to (b), in confirmation of previous anathematisations by the True Orthodox Church of Russia, the following false patriarchs should be anathematised: Sergius, Alexis I, Pimen and Alexis II of Moscow, and all the contemporary patriarchs of World Orthodoxy who take part in the World Council of Churches.

3. Other True Orthodox Jurisdictions. In the last ten years, the single organism of the Russian Church Abroad has divided into four major groups, each having its own episcopate: ROCOR (L) under Metropolitan Laurus, ROCOR (V) under Metropolitan Vitaly, ROAC under Metropolitan Valentine

("Suzdal") and RTOC under Metropolitan Tikhon (the "Lazarites"). Each of these groups insists, with greater or lesser plausibility, that it is "the best", if not "the only" True Russian Church, while the others are, to a greater or lesser degree, "false", "schismatical" or at any rate "uncanonical". The result: canonical chaos, the loss of souls, and the disintegration of the common front against the one undoubtedly false jurisdiction – the Moscow Patriarchate.

At San Francisco yet another, fifth jurisdiction may well arise...

But it does not have to happen that way. Bishop Dionysius (Alferov) of Novgorod has called for the formation of a common front among the True Orthodox Russians against the Moscow Patriarchate. We wish to join our voices to this call, and to suggest a concrete way in which a beginning can be made to the process of gathering together the scattered fragments of the Russian Church Abroad. We suggest that the anti-uniates meeting in San Francisco, instead of forming a fifth jurisdiction, appeal to representatives of the other four to join them in their Sobor. These representatives will not be asked to concelebrate with the anti-uniates, nor with each other. They will not be required to drop their objections to this or that supposedly heretical, uncanonical or immoral person. The invitation will be to talk, no more. How things will develop from there we dare not speculate. But we can hope...

A word should be said about other non-Russian jurisdictions in True Orthodoxy. Several of these have been, at one time or another, in communion with ROCOR; some have even received their hierarchical orders from her. To exclude them completely from the picture would therefore be uncanonical and contrary to the commandments of Christ, insofar as "in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew". And there can be no doubt that the final triumph of truth over heresy cannot be a purely Russian thing, even in a single country. In every liturgy the Church prays for her members of all nationalities throughout the world, and the triumph of the Church in any part of the world is the triumph of the whole Church throughout the world.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the union of True Orthodox Russians with True Orthodox Greeks or Romanians or Serbs or Bulgarians will be much easier to achieve once the Russians have obtained a certain degree of unity among themselves. Apart from any other consideration, the non-Russians have great difficulty in knowing which faction of the Russians to attempt union with as long as they are all fighting each other. So we suggest that unity with the non-Russian jurisdictions should be set aside for the moment – but only for the moment...

4. The Canonisation of Metropolitan Philaret. If there is one thing that, we believe, all four of the existing jurisdictions, together with the anti-uniates of San Francisco, can agree on and rejoice in, it is the holiness of Metropolitan Philaret of New York. This is witnessed to by the incorruption of his relics,

several miracles and the purity of his confession against Sergianism and Ecumenism. There may be other candidates for canonisation; but Metropolitan Philaret is likely to be the least controversial and the most directly relevant to the nature of the struggle ahead of us.

Finally, we should point out that this proposal has been formulated and signed in the first place by laymen only, not out of any anti-clerical bias, but out of a realisation that it is often difficult for clergy, for reasons of jurisdictional loyalty and obedience to hierarchs, to sign an appeal or proposal that transcends jurisdictional boundaries. Nevertheless, we hope and pray that the clergy will read our proposal and ponder its contents. For we are acutely aware that while the laity may propose, it is the clergy who have the power to bring or not bring our proposals to fruition – all under the Providence of God, Who orders all things for our good. Therefore it is in all humility and not as some kind of rebels or innovators that we have written the above. For we believe firmly the word of the apostle: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13.7-8).

London.
December 25, 2005 (O.S.).
The Nativity of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Prince Dmitri Golitsyn
Vladimir Moss
Igor Sobolev

(organizational committee)

plus an indefinite number of signatures.

(First Published in *Vernost'*, № 30)

22. "THE SACRED LIE"

Fr. Alexander Lebedev writes: "Vladimir Kozyreff (and others) have been arguing a position that the Orthodox Church cannot have any compromise with untruth (he calls this 'sergianism'); that a Church that fails to keep purity of faith loses Apostolic Succession and grace; that heresy cannot coexist with true teaching in the Church.

"In reality, the history of the Church proves the situation to be otherwise..."²⁶¹

I have been polemicising with open and covert supporters of the MP for over thirty years, but I don't think I have ever come across such a shameful statement, a statement that so manifestly contradicts the most fundamental principles of Orthodoxy.

"Orthodoxy", as everyone on this list must know, means "right belief" or "right glorification". It clearly entails freedom from heresy and all untruth. We need only read the Order for the Triumph of Orthodoxy to understand that Orthodoxy and heresy cannot coexist, that the Orthodox Church anathematises all heresies, that all compromise with heresy is sin. Of course, individual members of the Orthodox Church sin and say untruths. Some even stray into heresy, wittingly or unwittingly. But the Orthodox Church can never and has never been reconciled with untruth, wherever it may come from. She always tries to convert her children who are straying into heresy to the path of truth, of Orthodoxy. She does not immediately expel them from her midst as long as there is hope of their conversion. But if they remain stubbornly attached to their heresy, she has to expel them. And at no time does she call the lie truth, or heresy Orthodoxy.

Fr. Alexander thinks otherwise. So what are we to think about Fr. Alexander? We can think nothing else than that he is no longer Orthodox in his mind-set, even if, perhaps, he remains, for the time being, part of the Orthodox Church.

And what are we to think of the position of someone who has to justify the presence of lies and heresy in the Orthodox Church? Only that it must be exceedingly weak...

"But you haven't considered his arguments," someone will say. I shall – in a moment. But it is worth pondering this first: that no Orthodox Father or Saint could ever agree with what he has written.

²⁶¹ Lebedev, "[orthodox-synod]Wheat and Tares – a Much More Fundamental Question", orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com; orthodox-tradition@yahoogroups.com, January 4, 2006.

Now let us look at his first argument: “There were many renowned Saints of the Church who were ordained by heretics. St. Tarasios of Constantinople stated that fully half of the Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council were ordained by heretics.”

I think he means the Seventh Ecumenical Council, but never mind. If these Fathers, whether of the Sixth or Seventh Ecumenical Council, were originally ordained in heresy, they became Orthodox on their rejection of their heresy and reception into the Church. What is surprising or controversial about that?

Perhaps Fr. Alexander is inferring (although he does not make this clear) that the Fathers of the Ecumenical Council did not re-ordain those Fathers who had been ordained in heresy, and therefore accepted both their ordination and their heresy. I do not know exactly how these Fathers were received, whether “in their existing rank” or by re-ordination. But it does not really matter. For, as is well-known, although, according to the practice of “*oikonomia*”, in certain circumstances the Church can receive certain clergy “in their existing rank”, this in no way entails a recognition that the ordination performed in heresy was valid or grace-filled.

Moreover, we have clear historical evidence that St. Tarasios and the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council did *not* accept the penitent iconoclast bishops as already bishops and already inside the Church. Thus Archimandrite Nectarius (Yashunsky) writes: “As far as the Seventh Council is concerned, not only did it not consider the iconoclasts to be a part of the Church, but they themselves did not pretend to be such.” In support of this statement, Fr. Nectarius quotes from the Acts of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. “These are the words of the uniting iconoclasts. Thus Basil, bishop of Ancyra, said: ‘As far as I was able, I investigated the question of the icons and converted to the Holy Catholic Church with complete conviction.’ Theodore, bishop of Myra, said: ‘... I beseech God and your holiness to unite me, the sinful one, to the Holy Catholic Church.’” (pp. 41, 43 in the edition of the Kazan Theological Academy). And here are the witnesses of the holy Fathers of the Council: “His Holiness Patriarch Tarasius said: ‘What is now to be our relationship to this heresy that has again arisen in our time?’ John, the most beloved of God, *locum tenens* of the apostolic throne in the east, said: ‘Heresy divides every man from the Church.’ The Holy Council said: ‘That is evident.’ The Holy Council said: ‘Let the bishops who are standing before us read their renunciations, insofar as they are now converting to the Catholic Church.’”²⁶²

“*Heresy divides every man from the Church*”. Do you hear that, Fr. Alexander? That is what the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council said was “evident” – that is, clearly and obviously true.

²⁶² Yashunsky, *Ecclesiological Antitheses* (MS, in Russian), p. 48.

Now let us turn to the second argument: "A number of Church Fathers wrote and taught outright heresies, yet have not been condemned as being outside the Church. St. Gregory of Nyssa taught the false doctrine of universal salvation, for example. Several of the Church Fathers taught chiliasm..."

The Church does not accept all the opinions expressed by all the Church Fathers, but only "the consensus of the Fathers". Some Fathers have at certain times expressed opinions at variance with this consensus. Why did the Church not condemn them?

There could be many reasons.

One could be that the Father in question actually recanted of his heretical opinion. Thus Blessed Augustine wrote a whole book of recantations. Or it may be that the Father recanted in private, and this is not known to the world, but is known to the Church, which has the mind of Christ.

Again, it could be that the Father in question did not actually write what he is supposed to have written, or did not actually mean what people have taken him to mean. In the case of St. Gregory of Nyssa, I have seen a book (which, unfortunately, I have not read) that argues that the Holy Father has been misrepresented, that he did not preach, or did not mean to preach, universal salvation. Even if the world or many of her individual members do not know this, the Church, which is inspired by the Spirit of truth, knows it.

Again, it could be that the heresy in question has never been properly defined or discussed in council. Thus take the example of chiliasm. I have often heard that this heresy was condemned at the Second Ecumenical Council. And yet I have never seen this condemnation, and no theologian has been able to show it to me. Moreover, even Blessed Jerome, who, with Blessed Augustine, was the foremost enemy of the teaching, while mocking the chiliasts as "our half-Jews"²⁶³, in other places speaks of them with more respect, as holding views "which, although we may not hold, we cannot condemn, because many ecclesiastical men and martyrs have taught the same".²⁶⁴ One thing is certain: none of the so-called chiliast Fathers - SS. Justin, Irenaeus and Methodius - believed in a literal 1000-year reign of Christ, nor that the Jewish law would be introduced during that period, nor that every sensual pleasure would be indulged in it. So whether they actually preached anything heretical is highly debatable.

Fr. Alexander's third argument is based on a false interpretation of the Lord's Parable of the Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13.

²⁶³ St. Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* 60.1, 66.20.

²⁶⁴ St. Jerome, *Commentary on Jeremiah* 19.10.

“So,” he says, after quoting the whole Parable, “the Church has tolerated some tares among its good wheat during the entire time of its existence. It is not Cyprianism that first invented the terms ‘ailing and well members’ of the Church. This was used by St. Tarasios to describe the situation of the Church at the time of the iconoclastic heresy – and also by St. Basil the Great to describe the sad state of the Church during his time. So – the final answer is that the Church can tolerate those within it who bear false witness in times of persecution. They do not stain the Church, and it does not lose grace because of this. The wheat and the tares will coexist within it until the time of harvest.”

With regard to Cyprianism, it should be pointed out that while the members of the Church differ greatly in sanctity and spiritual health, she never tolerates sin or untruth in the sense of allowing it to flourish unchecked. A person who commits a mortal sin is excommunicated. A person who utters heresy and refuses to retract it is also excommunicated and, in extreme cases, anathematised, just as Lev Tolstoy was anathematised by the Russian Church in 1901.

Where did you get the idea, Fr. Alexander, that the Church tolerates those within it who bear false witness in times of persecution? This is completely untrue. Those who bore false witness in, for example, the African persecution of the third century, were rejected by the Church as being libellatici, and were received by her into communion only after fifteen years of sincere repentance. And you must know that in his encyclical of July 28 / August 10, 1928 Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) expresses “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”, calling it an illegally formed organization of apostates from the faith like 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...”

But let us examine the Parable you quote, and in particular a patristic interpretation of the Parable, by Blessed Theophylact of Bulgaria: “The field is the world, or, each one’s soul. The sower is Christ. The good seed is good people, or, good thoughts. The tares are heresies, or, evil thoughts. The one who sows them is the devil. The men who are sleeping are those by their indolence give entry to heretics and evil thoughts. The servants are the angels, who are indignant that there are heresies or any wickednesses in the soul, and wish to seize and cut off from this life the heretics and those who think evil thoughts. But God does not allow the heretics to be destroyed by wars, lest the righteous suffer and be destroyed along with them...”²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Blessed Theophylact, *Exposition of the Gospel According to St. Matthew*, House Springs, MO: Chrysostom Press, p. 115.

It should be noted, first, that there is nothing said about the Church here. The actors – those who eventually gather up the tares – are the angels, not Church hierarchs. Moreover, the action that is being debated – whether and when the tares should be gathered up and destroyed – does not concern the Church's judgement on heretics by means of conciliar decisions and anathemas. It is *the physical extermination* of heretics. This is made clear by the words: "But God does not allow the heretics to be destroyed by wars..."

Now is Vladimir Kozyreff or anybody else advocating the physical extermination of the sergianist heretics? Of course not! God will decide when to send the angel of death to take from this life Alexis II and the other heretics. We Orthodox Christians, however, have a duty to express our rejection of heretics and their heresies, and to try to have them removed from the Church if they prove impenitent. In other words, the Church strives, not for the *physical extermination* of heretics, but their *spiritual detoxification or decommissioning*, just as one might attempt to decommission a dangerously malfunctioning nuclear reactor.

In typically sergianist fashion, Fr. Alexander has confused the Church and the world. The world lies in evil and heresy; this is its normal condition; and it will not change until its final destruction at the Second Coming of Christ. It has no means of cleansing itself because it does not have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of purity and truth. The Church, on the other hand, being the home of the Holy Spirit, is in the process of constant self-purification. Of course, this process is never complete, and the world, the flesh and the devil are constantly introducing impurities and untruths into it. But as long as the process of self-purification continues, through the action of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Mysteries, the Church remains the Church, "the ark of salvation" and "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3.15).

However, a local Church ceases to be a Church when the process of self-purification comes to an end. And that takes place when the Holy Spirit flees from it as a result of either (a) the enthronement of heresy in its official teaching, or (b) its falling away from the Body of Christ into schism. At that point it becomes part of the world – a very "religious" part of the world, perhaps, but still a part of the world, whose essence is worldliness and whose natural element is filth and lies. The idea that the pillar and ground of the Truth can accept untruth and heresy officially is absurd and a contradiction in terms. If the Church were to tolerate heresy in principle, as Fr. Alexander is suggesting, then it would immediately cease to be the Church and would become a part of the world. For it has accepted the basic principle of the world, which is acceptance of evil and untruth, as its norm, and in which, like the witches in Macbeth, men "lie like truth". But the truth is, as St. John the Apostle says, that "no lie is of the truth" (I John 2.21).

It's really very simple. So why is Fr. Alexander trying to make it so complicated? Because he wants to join the truth of the Church to a lie - the lie of the Moscow Patriarchate - in a monstrous and adulterous union...

Let us remind ourselves what that lie is: that it is possible for the leading hierarchs of the Church to lie "in order to save the Church" - by which they actually mean themselves. Metropolitan Sergius lied about Soviet power, saying that it was "God-established", and about the Church's relationship to that power, saying that their "joys and sorrows" were the same. He justified this "sacred lie" on the grounds that thereby he was saving the Church. So "the pillar and ground of the Truth" had to be saved by a lie, "the ark of salvation" - by immersion in the flood of the revolution!

Was the Church of Metropolitan Sergius saved by this lie? By no means! It was rather as the Lord said through the Prophet Isaiah: "Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand: when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (28.18). For the overwhelming scourge of the 1930s swept through the sergianist church with a terrible vengeance. By 1939 only 4 hierarchs (Sergius among them, of course) had survived in freedom in the whole land of Russia, and many tens of thousands of priests had been killed.

But this physical destruction was as nothing compared to the spiritual devastation. For from a spiritual point of view, the sergianist church did not survive even in a greatly reduced form: it died a terrible and ignominious death. For it was no longer "the pillar and ground of the truth", but the upholder and champion of the greatest of all untruths: that Christ and Antichrist can live together in harmony, the former sharing the joys and sorrows of the latter...

If the sergianist church was no longer "the pillar and ground of the truth", what was it? There are only two possibilities. Either it became a non-religious society not directly concerned with truth, but rather with, for example, Russian culture or art of folklore - a kind of ethnographic museum. Or it became *the pillar and ground of the lie*. There is no other alternative, because, as St. Mark of Ephesus said, there is no mid-point between the truth and the lie.

Let us listen to the words of Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov, who suffered a terrible but glorious death because he refused to accept Sergius' lie: "What will those who have come to the Church say? What will they feel when, even from there, from the height of the last refuge of righteousness rejected by the world, from the height of the ambon, there sound words of hypocrisy, of man-pleasing and slander? Will it not seem that falsehood is achieving its final victory over the world, and that there, in the place where the image of Incarnate Truth flashed for them with the

Unwaning Light, there now laughs in a disgusting grimace the mask of the father of lies?

"It is one or the other: either the Church is truly the immaculate and pure Bride of Christ, the Kingdom of truth, in which case the Truth is the air without which we cannot breathe, or, like the whole world which lies in evil, it lives in lies and by lies, in which case everything is a lie, every word is a lie, every prayer, every sacrament.

"It seems to us that Metropolitan Sergius and those with him are enslaved by a terrible fantasy, the fantasy that it is possible to build the Church on man-pleasing and untruth. But we affirm that a lie can give birth only to a lie, and that it cannot be the foundation of the Church. Before our eyes we have the shameful path of "the church of the evil-doers" - renovationism. And this shame of the gradual immersion in the engulfing mud of ever more terrible compromises and apostasy, this horror of complete degradation awaits the community of the Church if it goes along the path marked out for it.

"It seems to us that Metropolitan Sergius has wavered in his faith in the omnipotence of the All-conquering Truth, in the omnipotence of God. And this wavering has been transmitted in the form of a terrible jolt to the whole body of the Church, making it shudder. There will be more than one heart that on hearing the words of untruth within the walls of the church will shake in its faith and perhaps be wounded in its most secret sanctuary; it will tear itself away from the Church that has deceived it and will remain outside her walls. The silence of thousands will utter a terrible word to the very heart of the people, wounding their much-suffering soul, and the rumour will spread to all the ends of the earth that the Kingdom of Christ has become the kingdom of the beast.

"What a pitiful and unworthy existence. Truly it is better to die than to live in this way..."

You have heard the words of the hieromartyr, Fr. Alexander: it is better to die than to live on the foundation of the lie. So go away and tell this to those Muscovite hierarchs with whom you are negotiating for the souls of thousands of eternal souls for whom Christ died. And before you make your Faustian bargain with them, think of these words from the Truth Himself: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of lies" (John 8.44).

December 28 / January 10, 2005/2006.

23. METROPOLITAN ANASTASY, THE NAZIS AND THE SOVIETS

Apart from the dogmatic-canonical questions of ecumenism and sergianism, one of the subjects that continues to divide the Moscow Patriarchate from the Russian Church Abroad is their differing attitudes to the victory of the Soviets in the Second World War. For the MP, as was made obvious at the 60th anniversary celebrations in Moscow last May, this was an unequivocally glorious victory, a victory of truth over falsehood, good over evil. In this, of course, it is following closely the lead given by Putin's neo-Soviet regime, for which Stalin and Stalinism are not dirty words, and which regards the fall of communism in 1991 as "a geopolitical tragedy" which it is doing everything possible to reverse. The attitude of ROCOR was different. Without in any way overlooking or condoning the terrible cruelties of the Nazi regime, it could not fail to regard the victory and consolidation of militant atheism over a vast territory from Berlin to Vladivostok with profound sorrow. Contrary to the slander of the Moscow Patriarch Alexis I, ROCOR never gave unequivocal support to the Nazis; but it did bless those Russian patriots who fought in the German armies in order to liberate their country from the all-annihilating scourge of Sovietism. In this article this thesis is developed on the basis of historical documents, and in particular the speeches of the leader of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anastasy.

ROCOR in Germany

It is necessary first of all to discuss the question of ROCOR's relationship to Hitler before the war.

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.²⁶⁶ The German government did not hand over all the property to ROCOR immediately. As Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris writes in his memoirs (p. 648), for some time it still retained parishes in Berlin, in Eastern Prussia and in Dresden.²⁶⁷ However, on May 5, 1939 the law was extended to Dresden and the Sudetenland.

²⁶⁶ 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; Monk Benjamin, *Letopis' Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1928-1938)* (Chronicle of Church Events (1939-1949)), part 3, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis2.htm>, part 2, p.71.

²⁶⁷ G.M. Soldatov, personal communication.

It may be asked why the German government was 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 Eulogius because of its links with the YMCA and other internationalist organizations, and were therefore more favourably disposed to ROCOR, which had broken links with the Eulogians. 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 counting in this way to elicit the sympathy of the Balkan Slavic peoples towards Germany.²⁶⁸

In 1938 Hitler also gave ROCOR a plot of land in Berlin to build a church, for which Metropolitan Anastasy thanked him. This formed the basis on which "Patriarch" Alexis of Moscow later accused him of having sympathy for fascism. 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'."²⁶⁹

In fact, the address sent to Hitler was not composed by Metropolitan Anastasy, but by the president of the Russian colony in Berlin, General V. Biskupsky, an adventurer and opportunist who had already been involved in several political escapades.²⁷⁰ When it was shown to the metropolitan, he

²⁶⁸ G.M. Soldatov, personal communication.

²⁶⁹ *Poslanie k russkim pravoslavnym liudiam po povodu 'Obraschenia patriarkha Aleksia k arkipastiriam 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.

²⁷⁰ Soldatov, *op.cit.*, p. 12, footnote 9.

found it too “flowery”. But it had already been sent to the ministry of internal affairs, and it was too late to compose a new, more moderate variant.²⁷¹

After the German annexation of Czechia and Moravia in March, 1939, the Germans tried to place all the Orthodox in those territories under the jurisdiction of ROCOR’s Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade). 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 intra-ecclesiastical independence and submission to Metropolitan Eulogius.²⁷² A similar arrangement was made with the parishes of the Serbian Bishop Vladimir (Raich) in Transcarpathia and Slovakia.²⁷³

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.²⁷⁴

The German Invasion of Serbia

It was not surprising, or reprehensible, that ROCOR and her first-hierarchy, Metropolitan Anastasy, should have cooperated with the Germans – but without supporting the Nazi ideology – so long as they did no harm to the Orthodox Church, and even benefited it. However, it was a different matter when they invaded an Orthodox country, Serbia. Archbishop Averky writes: “The unexpected German bombardment of Belgrade on April 6, 1941, which soon decided the fate of Yugoslavia, produced such a shattering impression that the capital was completely abandoned, both by the government organs and by the ordinary inhabitants, who fled in indescribable panic for many tens of kilometers. Amidst this complete devastation it was only in the life of the Russian church in Belgrade that no essential changes took place: the services prescribed by the Typicon continued as usual, while priests went with the Holy Gifts around the city, giving communion to the wounded and carrying out prayer services in the refuges. During the raid Metropolitan Anastasy remained at his hierarchical place in the altar, while the clergy took it in turns to serve prayer services in front of the wonder-working Kursk-Root icon of the Mother of God ‘of the Sign’. And this in spite of the fact that five

²⁷¹ Soldatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13.

²⁷² M. Nazarov, *Missia russkoj emigratsii* (The Mission of the Russian Emigration), Moscow, 1994, vol. 1, p. 266; in Monk Benjamin, *Letopis’ Tserkovnykh Sobytij (1938-1948)* (Chronicle of Church Events (1939-1949)), part 3, <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis3.htm>, part 3, p. 5.

²⁷³ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 1.

²⁷⁴ M.V. Shkarovsky, in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 14-15.

bombs fell in the immediate vicinity of our church, the neighbouring Serbian church of St. Mark burned down, and for a whole two days a gigantic fire from a warehouse full of logs that had been hit by a bomb burned just next to the wall of the church. On the second day, March 25 / April 7, on the very feast of the Annunciation, when there was a particularly violent bombardment, Vladyka Metropolitan was present at the Divine Liturgy which one of the priests celebrated in the basement of the Russian House for the many Russian people who had sheltered there. This liturgy, which was carried out in a situation recalling that of the ancient Catacomb Christians, was sealed for life in the memory of all those who received communion at it. And with the blessing of Vladyka Metropolitan up to 300 people received communion after a general confession (this was in view of the danger of death that clearly threatened everyone).

“Exactly a week later, on Lazarus Saturday, the Germans entered the completely destroyed and deserted city, and difficult years began for the Russian emigration in Yugoslavia. Together with the whole of his Belgrade flock, Vladyka Metropolitan nobly endured hunger and cold and all kinds of restrictions and deprivations, various unpleasantnesses from the German occupying authorities and hostile attacks from that part of the Serbian population which had submitted to the influence of communist propaganda.

“Soon after the occupation of Yugoslavia by the German armies, members of the Gestapo carried out a thorough search in the residence of Vladyka Metropolitan Anastasy, and then took away the clerical work of the Hierarchical Synod.²⁷⁵ However, they were forced to admit that Vladyka, as a true Archpastor of the Church of Christ, was profoundly alien to all politics, and they left him in peace.”²⁷⁶

The German Invasion of Russia

The Germans invaded Russia on June 22, the feast of all Saints of Russia. They were in general greeted with ecstatic joy. Thus Solzhenitsyn writes: “Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia gave the Germans a jubilant welcome. Belorussia, the Western Ukraine, and the first occupied Russian territories followed suit. But the mood of the people was demonstrated most graphically

²⁷⁵ On the day the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, writes M.V. Shkarovsky, “a search was carried out in the residence of Metropolitan Anastasy [in Belgrade]... [and] searches in the chancellery of the Hierarchical Synod and in the flat of the director of the synodal chancellery G. Grabbe... During the search the clerical work of the Synod and many other documents were taken away to Germany for study. In 1945 they were acquired by the Soviet armies and are now in Moscow, in the State archive of the Russian federation...” (*Natsistskaia Germania i Pravoslavnaia Tserkov'* (Nazi Germany and the Orthodox Church), Moscow, 2002, p. 193; in Soldatov, *op. cit.*, p. 12). (V.M.)

²⁷⁶ Averky, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Mitropolita Anastasia* (A Life of his Beatitude Metropolitan Anastasy), in *Troitskij Pravoslavnij Russkij Kalendar' na 1998 g.* (Trinity Orthodox Russian Calendar for 1998), Jordanville: Holy Trinity Monastery, pp. x-xi.

of all by the Red Army: before the eyes of the whole world it retreated along a 2,000-kilometre front, on foot, but every bit as fast as motorized units. Nothing could possibly be more convincing than the way these men, soldiers in their prime, voted with their feet. Numerical superiority was entirely with the Red Army, they had excellent artillery and a strong tank force, yet back they rolled, a rout without compare, unprecedented in the annals of Russian and world history. In the first few months some three million officers and men had fallen into enemy hands!

“That is what the popular mood was like – the mood of peoples some of whom had lived through twenty-four years of communism and others but a single year. For them the whole point of this latest war was to cast off the scourge of communism. Naturally enough, each people was primarily bent not on resolving any European problem but on its own national task – liberation from communism...”²⁷⁷

“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 Orthodox Church).”²⁷⁸ 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.

It was natural for ROCOR to welcome the resurrection of Orthodoxy in German-occupied Russia. It had nothing to do with any political sympathies for the Nazis. Thus “in September, 1941 Vladyka Metropolitan gave his blessing to the Russian patriots who hoped that hour of the liberation of the Russian people from the bloody oppression of Bolshevism to form a Russian Corps. However, the Germans did not allow this Corps to take part in military actions on the eastern front, but was left in Yugoslavia to defend it from local communist bands.”²⁷⁹

Again, in his paschal epistle for 1942 Metropolitan Anastasy wrote: “The day that it (the Russian people) has been waiting for 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!’”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Solzhenitsyn, *The Mortal Danger*, London: The Bodley Head, 1980, pp. 39-40.

²⁷⁸ 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.

²⁷⁹ Averky, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

²⁸⁰ *Tserkovnaia Zhizn’* (Church Life), 1942, № 4; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 41.

In June, the Synod of ROCOR made some suggestions to the German authorities on the organization of the Church in Russia. In June it wrote: "...In the spirit of the canons of the Orthodox Church there exists only one solution in the question of the organization of the Church's administration, and that is the convening of a Council of Russian hierarchs by the eldest among them and the appointment by this Council of a temporary head of the Church and of the rest of the Church administration." The final organization of the governing organs and the election of a Patriarch could take place, in the opinion of the Synod, only when 'hierarchs will be appointed to all the vacant sees and normal relations are established in the country'.²⁸¹

However, ROCOR's attitude to the Germans remained cautious because the attitude of the Germans to the Orthodox Faith was ambiguous. Hitler was "utterly irreligious"²⁸², but feigned religious tolerance for political reasons. Thus "the heaviest blow that ever struck humanity," he said, "was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew. The deliberate lie in religion was introduced into the world by Christianity. Bolshevism practises a lie of the same nature, when it claims to bring liberty to men, only to enslave them."²⁸³ But at the same time he recognized that Christianity "can't be broken so simply. It must rot and die off like a gangrened limb." And on April 11, 1942, he said: "We must avoid having one solitary church to satisfy the religious needs of large districts, and each village must be made into an independent sect, worshipping God in its own fashion. If some villages as a result wish to practise black magic, after the fashion of Negroes or Indians, we should do nothing to hinder them. In short, our policy in the wide Russian spaces should be to encourage any and every form of dissension and schism."²⁸⁴

The Germans wanted to prepare new priestly cadres who would conform to their views on the Jews. On October 31, 1941 a directive went out from the Main Administration of Imperial Security for the Reich: "The resolution of the ecclesiastical question in the occupied eastern provinces is an exceptionally important... task, which with a little skill can be magnificently solved in favour of a religion that is free from Jewish influence. However, this influence is predicated on the closing of churches in the eastern provinces that are infected with Jewish dogmas..."²⁸⁵

²⁸¹ Synodal Archive of ROCOR in New York, d. 15/41, l.27-30; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 44.

²⁸² Richard Overy, *Russia's War*, London: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 162.

²⁸³ Cited in Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin*, London: Harper Collins, 1991, p. 801.

²⁸⁴ Cited by W. Alexeyev and T. Stavrou, *The Great Revival*, Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1979, pp. 60-61.

²⁸⁵ I. Altman, *Kholokost i evrejskoe soprotivlenie na okkupirovannoj territorii SSSR* (The Holocaust and Jewish resistance in the occupied territories of the USSR); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 34.

One thing the Germans did *not* want was the resurrection of the Great Russian people through the Church. On May 16, 1942 A. Rosenberg, the head of the ministry of the East, said in Riga to a meeting of General and Security Commissars: "The Russian Orthodox Church was a political instrument of the power of tsarism, and now our political task consists in creating other ecclesiastical forms where the Russian Church used to exist. In any case we will hinder the Great Russian Orthodox Church from lording it over all the nationalities... We should think more about introducing the Latin script instead of the Russian. Therefore it is also appropriate that some churches should remain as far as possible restricted to the province of one General Commissar... It is also appropriate for Estonia and Latvia that they should have their own national churches..."²⁸⁶

Again, on August 8, 1942 the head of the German General Commissariat wrote to Archbishop Philotheus, temporary head of the Belorussian Autonomous Church, forbidding the baptism of Jews, the opening of work-houses attached to monasteries, the opening of theological seminaries and academies without the permission of the German authorities and the teaching of the Law of God in school. He also removed the juridical status of Church marriages. It was becoming clear that the authorities were not intending to give any rights to the Orthodox Church in Belorussia.²⁸⁷

On August 12, Archbishop Seraphim (Lyade) wrote from Vienna to Metropolitan Anastasy: "With regard to the question of sending priests to Russia: unfortunately, according to all available data, the higher government authorities are so far not well-disposed towards a positive solution of this question. I made several petitions, but without success. In all probability, the authorities suspect that the clergy from abroad are bearers of a political ideology that is unacceptable for the German authorities at the present time. I did not even succeed in getting permission to transfer several priests to Germany from abroad (for example, Fr. Rodzianko), and according to the information I have received permission was not given because these priests supposedly worked together with émigré political organizations."²⁸⁸

On October 21, 1943, with the permission of the Germans (the first time they had given such permission), Metropolitan Anastasy came to Vienna from Belgrade and convened a Conference of eight bishops of ROCOR which condemned the election of the Moscow patriarch as unlawful and invalid.²⁸⁹ When the hierarchs assembled in the hall, two representatives of the Nazi government wanted to be present, but the hierarchs refused, saying they

²⁸⁶ M.V. Shkarovsky, *Pravoslavie i Rossia* (Orthodoxy and Russia); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 41-42.

²⁸⁷ Archbishop Athanasius (Martos); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 45.

²⁸⁸ Synodal Archive of ROCOR in New York, d. 15/41, l.27-30; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 45-46.

²⁸⁹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 63-64.

wanted to discuss Church matters. The representatives withdrew... Although no protocols of the Council were taken, we know from Bishop Gregory (Boriskevich), formerly of Gomel, who later became a bishop in Canada and then the USA (+ 1957), that the main subject for discussion at the Council was the sending of priests to the territories liberated from communism and the establishment of links with the priests already there.²⁹⁰

"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) Giving Orthodox ecclesiastical authorities the possibility of opening theological schools and the organization of pastoral and religio-moral courses.'" ²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ G.M. Soldatov, personal communication.

²⁹¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, pp. 64-65; M.V. Shkarovsky, *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].

As the war progressed and the behaviour of the Germans towards the Russians became steadily crueller, the attitude of the Russian Orthodox to them changed.

This was reflected in the words of Metropolitan Anastasy in October, 1945, in response to Patriarch Alexis' charge that ROCOR sympathised 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..."²⁹²

G.M. Soldatov writes: "It was suggested to the metropolitan [by the Germans] 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. Shkarovsky 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."²⁹³

²⁹² Soldatov, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁹³ Soldatov, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13; Averky, *op. cit.*, p. xi..

Nevertheless, of the two alternatives – the Germans or the Soviets – ROCOR under the leadership of Metropolitan Anastasy 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 a persecution that was unprecedented in the history of Christianity. Thus in November, 1944 Metropolitan Anastasy addressed the Russian Liberation Movement (the “Vlasovites”) 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 not 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...”²⁹⁴

The Soviet Propaganda Offensive

After the victory of the Soviets in the Second World War, many Russian émigrés were swept up by a feeling of nostalgia for what they thought was their homeland, and, in the words of the writer Vladimir Nabokov, began to “fraternize with the Soviets because they sense in the Soviet Union the Soviet Union of the Russian people”²⁹⁵.

Typical of the feelings of many at this time were the following words of Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris, full of emotion and nostalgia but with no *spiritual, ecclesiastical* content: “The holy Mother Russian Church is calling us to return to her bosom. Shall we decline this maternal call? Our soul has suffered enough in exile abroad. It is time to go home. The higher ecclesiastical authorities promise us a peaceful development of church life. I want to kiss my native Russian land. We want peace in the bosom of our native Mother Church – both us old men, in order to find a final peace, and

²⁹⁴ 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.

²⁹⁵ Nabokov, in B. Boyd, *Nabokov: The American Years*, London, 1992, p. 85.

the young and the middle-aged, in order to work on the regeneration of the Homeland, and to heal her yawning wounds. Without fear or doubt, and without disturbance, let us go to our native land: it is so good, so beautiful..."²⁹⁶

Many were persuaded by the MP's pro-Soviet propaganda. Thus soon after the visit of the MP's Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) to Paris in 1945 a law on Soviet passports was passed (on June 14, 1946), after which more than 3000 Russians living in France hurried to the Soviet embassy to take their passports.²⁹⁷ In September, 1945 75 Eulogian parishes were united with the MP. The question of Eulogius' ban, placed on him by the MP 15 years earlier, was not even discussed, and Nicholas and Eulogius concelebrated in the church of St. Alexander Nevsky. On September 11 the MP decreed that Metropolitan Eulogius should be exarch of these. However, on December 25, 1945 the Soviet deputy foreign minister V. Dekanozov wrote to G. Karpov: "The successes of Nicholas of Krutitsa have not been established and could easily be destroyed. Comrade Bogomolov (the ambassador in France) thinks that the sending of constant representatives of the MP to Paris should be speeded up and the first successes of Nicholas confirmed, otherwise the Anglo-Americans will seize the foreign Orthodox organizations into their hands and turn them into a weapon against us" (GARF, f. 6991, op. 1, d. 65, l. 452). Metropolitan Eulogius twice asked the Ecumenical Patriarch to allow him to return to the MP, but no reply ensued, and he remained dependent on Constantinople, by whom he was also named exarch.²⁹⁸

Sergius Shumilo writes: "It was precisely thanks to the lying pro-Soviet propaganda of the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate that tens of thousands of émigrés, among whom were quite a few clergy and even bishops, believing in the spectre of freedom, began to return to the U.S.S.R. at the end of the Second World War, where the Soviet concentration camps and prisons were waiting for them... These tragic pages of the history of our Fatherland have been sealed by rivers of innocent blood on all succeeding generations. And to a great degree the blame for this, for the tens of thousands of destroyed lives and crippled destinies, lies on the first Soviet patriarch Sergius Stragorodsky and his church, who by deed and word served the God-fighting Soviet totalitarian system..."²⁹⁹

No less tragic was the fate of those forcibly returned by the western governments, who felt compelled to carry out the repatriation agreements they had signed with Stalin in Yalta. And so "from 1945 to 1947," writes G.M.

²⁹⁶ Eulogius, *Puti moej zhizni* (The Ways of My Life), p. 613; in Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 81.

²⁹⁷ Soldatov, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁹⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 94.

²⁹⁹ Shumilo, "Sovetskij Rezhim i 'Sovetskaja 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>®.

Soldatov, "2,272,000 people were handed over by the Allies to the USSR. Of these more than 600,000 had served in the 'eastern forces' of the German army.³⁰⁰ About 200,000 managed to remain in the West,"³⁰¹ thanks especially to the efforts of Protopresbyter George Grabbe and other ROCOR clergy, who organized evacuation committees in all three of the western zones of Germany.

The largest category of those forcibly repatriated was composed of those who had fought in the Soviet army. Protopriest Michael Ardov describes their fate: "I am already a rather elderly person. I remember quite well the years right after the war, 1945, 1946, and how Moscow was literally flooded with cripples, soldiers who were missing arms and legs, returning from the war, and then, suddenly, they all disappeared. Only later did I learn that they were all picked up and packed off to die on the island of Valaam, in order not to spoil the view in the capital. There was no monastery there then. You can just imagine for yourselves the conditions that they had to endure there while living out their last days. They were so poor, and were reduced to begging in order to survive. This is how they were treated, just so that the capital should not be spoiled by their presence! This I remember quite well. Besides this, as we all know that, because of Stalin and his military leaders, an enormous number of Soviet citizens were taken out of the country as prisoners. The government immediately disowned them; they were immediately branded traitors. And the consequences of this were that when they, for some reason or another, came back to our country, most of them were whisked off to Stalin's labour camps. This is how they treated the veterans then..."³⁰²

The Tragedy of the Vlasovites

Another category among those forcibly repatriated was composed of the soldiers who had fought on the German side in General A.A. Vlasov's "Russian Liberation Army" – not out of sympathy for the Nazis, but simply in order to liberate their homeland from a still greater tyranny. These included

³⁰⁰ On these "Vlasovites", see Joachim Goffman, *Vlasov protiv Stalina (Vlasov against Stalin)*, Moscow, 2005 (V.M.).

³⁰¹ Soldatov, *op. cit.*, p. 11, footnote 6. However, Shumilo (*op. cit.*) gives a still higher figure: "at the end of the war, with the cooperation of the governments of the western allied countries, more than 6 million 'Soviet' prisoners of war, 'Osty' workers, refugees and émigrés were forcibly repatriated to the U.S.S.R. up to 1948. The majority of them perished within the walls of Stalin's NKVD."

³⁰² Ardov, "Avoiding participation in the Great Victory Services", sermon given on May 8, 2005, *Vertograd*, May 18, 2005; translated in *The Hoffman Wire*, May 18, 2005. Shumilo writes: "Under the pretext of restoring 'socialist legality' whole families, and even settlements, were sent to Siberia, mainly from Western Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic region. By the end of the 40s, Soviet Marshal Zhukov had ordered the forcible removal from Western Ukraine to Siberia, Kazakhstan and other regions of more than 600,000 people" (*op. cit.*). Alexander Yakovlev writes that during the war the authorities executed 157,000 Red Army soldiers (the equivalent of fifteen divisions) and almost a million were arrested (*A Century of Russian Violence in Soviet Russia*, Yale University Press, 2003).

many who had fought in the Russian civil war on the side of the Whites and in alliance with the western powers.

In May, 1945, in Lienz in Austria, "the English occupying authorities handed over to Stalin to certain death some tens of thousands of Cossacks who had fought in the last months of the war on the side of Germany. Eye-witnesses of this drama recall that the hand-over began right during the time of the final liturgy, which Smersh did not allow to finish. Many Cossacks tried to hurl themselves into the abyss so as not to be delivered to the communists, and the first shots were heard from the Soviet occupational zone already a few minutes after the hand-over. It is interesting that the then head of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anastasy, blessed the Cossacks who had formally ended their lives through suicide because they did not want to fall into the hands of the Reds, to be given a church burial. 'Their actions,' he wrote, 'are closer to the exploit of St. Pelagia of Antioch, who hurled herself from a tall tower so as escape desecration [rape].'..."³⁰³

A similar tragedy took place in Kempten, this time at the hands of the Americans. On August 25, 1945, Metropolitan Anastasy wrote about it to General Eisenhower from Munich, where ROCOR had moved its headquarters earlier in the year: "After seven years of terrible war, the sun of peace has arisen over the suffering earth. This peace was won by the heroism of the Allied Armies and by the wisdom, courage and self-sacrificial valour of these leaders. Among these names yours stands in the first place. These names will be blessed by those people to whom the victory of the Allied Armies returned freedom. It was with a feeling of profound satisfaction that this victory was greeted by émigrés from various countries who now live in Germany... Only the Russians, of whom there were more in Germany than the representatives of any other nation, were deprived of this joy. They were forced to remain in a foreign land because between them and their Home was a wall which their conscience and common sense did not allow them to cross... The Russians, of course, love their homeland no less than the French, the Belgians or the Italians love theirs. The Russians are nostalgic for their homeland. If, in spite of this, they still prefer to remain in a foreign land, having no domicile, often hungry and with no juridical defence, this is only for one reason: they want to preserve the greatest value on earth – freedom: freedom of conscience, freedom of the word, the right to property and personal security. Many of them have already grown old and would like to die in their homeland, but this is impossible as long as there reigns there a power which is based on terror and the suppression of the human personality... It is a remarkable fact that not only intelligentsia, but also peasants and simple workers, who left Russia after 1941, when it entered into war, and who were brought up in the conditions of Soviet life, do not want to return to Soviet Russia. When attempts were made to deport them, they cried

³⁰³ A. Soldatov, *Vertograd*, May 18, 2005; Archbishop Savva (Raevsky), "Lienz", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 56, № 4, 2005, pp. 2-8.

out in despair and prayed for mercy. Sometimes they even committed suicide, preferring death in a foreign land to returning to a homeland where only sufferings await them. Such a tragic event took place on August 12 in Kempten. In this place, in the DP camp, there was a large concentration of Russian émigrés, that is, people who had left Russia after the revolution, and also former Soviet citizens who a little later expressed their desire to remain abroad. When the American soldiers appeared at the camp with the aim of dividing these émigrés into two categories and hand over the former Soviet citizens into the hands of the Soviets, they found all the émigrés in church ardently praying to God that He save them from deportation. Being completely defenceless and abandoned, they considered the church to be their last and only refuge. They offered no active resistance. The people only kneeled and prayed for mercy, trying, in complete despair, to kiss the hands and even the feet of the officers. In spite of this, they were forcibly expelled from the church. The soldiers dragged women and children by the hair and beat them. Even the priests were not left in peace. The priests tried by all means to defend their flock, but without success. One of them, an old and respected priest, was dragged away by the beard. Another spat blood out of his mouth after one of the soldiers, trying to pull the cross out of his hands, struck him in the face. The soldiers rushed into the altar in pursuit of the people. The iconostasis, which separates the sanctuary from the church, was broken in two places, the altar was overthrown and several icons were hurled to the ground. Several people were wounded, two tried to poison themselves. One woman tried to save her child by throwing it through the window, but the man outside who caught this child in his arms was wounded by a bullet in the stomach. You can imagine what a huge impression this made on all the witnesses. It especially shocked the Russians, who were in now way expecting such behaviour from American soldiers. Up to that point they had seen in them only help and support. The American authorities have always shown respect and goodwill to Russian churches and church organizations. Many Russians strove to get into the American zone of occupation because of their hope of being defended by the valourous American army... The Russian people consider the tragedy in Kempten to be an isolated case, which took place because of a misunderstanding. They firmly believe that nothing like will ever happen again. They hope that benevolent help will be given to them as before. They are convinced that the victorious American Army, the Army of a country which is glorified by its love for freedom and humanity, will understand their desire to defend their finest national and religious ideals, for the sake of which they have been suffering for more than 25 years. We joyfully note that we, Russian émigrés in Europe, are not alone in this respect. We have recently received news from the bishops of our Church in the United States that they have not agreed to recognize the newly elected patriarch in Russia. They consider that it would be incompatible with their feeling of dignity and with their priestly conscience to be in subjection to an institution that is under the complete control of the Soviet government, which is trying to use it for its own ends. The voice of our brothers speaks about the convictions

of their numerous flock in the USA... We are strengthened in the belief that we stand on the right path in defending our independence from the Muscovite ecclesiastical and political authorities until the establishment of a new order in our country that is based on the principle of true democracy, that is, freedom, brotherhood and justice. In obtaining a glorious victory together with its allies, and in pushing its frontiers forward, Russia could become the happiest of countries, if only if returned to a healthy political and social life. Being convinced that the victory of eternal truth will finally triumph, we continually pray that better days come for her, for Russia, and that peace and prosperity may be established throughout the world after the days of war have passed..."³⁰⁴

Conclusion

Archbishop Averky witnesses that "Vladyka Metropolitan never displayed any extremism in anything, but always behaved with complete dignity, as a true Hierarch of God."³⁰⁵ This quality is particularly evident in his handling of the extremely difficult political situation that confronted him during the period of the Third Reich. As a Russian Orthodox archpastor, he longed more than anything for the liberation of his country from the Bolshevik yoke, and was completely consistent in his unrelenting condemnation of Bolshevism. But he did not fall into the extreme of supporting the Nazis unreservedly. On the contrary: he supported them only so long as they supported Orthodoxy, but never flattered them and never supported their cruel excesses, and sincerely welcomed their defeat at the hands of the western allies.

However, the same lack of extremism cannot be attributed to Vladyka Anastasy's opponents, and especially to the Moscow Patriarch who hypocritically accused him of sympathising with the Nazis while himself cravenly bowing down to the most evil and destructive of tyrants, calling him "the chosen one of the Lord, who leads our fatherland to prosperity and glory". Indeed, the MP's cult of Stalin knows no parallel in Christian history, and Metropolitan Anastasy was telling no more than the sober truth when he 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 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

³⁰⁴ Prot. A. Kiselev, *Oblik gen. A.A. Vlasova* (The Face of General A.A. Vlasov), appendix VI ®; Monk Benjamin, *op.cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 90-93.

³⁰⁵ Averky, *op.cit.*, p. xi.

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..."³⁰⁶

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³⁰⁶ I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God present in the Soviet Church?* Wildwood, Canada: Monastery Press, 2000, pp. 32-33 (with some changes in the translation).

24. A DOGMATIC-CANONICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROCOR-MP UNIA

May Satan not seize me, and tear me from Thy hand and fold.
Morning Prayers.

*O Lord Who didst send down Thy Most Holy Spirit at the Third Hour upon Thine
Apostles, take not Him, O Good One, from us...*
Prayer of the Third Hour.

St. Gregory the Theologian said: not every ecclesiastical union is pleasing to God, and an honourable war is preferable to a shameful peace. In the political sphere this is well understood: the Munich agreement between Chamberlain and Hitler in 1938 has gone down in the annals of history as an example of a shameful peace that not only did not remove the threat of war, but made the war, when it came, much more costly than it would have been if the courageous and honourable course had been chosen at the beginning. If this is fully understandable in the political sphere, why is it so difficult to understand in the spiritual sphere, where so much more is at stake, where a dishonourable peace with a spiritual enemy leads not to the killing of bodies, but to the eternal death of thousands of souls? The answer is: because men have ceased to think spiritually, but instead are ruled by carnal categories, fallen emotions. And so the Lord says of them: "My Spirit will not always remain with these men, because they are carnal" (Genesis 6.4).

The proposed unia between ROCOR and the MP is a clear example of an ecclesiastical union propelled not by spiritual thinking, not by the overcoming of dogmatic and canonical obstacles through repentance and spiritual love, but first of all, by political and economic interests – the interests of the KGB leadership of the Russian Federation, which has been driving this unia from the beginning, and then by fallen emotions masquerading as spiritual motives – love of Russia (but which Russia do they love – Holy Rus' or the neo-Soviet Russia of Putin?), and fear of isolation from the rest of Orthodoxy (but which Orthodoxy do they fear to be separated from – the KGB/Masonic/Ecumenist "Orthodoxy" of the World Council of Churches, or the True Orthodoxy of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia?).

This article seeks to examine the dogmatic and canonical obstacles that remain in the path of any honourable Church unia. It should be noted at the outset that, far from these barriers decreasing with time, they have actually *increased* since the original break in communion between ROCOR and Metropolitan Sergius' MP in 1927. At that time only Sergianism separated the two. And yet Sergianism alone was enough to create the biggest schism in the Orthodox Church since 1054. Now there is also Ecumenism, to mention only the most important and intractable of all the obstacles...

I. Sergianism.

The nature of Sergianism is often misunderstood. In essence it is *the sin of Judas*. Judas was one of the closest disciples of Christ, who, having lost faith in the Divinity of His Teacher and in the ultimate victory of truth over falsehood, chose to betray Christ in exchange for thirty pieces of silver and immunity from persecution. Metropolitan Sergius did essentially the same through his Declaration of 1927. In exchange for some material benefits and immunity from persecution (he died in his bed), he betrayed Christ by identifying the interests of the Church with the interests of the God-hating Bolsheviks, whom the Church itself had anathematized in 1918. He did this not in word only (through his Declaration), but in deed also, by deposing his fellow-hierarchs who resisted him, and by labelling them as “counter-revolutionaries” – the equivalent of a death-sentence in the USSR.

It is sometimes argued that Sergius was justified because, as he himself put it, he was “saving the Church” by his actions. The idea that the Church, “the pillar and ground of the Truth” (I Timothy 3.15), to which the Lord has promised that it would “prevail against the gates of hell” (Matthew 16.18), needs to be saved by the lies of sinful men is in itself a fearsome heresy, a denial, as several Catacomb Hieromartyrs pointed out, of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. But in any case, Sergius saved nobody but himself (and that only in this temporal life). After most of the confessors of the Catacomb Church had been imprisoned or shot in the early 1930s, the majority of those who followed Sergius were imprisoned or shot in the late 1930s. By the beginning of the Second World War, there were only four sergianist bishops at liberty in the whole of the Soviet Union, most of the churches and monasteries had been destroyed, and the sergianist church presented a picture of complete moral and material devastation.

Another argument offered in defence of Sergianism is that similar compromises were made in the past by Orthodox hierarchs – in particular, by the Greeks under Turkish rule. But this is a slander against the Greek Orthodox. Were the Greek hierarchs, as a condition of the free functioning of their church administration, compelled to accept Islam and work for the triumph of Islam throughout the world? They were not. And yet Sergius and his followers welcomed the revolution, condemned its enemies and worked tirelessly in the interests of the world revolution.

Here is a variant on this argument: “Sergianism is supposed to be a violation of the 30th Apostolic Canon: ‘If a bishop, using secular authorities, receives through them Episcopal power in the Church: let him be deposed and excommunicated, and all those who commune with him.’ However, many Orthodox bishops received their power in this way, including very many in the pre-revolutionary Russian Church. Therefore they, too, were Sergianists by your reasoning. But they are not; so neither is Sergius.”

This argument ignores the vast difference between the secular authorities before and after the revolution, and between the ways in which these authorities worked. Before the revolution, the authorities were Orthodox and were genuinely interested in the flourishing of the Orthodox Church. While there were isolated cases in which the authorities imposed their will unjustly on the Church (for example, in the deposition of St. Arseny of Rostov), these were exceptions rather than the rule, and in general they did not prevent the promotion of pious and right-believing men to administer the Church. After the revolution, however, the “authorities” were not only not Orthodox, but anti-Orthodox and excommunicated from the Church; and they did everything in their power to impose unsuitable – that is, pro-communist – candidates for the episcopate. If, up to 1927, the bishops successfully resisted this pressure, after Sergius’ declaration (more precisely: from the time Sergius formed his first Synod in May, 1927) the resistance disappeared, and the way was open for complete domination of the Church by the antichristian authorities.

A much closer parallel to Sergianism, which the Sergianists do not like to admit, is with the renovationists who seized power in the Russian Church in 1922 on a pro-communist platform, and were anathematized by Patriarch Tikhon in 1923. In 1937 St. Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan spoke about “the renovationist nature of Sergianism”³⁰⁷. It follows that Sergius himself, who, together with the second Soviet “patriarch”, Alexis, was a former renovationist, and had therefore already once fallen away from the Church, fell away a second time into essentially the same mortal sin.

The essential identity of renovationism and Sergianism is indicated by the fact that, after Sergius’ pact with Stalin in 1943, almost the whole of the renovationist “church” poured, without repentance, into the sergianist church in order to make up the latter’s depleted ranks.

Thus on October 12, 1943 Karpov, the KGB head of the Soviets’ Council for the Affairs of the Orthodox Church, 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 Sergiite 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, Sergiite church.” On October 16 Karpov sent secret instructions to the regions not to hinder the transfer of renovationists to the Sergianist church.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Letter of Metropolitan Cyril to Hieromonk Leonid, February 23 / March 8, 1937, *Pravoslavnaia Rus’*, № 16, August 15/28, 1997, p. 7.

³⁰⁸ Karpov, in Edward E. Roslof, *Red Priests: Renovationism, Russian Orthodoxy, and Revolution, 1905-1946*, Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 194-195.

Since Karpov wanted the renovationists to join the state church, the rules for their reception were relaxed. Thus in 1944 Metropolitan Alexis (Simansky), the future patriarch, 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.³⁰⁹

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.”³¹⁰

Another argument put forward in defence of the Sergianists is that this was a passing phenomenon dependent on the existence of Soviet power, which passed into history with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. This is a little like saying that after the death of Annas and Caiaphas, or the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, the sin of Judas ceased to be a sin, and those who betrayed Christ were automatically exonerated! But sin is a spiritual phenomenon which is not expunged by external political changes, but can only be expunged by *repentance*.

“But the patriarch *has* repented!” the Sergianists declare - or rather, this is not said by the MP Sergianists, who see nothing to repent of in “Sergianism”, but by those defenders of the MP in ROCOR who are desperate to justify themselves. They point to an interview given in September, 1991 to *30 Dias*, in which 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”.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ See Metropolitan John (Snychev) of St. Petersburg, *Mitropolit Manuil (Lemeshevsky) (Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky)*, St. Petersburg, 1993, p. 185.

³¹⁰ Roslof, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

³¹¹ *30 Dias (Thirty Days)*, Rome/Sao Paolo, August-September, 1991, p. 23.

This is closer to self-justification than repentance. 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!’”³¹²

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.”³¹³ Patriarch Alexis here forgot to mention that 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!

In its “Jubilee” Council of August, 2000 the MP approved a “social document” which, among other things, recognised that “the Church must refuse to obey the State” “if the authorities force the Orthodox believers to renounce Christ and His Church”. This was immediately seized on by supporters of the unia as “proof” that Sergianism had been repented of. 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”.³¹⁴ 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. In fact, 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

³¹² Kozyrev, “[orthodox-synod] Re: The Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian persecuted Church”, orthodox-synod@yahoogroups.com, 28 November, 2002.

³¹³ Quoted by Anatoly Krasikov, “‘Tretij Rim’ i bolsheviki (bez grifa ‘sovershenno sekretno’)” (The Third Rome and the Bolsheviks), in Filatov, S.B. (ed.), *Religia i prava cheloveka (Religion and Human Rights)*, Moscow: Nauka, 1996, p. 198.

³¹⁴ *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.

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 Fathers 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 follow 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 word, it is necessary to condemn the very practice and ideology of the transformation of the MP into a Church 'of all the people'."³¹⁵

This analysis has been confirmed by events since the former KGB Colonel Putin came to power in January, 2000. The MP has adopted a submissive role in relation to the neo-Soviet power, 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. Nor does it discipline its priests who praise Stalin.

On November 9, 2001, the patriarch threw off the mask of repentance completely, stating in defence of Sergius' 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."³¹⁶

³¹⁵ Protopriest Vladimir Savitsky, Hieromonk Valentine (Salomakh) and Deacon Nicholas Savchenko, "Pis'mo iz Sankt-Peterburga" (Letter from St. Petersburg), *Otkliki* (Responses), part 1, Paris, 2001, p. 92.

³¹⁶ <http://www.ripnet.org/besieged/rparocora.htm?>

There followed an official justification of Sergianism. Thus on July 18, 2002, the Moscow Synod ratified 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).”³¹⁷

However, as we have pointed out, Soviet power was very different from the Tatars or Ottomans, and “bilateral relations” with it, unlike with those powers, involved the betrayal of the Orthodox Faith and 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 to be the heir of the Soviet State.

As recently as January 24, 2005 Metropolitan Cyril (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...”³¹⁸

In other words: “There is a wide path, the path of Sergianism; and there is a narrow path, the path of the Catacomb Church. We chose the wide path, and we will choose it again. There is ‘no space’ for the other path beside us...”

³¹⁷ *Moskovskij Tserkovnij Vestnik (Moscow Church Herald)*, №№ 14-15, pp. 243-244; quoted by Fr. Michael Ardov, “‘Sergians’ continue in the same spirit”, <http://portal-credo.ru/site/?act=english&id=13>.

³¹⁸ Gundiaev, in *Vertograd-Inform*, № 504, February 2, 2005.

II. The New Martyrs

The problem of the New Martyrs is considered non-existent by many in the present debate. After all, has not the MP canonized the New Martyrs as ROCOR has? And if there are some differences in who they count as martyrs, what does that matter? They accept (almost) all our martyrs, so they think the same way we do. In any case, is this a dogmatic issue?

It is in the first place a *canonical* issue, but one that directly touches on *dogmatic* issues. The 20th canon of the Council of Gangra declares: "If anyone shall, from a presumptuous disposition, condemn and abhor the assembly [in honour of] the martyrs, or the services performed there, and the commemoration of them, let them be anathema...." For many years the MP fell under this anathema, ignoring the decree of the Council of 1917-18 on the commemoration of the holy new martyrs, rejecting and viciously slandering them as "political criminals" and denying the very existence of a persecution against Orthodoxy in the Soviet Union. Now, in the "Jubilee" Hierarchical Sobor that took place in August, 2000, it has attempted, it would seem, to rectify this disastrous error. To what extent has it succeeded?

The major problems here from the MP'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 Sergius, 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..."³¹⁹

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. 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

³¹⁹ *Pravoslavie ili Smert'* (Orthodoxy or Death), № 8, 1998.

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.

This point will become clearer if we now turn to ROCOR's canonisation of the Tsar in 1981, in which the Tsar's feat is linked closely and explicitly with the position he occupied in the Christian State: "... The criminal murder of the Imperial Family was not merely an act of malice and falsehood, not merely an act of political reprisal directed against enemies, but was precisely an act principally of the spiritual annihilation of Russian Orthodoxy... *The last tsar was murdered with his family precisely because he was a crowned ruler, the upholder of the splendid concept of the Orthodox state; he was murdered simply because he was an Orthodox tsar; he was murdered for his Orthodoxy!*"³²⁰

Again: "The Tsar-Martyr, and his family as well, suffered for Christian piety. He was opposed to the amorality and godlessness of the communists, both on principle and by virtue of his position - on principle, because he was a deeply believing Orthodox Christian; by virtue of his position, because he was a staunch Orthodox Monarch. *For this he was killed.* To ask him anything concerning the faith was unnecessary, because he gave witness before the tormentors to his steadfastness in Christian principles by his entire previous life and works, and especially by his profoundly Christian endurance of the moral torments of his imprisonment. He was a staunch defender and protector of the Christian faith, preventing the God-haters from beginning a vicious persecution against believers in Christ and against the whole Orthodox Church. *For this reason he was removed and slain...*

"It is also known... that prior to the Revolution it was proposed that the Tsar repeal the strictures against anti-Christian secret societies, and it was threatened that if he refused he would lose his throne and his life. The sovereign firmly refused this proposal. Therefore, they deprived him of his throne and killed him. Thus, he suffered *precisely* for the faith."³²¹

Protopriest Michael Ardov has examined another part of Metropolitan Juvenal's report: "'In its approach to this subject, the Commission has striven that the glorification of the Royal Martyrs should be free from every political and other kind of time-serving. In connection with this it is necessary to stress that the canonisation of the Monarch can in no way be linked with monarchical ideology, and, moreover, does not signify the 'canonisation' of the monarchical form of government, in relation to which people's attitudes may, of course, differ.'...

³²⁰ Quoted in Fr. Alexey Young, *The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia*, San Bernardino, CA: St. Willibrord's Press, 1993, p. 84.

³²¹ Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, "The Glorification of the New Martyrs of Russia is Our Sacred Moral Duty", *Orthodox Life*, vol. 29, №. 3, May-June, 1979, pp. 24, 25.

“Naïve supporters of the Moscow Patriarchate are in no way able to understand why the long-awaited glorification of his Majesty was carried out in such an unintelligible manner. I can suggest to those who are perplexed a completely satisfying explanation. In 1993, the superior of church ‘Nikola v Pyzhakh’, Protopriest Alexander Shargunov, placed a large icon of the Tsar Martyr in his church. Two days later he was phoned from the patriarchate and told to remove it, while the superior himself had to go to Chisty Pereulok [the headquarters of the MP] to sort out the question. There the secretary of the so-called Patriarch, the so-called Bishop Arsenius, had a talk with Shargunov. In a burst of sincerity the former declared: ‘We all, including the Patriarch, venerate Tsar Nicholas as a saint. But we cannot glorify him – both the communists and the democrats will rise up against us...’

“This phrase explains all the following events. Being in fear of the communists and the democrats, the ‘sergianists’ have for years dragged out the matter of the glorification of the Royal Martyrs. And the canonisation took place only now, in the year 2000, after the election of President Putin, when the chances of the communists returning to power have become zero – it is finally possible to stop fearing them. But the Patriarchate’s fear of the ‘democrats’ has remained, and has perhaps got even stronger. That is why, in the ‘Acts of the Jubilee Council’, they speak about the crime that took place in Ekaterinburg in 1918, but there is not a word about what took place in March, 1917. But we know: the Tsar-Martyr was forced to abdicate from the Throne, not by the Bolsheviks, not by Lenin and Sverdlov, but by the traitor-generals Alexeyev and Rutsky, by the conspirator-parliamentarians Rodzyanko and Guchkov - that is, by the ‘democrats’ of that time. And for fear of their last-born children, not a word was spoken about the ‘February revolution’ at the ‘Jubilee Council’...

“In his report, the ‘president of the synodal commission for the canonisation of the saints’, the so-called Metropolitan Juvenal said: ‘We have striven also to take into account the fact of the canonisation of the Royal Family by the Russian Church Abroad in 1981, which elicited a not unambiguous reaction both in the midst of the Russian emigration, some representatives of which did not see sufficient bases for it at that time, and in Russia herself...’...

“Again a hiatus. In fact in the Patriarchate itself the glorification of the Royal Martyrs and the whole host of Russian New Martyrs and Confessors elicited a reaction that was completely unambiguous: they decisively condemned the act of the Council of the Church Abroad and declared it to be a purely political act...”³²²

³²² 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).

As regards the other martyrs, Sergius Kanaev writes: "In the report of the President 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."³²³

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 and his betrayal "worse than heresy"! The same is true of the Catacomb Elder Theodosius of Minvody, who never set foot in a MP church, but whose holiness cannot be hidden. 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).

³²³ Kanaev, "Obraschenie k pervoierarkhu RPTsZ" (Address to the First Hierarch of ROCOR), in *Otkliki*, op. cit., part 2, Paris, 2001, pp. 3-4; *Iubilejnij Arkhierejskij Sobor* (Jubilee Hierarchical Council), op. cit., pp. 43, 44.

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."³²⁴

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 1993 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."³²⁵ By the time of the council of 2000, the MP still did not feel able to canonise Sergius – probably because it feared that it would prevent a union with ROCOR. But neither did it canonise the leader of the Catacomb Church, Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd – which suggested that a later canonisation of *both* leaders was planned, 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!"³²⁶

³²⁴ "Ierei o. Oleg otvechaet na voprosy redaktsiui" (The Priest Fr. Oleg Replies to the Questions of the Editors), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (*Orthodox Russia*), № 23 (1452), December 1/14, 1991, p. 7.

³²⁵ Quoted by Fr. Peter Perekrestov, "The Schism in the Heart of Russia (Concerning Sergianism)", *Canadian Orthodox Herald*, 1999, № 4.

³²⁶ Perekrestov, "Why Now?" *Orthodox Life*, vol. 44, № 6, November-December, 1994, p. 44. 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 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..." (Eugene Polyakov, personal communication, April 5, 1992).

For in the last resort, as Fr. Peter (now a leading supporter of the ROCOR-MP union) 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."³²⁷

The MP's act of canonising both the true and the false martyrs has several serious consequences. First, it means that, if any one was still tempted to consider that the official acts of the MP had any validity at all, he can now be assured that even the MP itself does not believe in them. For consider: Archbishop Victor, Metropolitan Cyril and the whole host of Catacomb confessors were defrocked, excommunicated and cast out of the community of the "faithful" by official acts of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod. But if these "defrocked" and "excommunicated" people are now saints in the Heavenly Kingdom, this only goes to show, *as the MP now implicitly admits*, that the actions of Metropolitan Sergius and his Synod were completely uncanonical and invalid! And yet in spite of all that, the patriarch can still assert that "among the confessors of Christ we can in full measure name... his Holiness Patriarch Sergius..."

Secondly, it also shows that *the MP does not know what martyrdom is, and looks upon it in an essentially ecumenist spirit which deprives it of all meaning*. Some years ago, a writer for the Anglican "Church Times" was reviewing a book on the "martyrs" of the Anglican Reformation. In the spirit of that ecumenism that has been at the root of Anglicanism for centuries, this reviewer claimed that both the Catholics who died for their faith at the hands of the Anglicans and the Anglicans who died for their faith died at the hands of the Catholics died for the truth as they saw it and so were martyrs! For it was not important, wrote the reviewer, who was *right* in this conflict: the only thing that matters is that they were *sincere* in their beliefs. And he went on to deny that heresy in general even exists: the only real heresy, he said, is the belief that there is such a thing as heresy!!

³²⁷ Perekhrestov, "Why Now?" *op.cit.*, p. 43.

The present act of the MP presupposes a very similar philosophy. It presupposes that you can be a martyr whether you oppose the Antichrist or submit to him, whether you confess the truth or lie through your teeth, whether you imitate the love of Christ or the avarice of Judas. The perfect philosophy for our lukewarm times, which have no zeal, either for or against the truth!

Now lukewarmness is achieved when hot and cold are mixed together, so that that which is “hot”, zeal for the faith, is deprived of its essential quality, while that which is “cold”, hatred for the faith, is masked by an appearance of tolerance. But the Lord abominates this attitude even more than the “cold” hatred of the truth: “Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth” (Revelation 3.16).

This lukewarmness is identified, by Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava, with “the religious-moral fall of bishops, [which is] one of the most characteristic signs of the last times. Especially terrible is the fall of bishops when they fall away from the dogmas of the faith, or, as the apostle puts it, they want to pervert the Gospel of Christ (Galatians 1.7). To such the apostle orders that we say anathema: Whoever will preach to you a Gospel other than that which we preached to you, he writes, let him be anathema (Galatians 1.9). And one must not linger here, he says: A heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that such a one is perverted, condemning himself (Titus 3.10-11). Otherwise, that is, for indifference to apostasy from the truth, you may be struck by the wrath of God: because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth.”³²⁸

If the Lord Himself spews such lukewarmness out of His mouth, then so should we. And this is what the Kaliningrad parish of ROCOR commendably does in its epistle to the ROCOR hierarchs of November 1/14, 2000: “What throng of new martyrs was canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate if, in that multitude, there are ‘saints’ who fought against the Church, and who later suffered at the hands of their masters - but not for Christ, having become, rather, victims who were offered up upon the altar of the revolution, just as were thousands of other Bolsheviks and liberal dreamers? A throng of new martyrs where victims and executioners, holy martyrs and ‘Christians’ (at whose orders these new martyrs were shot and sent to prisons and labour-camps), find themselves side by side?”

It has been asserted by ROCOR that the glorification of the royal new martyrs by the MP “is an initial act of repentance; hence, one of the reasons for the division [between ROCOR and the MP] has been eliminated, for the most part.” The problem is: an act of repentance must employ at least a few

³²⁸ *Pis'ma Arkhiiepiskopa Feofana Poltavskogo i Pereyaslavskogo (The Letters of Archbishop Theophanes of Poltava and Pereyaslavl)*, Jordanville, 1976, p. 29.

words expressing repentance – and there is not one such word in the MP's statements.

As Hieromonk (now Bishop) Vladimir and Protopriest Sergius write: "Has such a thing ever been seen, that the bishops of God would anticipate and justify heretics and schismatics in that of which the latter do not only not think to repent, but which they even exalt to the rank and honour of 'saving the Church'? Throughout all history, the Church has not known examples of impenitent behaviour being covered over by 'love'. On the contrary, the Holy Church has always condemned any acts of 'glorification' by heretics - especially those in which true martyrs for Christ are commingled into a single whole with pseudo-martyrs (e.g. Canons 9 and 34 of the Council of Laodicea; Canon 63 of the VIth Ecumenical Council). At the same time, there is no doubt of the legitimacy of the question: do heretics have a moral and legal right, without bringing forth repentance in the True Church, to glorify those very ones whom they had betrayed? If a murderer glorifies his victim; a robber and thief of what is sacred -- the one robbed; and a blasphemer -- God, *without repenting* of the given sin, then this act of 'glorification' is not simply an 'atonement' and a setting-forth upon the way of the Lord, but an even greater blasphemy, a more refined sacrilege. For 'the virtue of heretics,' says St. John Chrysostom, 'is worse than any debauchery.' 'Not to confess one's transgressions means to increase them... Sin places upon us a blot which it is impossible to wash away with a thousand well-springs; only by tears and repentance can this be done,' says that selfsame Bishop. 'None is so good, and none so merciful of heart, as the Lord; but even He does not forgive those who do not repent.' (St. Mark the Ascetic). Hence, is not this 'glorification' by the MP comparable to that when the Roman soldiers, having put a scarlet robe upon Christ, 'glorified' Him, saying: 'Hail, King of the Jews'?! Here we have in view not the entire Russian nation, but the very system of the MP."

In conclusion, the MP has not only not delivered itself from the burden of its past apostasy by its decision on the new martyrs: it has significantly increased that burden. The early sergianists renounced the path of confession and martyrdom and condemned those who embarked upon it – but at least they did not change the concept of martyrdom itself. The later sergianists, while continuing to confess heresy and persecute the Orthodox, have added a further sin: by placing, in the spirit of ecumenism, an equality sign between martyrdom and apostasy, they have degraded the exploits of the true saints and presented false models for emulation.

And so they fall under the anathema of Canon 34 of the Council of Laodicea: "No Christian shall forsake the martyrs of Christ, and turn to false martyrs, that is, to those of the heretics, or those who formerly were heretics; for they are aliens from God. Let those, therefore, who go after them, be **anathema**."

III. Ecumenism

Since the MP, led by KGB General Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad, entered the World Council of Churches in 1961, it has signed up to a long series of declarations renouncing the central tenet of Christian soteriology, namely, that salvation is in Christ alone. In the early, inter-Christian stage of ecumenism, the MP officially prayed with, and recognized the sacraments of, almost all the Catholic and Protestant heretics. From the early 1980s, it entered the stage of inter-religious, "super-ecumenism", praying with Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and others. In 1989 the MP's Publishing Department slaked the spiritual thirst of the faithful by publishing – the Koran! In 1990 it signed the Chambésy agreement with the Monophysites, removing the anathemas on these so-called "Oriental Orthodox". Chambésy was followed by the Seventh General Assembly of the WCC in Canberra in 1991, in which the Orthodox delegates blasphemed against the Faith still more blatantly. Thus aboriginal pagans invited the participants to pass through a "cleansing cloud of smoke" uniting Aboriginal spirituality to Christian spirituality (!). In spite of this, Metropolitan Cyril (Gundiaev), head of the Department of External Relations of the MP, said that the WCC was "our common home and we want it to be the cradle of the one church".³²⁹

On November 13, 1991, "Patriarch" Alexis made his boldest ecumenical step yet when 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 [the Talmud!] is our law, your prophets are our prophets." Here the patriarch openly, in the name of the Orthodox Church, confessed that "we are one with the Jews [!], without renouncing Christianity and not in spite of Christianity, but in the name of and by dint of Christianity, while the Jews are one with us not in spite of Judaism, but in the name of and by dint of true Judaism. We are separated from the Jews because we are not yet completely Christian [!], while the Jews are separated from us because they are not yet completely Jews. For the fullness of Christianity embraces both itself and Judaism, while the fullness of Judaism is Christianity... The Jewish people are near to us in faith. Your law is our law, your prophets are our prophets."

The patriarch called on the Jews to work together with the Christians to build "the new world order" ...³³⁰

³²⁹ *Christian News*, April 1 and 8, 1991; reprinted in "Ecumenism down under", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, vol. XXIV, № 45 (1149), August 5/18, 1991, p. 3; *Keston News Service*, № 370, March 7, 1991, p. 2.

³³⁰ *Rech' Patriarkha Aleksea II k rabbinam g. Nyu Yorka (S.Sh.A.) i Eres' Zhidovstvoyushchikh*, (*The Speech of Patriarch Alexis II to the Rabbis of New York (U.S.A.) and the Heresy of the Judaizers*) U.S.A., 1993 (MS, in Russian), Moscow, 1992, pp. 8-10 ®.

In March, 1992, the heads of the Local Orthodox Churches, including Patriarch Alexis, met in Constantinople and issued a communiqué in which they officially renounced proselytism in the Christian countries of the West (point 4), thereby demonstrating the main consequence of ecumenism for the heretics: a ban on their entry into the Orthodox Church even if they repent! ...

Fr. Nicholas Savchenko has summed up the nature of the MP's 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 limites 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 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 (Alfeyev). 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 understanding 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..."³³¹

However, from the 1990s the anti-ecumenist teaching of ROCOR was beginning to make inroads into Russia, and the ecumenical activity of the MP, while continuing without interruption, became less prominent. Thus at the 8th General Assembly of the WCC in Harare in 1999 the delegation of the MP was merely symbolic. However, at the recent (2006) General Assembly in Porto-Alegri, Brazil, the MP's delegation was again representative. Evidently, the slight slackening in ecumenical activity in the late 1990s, caused mainly by ROCOR's preaching of the truth, has been succeeded by a more confident resumption of this activity now that ROCOR has been neutralized...³³²

Proponents of the ROCOR-MP unia have attempted to make much of the Jubilee 2000 Council's document on relations with the heterodox, in which a few concessions were made to the opponents of ecumenism, such as: "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."

However, wrote Protopriest Michael Arlov, "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

³³¹ Savchenko, "Tserkov' v Rossii i 'Vsemirnij Soviet Tserkvej'" (The Church in Russia and the World Council of Churches), *Pravoslavnaia Rus'* (Orthodox Russia), № 2 (1743), January 15/28, 2004, pp. 10-12.

³³² Igumen Gregory Lourié, "O natsionalizatsii prekrasnogo. Mysli po povodu IX General'noj Asamblei VSTs (On the Nationalization of the Beautiful. Thought on the 9th General Assembly of the WCC), <http://portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=comment&id=924>.

continued, and it is suggested that the World Council of Churches be not abandoned, but reformed..."³³³

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 Bishop) 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 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.³³⁴

After the Council, there was no let-up in the MP's ecumenical activities. Thus on August 18, 2000, 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..."³³⁵

All this heretical activity falls directly under the anathema against ecumenism hurled by the ROCOR in 1983 and confirmed by it in 1998; and there is no doubt that if it were to join the MP now, ROCOR would not only fall under the anathemas of the Ecumenical and Pan-Orthodox Councils against a whole series of heresies, but also under its own 1983 anathema...

³³³ Ardov, *op. cit.*

³³⁴ *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.

³³⁵ *Associated Press*, April 21, 2005; *Corriere della Sera*, April 24, 2005.

Conclusion

We can see from the above that not only have the main conditions posed by ROCOR for union with the MP at the beginning of the 1990s – rejection of Sergianism, glorification of the Holy New Martyrs and rejection of Ecumenism – not been met: they are nowhere near to being met. Even the MP's supposed glorification of the New Martyrs amounts more to their degradation than their glorification, and involves an understanding of martyrdom and the confession of the faith that amounts to a new heresy! By the criteria ROCOR has set herself, and leaving aside other important issues not discussed here (e.g. relations with other True Orthodox Churches, the betrayal of ROCOR members inside Russia who fled to ROCOR from the MP, the extreme moral corruption of the MP hierarchy, the political demands that will be imposed on ROCOR once inside the MP, etc.), ROCOR should *not* join the MP.

“Can two walk together unless they be agreed?” asks the Prophet Amos (3.3). The answer is clearly: *no*; for unity, for the Orthodox Christian, must be founded on unity *in the truth* and on no other basis. If, on the other hand, we mould our understanding of the truth in accordance with our need for some emotional or national or political unity, then we fall into that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of Truth, union with Whom is the whole aim of the Christian life.

If ROCOR does join the MP, she will fall under a whole series of fearsome anathemas: the anathemas against the heretics of the World Council of Churches, including ROCOR's own anathema of 1983; the anathemas against Bolshevism and those who cooperate with it (for there can be no doubt now that Putin's Russia is the successor of the Soviet Union); the anathema against renovationism (of which Sergianism is the heir); the anathemas of the Catacomb Church against the Sergianists; and the anathema against those who “forsake the martyrs of Christ, and turn to false martyrs” (whose crown, undoubtedly, will be the Russian Judas Metropolitan Sergius himself). Nor should the vainglorious thought that ROCOR within the MP can influence it to the better be taken seriously: ROCOR could influence the MP only when she was *outside* it and criticising it from a position of real independence. Once inside, she will simply be the salt that has lost its savour, of which the Lord of the Church said that “it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under the foot of men” (Matthew 5.13).

*March 18/31, 2006.
St. Edward the Martyr, King of England.*

(Slightly revised from the version published in *Vernost'*, № 42)

25. HOW THE MP FELL UNDER THE 1983 ANATHEMA

The founder of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) is usually considered to be the founder of the first of the two major heresies of the MP, Sergianism, but not of the second, Ecumenism. This is broadly correct, because, although we find ecumenist statements among his works³³⁶, Sergius did not receive any instructions from his communist masters to enter the ecumenical movement. It was only during the time of his successors, Alexis I (Simansky) and Pimev (Izvekov), when political conditions had changed and the communist party sought to infiltrate and use the ecumenical purpose for its own ends, that we find Sergianism compounded by the apostasy from the Orthodox Faith that constitutes the “pan-heresy” of ecumenism.

False Moscow Councils

After the Second World War, and even before its end, the Soviet Communist Party, and therefore the Sovietized MP, planned to draw the other Orthodox Churches into the MP’s orbit. And so in January, 1945, a council was convened in Moscow, consisting 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 S. 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. Alexeyev 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,

³³⁶ Thus in his article, “The Relationship of an Orthodox Person to his Church and to the Heterodox” (*Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1993, № 3) he wrote: “Outside the Church one does *not* find an immediate darkness between the Church and the heretical communities. Rather, there is found a partial shadow, which in its own way falls upon the schismatics and the self-willed (heretics). These two groups cannot be in the strict sense considered strangers to the Church nor completely torn away from Her.”

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 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.”³³⁷

³³⁷ Shumilo, “Sovetskij 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>®.

The MP, having meekly submitted to the rule of the totalitarian dictator Stalin, was now in effect a totalitarian organization itself. All decisions in the Church depended effectively on the single will of the patriarch, and through him, of Stalin. For, as Fr. Sergius Gordun has written: "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."³³⁸

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."³³⁹

After the enthronement of Alexis (on February 4), writes V. Alexeyev, Stalin ordered the Council to congratulate Alexis on his election and to 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 depositories of 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... Naturally, 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.'"³⁴⁰

³³⁸ 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), vol. 158, I-1990, p. 94 ®.

³³⁹ Jane Ellis, *The Russian Orthodox Church*, London: Croom Helm, 1986, p. 215.

³⁴⁰ Alexeyev, "Marshal Stalin doveriaet Tserkvi" (Marshal Stalin trusts the Church), *Agitator*, № 10, 1989, pp. 27-28 ®.

As was to be expected, the Eastern Patriarchs 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’”.³⁴¹

The price the Eastern Patriarchs 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.”³⁴²

In 1948 the World Council of Churches was founded. Seeing this as an important outpost of Anglo-American power, the Bolsheviks at first tried to mock it and remove all Orthodox participation in it. And so another “Pan-Orthodox” council was convened in Moscow in July, 1948, just before the First General Assembly of the WCC. 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 were not represented.

When Karpov, the real leader of the Council, 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”.³⁴³

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.³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ Shumilo, *op. cit.*

³⁴² RTsKhIDNI.F.17.Op.132.D.111.L.27; Monk Benjamin, “Letopis’ Tserkovnykh Sobytij” (Chronicle of Church Events), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis3.htm>, vol. 3, p. 81 ®.

³⁴³ RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 132, d. 8, l. 30; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, vol. 3, p. 128.

³⁴⁴ Bishop Ambrose of Methone, personal communication, November 5, 2005.

The council, in line with Stalin's foreign policy, denounced the West and the Vatican and condemned the ecumenical movement, which had received a new lease of life at the First General Assembly of the World Council of Churches which was taking place in Amsterdam in the same month.³⁴⁵

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.³⁴⁶ 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.³⁴⁷

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.³⁴⁸ And in April, 1950, a council took place at Prešov in Slovakia attended by 820 delegates, at which it was agreed to revoke the Uzhgorod unia of 1649 and return to Orthodoxy. The "converted" uniates formed a new, East Slovakian diocese of the Czech Orthodox Church.³⁴⁹

However, as Metropolitan Tikhon of Omsk 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."³⁵⁰

³⁴⁵ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 128-131.

³⁴⁶ M.V. Shkarovsky; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 81.

³⁴⁷ M.V. Shkarovsky; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 105-106.

³⁴⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 137-138.

³⁴⁹ 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 ®.

³⁵⁰ Metropolitan 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> ®.

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.³⁵¹ 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 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."³⁵²

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.

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 Ecumenical Pentecost can be nothing other than an old echo of the false teaching of these deceived heretics."³⁵³

³⁵¹ Documents in M. Shkarovskij, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' i Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo s 1943 po 1964 gg.* (The Russian Orthodox Church and the Soviet State from 1943 to 1964) ®.

³⁵² *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1948, № 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 ®.

³⁵³ Archimandrite Charalampus Vasilopoulos, *Oikoumenismos khoris maska* (Ecumenism Unmasked), Athens: Orthodoxos Typos, 1988, p. 122 (in Greek).

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 for the communist Prime Minister of Bulgaria. Karpov declared that the guests had become personally convinced in Moscow that the Russian Orthodox 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 Orthodox Church had been guaranteed throughout the world.³⁵⁴

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.³⁵⁵ 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...

The Communists Become Ecumenists

Since the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948, it had been the Ecumenical Patriarchate that had made the running in ecumenism among the Orthodox. 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. This indicated that the communists had changed their minds about ecumenism, and decided that the Bolsheviks' cause would be best served, not by boycotting it, but by joining it.

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.³⁵⁶ 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.

³⁵⁴ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 3, p. 133.

³⁵⁵ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), № 8, 1951; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, pp. 12-13.

³⁵⁶ Andrew Blane (ed.), *Georges Florovsky*, Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993, p. 122.

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.

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."³⁵⁷

In 1959, as a sign of the changing times, the MP joined the European Conference of Churches as a founding member... 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 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

³⁵⁷ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1958, № 6; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 30.

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 other western church leaders. At the end of August, Kuroyedov suggested to the patriarch that he retire Metropolitan Nicholas from administering 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 (there was no reply). On September 19, the MP Synod retired him. On December 13 he died in suspicious circumstances; many believe he was murdered.³⁵⁸

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 agent³⁵⁹, and so he had to be replaced. 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 Nicodemus (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.

Fr. Sergius continues: “The personality of Archimandrite Nicodemus (Rotov), later Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, is 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 Christianity and the tasks of the Church of Christ as those are understood by the Orthodox

³⁵⁸ "Nekotorie Stranitsy Biografii Mitropolita Nikolaia (Yarushevicha)" (Some Pages from the Biography of Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich), *Vertograd-Inform*, №№ 7-9 (16-18), 1996, pp. 16-17 ©; Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1999, p. 636.

³⁵⁹ 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@yahoo.com, January 19, 2006.

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..."³⁶⁰

Certainly, a new anti-ecclesiastical policy, the so-called "Khrushchev persecution" was in the making, and therefore needed masking.

In November-December, 1960 Patriarchs Alexis and Athenagoras met in Constantinople, and discussed questions related to the Second Vatican Council. After their meeting Bishop Nicodemus, now president of the MP's Department of External Relations, gave a press conference at which he said: "The Russian Church has no intention to take 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; and unless it accepts the dogmatic reforms accomplished in the Orthodox Church."³⁶¹

Meanwhile, the pressure on the Church inside the Soviet Union 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 March 30 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

³⁶⁰ Gordun, *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 133, 134.

³⁶¹ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 4, p. 42.

World Council of Churches declaring the desire of the Russian Orthodox Church to become a member of the World Council of Churches."³⁶²

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 particular reference to the points envisaged by the 1920 encyclical of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate.'"³⁶³

Also discussed was a catalogue of topics for a future Pan-Orthodox Council. This was used by the MP as a way of ensuring that no topic that might prove embarrassing to the Soviet government would be discussed. For, as Gordienko and Novikov write, "in the course of the debate on the catalogue, the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation [led by Archbishop Nicodemus] 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."³⁶⁴

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!³⁶⁵

The argument used by Nicodemus 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,

³⁶² Monk Benjamin, "Letopis' Tserkovnoj Istorii (1961-1971)" (A Chronicle of Church History (1961-1971)), <http://www.zlatoust.ws/letopis5.htm>, p. 1 ®.

³⁶³ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 3.

³⁶⁴ "The Russian Orthodox Church in the System of Contemporary Christianity", in A. Preobrazhensky (ed.), *The Russian Orthodox Church*, Moscow: Progress, 1988, p. 387.

³⁶⁵ See William C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1945-1970*, London: Oxford University Press, 1973, chapter 9.

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..."³⁶⁶

In November, 1961 Archbishop Nicodemus, accompanied by Bishop Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh and "a Russian government courier who is responsible for their comfort and all their expenses"³⁶⁷, 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 at its Third General Assembly in New Delhi. 142 churches voted for, 4 abstained and 3 voted against. The Vatican immediately issued a warning 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, during the Assembly, when an attempt was made to condemn communism, Archbishop Nicodemus immediately proposed a resolution listing the vices of capitalism, as a result of which both resolutions were withdrawn.³⁶⁸

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".³⁶⁹ 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."³⁷⁰

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!

³⁶⁶ Archbishop Basil of Brussels, *Vospominania* (Reminiscences); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 3-4.

³⁶⁷ *The Daily Telegraph* (London), November 22, 1961.

³⁶⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, p. 5.

³⁶⁹ V. Moss, "Ecucommunism", *Living Orthodoxy*, September-October, 1989, vol. XI, № 5, pp. 13-18.

³⁷⁰ Kuraiev, "Vo dni pechal'nie Velikago posta" (During the Sad Days of the Great Fast), *Den' (Day)*, № 13, March 29 / April 4, 1992 ®.

In 1968 the Fourth General Assembly of the WCC took place 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 assembles: '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."³⁷¹

Again, at the WCC's General Assembly at Nairobi in 1975, the Orthodox delegates, having signed an agreement to recognize the sacraments of the

³⁷¹ Vitaly, "Ekumenizm" (Ecumenism), *Pravoslavniy Vestnik (Orthodox Herald)*, June, 1969, pp. 14-30; *Moskva (Moscow)*, 1991, № 9, p. 149 ®.

non-Orthodox delegates, had declared that “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” – which gave the lie to their excuse that they were participating in the ecumenical movement “to witness to the non-Orthodox”.³⁷²

Rapprochement with the Catholics

During the New Delhi Congress, Nicodemus announced that the Vatican had invited the MP to send observers to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965); 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.

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 (№ 58/30).³⁷³

The arrival of Russian Orthodox observers at the Council in time for its opening produced consternation in French Catholic circles, which accused the Vatican of “selling out” to communism.³⁷⁴ 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.”³⁷⁵

³⁷² “Orthodoxy and the Ecumenical Movement”, *Orthodox Christian Witness*, October 27 / November 9, 1997, p. 2.

³⁷³ Protopresbyter Vitaly Borovoj, “I on byl veren do smerti” (He, too, was faithful unto death); Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 6-7.

³⁷⁴ *Informations Catholiques Internationales* (International Catholic Information), January 1, 1963, p. 29; *Itinéraires* (Journeys), № 7, February, 1963, pp. 177-178; *La Croix* (The Cross), February 15, 1963, p. 5 (in French).

³⁷⁵ *France Nouvelle* (New France), January 16-22, 1963, p. 15 (F).

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 observers – to infiltrate the camp of the enemy. And the possibility exists that their main agent of infiltration was precisely the MP's Metropolitan Nicodemus...

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 Nicodemus [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 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."³⁷⁶

This proved that beneath the "eirenic" ecumenical activities of the Vatican, there was a steely determination to take over the MP without any respect for the latter as a church. Havryliv was re-ordained by Nicodemus – a clear indication that Rome accepted the sacraments of the Orthodox for only as long as it suited her. When she had gained control, however, such recognition would no longer be forthcoming...

³⁷⁶ 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 Nicodemus' time taught at the Leningrad Theological Academy, told, among other things, that with Nicodemus' blessing he celebrated 'the Eastern Rite Liturgy' in Nicodemus' house church at the Leningrad Theological Academy." (*Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 276, note).

On December 16, 1969, on the initiative of Metropolitan Nicodemus, the MP Synod resolved to allow Catholics and Old Ritualists to receive communion from Orthodox priests if they ask for it.³⁷⁷

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 Nicodemus 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 Grigorious 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 Nicodemus, shocks us and deeply saddens us.' I recounted this reaction to Metropolitan Nicodemus. He even became angry: 'It's not important what they say on Athos. Athos is not an Autocephalous Church.'" ³⁷⁸

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 give sacraments, but itself becomes a partaker of their heresy."

Archbishop Averky of Jordanville commented: "Now, even if some entertained some sort of doubts about how we should regard the

³⁷⁷ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii* (Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate), 1970, № 1, p. 5 ®.

³⁷⁸ Monk Benjamin, *op.cit.*, part 5, p. 40.

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* [emphasis in the original] and can no longer be considered Orthodox."³⁷⁹

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 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 1961 statute taking control of the parishes away from the bishops and clergy was confirmed³⁸⁰, as was (unanimously) Nicodemus' 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".³⁸¹

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 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

³⁷⁹ Averky, *Contemporary Life in the Light of the Word of God: Sermons and Speeches* (1969-1973), volume III, Jordanville, p. 216.

³⁸⁰ 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).

³⁸¹ *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.

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.”

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.

“[There follows a discussion of Timothy of Alexandria’s explanation of this in *The Rudder*.]

"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."³⁸²

"Nikodimovschina"

From the 1970s we see the ascendancy in the MP of a school of thought devoted both to the interests of the Soviet State and of the ecumenical movement which has been called "Nikodimovschina" from its first leader and originator, Metropolitan Nicodemus, KGB Agent "Sviatoslav".

The fruits of Nicodemus' activity was soon evident. "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, including the Rhodesian Patriotic Front, believed to be responsible for a massacre of British missionaries in 1978."³⁸³

³⁸² *Tserkovnaia Zhizn'* (Church Life), July-December, 1971, pp. 52-54; Monk Benjamin, *op. cit.*, part 5, pp. 52-53.

³⁸³ Dr. Olga Ackerly, "High Treason in ROCOR: The Rapprochement with Moscow", http://stnicholascandles.com/High_Treason.htm, p. 32.

Ever since writing his master's thesis on Pope John XXIII, the man who led the Catholic Church onto the ecumenical scene, Metropolitan Nicodemus had been trying to do the same for the Moscow Patriarchate. Hierodeacon (now Hieromonk) Theophanes (Areskin) writes: "Metropolitan Nicodemus 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 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 Nicodemus 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 Nicodemus, '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 Nicodemus 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 Nicodemus, 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.”³⁸⁴

The death of Nicodemus in 1978 in Rome at the feet of Pope John-Paul I³⁸⁵ was a graphic symbol of the true direction of inter-Christian ecumenism – aided and abetted, on the Orthodox side, by the KGB. His 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 Nicodemus, Alexis celebrated a festive service for the repose of his soul in the Moscow Cathedral of the Epiphany, while another of Nicodemus’ disciples, the present Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev), celebrated a similar service in the Alexander Nevsky Lavra in Leningrad.³⁸⁶

Alexis, an Estonian by birth (he was bishop in Tallin before his transfer to Leningrad), had been a KGB agent with codename “Drozdov” since 1958 and an active ecumenist for almost as long as his mentor. He was a delegate to the Third General Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961, (with Metropolitans Nicodemus and Anthony (Bloom)), 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

³⁸⁴ Hierodeacon Theophanes, “The Head of the Moscow Patriarchate”, *Vertograd-Inform*, № 20, October, 2000, pp. 18-19.

³⁸⁵ “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.

³⁸⁶ L. Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 129.

and the church in society; and, realizing this, do not display any particular activeness in extending the influence of Orthodoxy among the population.”³⁸⁷

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.³⁸⁸

“Already in 1966,” writes Hierodeacon Theophanes, “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, 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.

³⁸⁷ Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin File*, London: Allen Lane the Penguin Press, 1999, pp. 639-640.

³⁸⁸ Andrew and Mitrokhin, *op.cit.*, p. 650.

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 Corinthians12.13).' 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 planter of the ecumenist heresy in the MP was Metropolitan Nicodemus (Rotov).”³⁸⁹

The Anathema against Ecumenism

In 1982, 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.³⁹⁰ The next year, the Vancouver General Assembly of the WCC 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.

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...”

³⁸⁹ Hierodeacon Theophanes, op. cit., pp. 15-18.

³⁹⁰ See Archbishop Vitaly, "The 1983 Sobor of Bishops", *Orthodox Christian Witness*, August 20 / September 2, 1984, p. 4.

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 knowingly 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**."³⁹¹

The implication of this anathema was clear: all Orthodox Churches that were fully participating members of the WCC – and this, as we have seen, included the MP – 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..."³⁹²

However, this most authoritative condemnation of ecumenism yet had no discernible effect on the apostates: the 1980s and 1990s were the decades of "super-ecumenism", that is, not only inter-Christian but also inter-religious ecumenism, when there seemed to be no limit to the blasphemy against the Orthodox Faith committed by "Orthodox" hierarchs. Thus Metropolitan Pitirim of Volokolamsk asserted that ecumenism should include "all men of good will", including atheists; Patriarch Parthenius of Alexandria declared that Mohammed was an Apostle of God; and Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow asserted that Christians and Jews have essentially the same faith, and sent regular messages of congratulations and encouragement to Monophysites, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims and Buddhists. After a slight "cooling" in the late 1990s, the ecumenists' zeal for blasphemy has resumed, with the MP sending a 27-member delegation to WCC's General Assembly Brazil in 2006.

³⁹¹ 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.

³⁹² "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) ®.

The only thing that has changed in these decades is that the Church that issued the anathema, ROCOR, has faltered in its understanding, not only of ecumenism and of the MP's full and unrestrained participation in it, but of the very meaning of heresy and anathemas on heresy. Thus the ROCOR priest Alexander Lebedev called the idea that the anathema strikes down all ecumenists "the heresy of universal jurisdiction". The present writer replied to Fr. Alexander: "Thinking about your 'heresy of universal jurisdiction', 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 '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).³⁹³ 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.

³⁹³ Again, St. Dionysius the Areopagite writes: “The hierarchs have the power of excommunication as expressers of the divine statutes. This is not to say that the All-Wise Godhead slavishly follows their irrational whims, but that they are guided by the Spirit regarding those worthy of excommunication” (*On Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, chapter 7).

“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...”³⁹⁴

*March 31 / April 13, 2006.
St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow and Enlightener of America.*

³⁹⁴ V. Moss, “Re: [paradosis] The Heresy of Universal Jurisdiction”, orthodox-tradition@egroups.com, October 12, 2000.

26. LESSONS IN RUSSIANNES FROM A SOVIET POLITICIAN

He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.
Matthew 24.13.

The proposed union between the MP and ROCOR would seem to be a strictly ecclesiastical matter. And yet it is strange how many politicians and economists are getting involved – and always on the side of the union rather than against it. Of course, the first among these is KGB President Putin himself, whose initiative has propelled the whole process from the side of the MP, and whose interest in creating a series of spy-stations in ROCOR parishes throughout the western world is obvious. More recently, we learned that the Russian-American financier Boris Jordan has been invited to speak at the May Sobor. What business (financial or otherwise) does the former chief executive of Gazprom Media and general director of its NTV television network have with this strictly dogmatic-canonical matter?!

Another example is Natalia Narochitskaya, “a State Duma deputy and well-known historian”, who in an article in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* suggests that ROCOR should cast away all doubts concerning the proposed union with the MP. Naturally, Narochitskaya does not discuss dogmas or canons. Her arguments are frankly emotional. “Today’s doubts are like temptations endured by a person who wants to be baptized but the enemy of mankind whispers into his ear: Wait, you are not ready; don’t do it today, do it tomorrow!... [However, there may be no tomorrow.] At a time when all the forces in the world have united to prevent Russia from restoring her national and religious identity, the Russian people cannot see the virtue and truth of a Church which cannot set aside secondary matters and instead of offering an embrace, requests that a score be settled.”

Of course, we would expect Duma deputies in today’s neo-Soviet Russian Federation to know all about “the enemy of mankind” and his temptations! As for the grace of baptism, this is indeed an issue. ROCOR has the grace of baptism; the MP does not. So ROCOR joining the MP rather than the MP joining ROCOR means ROCOR *losing* the grace of baptism rather than acquiring it. Again, ROCOR now has the Body and Blood of Christ; the MP does not. So if ROCOR were to join the MP rather than the other way round, she would lose the grace of the Eucharist, thereby fulfilling the words of the Prophet Jeremiah: “*The Holy Flesh has passed from you*” (Jeremiah 11.15). Which is precisely why the enemy of mankind is whispering to her hierarchs to join the MP!

“The Russian people cannot see the virtue and truth of a Church which cannot set aside secondary matters...” Has Narochitskaya asked the opinion of the Russian people? Does she really know what they think? Are they really

indignant with ROCOR for not joining the MP? Why, then, does such a tiny proportion of the Russian people go regularly to the MP churches (the statistics are especially poor in Moscow)? Is the truth not rather that the Russian cannot see the virtue and truth in the *MP*, with its KGB-homosexual metropolitans who trade in duty-free tobacco and alcohol, praise the new world order, hob-nob with rabbis and popes and muftis and imams – and seize by force the churches of the True Orthodox Christians?

But these are “secondary matters” in Narochnitskaya’s eyes. Otherwise she wouldn’t be a State Duma deputy, would she? Secondary, too, for her are the heresies of ecumenism and sergianism...

“What kind of faith is it without all-forgiving love; what kind of Orthodox Christians are people who try to see the mote in a neighbor’s eye; what kind of love for Russia is this if expressed as admiration for oneself rather than for Russia? [For while] Christian Europe has surrendered without resistance and is disappearing, it is post-Soviet Russia alone – however paradoxically – that is rising up.”

“Paradoxical” is a good word in this context. A better would be: “glaring and complete contradiction”. So “post-Soviet” (you mean: “neo-Soviet”, Ms. Narochnitskaya) Russia is “alone” rising up? How can the Sodom and Gomorrah that is modern Russia be described as “rising up” in any meaningful sense? Aren’t you forgetting the rampant crime, the prostitution, the drug-taking? What about the demographic catastrophe, caused by the fact that Russian men drink themselves to early deaths out of despair, while Russian women exceed the women of all other nations in the numbers of their abortions? (A Russian priest from Jerusalem told me recently that he regularly confesses pilgrims from Russia who have had eight or nine abortions – and these must be the more pious ones since they go to confession!) What about the almost complete grip of organized criminals on business? Or the almost complete disappearance of free speech in the media? Or the sheer savagery in Chechnya? Or the vast number of suicides in the army? Or the return of the red star and the hammer and sickle to public life in “post-“ Soviet Russia? Or – worst of all – the dithyrambs offered by both priests and politicians to Stalin, the worst butcher of Christians, and human beings in general, in world history?

“It is sad to read the words of lay émigrés who, isolating themselves in an ivory tower, endlessly reiterate and project upon today’s Russia and today’s Russians the notions of the ‘cursed days’ and the demons of the 1920s. One must be completely and intentionally isolated from reality, and refuse to change anything, to fail to see how different today’s Russians, today’s Russia and her much-suffering Church are from antiquated clichés.”

Now where do I remember reading this phrase “ivory tower” before? Ah yes! In Metropolitan Sergius’ declaration: “Only ivory-tower dreamers can think that such an enormous society as our Orthodox Church, with the whole of its organization, can have a peaceful existence in the State while hiding itself from the authorities.” Rejecting these “ivory-tower dreamers”, Metropolitan Sergius decided to build his own ivory tower: forgetting that friendship with the world is enmity with God (James 4.4), he decided to become friends with Stalin, thereby winning “peace” for himself but torments and death for the rest of the Orthodox population...

But what is Ms. Narochnitskaya saying: that the days of Lenin and Stalin were not “cursed days”, and that the demons did not control Russia then?! Is she saying that the descriptions of the horrors of those days are simply “antiquated clichés”? If so, then she is not the historian she claims to be. At least she is not denying that the Russian Church is “much-suffering”. But of course she cannot, unless she “completely and intentionally isolates herself from reality”, admit that that word applies to the contemporary MP, one of the richest and most privileged business corporations in Russia today. Even in Soviet times MP hierarchs would go round in limousines: they are no poorer now – unlike their much-suffering flock, who somehow do not seem to benefit from the enormous riches acquired by their hierarchy, but have to, for example, pay 1000 rubles for a prayer of absolution to be read over them to remove the sin of abortion...

In case what I have said should be derided as the word of a foreigner who knows nothing about Russia, let me cite the words of Archpriest Lev Lebedev, a convert from the MP to ROCOR, who knew the true condition of the MP from the inside: “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 Sovdepia 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 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 *prosphora* 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....

"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 unrecognisable 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 demonised 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 many 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...³⁹⁵

"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

³⁹⁵ 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.*'" ("Dve Tserkvi, dve very i raznie novomucheniki. Razmyshlenia po sluchaiu konchiny arhimandrita Ioanna (Krestiankina)" (Two Churches, two faiths and different new martyrs. Thoughts on the occasion of the death of Archimandrite Ioann (Krestiankin)", <http://portal-credo.ru/site/print.php?act=comment&id=915>®. (V.M.)

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."³⁹⁶

Narochnitskaya concludes: "Do not then lose forever the true Russia which has survived through suffering," and urges ROCOR not to doom herself "as an ethnographic museum of a bygone civilization, to a display-case existence outside of Russia and Russians in world history."

These are true words: only they must be understood in a sense diametrically opposed to Narochnitskaya's understanding, perverted as it is by a pseudo-Russian, truly *Soviet* patriotism, in which crocodile tears for the supposed fall of the "proud" and "haughty" anti-unionists are mixed hypocritically with a truly demonic pride in the modern Russia's supposed virtues. By joining the MP, ROCOR will truly "lose forever the true Russia which has survived through suffering" – that is, the Russia of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors, the Russia of the Catacomb Church, which survives to this day through suffering for Christ in the jurisdictions of the True Orthodox Church. Until recent years ROCOR was always the ally and fellow-sufferer of the Catacomb Church. If she joins the MP, she will lose forever the right to associate herself with these martyrs and confessors, and will fall under their curses and anathemas. She will become merely a foreign adjunct of neo-Soviet power, a KGB listening-post in the free world, an "ethnographic museum" to which future generations of Russians will point and say: "Those are the Russians who possessed the true faith and all the advantages of living in freedom, but who chose to betray their ancestors and their Christ for a mess of pottage, for the privilege of being called 'true Russians' by KGB hierarchs and presidents".

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³⁹⁶ Lebedev, *Velikorossia (Great Russia)*, St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 644-647 ®.

27. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

Friendship with the world is enmity with God.
James 4.4.

Be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.
Romans 12.2.

In an article entitled, "A Question from the Context of the Council", Eugene Korolev has congratulated Russian Orthodox public opinion for finally "maturing" so far as to pose "the main question of the post-Soviet period of its existence". This question, according to Korolev, has only now for the first time been posed by the Duma deputy Natalia Alexeevna Narochnitskaia in response to Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan's call that the Moscow Patriarchate should repent of its cooperation with the God-hating authorities. She formulated it as follows: "How is it possible to live in a state while having no relations with it? Christian churches live in non-Christian, Islamic states. Do they not have juridical, economic and social relations with them? It turns out that we have to repent for the fact that we lived in our fatherland. But what should the Church have done – go away into dugouts and let the people rot?"

"In fact," continues Korolev, "the members of the Jerusalem Orthodox Church live in conditions of rule by Jews. The members of the Constantinopolitan Orthodox Church live in conditions of rule by Mohammedans. The members of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad live in conditions of rule by the most various political regimes (including the experience of surviving in Hitlerite Germany and in the very 'liberal' United States). And nobody blames them for this co-existence with these far from Orthodox regimes!"

This is indeed an important question, and deserves a careful answer; for it goes to the heart of the reasons for the schism between the Moscow Patriarchate and the True Orthodox Church over the last 80-odd years. Unfortunately, Korolev himself does not help us to answer the question he himself poses. His approach is supremely facile: "In what is the 'Orthodox' Putin any worse than the 'Christian' Bush?" And he comes to the equally facile conclusion, reached after a minimum of argumentation, that the Moscow Patriarchate should indeed "repent of its cooperation with the God-haters – but only after the Church Abroad has clearly explained why it should not do the same"...

Actually, Korolev's conclusion is dishonest. The whole presupposition of his article is that the Church in both East and West had no alternative but to cooperate with the various regimes it lived under. So neither the MP nor

ROCOR has anything to repent about and they might as well forget about the whole thing and “move on from endless polemics between themselves to constructive communion and even cooperation”.

However, we cannot forget about the whole thing without denying the podvig of the thousands of holy new martyrs for whom this was indeed “the most important question” and who died because they gave a different answer to that question from Korolev’s.

What was their answer? That it was not only possible, but absolutely necessary for the salvation of their souls, to have nothing to do with the God-hating authorities. And this not out of self-will, but out of obedience to the decree of Patriarch Tikhon of January 19 / February 1, 1918 in which he anathematised the Bolsheviks and went on: “We 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).”

This decree was confirmed nine days later by the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, which declared: “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 anathematised 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.”³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ "Iz sobrania Tsentral'nogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Oktyabr'skoj revoliutsii: listovka bez vykhodnykh dannykh, pod № 1011" (From the collection of the Central State Archive of the October Revolution: pamphlet without dates, under № 1011), *Nauka i Religia* (Science and

On February 7, the Council reacted to the Bolsheviks' law on the separation of Church and State as follows: "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)."

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."³⁹⁸

So there can be no doubt about it: at the beginning of the revolution, the Russian Church officially, in the persons of her highest representatives, forbade her members, under threat of the most severe penalties, from "cooperating" in any significant way with the God-hating authorities. But Mr. Korolev, following Ms. Narochitskaia, thinks this is "impossible". So we have to choose: which is the greater authority: Mr. Korolev, who thinks non-cooperation was impossible, or Patriarch Tikhon and the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, who think it was not only possible but absolutely obligatory?

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Korolev appears to assume that all authorities, even the Soviet ones, are lawful, all are Caesar, so that the only question is one of drawing the line between what is Caesar's and what is God's. However, the historical significance of the Russian revolution consists in the fact that here, for the first time in Christian history since Julian the Apostate, the Church encountered an authority that was not Caesar, but Pharaoh. For this was that "authority" of which the Apocalypse says that it receives its power, not from God, but from the devil (Revelation 13.2) – that is, it is the power of the Antichrist. This was the intuition proclaimed by the 1917-18 Moscow Council, which was confirmed by the first All-Diaspora Council of the Russian Church Abroad in

Religion), 1989, № 4 ®; partly translated in Arfed Gustavson, *The Catacomb Church*, Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1960, p. 9.

³⁹⁸ *Bogoslovskij Vestnik* (The Theological Herald), № 1, 1993, p. 217 ®.

1921, and by several Catacomb Church Councils, such as that of Ust-Kut in 1937. It defines the position of the True Church in relation to Soviet power to this day.

Of course, such an uncompromising attitude is very difficult to sustain. But Christian life is not easy; it is, by definition, the way of the Cross, the way of martyrdom. However, there are many who have trodden this path to the end.

For example, in 1918, the clairvoyant Elder Nicholas (Parthenov), later Bishop of Aktar and Hieromartyr, "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..."³⁹⁹ His example was followed by many Catacomb hierarchs and their flocks.

Again, during the Second World War many Catacomb Christians refused to join the Red army and fight "to defend the achievements of October", and were shot. More recently, from the early 1960s we see the movement of the "passportless" Christians, who refused to accept Soviet passports or in general to take part in Soviet life. Many were martyred, but many survive to this day in one or other of the True Orthodox jurisdictions.

Again, Yury Belov writes: "In prison I met some Orthodox priests... Most of them were True Orthodox priests, two of whom were unforgettable: Fr. John (Krivushchev) and Fr. Michael (Kalinin). They did not recognize the satanic authorities and did not want to hide that fact. On the contrary, they went along the Volga from village to village preaching that salvation would come to the world only from struggle with 'the Bolshevik devil'. They called on people not to work for the Bolsheviks, to go into the woods, not to serve in the Soviet army, and not to read satanic newspapers and books, since through them, and through the cinema and radio, 'a great deception comes'. Krivushchev is now [in 1980] serving his last 10-year sentence at the age of 80. Kalinin also is not yet free, he is now about 63. If a chekist or just a warder appeared, he would make the sign of the cross all around him and proclaim: 'Get out, satan! Out of my sight, Bolshevik filth!' He absolutely refused to talk with them and said that if everyone rejected 'these commissars' they would not remain in power even for a year..."⁴⁰⁰

This is reminiscent of the attitude of one delegate to the 1917-18 Council, who said: "If the father, mother, brothers and sisters did not receive the returning [Bolshevik] evil-doer, but expelled him, saying: 'You are a

³⁹⁹ 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'* (Orthodox Russia), № 17 (1782), September 1/14, 2005, p. 5 ®.

⁴⁰⁰ Belov, "Svyashchenniki v lageryakh", *Posev* (Sowing), 1980, № 5 ®.

scoundrel, your hands are covered in blood, you are not our son, nor our brother,' the disorders would cease."⁴⁰¹

So Korolev is simply wrong when he says that it was "impossible" to refuse to cooperate with the Soviet authorities. It was not only possible: very many followed that path. And if still more had followed it, very likely Soviet power would not have lasted so long; for the Lord says: "If My people had heard Me, if Israel had walked in My ways, quickly would I have humbled their enemies, and upon their oppressors would I have laid My hand" (Psalm 81.12-13).

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However, it is true, as Korolev will doubtless object, that after the first five years, 1917-22, when the Church refused to cooperate with Soviet power, a certain weakening of resolve took place. It was realised that such outright rejection of Soviet power could be sustained, on a large scale, 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 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 - in fact, impossible - to draw. For for the early Bolsheviks, at any rate, 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. Thus 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 (which the Christians were very 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

⁴⁰¹ *Deiania Sobora* (The Acts of the Council), vol. 6, p. 40 ®.

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 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 thousands of deaths of believers. For, as 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!"⁴⁰²

⁴⁰² 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 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 ®).

Again, in 1923 the patriarch claimed that he was no longer an enemy of Soviet power, dissociated himself from the Church Abroad and sought to annul the 1918 anathema against Soviet power.

This act was criticized by many in the Church. Nevertheless, it was generally recognized that, by contrast with the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius four years later, Patriarch Tikhon's actions never went beyond the boundary separating membership of the Church from apostasy. Thus he never went so far as to recognize Soviet power as God-established, or to praise communism, or to identify the Church's joys and sorrows with communism's joys and sorrows – all of which Metropolitan Sergius and his successors did. As Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky) writes: "How expedient this way of acting was is another question,... but in any case Patriarch Tikhon did not cross that boundary which had to separate him, as head of the Russian Orthodox Church, from the godless power."⁴⁰³ Moreover, we must never forget that the patriarch's motivation was to protect his flock from the terrible consequences of communion with Soviet power by taking the sin of communion with that power upon himself.

In any case, there can be no question, as some sergianists have asserted, that this showed that the 1917-18 anathema was "invalid". For Patriarch Tikhon did not have the right to annul the 1918 anathema himself, since it was a decree of the highest organ of the Church, the Church Council, which only a later Church Council of a still higher authority could annul. Actually, there is strong evidence that the patriarch himself recognized this, and only "repented" of the anathema in order to buy space and time from the authorities. As he wrote to Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky): "I wrote this for the authorities, but you sit and work."⁴⁰⁴ In other words, the Church was not to take his words seriously...

The decision to negotiate and compromise 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

⁴⁰³ Rklitsky, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhenneishago Antonia, Mitropolita Kievskago i Galitskago* (Biography of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), New York, 1960, vol. 6, p. 152 ®.

⁴⁰⁴ *Izvestia*, June 12, 1924; Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 577 ®.

Caesar's (if one should really consider it to be Caesar and not Pharaoh) are always associated with the quenching of the Spirit..."⁴⁰⁵

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 concessions were made with regard to the communist *ideology*. Metropolitan Sergius, on the other hand, did both these things: he called his opponents "counter-revolutionaries", thereby in effect condemning them to death; and he identified the interests of the Church with the interests of the God-hating State. Nothing could excuse these Judas-like acts...

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Let us now turn to the situation outside Russia, in the free world. The word "free" here is no misnomer; and while it has become fashionable to downgrade the value of freedom (among those who wish to justify their enslavement), there can be no question but that it is a most precious gift given by God. As Metropolitan Anastasy wrote to General Eisenhower in August, 1945: "The Russians are nostalgic for their homeland. If, in spite of this, they still prefer to remain in a foreign land, having no domicile, often hungry and with no juridical defence, this is only for one reason: they want to preserve the greatest value on earth – freedom: freedom of conscience, freedom of the word, the right to property and personal security."

The freedom of conscience and freedom of the word are especially important. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said before Pilate: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18.37). God gave freedom of the word to the Russian Church Abroad to imitate Christ in bearing witness to the truth; and until the recent tragic events she fulfilled that task, not only proclaiming the truth about the Church inside Russia – while the official church inside Russia was uttering the most appalling lies that any Orthodox Church hierarchy has ever uttered, but also bringing the truth of the Orthodox faith to many thousands of unenlightened westerners.

Korolev hints that the Russian Church Abroad was somehow contaminated by living in the West, "by the experience of surviving in Hitlerite Germany and in the very 'liberal' United States". He produces no evidence for this disgusting insinuation for the simple reason that he cannot. The libel that ROCOR cooperated with Hitlerite Germany to the extent of approving its ideology or its cruelties has been exposed many times in other

⁴⁰⁵ *Russkaia Mysl'* (Russian Thought), № 3143, March 17, 1977 ®.

publications: I prefer here to deal with the accusation that ROCOR was somehow contaminated by the liberalism of the United States.

Let us consider some forms of American liberalism. The most obvious is democratism, the belief that the only moral form of politics is democratic politics. Has ROCOR ever adopted this ideology? Never. On the contrary, in the writings of a whole series of distinguished hierarchs and theologians (Archbishop Averky, Bishop Gregory Grabbe, Archimandrite Cyril Zaitsev) precisely the opposite ideology, that of monarchism, has been proclaimed from the rooftops. Meanwhile, the MP was preaching democratism in its most extreme, satanic form – communism. As late as the 1980s Patriarch Pimen was advocating “a return to Leninist norms”. And on July 4/17, 1990, when thousands of ordinary people were throwing in their party cards, Patriarch Alexis II announced publicly that he was praying for the preservation of the communist party!

Korolev will perhaps point to the fact that ROCOR under Metropolitan Philaret supported the Americans in Vietnam. And why not? Support for the anti-communist struggle did not mean supporting all means employed in that struggle, nor admiration for all its leaders.

Another form of liberalism is permissiveness to all kinds of immoral sexual behaviour, such as homosexuality. Has ROCOR ever approved of homosexuality? Never. Or any of the other perversions that are preached today? Never. And yet the MP, by its tolerance towards the homosexuality of all its leading metropolitans, has displayed a “liberalism” which is breathtaking. And which makes its fulminations against the liberal West breathtakingly hypocritical...

Perhaps the most important form of liberalism rampant in the United States and the western world in general is liberalism in matters of the faith, that is, *ecumenism*. And yet, taking advantage of her God-given freedom of the word, ROCOR has not only condemned, but formally anathematized all participants in the ecumenical movement. Meanwhile, the MP even now, long after the fall of the Soviet regime, takes an active part in the ecumenical movement.

Consider, for example, the following from the report of Priest Victor Dobrov to the recent May, 2006 Sobor in San Francisco about the ecumenical activity of the MP: “Just recently, from February 14-23 of this year in Porto Alegre, Brazil the regular 9th ecumenical Assembly of the WCC took place.

“The Russian Church (MP) at this Assembly was unusually imposing with more than 20 members in its delegation.

“The Summary Document, adopted and ratified by the participants of this ecumenical Assembly, and particularly by the Moscow Patriarchate in the face of its representatives, is the Document PRC 01.1 entitled “The Teaching on the Church: Called to be a United Church”.

“A careful study of this Document casts doubt on the multitude of statements made by the representatives of the Moscow side, that the objective of the continued membership of the Patriarchate in the WCC is the uncompromising witnessing to the Truth to the heterodox world. Moreover, this document evokes doubt in the Orthodoxy of the confession of the faith of the Moscow Patriarchate itself. The entire adopted Document is heretical from beginning to end, but because of the lack of time for a thorough examination, we will focus only on the most glaring evidence.

“Let us refer to the text of the Document:

“One may call the following assertion in the Document a theological breakthrough, yet it is far from Orthodox thinking:

“‘All who have been baptized into Christ are united with Christ in his body’. (III,8) (*i.e. in the Church of Christ!*)

“It is completely unequivocal, simple and comprehensible! Since nowhere in the remainder of the Document is it stated that this implies baptism with the obligatory participation of the one being baptized in the Eucharist which is in the Orthodox Church, therefore now there is every basis to consider the Moscow Patriarchate as already being of one body with Protestants...

“Our Orthodox consciousness is amazed and startled by the ecumenical statement adopted by the Moscow Patriarchate on recognizing the grace and genuineness of baptisms carried out in heretical communities!”⁴⁰⁶

So even in the sphere of ecumenism, the most typical and most serious manifestation of American liberalism, the MP appears to be far more liberal than ROCOR!

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To conclude: Korolev demonstrates a slavish adherence to the basic principle of sergianism: that the Church must conform to the world. Ignoring the writings of the Holy Scriptures and Holy Fathers, the decisions of the 1917-18 Moscow Council, and the witness of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia, he thinks that the Church had no choice but to compromise with communism.

⁴⁰⁶ Dobrov, at http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=913.

As if this blasphemy were not enough, he compounds it with slander, claiming that ROCOR conformed to the diseases of the western world as seriously as the MP conformed to Leninism, whereas in fact the MP has shown itself thoroughly infected by westernism while not even living in the West!

The whole world lies in evil, as the Apostle John says. However, it is possible to live in this evil world while not being of the world, and without betraying one's Christian conscience. The True Orthodox Church of Russia – that is, ROCOR and the Catacomb Church - demonstrated that this was possible both in the conditions of Soviet communism and western liberalism and ecumenism: the MP has failed the test in both conditions.

10/23 May, 2006.

(Published in *Vernost'*, № 52)

28. ROCOR AND THE SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

The minutes of the meeting of ROCOR's Hierarchical Synod on February 9/22, 2006 contain the following revealing paragraph: "We heard: Archbishop Mark's report on the necessity of a trip to Romania and Bulgaria in order to discuss with Metropolitan Vlasii and Bishop Fotii our relations with the Synod of Metropolitan Cyprian. It is necessary to deliver to them a copy of our latest correspondence with Metropolitan Cyprian, and also to try to convince them to enter into contact with the Local Churches of their countries for possible regularization of their canonical status with the preservation by them of the right to adhere to the Julian (Old) Church Calendar" (Orthodox Life, no. 6, 2006, p. 47).

This represents a dramatic step backwards in ROCOR's confession of faith even by comparison with its position in 1994, when it entered into communion with Metropolitan Cyprian, and constitutes in effect a call to the Old Calendar Churches of Romania and Bulgaria to abandon their confession of faith and join apostate World Orthodoxy. Logically, ROCOR must now recognize that its (already weakened) confession of faith in 1994 - the idea that it and its sister-Churches in Greece, Romania and Bulgaria were right to "wall themselves off" from World Orthodoxy in accordance with the holy canons - was a mistake.

In 1994, when ROCOR entered into official communion with Metropolitan Cyprian and officially accepted his ecclesiology, many said that this meant a significant change in ROCOR's stance vis-a-vis World Orthodoxy, and in particular a change from the position enunciated clearly under Metropolitan Philaret in 1983, when ecumenism and the ecumenists were anathematized. In fact, in an "Informatory Epistle" published by Metropolitan Cyprian in 1998, he clearly shows that his Synod does *not* recognize ROCOR's anathema against ecumenism. He writes: "3 (c) The right to issue an anathema does not belong to ecclesiastical administrative bodies which have a temporary synodal structure, but which do not possess all the canonical prerequisites to represent the Church fully, validly, and suitably for the proclamation of an anathema - a right and 'dignity' which is 'granted' only to the choir of the Apostles 'and those who have truly become their successors in the strictest sense, full of Grace and power... 5 (a) The extremely serious implication of an anathema, coupled, first, with the absence, in our day, of a synodal body endowed with all of the aforementioned canonical prerequisites or proclaiming an anathema and, secondly, with the immense confusion that prevails, on account of ecumenism, in the ranks of the local Orthodox Churches, constitute, today, a major restraint on, and an insurmountable impediment to, such a momentous and, at the same time, historic action."

Since Metropolitan Cyprian considers that the right to anathematize belongs only to the Apostles "and those who have truly become their successors in the strictest sense", and refuses to accept ROCOR's anathema of

1983, we can only conclude that he does not regard the ROCOR Synod under Metropolitan Philaret to have been successors of the Apostles, and that in fact there is *no* Church in the world today competent to bind and to loose - which, as Gabriel and Helena Lawani have written in their recent letter to Archimandrite Alexis (Pobjoy), amounts to a denial of the continued existence of the Church on earth - "in the strict sense". Of course, Cyprian would deny that he is saying that, and we are reliably informed that he even has a big photograph of Metropolitan Philaret and calls him a holy man. But it is impossible to read his "Informatory Epistle" in any other way.

So ROCOR's acceptance of Cyprian's ecclesiology in 1994 undoubtedly constituted a renunciation of the 1983 anathema, as Bishop Gregory Grabbe remarked at the time. This fact was veiled by the ROCOR Synod's reiteration of the anathema against ecumenism a few years later, in 1998. But it is impossible to reiterate an anathema while accepting that one does not have the right to anathematize, but only to "wall oneself off from", the heretics!

However, all veils and masks - and walls - are now cast aside. Archbishop Mark's urging his erstwhile brothers in Romania and Bulgaria to join the apostate World Orthodox is a renunciation not only of the 1983 anathema - that goes without saying - but also of Metropolitan Cyprian's ecclesiology which ROCOR accepted in 1994. Not only must ROCOR join the MP, according to him: *all* the other confessing Churches in Orthodoxy must join World Orthodoxy. So the "resistance movement" of True Orthodoxy was all a mistake - or rather, a church schism carrying with it all the consequences that apply to schismatics! And since the ROCOR Synod accepted Archbishop Mark's suggestion, and sent Fr. Alexander Lebedev to Romania to discuss matters with the Old Calendarists, we can only presume that other hierarchs agreed with Mark's reasoning.

Those ROCOR members contemplating following their leaders into the MP must consider carefully what this means. It means that, according to ROCOR, it is *wrong*, not only to anathematize ecumenism and the ecumenists, but also to "wall oneself off" from them. So when (and if) they come to anathematize ecumenism tomorrow during the Rite of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, they should remember that this anathema has now been renounced by their leaders, and that they will very soon be entering into full communion with all the "Orthodox" ecumenists - and thereby falling under the anathema that they themselves are pronouncing!

February 11/24, 2007.

(published in *Vernost'*, no. 79)

29. "DEMONIC GRACE" AND METROPOLITAN SERGIUS

"It is no secret that the Moscow Patriarchate was infiltrated by imposter clergy during various stages of its existence. Needless to say, they possessed demonic grace..."

This extraordinary oxymoron we find in an article by ROCOR Archpriest Nicholas Dalinkiewicz of Melbourne that was written in reply to Fr. Nikita Grigoriev's "Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, The Beacon of Light (Revised)".⁴⁰⁷ Fr. Nikita's sharp, incisive exposure of the falsehood of the arguments in favour of the ROCOR-MP union has obviously rattled the uniates. Fr. Nicholas' long, wordy and rambling reply was equally obviously meant to counter the invigorating effect Fr. Nikita's article has had on the anti-union struggle. Not that he admits that this is his purpose: he claims to be neither pro- nor anti-union, but loftily neutral, "above the fray" and motivated by a purely rational and emotionless objectivity. But *qui s'excuse s'accuse* – Fr. Nicholas would have done better to remain out of the fray altogether rather than to betray such astonishing theological ignorance (not to use a more pejorative word).

Let us be clear: grace is Divine, grace is *God Himself*, according to the Holy Fathers. Therefore it cannot be demonic, or possessed by demons, or by the followers of the demons. An imposter cleric is clearly a follower of the demons, and so he cannot have grace. For "what concord hath Christ with Belial?" as the Apostle says (II Corinthians 6.15). There can be no concord, no union, because "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (I John 1.5).

A ROCOR Archbishop once said to the present writer: "[The MP's] Patriarch Pimen certainly has grace – it is another matter how he uses it." With these words he betrayed the fact that he did not understand what grace is. Grace cannot be *used*; it is not some kind of neutral substance, like electricity or plasticine, which can be used for good works or bad. Indeed, the very idea that God in His Divine and uncreated energies can be *used* in any way is blasphemous. God is the Almighty Sovereign: He is not *used* by anyone or anything, but is in complete control of everyone and everything. Grace works together with the good will of man to produce good works. It can never, ever be used by evil men for evil works.

Perhaps that error was just a slip of the tongue. But Fr. Nicholas' error is worse than the archbishop's and cannot be so easily excused. "Demonic grace"?! The idea is as contradictory as the idea of a holy devil or an evil God. Perhaps Fr. Nicholas is being ironic, perhaps he is indicating the impossibility of a KGB agent in a cassock being a true priest of God? Unfortunately not –

⁴⁰⁷ orthodox-synod@yahoo.com, February 24, 2007.

there is no trace of irony in his words, and the whole thrust of his argument is that these KGB agents in cassocks are indeed true priests of God...

A further clarification is necessary here: when Fr. Nicholas speaks about "imposter clergy" here he is not talking about merely *sinful* clergy – that is, all clergy without exception, for there is no man, and no priest, without sin. Sin in a general sense drives away grace, but the grace of the priesthood remains in the sinful priest provided he remains in the true faith and the True Church, for the sake of that faith and that Church. As Fr. Nikita writes, "the fact that many of the MP hierarchy are apparently of questionable moral character is certainly not the actual reason why the Russian Church Abroad cannot unite with them." It is not because they are *sinner*s that the True Church cannot unite with them but because they are *imposters* – that is, agents of Belial *posing* as servants of Christ. And for the servants of Christ there can be no union with *them*...

However, Fr. Nicholas implies that these imposters were the exception rather than the rule, and that the vast majority of bishops and priests in the MP were, and are, decent, right-believing people. In particular, he devotes a lot of space to justifying Metropolitan Sergius, even describing his notorious declaration as "of Divine inspiration"! Let us examine this claim in detail.

The question of Metropolitan Sergius and his declaration will not go away, hard as the MP tried to remove it from the agenda of negotiations. And rightly. For it is the crucial question, the question that caused the schism in the first place and the question that must be resolved in accordance with Divine Truth if the unia is not to go down in Church history as one of the greatest betrayals of all time.

First, it is necessary to establish that Metropolitan Sergius' declaration was not a "one-off" slip, a moment of weakness that tarnished the career of an otherwise honourable hierarch. Metropolitan Sergius was notorious as an ambitious intellectual flirting with the revolutionary left long before the revolution of 1917. He betrayed the Church and undermined the authority of the Church hierarchy *at least three times* before the ultimate betrayal which was the declaration of 1927.

1. Sergius Before the Revolution. The first betrayal was in 1901, when the Holy Synod anathematised the novelist Lev Tolstoy 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".⁴⁰⁸ 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..."

However, Bishop Sergius (Stragorodsky), then a rising star of the Russian Church, took a different view. G.M. 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, he said, 'it was not necessary to excommunicate Tolstoy, since he himself consciously left the Church'..."⁴⁰⁹ If this reasoning were correct, it would not be necessary to anathematize any heretic, since it could be argued that he had already left the Church. Then it would also not be necessary to anathematize Arius or the Iconoclasts – or the Bolsheviks...

But Sergius' reasoning here is less important than the way in which he finds clever arguments to place himself in accord with the fashionable opinion of the time, the opinion of the liberals and the intellectuals. We find this ability to "jump on the bandwagon" again and again in his career, and it was undoubtedly because of this ability that Sergius was made chairman of the series of religio-philosophical meetings which began in 1901 and which enabled Church liberals and heretics to voice their opinions in public for the first time. "Sergius," writes 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."⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ Vladimir Gubanov (ed.), *Nikolai II-ij i Novie Mucheniki (Nicholas II and the New Martyrs)*, St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 701 ®.

⁴⁰⁹ Soldatov, "Tolstoj i Sergij: Iude Podobnie" (Tolstoy and Sergius: Images of Judas), *Nasha Strana (Our Country)*, № 2786; *Vernost' (Fidelity)*, № 32, January 1/14, 2006 ®.

⁴¹⁰ Soldatov, *op. cit.*

Now it was not only liberals and future renovationists who were calling for reform in the relationship between Church and State. The conservative revolutionary-turned-monarchist L.A. Tikhomirov also published an article at this time 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”.⁴¹¹ 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.⁴¹² 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 bandwagon of the reform of Church-State relations, and of what later came to be called *renovationism*, in order to further their own careers.

Sergius was leftist in both the ecclesiastical and political senses. Thus he took a very active part in the work of the society for the rapprochement of the Orthodox and Anglican Churches. And his views on salvation caused controversy. One of his earliest critics was the future New Hieromartyr Archbishop Victor of Vyatka. He noted already in 1912 that the “new theology” of Bishop Sergius “would shake the Church”. Later, after Sergius issued his disastrous declaration of 1927, Archbishop Victor saw in it a direct result of Sergius’ pre-revolutionary teaching on salvation.⁴¹³

Again, “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.’”⁴¹⁴ And 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).

⁴¹¹ Tikhomirov, “Gosudarstvennost’ i religia” (Statehood and religion), *Moskovskie Vedomosti* (Moscow Gazette), March, 1903, p. 3 ®.

⁴¹² His son became one of the hieroconfessors of the Soviet period, Bishop Tikhon of Kirillovsk.

⁴¹³ Hieromartyr Victor, “Novie Bogoslovy” (The New Theologians), *Tserkov’* (The Church), 1912; reprinted by *Orthodox Action*, Moscow, № 1 (11), 2000; Protopriest Michael Polsky, *Novie Mucheniki Rossijskie* (The New Martyrs of Russia), 1949-57, Jordanville, vol. 1, p. 601 ®.

⁴¹⁴ “Preemstvennost’ Grekha” (The Heritage of Sin), publication of the parish of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, Tsaritsyn, p. 7 ®.

Having such sympathies, it is not surprising that he was not liked by the Royal Family.⁴¹⁵

Sergius was in favour of many of the innovations that were later to be introduced by the heretical “living church” renovationists. Thus among the suggestions made to the Pre-Conciliar Commission preparing for the Council of the Russian Orthodox Church that eventually took place in 1917-1918, we read of “a suggestion of the clergy of the cathedral of Vyborg on the longed-for reforms, presented by Archbishop Sergius of Finland to the Holy Synod on January 18, 1906:

- 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.”⁴¹⁶

2. Sergius During the Revolution. Already on March 7, 1917 Sergius, now Archbishop of Finland, supported the new Church Procurator, Prince Vladimir Lvov, in transferring the Synod’s official organ, *Tserkovno-Obshchestvennij 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 of March 7 and led by Titlinov, a professor at the Petrograd Academy of which Sergius was the rector.⁴¹⁷ 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 and handed the press over to Titlinov, who promptly began to use it to preach his Gospel of “Socialist

⁴¹⁵ In 1915 the Empress wrote to the Emperor that Sergius “must leave the Synod” (A. Paryayev, “Mitropolit Sergij Stragorodskij: Neizvestnaia Biographia” (Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky: The Unknown Biography), *Suzdal’skie Eparkhial’nie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan News), № 1, September, 1997, pp. 12-15 ®).

⁴¹⁶ *Suggestions of the Diocesan Hierarchs on the Reform of the Church*, St. Petersburg, 1906, vol. 3, p. 443 ®.

⁴¹⁷ 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).

Christianity", declaring that "Christianity is on the side of labour, not on the side of violence and exploitation".⁴¹⁸

On April 14, a stormy meeting took place between Lvov and the Synod during which Lvov's actions were denounced as "uncanonical and illegal". At this session Archbishop Sergius apparently changed course and agreed with the other bishops in condemning the unlawful transfer. However, Lvov understood that this was only a tactical protest. So he did not 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*.⁴¹⁹ Thus in little more than a month since the coup, the Church had been effectively placed 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".

On April 29, the new Synod headed by Archbishop Sergius accepted an Address to the Church concerning the establishment of the principle of the election of the episcopate, and 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 arrested and imprisoned for a time before being shot. The retirement of Archbishop Alexis (Dorodnitsyn) of Vladimir

⁴¹⁸ See Mikhail V. Shkarovskii, "The Russian Orthodox Church", in Edward Acton, Vladimir Cherniaev, William Rosenberg (eds.), *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution 1914-1921*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997, 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), № 2, November, 1997, p. 19.

⁴¹⁹ 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).

was justified by his earlier closeness to Rasputin. The others were accused of being devoted to the Autocracy.⁴²⁰

Although the spirit of this revolution wave was undoubtedly anti-ecclesiastical, by the Providence of God it resulted in some beneficial changes 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 replacement of Archbishop Alexis of Vladimir by – Archbishop Sergius. The electors in Vladimir rejected beforehand all candidates who had displayed monarchist or “reactionary” tendencies before the revolution. The liberal Sergius was therefore a natural choice...⁴²¹

3. Sergius After the Revolution. So far we have seen how Sergius harmed the Church without waging open war against it. However, on June 16, 1922 he was one of three important hierarchs who joined the schismatical “Living Church”, 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.”

Sergius was a full and conscious participant in the renovationist councils that praised Lenin and the revolution and “defrocked” Patriarch Tikhon. And his apostasy persuaded many others to apostasise. As the sergianist Metropolitan John (Snychev) admits: “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.’”⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Monk Benjamin (Gomareveli), *Letopis' tserkovnykh sobytij Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi nachinaia s 1917 goda* (Chronicle of Church Events, beginning from 1917), www.zlatoust.ws/letopis.htm, p. 8 ®.

⁴²¹ See Paryaev, *op. cit.*

⁴²² Snychev, “Mitropolit Sergij i Obnovlenneskij Raskol” (Metropolitan Sergius and the Renovationist Schism) ®.

On July 15, 1923 Patriarch Tikhon anathematized the renovationists, after which the movement began to decline sharply. Metropolitan Sergius now hastened (and yet not very quickly, as Hieromartyr Bishop Damascene of Glukhov pointed out⁴²³) to make public confession to the Patriarch.

The Patriarch received Sergius in the following way. He explained that it was his Christian duty to forgive him, but that since his guilt was great before the people also, he had to repent before them, too. Then he would receive him with joy and love. And so he stood throughout the liturgy in simple monastic garments without his Episcopal mantia, klobuk, panagia, and cross. At the end of the liturgy he was led by the Patriarch out onto the amvon where he bowed to the people three times, after which the Patriarch restored to him his panagia with cross, white klobuk, mantia, and staff.⁴²⁴

Sergius appeared to have repented. But the renowned Elder Nectarius of Optina prophetically said that, even after his repentance, the poison of renovationism was in him still.⁴²⁵

After his fall from grace and public repentance in 1923, we would have expected Metropolitan Sergius to lie low, and attempt to hide the ambition that clearly propelled him. But no: only three years later, Sergius attempted to seize the position of first-hierarchy in the Church uncanonically. For in 1926, while he was deputizing for Metropolitan Peter, the patriarchal locum tenens, Metropolitan Agathangelus, another of the three locum tenentes appointed by Patriarch Tikhon, returned from exile and asked Sergius to hand over to him the reins of power. *Sergius refused*, although Agathangelus' claim was just. Eventually, seeing that Sergius was stubborn and that a schism threatened, Agathangelus yielded "for the sake of the peace of the Church".

The astonishing extent of Sergius' usurpation of power is revealed in his fifth letter to Agathangelus, 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 has commented on this letter: "It turns out that, once having appointed a deputy for himself, Metropolitan

⁴²³ E.L. *Episkopy-Ispovedniki*, San Francisco, 1971, p. 68, note ®.

⁴²⁴ Parayev, "Istinnoe Pravoslavie i Sergianstvo" (True Orthodoxy and Sergianism), *Suzdal'skie Eparkhialnie Vedomosti* (Suzdal Diocesan Gazette), September, 1997 <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=544>

⁴²⁵ I.M. Kontsevich, *Optina pustyn' i ee vremia* (Optina Desert and its Time), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery Press, 1971, p. 546 ®.

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 not going to depart from power under any circumstances."⁴²⁶

The Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. In the context of Sergius' earlier career, his declaration of 1927 comes as no surprise. His surrender to the Bolsheviks in 1927 was entirely in character with his surrender to the liberals before 1917, to the Provisional Government in 1917, to the renovationists in 1922 and to his personal ambition in 1926. The fact is: Sergius had never confessed the truth in face of the *Zeitgeist*. Clearly, as even sergianist sources admit, he wanted power, and, having attained it, was prepared to make the sacrifices with his conscience required in order to retain it.

Fr. Nicholas will have none of this. He believes that the wording of the declaration has been misunderstood ("by virtually every person that has ever formed an opinion about the Declaration"!), that it was in fact the best he could have done in the circumstances ("the precise wording of his Declaration must have involved Divine inspiration"!), and that it doesn't matter anyway because "the end result would have been much the same whether the Declaration existed or not"! But the end result, it cannot be denied, was a Church schism of massive proportions, and the sending to prison and death of thousands of clergy and laity who refused to accept the declaration and who were labelled as "counter-revolutionaries" by Sergius for rejecting it. Surely, Sergius cannot be absolved of *all* responsibility for that?! And if he can, and Fr. Nicholas is right in his justification of the declaration, then are we not led to the inescapable conclusion that it was a grave sin to reject the declaration, and that both the Catacomb Church and the Russian Church Abroad became schismatics for rejecting it and the Church that issued it?!

One cannot have it both ways. Either the declaration was a betrayal of the truth, in which case the Catacomb Church and the Russian Church Abroad were right to reject it and break communion with the traitors who accepted it, and the MP *must* clearly and unambiguously repent of having accepted it (instead of calling it "clever", as Patriarch Alexis has done). Or, if it can in fact be justified on the grounds Fr. Nicholas has put forward, then the Catacomb Church and the Russian Church Abroad fell into schism, and all the ROCOR clergy, including Fr. Nicholas himself, must repent before KGB agent Drozdov of the mortal sin of schism. But Fr. Nicholas does want to have it both ways. He wants to justify Metropolitan Sergius, - in fact, whitewash him completely, - while saying that it was alright to break communion with him.

Fr. Nicholas tries to get round this dilemma by claiming that the schism was not a schism in the full sense, but only an "administrative division". Even if this view could be justified (which it cannot - but that will not be argued

⁴²⁶ *Za Khrista Postradavshie* (Those Who Suffered for Christ), Moscow, 1997, p. 36 ®.

here), it avoids the primary and critical issue: who was right? If, as Fr. Nicholas argues, Metropolitan Sergius was *right* to issue his declaration, then there is no escaping the conclusion that the Catacomb Church and the Russian Church Abroad were *wrong* to break with him, whether we call that break “administrative” or “spiritual”.

Fr. Nicholas goes on: “The fact that Metropolitan Sergius subsequently ‘told lies’ about the state of the Church, merely reflects his inability to cope with pressure applied to him, not only in terms of his personal safety, but the threat of execution of 117 bishops, the menace posed by the Revisionists [*sic* – renovationists is meant], and the welfare of the Church in general.”

It is necessary to expose this lie that supposedly Metropolitan Sergius had to sign the declaration because otherwise 117 bishops would have been executed. The present writer has found no evidence to support such a claim. Undoubtedly Sergius was threatened, but there is no reason to believe that the threat was any different to those made to other Church leaders who were in his position – Metropolitan Peter, for example. The difference is this: those hierarchs did not succumb to the threat, and therefore suffered martyrdom in their own bodies while not bringing this fate on anyone else, whereas Metropolitan Sergius died in his own bed while thousands of his clergy whom he had denounced as counter-revolutionaries went to the death camps.

This is particularly obvious in relation to Metropolitan Peter, who was, after all, the canonical head of the Church and the first target of the Bolsheviks’ threats. If Metropolitan Sergius had been threatened with the shooting of 117 bishops if he did not sign the declaration, then there is no doubt that Metropolitan Peter would have been threatened in the same way. But he did not sign the declaration, was sent to a slow and horrible death in Siberia – and 117 bishops were not shot. As he wrote on January 22, 1928: “For a first-hierarchy such an appeal [as Sergius’ declaration] is *inadmissible*... It was suggested to me... that I sign the appeal. I refused, for which I was exiled. I trusted Metropolitan Sergius, and I see that I was mistaken...”

What would have happened if Metropolitan Sergius had refused to sign the declaration? Exactly what happened to his predecessors in that position, Metropolitan Peter and Archbishop Seraphim – he would have been sent to prison while the Bolsheviks looked for another candidate for the role of the Russian Judas. After all, if the Bolsheviks had wanted to kill 117 bishops they could have done so without negotiating with anyone about it. But all the evidence is that after the Civil War period (1918-21), the Bolsheviks abandoned the method of direct physical annihilation in favour of the more subtle tactic of subversion of the Church from within. Lenin had rejected the murder of Patriarch Tikhon because, as he said, he did not want to make a martyr out of him like Patriarch Hermogen. Much more useful, much more of a real triumph for Bolshevism was the public recognition, *by the Church herself*,

of the legitimacy of the Bolshevik revolution. Metropolitan Peter, Metropolitan Agathangelus, Metropolitan Cyril, Metropolitan Joseph, Archbishop Seraphim and all the other martyrs and confessors of the Catacomb Church rejected this path. Metropolitan Sergius accepted it. That is the difference between a martyr and a traitor...

Fr. Nicholas quotes a letter from Metropolitan Sergius to Metropolitan Agathangelus in January, 1928 as if it proved his good intentions: he pleaded with him not to break with him and to have a little more patience "until it becomes clear where we are leading the ship of the Church: to a relatively bearable existence in the given conditions, or to a catastrophe. In another message, he promised that his uncanonical removals and appointments of bishops and other policies were a temporary expedient that would soon be abandoned once the church situation had been normalized."⁴²⁷

And yet Metropolitan Sergius never did abandon these uncanonical measures, although he lived for another fifteen years. Moreover, his policies quite clearly led to catastrophe rather than "a relatively bearable existence". As long as the Church, in the persons of her leading hierarchs, refused to compromise with Bolshevism, she suffered, but retained her strength. In the words of E. Lopeshanskaia: "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."⁴²⁸ But soon after Metropolitan Sergius issued his declaration, the situation changed: a whirlwind descended upon the Church, such a persecution as She has never suffered in the two thousand years of her existence on earth.

What a paradox! That a policy designed to secure "a relatively bearable existence" for the Church in fact led to the greatest shedding of Christian blood in the whole history of the Church's existence! As St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco (whom Fr. Nicholas likes to quote selectively and out of context) 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 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."⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ D. Pospelovsky, *The Russian Church Under the Soviet Regime, 1917-1982*, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1984, vol. 1, pp. 186-187.

⁴²⁸ E.L., *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁴²⁹ St. John Maximovich, *The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. A Short History*, Jordanville, NY: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, pp. 28-29.

Even a recent biography of Sergius by an MP 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.*"⁴³⁰

Not only did Sergius not save anyone (except himself) through his declaration: we have evidence that he personally threatened confessing bishops with death if they did not sign it.

Thus the sergianist Metropolitan Manuel (Lemeshevsky) writes about the Catacomb Hierarchy, Bishop Seraphim of Dmitrov and Archbishop Zenobius of Tambov, that they refused to accede to Sergius' demand that they read out his declaration from the ambon to their flocks, which would have meant that they agreed with the declaration.

"I am morally incapable of doing that which those who do not love Christ the Saviour want," said Vladyka Seraphim.

"Agree with the proposal," said Metropolitan Sergius, "otherwise you will not only land up beyond the Arctic circle, but your lot will be three times as bad as that of Metropolitan Peter..."⁴³¹

Another Catacomb confessor, Bishop Arcadius of Lubny, was once secretly in Moscow in the 1930s. Feeling weak and oppressed by constant loneliness, homelessness and fear of the next day, he was tempted to visit Metropolitan Sergius. In order to see the metropolitan, one had to go through great difficulties and dangers. And when he finally saw him and told him about his situation, the metropolitan, without listening to him, asked abruptly:

"Have you registered with the GPU? Until you are registered there, I will not speak with you."

As Vladyka Arcadius was leaving the metropolitan's office, he noted that both the metropolitan and all his clergy were well fed and wore clean clothing. And when he looked around at the miserable, destitute people who were waiting outside his office in the hope of seeing the metropolitan and receiving some help from him, he understood that his path was different, and that he had to return to his wandering...

Sergius' treachery was imitated by his followers. Thus once the Catacomb priest Fr. Sergius Mechev of Moscow, being without a bishop, followed the

⁴³⁰ Sergius Fomin, *Strazh Doma Gospodnia* (Guardian of the House of the Lord), Moscow, 2003, p. 262 ®.

⁴³¹ Metropolitan Manuel Lemeshevsky, *Die Russischen Orthodoxen Bischöfe von 1893-1965*, Erlangen, 1989.

advice of one of his spiritual sons and opened his heart to Bishop Manuel Lemeshevsky, and in confidence explained to him his church position, thinking that he shared his views. Bishop Manuel was soon arrested, and betrayed Fr. Sergius. During questioning at his trial, the arrested hierarch said that Fr. Sergius was the main instigator of the opposition to Metropolitan Sergius. He also said that he wished to be a loyal Soviet citizen and wanted no trouble. The prosecutor tapped him on the shoulder and said:

"Don't worry and be upset, Vladyka: you will be of some use to us later."

After this, he was released and was given the diocese of Orenburg by Metropolitan Sergius...⁴³²

In August, 1936 Sergius assumed for himself the title of Metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna, although Metropolitan Peter was still alive, and also the title of patriarchal locum tenens, although only a lawfully convened Council of the Russian Church could give him that. There is no question about it: his motivation was ambition. And he was prepared to betray his fellow bishops in order to fulfil his ambitions...

Sergius' ferocity even against his own people continued right to the end of his life. Thus Sergius Shumilo writes that "in October, 1941, when the German armies had come right up to Moscow, Metropolitan Sergius 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..."⁴³³

Even patriarchal 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..."⁴³⁴

And again: "The particular tragedy of the Declaration of Metropolitan Sergius consists in its principled rejection of the podvig of martyrdom and

⁴³² Alla D. "Svidetel'stvo" (Witness), in *Nadezhda* (Hope), vol. 16, Basel-Moscow, 1993, 228-230 ®.

⁴³³ Shumilo, "Sovetskij Rezhim i 'Sovetskaja 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> ®.

⁴³⁴ M.E. Gubonin, *Akty Sviatishago Patriarkha Tikhona* (The Acts of his Holiness Patriarch Tikhon), Moscow, 1994, pp. 809, 810 ®.

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..."⁴³⁵

The Consequences of Sergianism

Sergius did not only destroy his own soul by his Judas sin: he created a tradition of spiritual treachery which the Moscow Patriarchate has followed to this day. This tradition has become so second nature to its leaders that they seem quite sincerely to be unaware of it, as if it were quite normal. Perhaps such seared consciences are to be expected in a church that has quite obviously been deprived of the grace of God now for generations. But the real tragedy is that ROCOR also has ceased to notice it. How many churches of ROCOR in Russia have been seized by the MP with the aid of OMON forces, even with the death of some clergy? And what about the seizure of the Hebron monastery in the Holy Land and the beating up of Abbess Juliana, accomplished with the aid of KGB-trained Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat? But Fr. Nicholas says nothing about such awkward details except to mouth the resounding lie that "the present regime in Russia offers greater religious freedom in Russia than is available in the West"!

But the most damning legacy of Sergius, and the one that ROCOR uniates try by all means to keep quiet about, is the undoubted fact that the bishops of the Moscow Patriarchate are KGB agents. Many people seem bored by this fact, as if it will just go away if we leave it alone. But we need constantly to remind ourselves of the single greatest obstacle to union with the MP – that it is an organization effectively created and run by the most antichristian force in recent history.

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."⁴³⁶ Keston College came to the same conclusion.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁵ M.B. Danilushkin (ed.), *Istoria Russkoj Pravoslavnoj Tserkvi* (A History of the Russian Orthodox Church), St. Petersburg: "Voskresenie", 1997, vol. I, pp. 297, 520 ®.

⁴³⁶ 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.

⁴³⁷ Felix Corbey, "The Patriarch and the KGB", *Keston News Service*, September 21, 2000.

Former KGB Lieutenant-Colonel Constantine Preobrazhensky confirms this: “*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...”⁴³⁸

At the present time the KGB-FSB is more powerful than ever, and there is no reason to believe that its control of the Church is not as powerful as ever. So the “imposter clergy” are still there in greater numbers than ever. What consequences are we to draw from this undeniable fact?

We shall not draw the blasphemous conclusion made by Fr. Nicholas that the “grace” of these clergy is “demonic”. No, there is no such thing as “demonic grace”. There are demons, and there is grace. But they do not dwell together. The great lie of the Moscow Patriarchate, the great lie of Metropolitan Sergius, is that they can dwell together, that the grace of God can work through an organization created by demons and consciously pursuing demonic ends. Against this great and terrible lie we have to assert the Gospel truth that the Church is “the pillar and ground of *the truth*” (I Timothy 3.15), the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

As Catacomb Hieromartyr Damascene, Bishop of Glukhov, said: “What will those who have come to the Church say? What will they feel when, even from there, from the height of the last refuge of righteousness rejected by the world, from the height of the ambon, there sound words of hypocrisy, of man-pleasing and slander? Will it not seem that falsehood is achieving its final victory over the world, and that there, in the place where the image of Incarnate Truth flashed for them with the Unwaning Light, there now laughs in a disgusting grimace the mask of the father of lies?

⁴³⁸ Preobrazhensky, *KGB v russkoj emigratsii* (The KGB in the Russian emigration), New York: Liberty Publishing House, 2006, p. 41 ®.

"It is one or the other: either the Church is truly the immaculate and pure Bride of Christ, the Kingdom of truth, in which case the Truth is the air without which we cannot breathe, or, like the whole world which lies in evil, it lives in lies and by lies, in which case everything is a lie, every word is a lie, every prayer, every sacrament..."

*February 17 / March 2, 2007.
Hieromartyr Hermogenes, Patriarch of Moscow.*

(published in *Vernost'*, no. 80)

30. JUDAS, PILATE AND ROCOR

Sergianism is the sin of Judas, the selling of the Body of Christ for the sake of security – the “security” provided by the Committee of State Security (the KGB). Ecumenism is the sin of Pilate, the turning away from the quest for truth in dogmatic questions for the sake, again, of security – the “security” provided by union with World Orthodoxy and World Religion in general. At one stroke on May 17 ROCOR will have committed both sins, and fallen into a double condemnation, when it enters into the “ecocommunist” organizations of the Moscow Patriarchate and the World Council of Churches.

The parallels between Sergianism and the sin of Judas, and between Ecumenism and the sin of Pilate, are closer than might be expected. Just as Judas sold Christ to the Jews, to Annas and Caiaphas, so Metropolitan Sergius sold his Church to the Jews – the atheist Bolsheviks who at that time controlled the Soviet Union. Decades later, as has been established by the MP priest Fr. Sergius Gordun, the Bolsheviks compelled the MP to enter the World Council of Churches because in this way they could obtain the seal of approval from the Gentile “Christian” world for their own apostasy. And so, before that impious tribunal, after washing their hands in a hypocritical confession of their innocence, the Soviet hierarchs proclaimed that there was no persecution of the faith in the Soviet Union, thereby condemning the true confessors to further torments while absolving the true thieves and murderers, the Barabbases of our age, of all blame. They then proceeded, as the holy Metropolitan Philaret of New York put it, to “put a sign of equality between truth and falsehood”, Orthodoxy and heresy, by signing up, over the course of the last 46 years, to a long series of anti-Orthodox resolutions of the WCC. In this criminal indifference to truth they were true Pilates, wearily shrugging their shoulders before Truth incarnate and saying: “What is truth?”

“But what has this to do with us?” say the ROCOR uniates. “We are free of the sins of our holy Father Sergius. We protested for a time, and now we have decided to stop protesting. After all, as our most holy Patriarch Alexis says, ‘the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius has gone into the past.’ Let bygones be bygones.” But did not the Jews of Christ’s time say: “His Blood be on us *and on our children*”? And does not the blood of the New Martyrs betrayed by Sergius fall on *every succeeding generation of Russian Christians* that does not decisively and publicly denounce his sin? After all, St. John Maximovich said that the guilt for forcing the tsar’s abdication falls on all Russian Christians to all succeeding generations who did not then, or do not now, condemn those who forced the withdrawal of “him who restrains”. Metropolitan Sergius’ sin of 1927 is a continuation of the sin of 1917. If the first removed the restraining power of the Orthodox State, the second removed the restraining power of the confessing Orthodox Church...

Shortly after the Bolsheviks came to power, they erected a statue to Judas Iscariot in Tula. Now the MP is erecting monuments to Metropolitan Sergius in his homeland, while in Ishim, home of ROCOR's Bishop Eutyches of Ishim, a monument has been erected to Stalin. More than that: a MP website is proclaiming to the whole world that the greatest feast of the Church year is not Pascha, but May 9, when Stalin's God-hating Red Army, after raping an estimated two million German women, gained the victory over Nazi Germany, thereby "trampling down death by death"! So Stalin, not Christ, is the saviour of the Moscow Patriarchate. No wonder that Metropolitan Sergius thought that he was "saving the Church" when he surrendered his Church into the hands of Stalin!

Judas at least had the strength to throw away his thirty pieces of silver. Will the ROCOR uniates have the strength to do the same when they at last face up to what they have done? Only God knows the answer to that question. What we can say, however, is that it is unlikely that considerations of pure truth alone will be enough to sway those who have already combined Pilate's indifference to the truth to Judas' betrayal of the truth. More likely to sober them up will be a material or psychological shock: the removal of their church by emissaries from Moscow, perhaps, or the replacement of a beloved pastor by a hireling or wolf from overseas.

Those who love ROCOR as she used to be must hope and pray that God will count them worthy of such a sobering-up. In the meantime, they cannot say that they have not been warned – and not only by us anti-uniates. They can do no better than listen to the words of the second hierarch of the Moscow Patriarchate, and probable future patriarch, Metropolitan Cyril (Gundyaev) in his August, 2006 letter to Putin. After calling Metropolitan Laurus a "heresiarch", and his clergy "false pastors", he writes: "No contacts whatsoever are permitted with the schismatic collaborationist Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, which has not repented publicly before us for the great sin of blessing the stooge Fascists by her heresiarch and collaborator, Anastasy.

"We confirm the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church-Moscow Patriarchate which excommunicated from our Church the false Metropolitan Anastasy and the schismatics of the ROCA during the years of the holy war [WWII] of the Soviet people under the leadership of our great Orthodox leader, Joseph Stalin, against the fascist enslavers. This verdict against the criminal was pronounced by the State Court.

No assembly whatsoever, much less one of the political character, or pannikhidas for the followers of Vlasov or the Cossacks, who entered into the service of Hitler, can be allowed. We bless all our faithful children to publicly expel the followers of the Karlovchanians from the parishes of the ROC/MP and of the ROCA. Our clergy and laity are permitted to overthrow the

monuments of the fascists stooges von Panwitz, Sultan-Girey, Krasnov, Shkuro, and Vlasov on the territory of the Patriarchate's metochion of All Saints at Sokol and of the parishes of the ROCA...

"May the Lord aid you in the God-pleasing labor of eradicating the impious Karlovchanians with their Vlasov-Fascist world-view, headed by their false Metropolitan Laurus..."

So from the mouth of the new Caiaphas himself in his letter to the new Herod we know exactly how he intends to deal with the new Judases of ROCOR! Nor will ROCOR be able to appeal for help from their new "brothers", the Pilates of World Orthodoxy. They will be alone, utterly alone, to reap the bitter fruits of their new Babylonian captivity.

"I will not speak of the Mystery to Thine enemies, nor give Thee a kiss as did Judas..."

April 8/21, 2007.

31. OPEN LETTER TO PROTOPRESBYTER VALERY LUKIANOV

Dear Fr. Valery,

Forgive me, who know you only by reputation (they say you are a fine pastor with the most magnificent church in the Church Abroad), for writing to you “out of the blue” like this. I was sent a copy of your letter to Metropolitan Ilarion, and immediately felt that someone had to reply to it – and publicly. For it contains a misunderstanding which, if allowed to go uncorrected, could lead many onto the wrong path.

You write: “My heart is pained for the many clergy and believing children of the Church Abroad who today are not in communion of prayer with us, but who would have returned at that moment when the Moscow Patriarchate would have found it possible to leave the ecumenical World Council of Churches...”

Are you saying that the only obstacle to union with the MP is its membership of the WCC? I thought I must be mistaken, but looking through the rest of your letter I found no mention of sergianism, the root sin of the MP, the sin that *created* the MP. Moreover, you speak of ecumenism as “*the only* obstacle whose removal is vitally important and obligatory for the reunion of the broken families and divided parishes of the Church Abroad” (my italics).

Of course, the renunciation of ecumenism is indeed “vitally important and obligatory”. But to concentrate on ecumenism while not even mentioning the force behind it – sergianism – is to put the cart before the horse. Let me explain what I mean with an example from my personal experience.

Back in the 1970s, when I was still in the MP, my spiritual father was Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom). It was he who, together with Metropolitan Nicodemus, the KGB general (Agent “Sviatoslav”) of sorry memory, led the MP into the WCC at the General Assembly in New Delhi in 1961. At one point our English parish asked him to renounce his ecumenical activities. He said that he was not able to because he was “under orders” to continue them. Later I discovered who precisely was giving him the orders. Some Italian parishes in Sardinia came under his omophorion when he was exarch for Western Europe. However, these former papists in their zeal for Orthodoxy began to attack the Pope. Then Metropolitan Anthony (as he told me personally) received a phone call from Metropolitan Juvenaly of Tula (Agent “Adamant”). “Drop your Italian parishes”, said Juvenaly. “We are having negotiations with the Pope over the uniate question, and he has laid it down as a condition of the success of the negotiations that you drop these parishes.” So he dropped them... (They joined the Nestorians, but later came under Metropolitan Cyprian of Fili.)

Do you see that the ecumenism of the MP is a product of its enslavement to the God-fighting Soviet regime – in other words, of sergianism? In 1948 the MP condemned ecumenism: in 1958-61 it embraced it. This volte-face had nothing to do with the personal convictions of the hierarchs, and everything to do with their spineless subjection to the God-hating atheists. So it makes no sense to plead for the abandonment of ecumenism when its root and source, sergianism, is still flourishing. If you cut off the top of a weed but leave its root in the ground, it simply grows up again...

“But,” you may object, “sergianism is not relevant now that the USSR is no more, and the hierarchs are no longer in subjection to the KGB.” For reasons I will explain later, I do not believe for one moment that the KGB no longer controls the MP. But let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that you are right. Then we must conclude that the MP hierarchs are ecumenists “not out of fear, but for conscience’s sake”. This only makes their sin deeper – and the chances of getting them to renounce it even smaller. Was Judas justified after he went back to the high priests and threw down the money in the temple? Not at all. He no longer feared the high priests, or wanted their money, and was heartily disgusted with himself, but *he did not repent* – and so was condemned. In the same way, the MP hierarchs *have not repented* of their cooperation with the atheists, and so are still condemned. They have not repented of Sergius’ declaration (they are preparing to glorify him), or of the thousands of True Orthodox clergy they sent to their deaths by labelling them “counter-revolutionaries”, or of calling the Tsar-Martyr “Bloody Nicholas” for generations, or of their cooperation in the destruction of thousands of churches and monasteries, or of their obscene praises of the biggest murderer in history, Joseph Stalin, or of their praises of the revolution and “Leninist norms”, or of helping to export that revolution to other countries, causing the murder, both spiritual and physical, of millions more people, or of destroying most of the Russian Church Abroad...

How can there be any union with the MP before they have repented of these evil deeds? And how can that union take place in any other way than by the MP repenting *before* the True Church and being received *by* the True Church?

If we follow the logic of your argument, then all the New Martyrs before about the year 1961, the entry of the MP into the WCC, were schismatics; for they rejected the MP, not because of ecumenism, which did not yet exist there at that time, but because of sergianism. The same applies to ROCOR, which broke communion with Sergius in 1927 precisely because of sergianism. We reject the MP because of sergianism in the first place, because it made itself into a tool of the God-fighting communists: ecumenism came later as a consequence, as the icing on the poisonous cake of apostasy...

But let us now turn to the argument that the issue of sergianism is now irrelevant, because the Soviet Union passed away in 1991... This must be a first in Church history: that a group of heretical churchmen are deemed to have stopped practising their heresy, not because of any change of heart or behaviour on their part, but because of a change of political regime! Since when can *any* political change be considered equivalent to the abandonment by heretics of their heresy?!

In fact, of course, from a *spiritual, ecclesiastical* point of view there has been no change for the better in the MP, but rather a distinct change for the worse. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s the MP has waged a relentless war against ROCOR, the Catacomb Church and in general against any Orthodox group that refuses to submit to it. Vile, lying propaganda, the seizing of churches and monasteries, the physical intimidation (and more) of clergy and believers, has continued unabated. And worst of all, the justification of sergianism goes on. Thus consider the following evidence of sergianism in *just one year*:-

1. In May, 2004, at a liturgy in Butovo in the presence of Metropolitan Laurus, Patriarch Alexis said: "We pay a tribute of respect and thankful remembrance to his Holiness Patriarch Sergius for the fact that he, in the most terrible and difficult of conditions of the Church's existence in the 1930s of the 20th century led the ship of the Church and preserved the Russian Church amidst the stormy waves of the sea of life."⁴³⁹
2. On November 1, 2004 Patriarch Alexis, according to "Edinoe otechestvo" "emphasised that it is wrong to judge Metropolitan Sergius and his actions".⁴⁴⁰ For, as he said on November 9, 2001: "This was a clever step by which Metropolitan Sergius tried to save the church and clergy."⁴⁴¹ A *clever* step?!
3. On January 24, 2005 Metropolitan Cyril (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..."⁴⁴² No catacombs, but there was the Catacomb Church. However, the sergianists have no time for the Catacomb Church...

⁴³⁹ Ridiger, in A. Soldatov, "Sergij premudrij nam put' ozaril", *Vertograd-Inform*, № 461, 21 May, 2004, p. 4 ®.

⁴⁴⁰ "Chto 'soglasovano' sovместnaia komissia MP i RPTs (L)" (What the Joint Commission of the MP and the ROCOR (L) Agreed Upon), <http://www.russia-talk.com/otklike/ot-402.htm>, 3 November, 2004 ®.

⁴⁴¹ <http://www.ripnet.org/besieged/rparocora.htm?>

⁴⁴² Gundiaev, in *Vertograd-Inform*, № 504, February 2, 2005 ®.

4. In February, 2005, there was a "Worldwide Russian People's Council" in Moscow, to which several guests from ROCOR (L) were invited. As Laurence A. Uzzell, president of International Religious Freedom Watch wrote for *The Moscow Times*: "The speeches at that gathering, devoted to celebrating the Soviet victory in World War II and linking it to the Kremlin's current policies, suggest that the domestic church [the MP] is counting on Russian nationalism to woo the émigrés. Especially striking is the distinctively Soviet flavor of that nationalism. The main speeches failed to mention the victory's dark sides, for example the imposition of totalitarian atheism on traditionally Christian societies such as Romania and Bulgaria. Patriarch Alexey II made the incredible statement that the victory 'brought the Orthodox peoples of Europe closer and raised the authority of the Russian Church'. If one had no information, one would think that the establishment of Communist Party governments in the newly conquered countries were purely voluntary – and that what followed was unfettered religious freedom... Sergianism is clearly still thriving, despite the Moscow Patriarchate's occasional abstract statements asserting its right to criticize the state. The Patriarchate's leaders still openly celebrate Patriarch Sergei's memory, with some even favoring his canonization as a saint. With rare exceptions, they still issue commentaries on President Vladimir Putin's policies, which read like government press releases. They seem sure that this issue will not be a deal-breaker in their quest for reunion with the émigrés. Putin's Kremlin will be hoping that they are right."⁴⁴³ Unfortunately, they were right: sergianism was no longer a "deal-breaker" for ROCOR.

5. In May, 2005 Patriarch Alexis wrote a congratulatory epistle to the president of Vietnam on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the communist victory in the Vietnam War. He called it a "glorious anniversary" and said that it opened up new horizons for the Vietnamese people.⁴⁴⁴

Nothing much has changed, has it? And how could it, when, as is affirmed by many sources, the KGB-FSB is now more powerful than ever, occupying 40% of all government posts, and the whole of the hierarchy of the MP? Some say this is "old news" and ignore it. But how can we ignore the fact that the MP is led by unrepentant members of the organization that has done more to destroy the Orthodox Church than any other organization in history (with the possible exception of the Jewish rabbinate), and of which its former head, Vladimir Putin once said: "There is no such thing as an ex-chekist"? How can

⁴⁴³ Uzzell, "Reaching for Religious Reunion", *Moscow Times*, March 31, 2005, p. 8; *Tserkovnie Novosti* (Church News), May, 2005 ®.

⁴⁴⁴ http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2007/01/04/feature-02

we ignore the fact, moreover, that, as former KGB Lieutenant-Colonel Constantine Preobrazhensky writes, “*absolutely all* [my italics] the bishops and the overwhelming majority of the priests worked with the KGB.”⁴⁴⁵

Let us suppose, Fr. Valery, that by a miracle the MP renounces the WCC. Presumably you will then change the semi-communion you now have with the MP (that is, everything except commemoration of the Patriarch) for full-blooded membership. And then what will happen?

First, a number of those who are with you now will leave you and join the True Orthodox Church. This will undoubtedly sadden you; for as you movingly write: “If the good pastor leaves his whole flock for the salvation of one lost sheep, one cannot imagine that the leadership of the Church could simply leave a multitude of its children who have departed for ideological reasons to the whim of destiny.” And yet it is not those who *leave* you then whom you will have to answer for, for they will have saved themselves. It is those who *follow* you that you will have to answer for at the Last Judgement. For they will have followed you into the abyss of the Church’s condemnation – that condemnation which falls on sergianism and all the sergianists.

But that will be only the beginning. Your magnificent church will then become – not immediately, of course, but eventually – one of the KGB-FSB’s listening posts in the United States. For that is what every major MP church abroad has become. Thus for example the MP cathedral in London which I used to visit became – as the former MI5 officer Michael Wright revealed (in a book banned in Britain but published in Australia) – the main “dropping off” point for KGB agents in London. And it will happen to your church – unless you resist, in which case you will be removed.

You are now on the very brink of spiritual death, for you and for your flock, Fr. Valery. Step back while you still have time! The temporary fig-leaf which the MP gave you in the form of non-commemoration of the Patriarch is now being removed, and is being replaced by the garments of skin given to those who have been expelled from the Paradise of the Church. Flee, casting your garment behind you, as did Joseph the Fair! Otherwise you will become like the fig-tree without fruit that was cursed by the Lord, or the salt that has lost its savour – good for nothing, except to be cast out and trampled on by men...

Yours in Christ,
Vladimir Moss.
May 26 / June 8, 2008.
Sunday of the Holy Fathers.

⁴⁴⁵ Preobrazhensky, *KGB v russkoj emigratsii* (The KGB in the Russian emigration), New York: Liberty Publishing House, 2006, p. 41 ®.

32. THE CATHOLIC ASSAULT ON RUSSIA

From the decline and fall of the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages, and until the Russian revolution of 1917, the main bastion and protector of Orthodox Christianity in the world was Russia. The Russian Tsars protected the Orthodox of many nations, not only within the bounds of their own realm, but well beyond it – in particular, in the Balkans and the Middle East. They defended them not only against pagan and Muslim Mongols and Tatars and Turks from the East, but also from Christian Swedes, Poles, Germans, Austrians, French and English from the West.

This mission was conducted with notable success right up to the revolution: Napoleon was crushed in 1812; the English, French and Turks were, if not defeated, at any rate repelled in the Crimean War, and the Holy Land was again opened to Orthodox pilgrims; and when the Russian revolution broke out in February, 1917, the Germans and Austrians who had invaded the Orthodox lands of Russia, Serbia and Romania were on the point of being turned back. But then Russia was stabbed in the back by an enemy that came neither from the East nor from the West, but from within – the Jews, vast numbers of whom (half of the world's total) had been incorporated into the Russian Empire since the end of the eighteenth century, and who, by 1917, had taken control of one-third of Russian commerce and almost all of the country's newspapers. It was these Jews who whipped up public opinion against the Tsar, viciously slandering him and his family and calling for the overthrow of the dynasty, until almost the whole country believed their lies. Such calls at a time when the country was fighting for its survival would have exacted the death penalty for treason in any other of the combatant countries. But Tsar Nicholas was a gentle and generous man who hated bloodshed... In any case his enemies were too many to be executed en masse, and acting against them would have involved, among other things, a complete purge of the army high command, which was unthinkable at such a time... And so he chose the way of Christ, the way of non-resistance to evil, and abdicated...

Of course, the Bolshevik Jews who, within a few months, seized control of Russia were aided by many other forces – first of all their fellow Jews in New York (such as the banker Jacob Schiff, who financed Trotsky and hundreds of other Bolsheviks), then the German High Command (Lenin was a paid-up German agent with vast funds at his disposal), and then a group of about 300 Russian Freemasons who occupied most of the leading posts in the Russian Army, Industry and Society, together with their French and English brothers who supported them from abroad. And then there was another enemy of Russia that is often forgotten in historical accounts of the revolution, but whose undying hatred of Russia was known to all the Orthodox – the Roman Catholic Church. Let us briefly look at the historical threat posed by the Vatican to Holy Russia before turning to the very *present* threat that it poses...

Throughout the whole of the first millennium of Christian history, almost the whole of Europe and much of the Middle East confessed a single form of Christianity – not Roman Catholicism, as Catholic historians would have us believe, but *Orthodox* Christianity, which existed in several national and linguistic variants – Greek, Arabic, Slavic, Georgian, Roman, Spanish, Gallic, Celtic, Anglo-Saxon... However, this unity of faith was shattered in 1054, when the Pope of Rome, offended by the refusal of the Christians of the East to accept his authority over them and the new dogmas that he was introducing, anathematized the Eastern Churches. Almost immediately, as if possessed, the Popes began a series of crusades to crush by armed force those who rejected this ecclesiastical revolution that they had effected in one of the historic centres of Christianity.

Probably the first crusade of the Roman Catholic Church against Orthodox Christianity took place in 1066-70, when Duke William of Normandy, with the full blessing and support of Pope Alexander, invaded the “schismatic” land of England. At the battle of Hastings and in its aftermath William killed the English King Harold and perhaps 20% of the population (Harold’s daughter fled to Russia, where she married the Russian Great Prince), forced most of the English aristocracy to flee to Constantinople (where they took service in the armies of the Emperor Alexis and were given land in Bulgaria and the Crimea), took over and “communized” most of the land of England (and, later, Wales, Scotland and Ireland also), destroyed most of the English churches, removed almost all the English bishops, replacing them with French ones, defiled the relics of the English saints, banned the age-old Orthodox liturgy and music, substituted French for English as the official language, and in general created one of the most complete and fateful cultural, political and religious transformations in history... There were further crusades, on a smaller scale, in other parts of Western Europe, particularly in Germany, whose emperors were for long unwilling to become papists...

Then the Popes turned their attention to the eastern “rebels” against his dominion. In 1098-99 Pope Urban incited the footloose and land-hungry western knights to go on a vast scavenging campaign to the East, which ended with the wholesale slaughter of the Jewish and Muslim population of Jerusalem and the devastation of all the Orthodox lands between Serbia and Egypt. Further eastern crusades followed. They failed in their overt purpose, which was to destroy Muslim power in the Middle East, but succeeded in another purpose, which was to undermine the power of the Orthodox Byzantine Empire and the Orthodox Church in the region. The Eastern crusades were “crowned” by the sack of Constantinople in 1204, one of the most barbaric and tragic episodes in Christian history.

By this time, however, the main concentration of power in the Orthodox Christian world was neither in the east nor in the west, but in the *north*. And so in 1150 the Roman Catholic Bishop Matthew of Crakow in Poland asked the famous Catholic rabble-rouser Bernard of Clairvaux to “exterminate the godless rites and customs of the Ruthenians [Russians]”. The “Teutonic Knights” duly answered the call and invaded Russia, but were defeated at the famous battle on the ice by St. Alexander Nevsky, Prince of Novgorod. Shortly afterwards, the Mongols conquered Russia – a great tragedy, without a doubt, but a tragedy that, by the Providence of God, turned out for the ultimate benefit of Russia, since the Mongols, though pagans, were much more tolerant of Orthodoxy than the Roman Catholics. And on emerging from under the yoke of the Mongols the Russians did not forget the threat of Catholicism: by the sixteenth century they had turned their land into a fortress whose main purpose was: to preserve the Orthodox Faith pure and undefiled from the ravages of the Latins.

Unfortunately, however, the re-emergence of Russia as an independent (in fact, the *only* independent) Orthodox state coincided with the rise to power of one of the two great states of the Catholic Counter-Reformation – Poland. At the same time that the other great Catholic State, the Hapsburg Empire, was slaughtering Protestants in the West, the Poles – with the active connivance of the Jews – were persecuting the Orthodox over a vast swathe of what is now the Ukraine and Belorussia. Finally, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Poles conquered Moscow and placed a Catholic king, the “false Dmitri”, in the Kremlin. But Patriarch Hermogen of Moscow from his prison cell in the Kremlin dungeon issued appeals to the Russians to rise up against the heretical invaders. And although Hermogen did not live to see the outcome (he was starved to death in his cell), his appeals were heeded, and a great army of national liberation drove the Poles and the Swedes, if not out of Russia completely, at any rate out of her historical heartland.

The new dynasty that came to power in Moscow, the Romanovs, steadily increased its power – to the great frustration of the Popes. Although papal propaganda had some success in infiltrating the upper classes, and in inciting the Crimean war against Russia, the Russian people as a whole remained faithful to Orthodoxy, and the Tsars, especially after the defeat of Napoleon in 1812, faithfully protected the interests of Orthodoxy throughout the world. Russian power extended slowly but surely to the south and the west, until, in 1915, the last of the age-old Russian lands, Polish Galicia, was recaptured from Austrian armies: the “regathering of the Russian lands” was complete.

But then, just when Russian power seemed to be at its height, tragedy struck: the revolution. Three years after the recovery of Galicia, most of the West Russian lands were again in German and Austrian hands. And the heartland of Holy Russia was in the hands of their worst enemies, the Jews...

How did the Vatican, Russia's age-old enemy, react to the revolution? In reality, with joy, as being a wonderful missionary opportunity. However, since the Vatican had always opposed communism as well as Orthodoxy, it had to hide its joy at first....

On March 12, 1919 Pope Benedict XV sent Lenin a protest 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".⁴⁴⁶

In general, however, the attitude of the Vatican to Orthodoxy was hostile to the Orthodox. Thus Deacon Herman Ivanov-Trinadtsaty writes: "Pope Pius X (who was canonized in 1954) pronounced on the very eve of World War I, 'Russia is the greatest enemy of the [Roman] Church.' Therefore it is not surprising that 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 uncontrollable 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 II, 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.

⁴⁴⁶ 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 (in Russian).

“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...

“In Russia the experiment with the ‘Eastern Rite’ lasted more than ten years...⁴⁴⁷ The heart and soul of the papal ‘Ostpolitik’, its eastern policies, was a Jesuit, the French Bishop d’Erbigny, who was specially authorized by the pope to conduct negotiations with the Kremlin for the wide dissemination of Roman Catholicism in the Soviet Union and by the same token the supplanting of Orthodoxy in Russia and in Russian souls.

“With this in mind, d’Erbigny travelled three times to the Soviet Union on a French diplomatic passport. He consecrated several Roman Catholic hierarchs with the aim of building up a group of Russian Catholic clergymen who would be acceptable to the Soviet authorities. Let us listen to the degree of open amorality that these clerics were capable of: ‘Bolshevism is liquidating priests, desecrating churches and holy places, and destroying monasteries. Is this not where the religious mission of irreligious Bolshevism lies, in the disappearance of the carriers of schismatic thought, as it were presenting a “clean table”, a tabula rasa, which gives us the possibility of spiritual recreation.’ For those to whom it is not clear just what kind of spiritual reconstruction the Benedictine monk Chrysostom Bayer is referring to, his thoughts can be amplified by the official ...Catholic journal, *Bayrischer Kurier*: ‘Bolshevism is creating the possibility of the conversion of stagnant Russia to Catholicism.’

⁴⁴⁷ In 1922 Hieromartyr Benjamin, Metropolitan of Petrograd said to Fyodorov: “You offer us unification... and all the while your Latin priests, behind our backs, are sowing ruin amongst our flock.” 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, №№ 21-22).” (Nikolaiev, *Tserkov’, Rus’ i Rim* (The Church, Russia and Rome), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1983, p. 13 (in Russian)). (V.M.)

"No one less than the exarch of the Russian Catholics, Leonid Fyodorov, when on trial in March of 1923 along with fourteen other clergymen and one layman, 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.

"Let us not lose sight of the fact that all these declarations by Roman Catholics, who were quite friendly with the Soviets, were pronounced during the nightmarish period when the Soviets were trying to eradicate the Orthodox Church. Keeping in mind that Vatican diplomacy adheres to the principle that the end justifies the means, which is illustrated throughout its centuries-old history, the game which the Vatican has been playing with Moscow should be clearly understood. The essence of the matter is that Russia has become a sacrifice to two principles hostile to it, Catholicism and godless communism, which are drawn together by a curious concurrence of interests. Moscow realizes that the eradication of faith from the Russian soul is a hopeless task. As long as the Russian Church remained faithful to itself, and uncompromising towards the godless power, courageously witnessing to the fundamental incompatibility between Christian and communist principles, the Soviet leaders were ready for two reasons to graciously study the variant of Roman Catholicism offered to them. By this means they hoped to manipulate the religiousness of the Russian soul.

"The first reason was Rome's consistent, impeccable loyalty to the communist regime, both in the U.S.S.R. and outside it [until 1930]. Secondly, it was advantageous to the Kremlin, or simply entertaining, that the religious needs of the Russians should be satisfied by this centuries-old enemy of Orthodoxy. For their part, the Catholics 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, Malyetsky 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 № 266 of

February 6, 1925 from Berlin, stated that the Soviet ambassador, Krestinsky, told Cardinal Pacelli (the future 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. In all likelihood, it had not been satisfactorily settled earlier. This might be viewed as the culmination of the unnaturally close relations between the Vatican and the Soviet government."

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In July, 1927 the deputy leader of the Russian Church, Metropolitan Sergius wrote a notorious declaration, committing his church to cooperation with the Bolsheviks. Having broken Sergius, - but not the True Russian Church, which went underground, - the Bolsheviks no longer needed the Catholics. And so, as an "unexpected and indirect result" of the declaration, writes Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "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 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 Redemptoris (Divine Redeemer), which denounced communism..."

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In the early 1960s the relationship between the Vatican and Russia began to change. The Second Vatican Council introduced ecumenism into the Roman Catholic bloodstream, and the Orthodox were now "separated brethren" rather than schismatics and heretics. So the Popes were now willing to enter into friendly relations with the Orthodox - although whether this was simply the wolf putting on sheep's clothing remained to be seen... As for the official Russian Orthodox Church, it was now a complete slave of the Bolsheviks. In 1948, at Stalin's bidding, it had condemned ecumenism and the Roman Catholics. But now, under orders from the same KGB, it entered the World Council of Churches and sent observers to the Vatican Council. The aim, undoubtedly, was not ecclesiastical, but political: to infiltrate western church

⁴⁴⁸ Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "The Vatican and Russia", <http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/new.htm> (in Russian).

life with Soviet agents, and to influence western church gatherings in a pro-Soviet direction...

Soviet control of the Russian Orthodox Church, and its influence on the Vatican through the Russian hierarchs, was proved in January, 1992, when a Commission of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet investigating the causes and circumstances of the 1991 putsch, established that for several decades at least the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate had been KGB agents. Members of the commission obtained access to the records of the fourth, Church department of the KGB's Fifth Directorate, 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".

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 the present patriarch, Cyril (Gundiaev)], 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." "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."⁴⁴⁹

The findings of the Commission included:- (i) the words of the head of the KGB Yuri 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).⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ Fr. George Edelshtein, "Double Agents in the Church", *Moscow News*, August 26, 2005.

⁴⁵⁰ 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 ®.

But the process of infiltration was not one-way: the Vatican also managed to get its agents into the highest reaches of the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1992 the Pope said that he had two cardinals among the bishops in Russia.⁴⁵¹ We now know that the most powerful Russian bishop in the 1970s, Metropolitan Nicodemus of Leningrad, was both a KGB agent with the nickname "Sviatoslav" and a secret Vatican bishop! This at first sight unlikely combination gains credibility from the witness 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 Nicodemus [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 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.'"⁴⁵²

These words indicate the truth behind the mask of the Vatican's ecumenism; and the fact that Havryliv was reordained by Nicodemus 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...

⁴⁵¹ Liudmilla Perepiolkina, *Ecumenism – A Path to Perdition*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 204.

⁴⁵² 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 Perepiolkina, "the Catholic Journal *Truth and Life* published the memoirs of Miguel Arranz, in which this Jesuit, who in Nicodemus' time taught at the Leningrad Theological Academy, told, among other things, that with Nicodemus' blessing he celebrated 'the Eastern Rite Liturgy' in Nicodemus' house church at the Leningrad Theological Academy." (*op. cit.*, 1999, p. 276, note).

The intriguing question is: which master was Nicodemus 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. He completed a massive master's thesis on Pope John XXIII, the originator of Orthodox-Catholic ecumenism, and in 1969 he engineered a decree establishing partial inter-communion between Orthodox and Catholics in the Soviet Union. He himself gave communion to Catholics in the Rossicum in Rome. And in 1978 he died in Rome at the feet of Pope John-Paul I, from whom he received the Catholic last rites – a graphic symbol of the dangers posed by the too-close relationship of Russia's hierarchs to the Vatican...⁴⁵³

The career of Nicodemus is not merely of historical interest. He founded a school of theology, "Nikodimovshina", and a close circle of disciples, that still controls the upper reaches of the Russian Orthodox Church. Thus both the former Patriarch Alexis II (Ridiger) and the present Patriarch Cyril (Gundiaev) were disciples of Nicodemus...

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Whatever the Vatican hoped to achieve through its policy of ecclesiastical détente with the Moscow Patriarchate, it must have known that it could achieve little as long as the Soviet regime remained in power and the restrictions on all religions remained in place. However, in the early 1980s the Polish Pope John-Paul II succeeded, with the help of the Polish trade union Solidarnost, in fatally weakening the communist regime in his native land; and when Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the whole of the Soviet power structure in Eastern Europe began to totter. The Vatican saw its chance, and began a more aggressive – although still outwardly "eirenic" and ecumenist – approach to Russia.

The Achilles' heel of Soviet ecclesiastical diplomacy was the Western Ukraine, where Stalin had forcibly "converted" the majority uniate or Greek Catholic population into the Moscow Patriarchate at the council of Lvov in 1946. The uniates were Catholic through their submission to the Pope, but Orthodox in their ritual and historical ancestry. In other circumstances, they might have been happy to return to the Orthodoxy of their Fathers, from which the Poles had separated them at the false unia of Brest-Litovsk in 1596. However, Stalin's heavy-handed approach to church unity had only alienated them even further from Orthodoxy and the Russians. At the same time, it was from the former uniate population of the Western Ukraine that the Moscow Patriarchate recruited a large proportion of its clergy (Stalin had killed most of the clergy in the other regions of the country in the previous thirty years).

⁴⁵³ *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.

Now when Gorbachev came to power, the uniates who had resisted absorption into the Moscow Patriarchate came out of their catacombs and 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 patriarchate and members of the Ideology department of the Central Committee to complain about Kharchev to the Supreme Soviet, and he was removed in June, 1989.

The ferment in the Western Ukraine also motivated the Moscow hierarchs to refuse the request of Pope John Paul II to attend the festivities commemorating the millennium of the Baptism of Russia by St. Vladimir of Kiev in 988. The Pope pointed out, correctly, that in 988 there had been no schism between Eastern and Western Christianity, so his attendance was natural, especially in the contemporary climate of inter-Christian ecumenism. But Moscow feared that the Pope's visit would elicit a stampede of conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism, not only in the Western Ukraine, but also in the heartland of Russia. Not the least of the attractions of Catholicism for many Russians, especially intellectuals, was the fact that the Pope was clearly an independent hierarch, whereas the Moscow hierarchs were "KGB agents in cassocks", completely dependent on the whims of their communist bosses. Ecumenism was all very well, but it could not be allowed to undermine the power of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union!

However, the tide of liberalization could not be stopped, and in January, 1990, just after Gorbachev met the Pope in Rome in order to try and stem the tide, the uniates finally achieved legalization for their church. Moreover, 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 Moscow Patriarchate seemed helpless to stop the rot. One reason for this was that for many years the patriarchate had been teaching its seminarians, a large proportion of whom came from the Western Ukraine, that the Orthodox and the Catholics were "sister churches". 60% of those who joined the uniates were graduates of the Leningrad theological schools founded by that KGB Agent, Orthodox Metropolitan and Catholic bishop, Nicodemus...

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...

When the red flag came down for the last time from over the Kremlin in December, 1991, the way seemed open for a repeat of the Catholic conquest of Moscow in the early seventeenth century, spearheaded once again by a Pole... But then something unexpected happened. Along with the Jesuits and the Freemasons and the Protestant missionaries, there also came into Russia from the West the Russian Church Abroad, the so-called "White Russian" Church. This Church had long been a thorn in the side of the Moscow Patriarchate. Fiercely anti-communist, it was also anti-ecumenist and anti-Catholic. And although the numbers of its adherents in Russia remained small, and its attempt to unseat and replace the Moscow Patriarchate failed, its ideological influence continued to increase throughout the 1990s. Anti-ecumenism and anti-Catholicism grew in Russia, and even found adherents among the hierarchy. True, the patriarchate remained in the World Council of Churches, and ecumenist meetings with leading Catholics continued – but the Pope was still not invited to Moscow...

When KGB Colonel Putin came to power in 2000, he acted swiftly to stop the ideological rot. He summoned the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Church Abroad to settle their differences, and in 2007, by dint of various forms of persuasion and blackmail, the Russian Church Abroad surrendered and joined the patriarchate. Now only a few "True Orthodox" Churches remained in Russia to contest the ecclesiastical consensus – and in 2009 the largest of these, the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church, was neutralized and its churches confiscated.

It would seem that the final victory of the "Red Church" is now assured. And yet... it is now not at all clear what the "Red Church" stands for. Is it for the anti-ecumenism and anti-Catholicism of Stalinist times, and the nationalism of the Russian Church Abroad? Perhaps; for Putin is a great admirer of Stalin, and paranoically anti-western. Or does it wish to continue the ecumenist and pro-Catholic policies of the 1960s to early 1980s? Perhaps; for Putin, as one who worked in the Fifth Department of the KGB, is well familiar with this aspect of Soviet diplomacy, and values the power that infiltration of western ecclesiastical institutions and media gives him. One thing only is certain: that Russian ecclesiastical policy is as firmly determined by the secular authorities now as it was in Soviet times...

One factor working against the pro-Catholic line is the situation in the Ukraine. Since acquiring political independence, the Ukraine has moved further away from Moscow in Church matters also; both the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who is seen as an American agent, have made major inroads into there. Both Putin and Patriarch Cyril desperately want to keep the Ukraine out of the western orbit...

In this context, it will be useful to take a brief look at what we may call “the Fatima phenomenon”. In 1917, on the thirteenth day of the month for six months the Virgin Mary supposedly appeared to three shepherd girls in Fatima, Portugal, the first appearance being on May 13. The girls were entrusted with “three secrets”, the second of which is the most important. This supposedly revealed that, in order to avoid terrible calamities in the world and the persecution of the Catholic Church, the Virgin will ask for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. If her request is granted, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace. If not, then she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecution of the Church. “The good will be martyred, the Holy Father will have much to suffer, various nations will be annihilated. In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she shall be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”⁴⁵⁴

Now from the point of view of the Orthodox Saints and Holy Fathers (and even of some of the Catholic “saints”, such as John of the Cross), these visions and revelations are clear examples of demonic deception and not to be trusted. In May, 1917 it was not difficult to see that Russia was descending into chaos, and the devil used the opportunity to try and persuade people that the chaos could be averted only through the submission of Russia to his tool, the Catholic Church. Not surprisingly, the Vatican seized on these “revelations” and in 1930 pronounced them worthy of trust; and every Pope since then has been committed to belief in the Fatima phenomenon.

However, this poses a major problem for the present ecumenist policies of the Vatican. For Orthodox-Catholic ecumenism presupposes that the two Churches are – in the words of the Balamand agreement of 1994 – “the two lungs” of the single Body of Christ. Such a formulation is incompatible with the idea that Russia has to be “converted” – for it implies she is converted already, if not to Catholicism, at any rate to a sister Church of roughly equal status. The anathemas between the two Churches were supposedly lifted in 1964 by Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople, and concelebration between hierarchs of the two Churches at the highest level has already taken place. Nor is there any reason why Russia should be “consecrated” to the Mother of God, since she has called herself the House of the Mother of God for centuries. And if reconsecration is necessary (although the Orthodox prefer the word “repentance”), then she has her own hierarchs to lead the way... Perhaps in view of these difficulties, 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.

⁴⁵⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_F%C3%A1tima.

But this has aroused the wrath of the Fatima fanatics, otherwise known as the Blue Army. Thus one of their leaders, 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."⁴⁵⁵

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".⁴⁵⁶

Now it will be immediately apparent that this is the old-fashioned, pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism speaking. The modern, ecumenist Vatican would never say that Russia has "separated from the True Church" or that it was "schismatic". Such language would ruin its ecumenist diplomacy with the Moscow Patriarchate. Of course, in his heart the present Pope may think like the Fatima fanatics, and in practice the Vatican allows this old-fashioned kind of thinking to coexist with the newer spirit of ecumenism. But the fact is that the cult of the Fatima phenomenon and the Vatican's present ecumenist strategy in relation to Russia are incompatible – which may explain the tensions between the Fatima fanatics and the Pope over the "Third Secret" and other questions...

So there are tensions between ecumenist and anti-ecumenist forces in both Roman Catholicism and the Moscow Patriarchate. However, in spite of that, there are signs that both the pope and the patriarch are pushing forward the ecumenical agenda with renewed vigour. If newspaper reports are to be believed, a visit of the Pope to Russia is imminent...⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ Gruner, in "The Fatima Challenge", *The Fatima Crusader*, 94, Spring, 2010, p. 12.

⁴⁵⁶ Guimaraes, "The Progressivist Challenge to Fatima",
<http://www.traditioninaction.org/HotTopics/a014FatimaShrine.htm>.

⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/expat/expatnews/6553583/Russian-Orthodox-and-Catholic-church-may-end-950-year-rift.html>.

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The conclusion, then, must be that Russia is in as imminent danger of being drawn into a union with the Vatican as it was four hundred years ago. Indeed, the danger is probably greater now for the simple reason that the leaders of the Russian Church are as compromised in their own way as the papacy itself, and can therefore offer far less effective opposition to the threat than the dying Patriarch Hermogen was able to produce from his freezing Kremlin prison. The National Bolshevism (disguised under the slogan of "Sovereign Democracy") of the neo-Soviet Russian State cannot help – one cannot drive out one demon by employing another, hardly less wicked one. The only hope for the Russians is to begin to repent at last of their apostasy from God since 1917, and to purify themselves by returning to the undefiled truth of the Holy Orthodox Faith. Then, and only then, will a true leader emerge who, like Moses, will use God's own weapons to drown the spiritual Pharaoh threatening it from the West...

April 17/30, 2010.

33. 1945 AND THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE'S **"THEOLOGY OF VICTORY"**

It is well-known that for over eighty years now the Moscow Patriarchate has assiduously defended and advanced the cause of world communism, making excuses for the Soviet government even in its most evil acts – and such acts have been without precedent in world history... This process began with the pro-Soviet “declaration” of Metropolitan, later Patriarch Sergius in 1927. It gathered pace under Patriarch Alexis during and after the Second World War. In the 1960s, under Metropolitan Nicodemus of Leningrad, it acquired a quasi-theological basis in the “Theology of Peace”, very similar to the “liberation theology” of the contemporary Catholic Marxists of Central and South America. This “Gospel of Communist Christianity” suffered a temporary setback after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, but towards the end of the 1990s a new “religion of victory” was being developed, a glorification of the Soviet victory in 1945 as a victory of good over evil comparable to the victory of Christ over the devil at Pascha! Now, in 2010, to crown this truly horrific justification of the greatest evil as the greatest good, the new patriarch, Cyril (Gundiaev) has described the deaths of the millions of Soviet citizens in the Second World War as “a nation-wide propitiatory sacrifice” to God for the sins of the Russian people...⁴⁵⁸

Let us briefly examine how this “theology of victory” grew out of the “theology of peace” of the 1960s.

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The so-called “movement for peace” or “theology of peace” arose as an essentially political reaction to the foundation of NATO in 1949. This organization had been created in order to defend Europe against Soviet aggression. But from the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism, it was not a defensive organization, but a threat to world peace.

In line with this position, 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.

⁴⁵⁸ “Bogoslovie ‘Pobedy’”, *Nasha Strana* (Buenos Aires), no. 2891, May 8, 2010 (in Russian).

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."⁴⁵⁹

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 excluding from our society any possibility of enmity between peoples of different races and nationalities, of different persuasions, faiths and social conditions."⁴⁶⁰

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..."

"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.

⁴⁵⁹ P.K. Kurochkin, *Evolutsia sovremennogo russkogo pravoslavia*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 81, 82 (in Russian)

⁴⁶⁰ *Zhurnal Moskovskoj Patriarkhii*, 1967; translated in *Orthodox Life*, № 110, March-April, 1968, p. 25.

“That is why, in his report ‘Peace and Freedom’ at the local conference of the movement for peace in Holland in 1963, Metropolitan Nicodemus 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 Nicodemus renouncing in these words? He is renouncing the 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.”⁴⁶¹

Marxism-Leninism went out of fashion after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. But the communist spirit never died, and by the end of the liberal era of the 1990s, it revived in the form of “National Bolshevism”, an extreme nationalistic form of the old communism with some “Orthodoxy” added but without Marxism. This modernized form of the old ideology sought to justify the Soviet past in all its unprecedented evil, and rejected repentance for its sins as a betrayal of the nation.

It was illustrated most vividly in an article entitled “The Religion of Victory” in which a new Russian religio-political bloc, “For Victory!”

⁴⁶¹ Grabbe, *Dogmat o Tserkvi v sovremennom mire*, report to the Third All-Diaspora Council, 1974 (in Russian).

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”. 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. And a new communality embracing the whole nation will confirm the Victory of ‘45 in the 21st century.

“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.

“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...”⁴⁶²

⁴⁶² V. Chikin, A. Prokhanov, “Religia Pobedy: Beseda”, *Zavtra*, № 32 (297), 1999, p. 2. Cf. Egor Kholmogorov, “Dve Pobedy”, *Spetsnaz Rossii*, № 5 (44), May, 2000, and my reply: V. Moss, [http://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/316/imperia-i-anti-imperia-\(-russian\)](http://www.orthodoxchristianbooks.com/articles/316/imperia-i-anti-imperia-(-russian)).

Orthodox writers rushed to support this ideology. Movements began for the canonization of such “strong” leaders as Ivan the Terrible and Rasputin. “Icons” of Stalin have appeared. And, most horrific and blasphemous of all, the anniversary of the Soviet victory on May 9, 1945 was described as a “feast of feasts” comparable to Pascha – even as Pascha itself! Thus in an article on an MP web-site we read: “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...”⁴⁶³

Again, the former idol of ROCOR’s liberals, Fr. Demetrius Dudko, wrote: “Now the time has come 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!”⁴⁶⁴

“Ecclesiastical Stalinism” was the most horrific sign of the lack of repentance of the Moscow Patriarchate even now that it had been liberated from Soviet oppression. That lack of repentance has continued and intensified in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In 2010, it has become the official ideology of the Moscow Patriarchate as preached by her new leader, Patriarch Cyril, who believes that “we must be penetrated with a special understanding of the redemptive significance of the Great Patriotic War – and this is a religious understanding”.

Cyril mocks those historians who think that the evil on the Soviet side was no less than that on the Nazi side: with their “primitive and sinful analysis”, he says, they fail to see “the Divine perspective”. The fact is, according to the patriarch, that Russia was spiritually regenerated in 1945 thanks to the blood

⁴⁶³ Yuri Krupnov, “The Victory is Pascha”, <http://pravaya.ru/look/7580?print=1> (in Russian).

⁴⁶⁴ Dudko, “Mysli sviaschennika”, <http://patriotica.narod.ru/history/dudko> (in Russian).

of the millions of Soviet citizens who died in the war. That is why we must triumphantly celebrate May 9 as a general Church feast.⁴⁶⁵

Let us consider for a moment what actually happened in the war, and in the period just before and after it.

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The period 1917 to 1941 constituted the most relentless, massive, bloody and destructive persecution of the Orthodox Church in the whole of her history. To take just one out of many staggering statistics: according to Russian government figures, in 1937 alone 136,900 clergy were arrested, of whom 106,800 were killed.⁴⁶⁶ Not content with destroying its own citizens on an unprecedented scale, the Soviet Union then entered into a pact with Nazi Germany, and proceeded, with the Nazis' blessing, to invade Poland, the Baltic countries and Finland.

The Nazi invasion on the Sunday of All Saints of Russia, 1941 liberated Western Russia from the Soviet yoke, and was greeted with unfeigned enthusiasm by most of the inhabitants. The collective farms (slave-labour camps in all but name) were dissolved, the churches were reopened, and millions of people were baptized, enjoying free church life for the first time in a generation. Legitimate church hierarchies were re-established in the form of the Autonomous Orthodox Churches of Belorussia and the Ukraine.

However, it was a different story for those who remained in the Soviet sphere. The miseries of war compounded the miseries created by the Soviets themselves, and there was no let-up in the persecution of the Christians, especially the Catacomb Christians who refused to recognize Soviet power or fight "for the achievements of October". Many were shot for refusing to serve in the Red Army; thousands more were sent to the camps.

Moreover, in spite of the best efforts of the Soviet propagandists, there was no genuine revival of Russian patriotism, in spite of the peddling of the myth of "the Great Fatherland War" as a great victory for Russian patriotism over a foreign invader. For, as Anton Kuznetsov writes, "from the very beginning the Bolsheviks showed themselves to be an *anti-Russian power*, for which the concepts of Homeland, Fatherland, honour and duty do not exist; in whom the holy things of the Russian people elicit hatred; which replaced the word

⁴⁶⁵ "Bogoslovie Pobedy", *op. cit.*

⁴⁶⁶ 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*, № 204, January, 1996, p. 15 (in French). 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. ("Nasha Strana' - konechno zhe ne Vasha, http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print_page&pid=771, p. 3 (in Russian).

'Russia' with the word 'Internationale', and the Russian flag with the red banner; which even in its national composition was not Russian: it was dominated by Jews (they constituted a huge percentage, and at first it seemed as if it was a question of a purely 'Jewish power') and foreigners.

"During the 24 years of its domination the Bolshevik ('Soviet') power had had enormous successes in the annihilation of historical Russia. All classes were wiped out one by one: the nobility, the merchants, the peasantry, the clergy and the educated class (including all the Russian officers), and all the state institutions of what had been Russia were destroyed: the army, the police, the courts, local administration, charitable institutions, etc. A systematic annihilation of Russian culture was carried out – churches were blown up, museums were robbed, towns and streets were renamed, Russian family and everyday traditions were exterminated, Russian sciences and schools were liquidated, the whole of Russian history was blotted out and spat upon. In the place of the annihilated Russian element a red and Soviet element was created, beginning with the Red army and the Red professors and ending with Soviet orthography and Soviet sport. Our earthly Fatherland, Russia, was in fact destroyed, by terror; she was transformed into the Sovdepiia, which was a complete denial of Russia – it was anti-Russia. A Russian person has no right to forget that a consistent denial of Russian statehood is that on which the Soviet regime stood and on which it prided itself with emphasis.

"One has no right to call such a regime a national power. It must be defined as *an anti-national, occupying power, the overthrow of which every honourable patriot can only welcome.*

"... The antinational and antipopular essence of the Red (Soviet) army is clear to everyone who has come into more or less close contact with this army.

"Every Russian who has preserved his national memory will agree that the Workers and Peasants Red Army (RKKA) *never was either the continuer of the traditions, nor the successor by right, of the Russian Imperial Army* (that is what the White army was and remains to this day). The Red army was created by the Bolsheviks in the place of the Russian Army that they had destroyed. Moreover, the creators, leaders and backbone of the personal make-up of this army were either open betrayers of the Homeland, or breakers of their oath and deserters from the Russian Army. This army dishonoured itself in the Civil war by pillaging and the killing our Russian officers and generals and by unheard-of violence against the Russian people. At its creation it was filled with a criminal rabble, village riff-raff, red guards, sailors, and also with Chinese, Hungarians, Latvians and other 'internationalists'. In the make-up of the Red army the communists constituted: in 1920 – 10.5%, in 1925 – 40.8%, in 1930 – 52%, and from the end of the 30s all the command posts were occupied by communists and members of the komsomol. This army was stuffed with

NKVD informants and political guides, its destinies were determined by commissars, the majority of whom were Jews; it represented, not a national Army, but the party army of the Bolshevik Communist Party (B) – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The slogan of this army was not ‘For the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland!’, but ‘Give us the Internationale!’ This army was created from the beginning, not for the defence, but for the enslavement of our Fatherland and in order to turn it into ‘the launch-pad of world revolution’; it had to wage an aggressive war against it in order to spread antitheist communism throughout the world...

“But of course the most terrible blow at this myth is delivered by the Russian Liberation Army [ROA] in the Second World War, which is called ‘the Vlasovites’ by Soviet patriots. The very fact that at various times 1,000,000 (one million!) Soviet citizens served in the German Wermacht must cut off all talk of a ‘great fatherland’ war, for in fact: where, when and in what Fatherland war do people in such numbers *voluntarily* pass over to the side of the opponent and fight in his ranks? Soviet patriots find nothing cleverer to say than to declare these people innate traitors, self-seekers and cowards. This is a blatant lie, but even if it were true, it remains complete incomprehensible why Russia never knew such a massive ‘betrayal’ in her history. How many wars has Russia waged, and never have there been so many traitors, turncoats and ‘self-seekers’ among us. And yet it was enough for the ‘Fatherland’ war to begin and not just a simple one, but a ‘Great’ one, and hundreds of thousands of people with weapons in their hands passed over to the side of the enemy. Moreover, people were enlisting in the ROA even in 1945, when the fall of Hitler’s Germany and the victory of Stalin was evident...”⁴⁶⁷

As the Bolsheviks retreated in 1941, “the NKVD carried out a programme of liquidation of all the prisoners sitting in their jails. In the huge Lukyanov prison in Kiev thousands were shot in their cells. But in Stavropol they still had time to take the ‘contras’, including several old priests and monks, out of the city. They were led out onto the railway line from Kislovodsk to Moscow. At the small station of Mashuk, where the poet Lermontov had his duel, the wagons containing the prisoners were uncoupled from the trains and shunted into a siding at Kamenolomnya. Then the priests and monks were taken out with their hands bound and their eyes covered. In groups of five they were led to the edge of a sheer cliff, and thrust over the edge. Then the bodies were

⁴⁶⁷ Kuznetsov, “O Sovjetsko-Germanskoj Vojne”, <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=print> page&pid=570 pp. 3-4, 7-8 (in Russian). A. Soldatov writes: “The memory of the ‘Vlasovtsy’ is dear to many children of the Russian Church Abroad (ROCORA)... In the memorial cemetery of ROCORA in Novo Diveyevo near New York there stands an obelisk which perpetuates the memory of all the officers and soldiers of the Russian Army of Liberation, who perished ‘in the name of the idea of a Russia free from communism and fascism’ (“Radosti Paskhi i Skorb’ Pobedy”, *Moskovskie Novosti* and *Vertograd*, № 520, May 14, 2005 (in Russian)).

lifted up with hooks and covered with crushed stone and sand before a tractor levelled the area for the next wagon-full..."⁴⁶⁸

The Germans were in general greeted with ecstatic joy. Thus Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes: "Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia gave the Germans a jubilant welcome. Belorussia, the Western Ukraine, and the first occupied Russian territories followed suit. But the mood of the people was demonstrated most graphically of all by the Red Army: before the eyes of the whole world it retreated along a 2,000-kilometre front, on foot, but every bit as fast as motorized units. Nothing could possibly be more convincing than the way these men, soldiers in their prime, voted with their feet. Numerical superiority was entirely with the Red Army, they had excellent artillery and a strong tank force, yet back they rolled, a rout without compare, unprecedented in the annals of Russian and world history. In the first few months some three million officers and men had fallen into enemy hands!

"That is what the popular mood was like – the mood of peoples some of whom had lived through twenty-four years of communism and others but a single year. For them the whole point of this latest war was to cast off the scourge of communism. Naturally enough, each people was primarily bent not on resolving any European problem but on its own national task – liberation from communism..."⁴⁶⁹

"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 Orthodox Church)." ⁴⁷⁰ 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.

However, the Germans' stupidity and race-hatred towards the Slavs undermined the goodwill initially shown them, and towards the end of the war many Russians were glad to see the back of them. For the bitter fact is that Nazism and Sovietism are closely related spirits and ideologies, two branches of the single antichristian revolution. So the savage war between them was in no way a war between good and evil, even relatively speaking, but rather a war between two demon-possessed regimes.

And the bigger demon won... with the natural result that as the Red Army advanced westwards in the later stages of the war, one of the greatest exoduses in human history took place. Millions of people of various nations

⁴⁶⁸ Monk Epiphany (Chernov), "Tserkov' Katakombnaya na Zemle Rossijskoj" (MS, Old Woking, in Russian).

⁴⁶⁹ Solzhenitsyn, *The Mortal Danger*, London: The Bodley Head, 1980, pp. 39-40.

⁴⁷⁰ Krasikov, "'Tretij Rim' i Bol'sheviki", in L.M. Vorontsova, A.V. Pchelintsev and S.B. Filatov (eds.), *Religia i Prava Cheloveka*, Moscow: "Nauka", 1996, p. 203 (in Russian).

fled before the apocalyptic beast – especially Russians, who knew precisely what the return of Soviet power portended. These included almost the whole hierarchy of the Belorussian and Ukrainian Autonomous Churches, together with many future luminaries of the Russian Church Abroad such as Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishops Vitaly and Averky of Jordanville, Leontius of Chile and Andrew of Rockland.

The behaviour of the Red Army soldiers was almost unbelievably bestial, cruel and lustful. This has been excused by Soviet propagandists on the grounds that it was natural for the soldiers to take vengeance on the Germans for their atrocities in Russia. Such an argument might convince a pagan or a communist, but hardly a Christian, still less an Orthodox Christian.

In any case, what atrocities had the female population of the German provinces committed? And yet, as recent historical research has demonstrated, it was precisely this element of the population that suffered the most. For, as Richard Evans, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, writes: “Women and girls were subjected to serial rape wherever they were encountered. Rape was often accompanied by torture and mutilation and frequently ended in the victim being shot or bludgeoned to death. The raging violence was indiscriminating. Often, especially in Berlin, women were deliberately raped in the presence of their menfolk, to underline the humiliation. The men were usually killed if they tried to intervene. In East Prussia, Pomerania and Silesia it is thought that around 1,400,000 women were raped, a good number of them several times. Gang-rapes were the norm rather than the exception. The two largest Berlin hospitals estimated that at least 100,000 women had been raped in the German capital. Many caught a sexually transmitted disease, and not a few fell pregnant; the vast majority of the latter obtained an abortion, or, if they did give birth, abandoned their baby in hospital. The sexual violence went on for many weeks, even after the war formally came to an end. German women learned to hide, especially after dark; or, if they were young, to take a Soviet soldier, preferably an officer, as a lover and protector...”⁴⁷¹

In this way, if Patriarch Cyril is to be believed, did the glorious Christian soldiers of the Red Army “redeem the sins of the Russian people”! In this way did Stalin “trample down death by death”! In this way was Christ glorified in a new Pascha, a new and unprecedentedly glorious propitiatory act!

But no: the results of the war were irredeemably evil for all the peoples who came within the Soviet sphere – and even outside that sphere, since Stalin bullied his allies into forcibly repatriating millions of Russians in accordance with the Yalta agreement. Thus “from 1945 to 1947, 2,272,000 people were handed over by the Allies to the USSR. Of these more than 600,000 had served in the ‘eastern forces’ of the German army. About 200,000

⁴⁷¹ Evans, *The Third Reich at War*, London: Penguin Books, 2009, pp. 710-711.

managed to remain in the West.”⁴⁷² However, according to Vitaly Shumilo writes, “more than 6 million ‘Soviet’ prisoners of war, ‘Osty’ workers, refugees and émigrés were forcibly repatriated to the USSR up to 1948. The majority of them perished within the walls of Stalin’s NKVD.”⁴⁷³

The largest category of those forcibly repatriated was composed of those who had fought in the Red army. Already during the war the authorities had executed 157,000 Red Army soldiers (the equivalent of fifteen divisions) and almost a million were arrested.⁴⁷⁴ And there was no respite now for those who had spent the war in Nazi prisoner-of-war camps or had simply witnessed the prosperity of the West and therefore knew that Soviet propaganda about the West was a lie. Thus Protopriest Michael Ardov writes: “I remember quite well the years right after the war, 1945, 1946, and how Moscow was literally flooded with cripples, soldiers who were missing arms and legs, returning from the war, and then, suddenly, they all disappeared. Only later did I learn that they were all picked up and packed off to die on the island of Valaam, in order not to spoil the view in the capital. There was no monastery there then. You can just imagine for yourselves the conditions that they had to endure there while living out their last days. They were so poor, and were reduced to begging in order to survive. This is how they were treated, just so that the capital should not be spoiled by their presence! This I remember quite well. Besides this, as we all know that, because of Stalin and his military leaders, an enormous number of Soviet citizens were taken out of the country as prisoners. The government immediately disowned them; they were immediately branded traitors. And the consequences of this were that when they, for some reason or another, came back to our country, most of them were whisked off to Stalin’s labour camps. This is how they treated the veterans then...”⁴⁷⁵

In 1945 a hand-picked selection of the most craven bishops in Russia were ordered to elect Alexis (Simansky) as patriarch of Moscow, and agreed to an unprecedentedly total control of the State over the Church. 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. This led into error not only a part of

⁴⁷² Soldatov, *op. cit.*, p. 11, footnote 6.

⁴⁷³ Shumilo, “Sovietskij Rezhim i ‘Sovietskaia Tserkov’ v 40-e-50-e gody XX stoletia”, <http://catacomb.org.ua/modules.php?name=Pages&go=page&pid=678> (in Russian)).

⁴⁷⁴ Alexander Yakovlev, *A Century of Russian Violence in Soviet Russia*, Yale University Press, 2003.

⁴⁷⁵ Ardov, “Avoiding participation in the Great Victory Services”, sermon given on May 8, 2005, *Vertograd*, May 18, 2005; translated in *The Hoffman Wire*, May 18, 2005. Shumilo writes: “Under the pretext of restoring ‘socialist legality’ whole families, and even settlements, were sent to Siberia, mainly from Western Ukraine, Belorussia and the Baltic region. By the end of the 40s, Soviet Marshal Zhukov had ordered the forcible removal from Western Ukraine to Siberia, Kazakhstan and other regions of more than 600,000 people” (*op. cit.*)

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."⁴⁷⁶

The decisions of the council had direct and extremely unpleasant consequences for those Orthodox Christians who remained faithful to Christ. Thus Professor Ivan Andreev, who was a member of the Catacomb Church before the war, 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."⁴⁷⁷ This fact, writes 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."⁴⁷⁸

Other consequences of Stalin's "redemption" included the enslavement of the Romanian, Bulgarian and Serbian Orthodox Churches to the KGB and its sister-organizations, as a result of which hundreds of bishops and clergy were killed while the survivors became obedient puppets of the collective Antichrist. Then began the terrorization and communization of the captive populations of Eastern Europe; and if the physical and spiritual devastation in these lands did not equal that in the Soviet Union, this was only because they were under the communist yoke for a shorter period, and most of that period took place after the death of Stalin... Meanwhile, as the "free" population of the Soviet Union suffered starvation conditions, the population of the Gulag swelled to its greatest-ever extent, making the period *after* the war still more terrible for Russia than the period before it...

Further west, the communist parties of France and Italy received a new lease of life from "Uncle Joe's" prestigious victory and the generous subsidies he gave them (at the expense of the starving Russian people, of course), so that only the presence of American troops in Western Europe and the still more generous (self-interested, but still generous) subsidies of the American Marshall plan saved Western Europe from the Soviet yoke. As the Iron Curtain fell across Europe, hordes of Stalin's redeeming angels dispersed throughout the world, spreading peace and goodwill for all men – except Christians, Capitalists and all men in general who did not embrace the antichristian creed of Dialectical Marxism.

⁴⁷⁶ Shumilo, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷⁷ I.M. Andreev (Andreevsky), "The Catacomb Church in the Russian Land".

⁴⁷⁸ Shkarovsky, *Russkaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov' pri Staline i Khrushcheve*, Moscow, 2005, p. 205 (in Russian).

Their greatest victory came in 1949, when the world's most populous country, China, embraced communism. Now about a quarter of the earth's surface, from Berlin to Peking, was under communist rule. Involuntarily, the words of the seer come to mind: **I looked, and behold, a pale horse** [the Greek word for "pale" is *khloros*, the colour of human flesh]. **And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed after him. And power was given to them over a quarter of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth** (Revelation 6.8).

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It is characteristic of fallen men to understand everything in crudely physical and *external* terms, in terms of men alive or dead, lands conquered or lost, goods seized or destroyed... But Christians are exhorted not to judge by external appearances (John 7.24), but by internal reality. For Christianity is the religion of the Spirit, of the invisible and the immaterial, which manifests itself in the visible and the material, but has its roots elsewhere.

The sergianists' "theology of victory" proclaims a crudely sensual, blasphemously heretical understanding of redemption and of the basic principles of Christian morality. Their understanding of redemption through Stalin is essentially the same as the Judaic understanding of redemption through their false Messiah: a national-political liberation from, and extermination of, their external enemies by means of war and bloodshed. While Patriarch Cyril may talk about the victory of 1945 as having redeemed the Russian people from their sins, this is merely a quasi-religious fig-leaf for a shamelessly non-religious and even anti-religious goal.

Christ rejected the Judaic dream of national liberation from the Romans, and for that He was crucified. The redemption He wrought, which was redemption from *sin, death and the devil*, as opposed to a national-political oppressor, was accomplished through precisely the opposite means to those employed in the Jewish and Soviet-German wars: through the voluntary acceptance of suffering and humiliation without the slightest hint of vengeance, hatred, lust or pride. *Externally*, Christ and His work appeared to suffer complete defeat as His Body was laid in the tomb and His disciples fled in fear and despair. *Externally*, His Death on the Cross appeared to change nothing – at any rate, in the political domain. But *internally*, within His own Soul and Body, within the depths of Satan's domain in the heart of the earth, and later in the souls and bodies of those who followed Him in truth, sin was redeemed, death was abolished and Satan crushed in a Victory far more devastating and complete than any national or political victory.

St. Paul writes: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12.21). However, the soldiers of the Red Army in 1945, while

overcoming the evil of Nazism in the physical sense, were overcome by it morally and spiritually. While standing for an utterly evil world-view themselves, they imbibed all the evil of their adversaries, their pride, their lust, their race-hatred. And after the war, while the Germans, humbled by defeat, repented and achieved Vergangenheitsbewältigung, "the overcoming of the past", the Soviets, puffed up by victory, multiplied their iniquities and impenitence. And so today we have a regime which recalls both Sovietism and Nazism, which is as resentful at its defeat in the Cold War as Germany was at its defeat in World War I, which hates blacks and Jews as much as the Nazis ever did, and which is rebuilding its armed forces as rapidly as Hitler did in the 1930s. Again, as Edward Lucas writes, "the unthinking nationalism and glorification of Mr. Putin [by mass youth movements such as "Nashi"] lead some to call it the Putinjugend (Putin Youth), recalling the Hitlerjugend of Nazi Germany."⁴⁷⁹

Physical evils can be overcome by physical means, but spiritual evil can be overcome by nothing else than spiritual means. And the twin demons of Sovietism and Nazism are undoubtedly spiritual evils. Thus Elder Aristocles of Moscow declared in 1911: "An evil will shortly take Russia, and wherever this evil goes, rivers of blood will flow. It is not the Russian soul, but an imposition on the Russian soul. It is not an ideology, nor a philosophy, but a spirit from hell..."

Such spiritual evils can be overcome only by spiritual good, by holiness. This was the teaching of Tsar-Martyr Nicholas, in his last message to the world, as passed on by his daughter, the martyred Great-Princess Olga Nikolayevna: "Father asks the following message to be given to all those who have remained faithful to him, and to those on whom they may have an influence, that they should not take revenge for him, since he has forgiven everyone and prays for everyone, that they should not take revenge for themselves, and should remember that the evil which is now in the world will be still stronger, but that it is not love that will conquer evil, but only love..." And the reverence in which the Tsar-Martyr is held in Russia today is one of the few signs that all is not lost, that good may finally triumph over evil there.

But the Moscow Patriarchate has not absorbed the lesson of the Tsar-Martyr. Acting like Goebbels to Putin's Hitler, Patriarch Cyril stokes up the passions of vengefulness, of pobedobesie, "victory-demonism". Far from recognizing that the physical victory of 1945 was in fact a catastrophic spiritual defeat, when Stalin conquered Russia and Eastern Europe for Satan,⁴⁸⁰ Cyril is in effect saying, with Macbeth: "Evil, be thou my good!"

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⁴⁷⁹ Lucas, *The New Cold War*, London: Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 102.

⁴⁸⁰ <http://ambrose-s.livejournal.com/42902.html>, May 3, 2010 ®.

We must conclude that if the deaths of the Red Army soldiers in 1945 can be considered to be sacrifices, then they were sacrifices, not to God, but to the devil. Nor should this idea be understood in a purely figurative sense. Archpriest Lev Lebedev speaks about the bloodthirstiness of communism – it is in fact by a wide margin the most bloodthirsty movement in human history⁴⁸¹ - as its “devil-worshipping *essence*. For the blood it sheds is always ritualistic, it is a sacrifice to demons. St. John Chrysostom wrote: ‘It is a habit among the demons that when men give Divine *worship* to them with the stench and smoke of blood, they, like bloodthirsty and insatiable dogs, *remain in those places* for eating and enjoyment.’ It is from such bloody sacrifices that the Satanists receive those demonic *energies* which are so necessary to them in their struggle for power or for the sake of its preservation. It is precisely here that we decipher the enigma: the strange bloodthirstiness of all, without exception all, revolutions, and of the whole of the regime of the Bolsheviks from 1917 to 1953.”⁴⁸²

That communism, a supposedly strictly “scientific” and atheist doctrine, should be compared to devil-worshipping may at first seem strange. And yet closer study of communist history confirms this verdict. The communists’ extraordinary hatred of God and Christians, and indeed of mankind in general, can only be explained by demon-possession – more precisely, by an unconscious compulsion to bring blood-sacrifices to the devil, who was, in Christ’s words, “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8.44)... Nor can the possibility be excluded that in some cases they knew precisely to whom they were sacrificing. After all, the leading Bolsheviks came from a religious background, Talmudic Judaism, and joined the Party in a conscious rebellion against the God of their fathers...

This can be illustrated from the deathbed confession of Yankel Yurovsky, the murderer of the Tsar: “Our family suffered less from the constant hunger than from my father’s religious fanaticism... On holidays and regular days the children were forced to pray, and it is not surprising that my first active protest was against religious and nationalistic traditions. I came to hate God and prayer as I hated poverty and the bosses...”⁴⁸³ He hated God, but did he cease to believe in Him? Or did he perhaps transfer his allegiance consciously to His great antagonist, the devil? We do not know the answer to these questions. But we do know that the Tsar and his family were executed in a decidedly Judaist-ritualistic manner. Strange cabbalistic symbols were found on the walls of the room where the crime took place which have been deciphered to mean: “Here, by order of the secret powers, the Tsar was

⁴⁸¹ “With a grand total of victims variously estimated by contributors to the volume at between 85 million and 100 million... the Communist record offers the most colossal case of political carnage in history...” (Martin Malia, 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, p. x).

⁴⁸² Lebedev, *Velikorossia*, St. Petersburg, 1999, p. 429 (in Russian).

⁴⁸³ Yurovsky, in Edvard Razinsky, *The Last Tsar*, London: Arrow, 1993, p. 177.

offered as a sacrifice for the destruction of the state. Let all peoples be informed of this..."⁴⁸⁴

A second illustration. Once the former seminarian Stalin said to Churchill: "May God help you". Churchill replied: "God, of course, is on our side." Stalin replied: "And the devil is, naturally, on mine, and through our combined efforts we shall defeat the enemy."⁴⁸⁵ He was joking, of course...

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But was there *nothing*, it may be asked, to redeem the "victory" of 1945, that bacchanalia of evil? Yes, there was, and we find it again in Revelation: **When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Then a white robe was given to each of them, and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who would be killed as they were was completed** (6. 9-11). In other words, the silver lining in the black cloud, the redeeming factor in the horrific triumph of evil that was 1945, was the feat of the Holy New Martyrs of Russia who rejected Soviet power.

Not, of course, that any mere man can redeem – and not the least of Patriarch Cyril's heresies is his implication that mere men can redeem sins independently of Christ the Redeemer. For, as David says: "A brother cannot redeem; shall a man redeem? He shall not give to God a ransom for himself, nor the price of redemption of his own soul, though he hath laboured for ever, and shall live to the end" (Psalms 48.7-8 (LXX)). Not even the greatest of the saints, and certainly not the raging atheist rapists of the Red Army, can be said to redeem anyone. Only Christ God is the Redeemer, He Who has offered up the perfect propitiatory Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

And only He is the Victor. For the true victor is not he who kills men and conquers kingdoms, thereby offering pleasing sacrifices to the devil, the hater of men and "ruler of this world", but He Who through His perfect Sacrifice of Himself to God destroyed the power of the devil himself, thereby freeing men from death. For, as St. Jerome said, "the Lord's day, the day of the Resurrection, the day of Christians, is *our* day. It is called the Lord's day because on this day the Lord ascended to the Father as *Victor*."⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁴ See Nikolai Kozlov, *Krestnij Put*, Moscow, 1993; Enel, "Zhertva", *Kolokol*, Moscow, 1990, № 5, pp. 17-37, and Michael Orlov, "Yekaterinburgskaya Golgofa", *Kolokol*, 1990, № 5, pp. 37-55; Prince Felix Yusupov, *Memuary*, Moscow, 1998, p. 249; Lebedev, *op. cit.*, p. 519 (in Russian).

⁴⁸⁵ Jonathan Fenby, *Alliance*, London: Pocket Books, 2006, p. 152; cf. p. 65.

⁴⁸⁶ St. Jerome, *Homily 94, on Pascha*.

Nevertheless, of the saints and the martyrs it can truly be said that they *participate* in the redeeming Sacrifice and Victory of Christ to this extent, that by their sufferings they “fill up in their flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ” (Colossians 1.24). They offered themselves up as whole-burnt sacrifices to the Saviour, and their sacrifice was not in vain, but rather gives them the boldness to intercede for the avengement of their blood and the bringing forward of the final victory of Christ over Bolshevism...

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So where does this leave Patriarch Cyril, and his glorification of the “redemptive sacrifice” of the Bolshevik Satanists? Metropolitan Anastasy, first-hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, put it well when, in response to Patriarch Alexis’ description of Stalin as “the chosen one of the Lord, who leads our fatherland to prosperity and glory”, he wrote that at this point “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’, and 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 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*.”⁴⁸⁷

And yet a resurrection of Holy Russia *is* possible. But it can come about only when the nation as a whole repents, condemns the satanic victory of 1945, anathematizes “Patriarch” Cyril and all those with him who glorify it, and returns to a real knowledge of the one and only Victor over death and hades, the Lord Jesus Christ. Each one who repents in this way is offering his own true sacrifice to counteract the false sacrifices of the Bolsheviks. For, as Elder Aristocles said: “One must repent of one's sins and fear to do even the least sin, but strive to do good, even the smallest. For even the wing of a fly has weight, and God's scales are exact. And when even the smallest of good in the cup tips the balance, then will God reveal His mercy upon Russia...”

May 15/28, 2010; revised May 21 / June 3, 2010.

⁴⁸⁷ I.M. Andreyev, *Is the Grace of God present in the Soviet Church?*, Wildwood, Alberta, 2000, pp. 32-33 (the translation has been slightly altered by me, V.M.).

APPENDIX 1. COMRADE DROZDOV - THE THIEF OF HEBRON

The storming, with the help of the Palestinian police, of the Trinity monastery in Hebron, which is under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, has opened a new page in the chronicle of the Moscow Patriarchate: history does not know a case of the first-hierarchy of a Local Church entering into a plot with Muslims to seize an Orthodox church. However, we should not be surprised by what has happened if we remember that in recent years the Moscow Patriarchate has made frequent use of the clubs of the state's special forces (OMON) to return to its control churches on the territory of Russia which have dared to move to the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

The Moscow Patriarchate is the only power structure of the former USSR that has not undergone any changes since the fall of communism in Russia; and the patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Alexis II, according to the well-known report of Furov to the Soviet leadership, was one of the hierarchs who were most loyal to Soviet power. Moreover, as was revealed during a checking of the archives of the KGB, before access to them was closed again by Ruslan Khasbulatov, the present patriarch was also a KGB agent with the code-name "Drozdo" - a very active agent, moreover, if he was counted worthy of an honorary award of that organization. It is not known whether he then hung up this award in his icon corner with the icons, but he wore the order of the Red Banner next to his bishop's panagia, which was just as blasphemous.

The questions which worried the patriarch quite often had an exclusively secular character. Thus, for example, during 1990, a crisis year for the CPSS, he declared that he was praying to God that there should not be a schism in the party. During the putsch, the patriarch kept quiet, and only on the third day, when it was already clear which way the scales were inclining, did he publish a very cautious declaration giving weak support to Yeltsin. Later he spoke against the reburial of Lenin. In 1993 he promised to excommunicate the first person to fire a shot, but when shooting - artillery shooting, moreover - thundered around the "White House", he forgot about his promise. But then, during the last pre-election campaign, he emphasized that the Church did not engage in politics, Patriarch Alexis nevertheless called on the people not to vote for the communists. In this he was probably being sincere.

It is still not known whether the patriarchate would be able to trade in cigarettes and alcohol without duty-free if power had changed hands in Russia. Although he would most likely have come to an arrangement with the new authorities. Mercantile interests have always been characteristic of the patriarchate. That is why, during the redistribution of property, it took everything that it could, even if it did not have enough priests for the

churches it received. They knowingly appointed unsuitable priests just so as to keep the property in their own hands.

Having strengthened his position in the present Russian leadership, Alexis Ridiger began to cast his eyes abroad. With stealthy force he seized parishes of the Church Abroad in those places where there was no priest, in particular, two parishes in Tunis and one in Teheran. Then the patriarch entrusted President Yeltsin, who was visiting Germany, with the task of pleading for the handover of the German parishes of the Church Abroad.

Germany, however, is not Palestine, it didn't happen there. Moreover, in the legal proceedings brought by the patriarchate, the Church Abroad received the rights to the Orthodox church in Dresden which is occupied at the present time by the patriarchate. However, Bishop Mark of Berlin has not appealed to the police to drive out the unlawful proprietors.

According to the present reasoning of the Moscow Patriarchate, all the church property amassed by Russians abroad should belong precisely to it. Even that which has never belonged to it, as, for example, the church built by emigres in West Berlin and seized immediately after the war. In 1948, in gratitude for its recognition of the state of Israel, the Soviet leadership received from the Israeli government the monasteries and churches on the territory of this state. Then the chekists dispensed with any outside help and used methods that made Archimandrite Methodius, who refused to hand over the keys of the Gorny monastery, a cripple for the rest of his life.

The violent actions of the Palestinian police in Hebron, with the silent approval of the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian consulate who were present at the seizure of the monastery, elicited condemnation throughout the world, as is witnessed by the storm of protests on the Orthodox internet.

It goes without saying that supporters of the patriarchate were found who tried to twist the truth of the events. Thus Serge Schmemmann, who was reporting on what had happened in Hebron in the *New York Times* newspaper, deceived his readers when he wrote that the Church Abroad did not allow pilgrims to the Holy Places. The Synod of the Church Abroad allowed Patriarch Alexis and the Greek metropolitans who were accompanying him to visit the places they asked to see. And they did visit them. And in June this year Serge Schmemmann himself, together with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate's daughter, the Orthodox Church in America, visited the Holy Places under the administration of the Synod Abroad.

An attempt was made not to allow the Moscow Patriarch into the Trinity monastery only when he unexpectedly appeared there accompanied by the Palestinian police. The fears of the monastics were justified: it was not a

pilgrim that was heading towards them, but a thief. The more so in that on the eve Alexis Ridiger had openly published his claims to the property of the Church Abroad, and the rumours about his deal with Arafat had been circulating already for a long time.

The whole visit to the Oak of Mamre in Hebron was thought up as a provocation which would give the Palestinian police an excuse to use force. It is sad that on the side of the aggressors has appeared Metropolitan Theodosius, the first-hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America. But, as is well known, insofar as the autocephaly this church received from the Moscow Patriarchate is recognized by nobody, it is forced to support Moscow in everything. Just think what it would say if the patriarchate on the same basis were to demand the handover to it of the pre-revolutionary property of this church in America! Or else the post-revolutionary property: in Hebron there is a church in honour of Abraham and Sarah whose construction was begun already after the revolution. All the property in the Holy Land was owned and is owned to the present day by the private Imperial Palestine Society. Neither the state nor the Church has had any rights to it. The claims of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Trinity monastery in Hebron are as absurd as would be its claims to the St. Tikhon monastery in Pennsylvania, which is spiritually cared for by Metropolitan Theodosius.

It goes without saying that Patriarch Alexis II is free not to recognize the canonicity and grace of the Church Abroad (the MP reordains clergy that come to it from the Church Abroad, which the Synod does not do). But the flock of the Church Abroad also has the same right to consider Alexis Ridiger as a false patriarch, who has not brought the will of God into the Church by his servility to the atheist state. The Lord will decide who is right. One thing is absolutely clear: violence is unacceptable in any circumstances. And there is no need to cover up the robbery with worry about pilgrims.

The patriarch has evidently forgotten that in 1991 he ordered that a cleric of the Church Abroad, Fr. Victor Potapov, should not be admitted to the Sarov Hermitage. Not long before this, during the patriarch's visit to the USA, a denunciation against Fr. Victor had been made to the State Department - the patriarch did not like Fr. Victor's broadcasts on the *Voice of America*. At that time Fr. Victor simply did not go to Sarov, but the zealous policemen accidentally arrested some Greek priest on a train.

Behind all the events in Hebron there stand, not spiritual, but mercantile interests. The property in the Holy Land is too tasty a morsel for people who have been accused of links with the all-penetrating Russian mafia not to have a bite at it. That was why mafia methods were applied. Or were they chekist?

Eugene Sokolov, *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*, 18 July, 1997.

APPENDIX 2. PATRIARCH ALEXIS II AS A CHURCH FIGURE

In our time many ordinary believers of the MP, when coming across criticism of their hierarchy, and in particular the patriarch of Moscow and all Rus' Alexis (Ridiger), and notably in connection with the accusation that he has betrayed Orthodoxy and has openly confessed the heresy of ecumenism, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with "His Holiness" and demand that they be given concrete facts proving his apostasy from the faith. In actual fact, it is not difficult to prove this; it is sufficient merely to take into one's hands a selection of issues of the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* during the last two or three decades, and also to acquaint oneself with the interview the patriarch gave to the mass media, with the decisions of the synod and the resolutions of the Hierarchical councils of the MP in the years 1994-97, and compare them with Orthodox ecclesiology and patristic teaching.

The Servant of the Ecumene

While he was metropolitan of Tallin and Estonia, and then Leningrad and Novgorod, Alexis II headed one of the most important ecumenical organizations of our age – the Conference of European Churches (CEC), into which the majority of the Christian denominations of Europe entered on equal terms. In this post Alexis worked hard to unite and coordinate the activity of all the member churches of the CEC in "the Church's peace-making service to the world". This was expressed in the conducting of ecumenical conferences, in joint declarations and inter-confessional prayers. However, Alexis was not the first comer here: the MP had been taking part in "peace-making activity" for a long time already, since the 1940s (the true "first comer" in this field may be considered to have been the Stalinist metropolitan, Nicholas (Yarushevich)). It is not surprising that this ecclesiastical "struggle for peace" should have required a theoretical underpinning, which appeared shortly in the distorted form of a "theology of peace", that is, a theological doctrine justifying and interpreting the necessity for the preservation of peace on the planet. It became the aim of this struggle to unite the whole of humanity, all "men of good will" and all Christian confessions (and even non-Christian religions) in a single impulse towards a peaceful future for humanity. Ideologically, this movement was characterized by two elements – humanism and ecumenism.

Already in 1966, 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."⁴⁸⁸ If we remember that, according to Orthodox teaching, Christ adopted people to Himself only in His Hypostasis,

⁴⁸⁸ Sheder Ch. "The Orthodox Church of the East", *Church Yearly*, 1956, Husterlo, 1957, p. 281 (in German).

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 Churches⁴⁸⁹, 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, 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.”⁴⁹⁰ 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. Khomyakov) 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.”⁴⁹¹

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”.⁴⁹² From this there follows an open admittance

⁴⁸⁹ Crete, Greece, 18-25 October, 1979.

⁴⁹⁰ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 1, p. 54.

⁴⁹¹ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 1, p. 54.

⁴⁹² *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 2, p. 62. Italics here and later are ours – H.Th.

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 Cor.12.13).⁴⁹³ 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."⁴⁹⁴ 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".⁴⁹⁵ 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."⁴⁹⁶ And although the metropolitan makes the qualification

⁴⁹³ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 3, p. 59.

⁴⁹⁴ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1966, № 7, p. 43.

⁴⁹⁵ St. John of Damascus, *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, III, 11; Moscow, Rostov-on-Don, 1992, pp. 217-218.

⁴⁹⁶ J. Gouillard. *Le Synodikon de l'Orthodoxie, Edition et commentaire*, Travaux et mémoires 2 (1967), p. 301.

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 Cor. 12.7-11), so that human talents should be revealed more fully.”⁴⁹⁷ 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.”⁴⁹⁸

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 culture 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.”⁴⁹⁹

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.

⁴⁹⁷ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 2, p. 63.

⁴⁹⁸ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 2, p. 63.

⁴⁹⁹ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 3, p. 58.

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).⁵⁰⁰ 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 Nicodemus (Rotov).

Teacher and Pupil

We shall now see that it was precisely Metropolitan Nicodemus who initiated Metropolitan Alexis into the wisdom of ecumenism. We can learn how the latter believed in God and the Church from his numerous articles, reports and speeches.

Metropolitan Nicodemus 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 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”.⁵⁰¹ But further on Metropolitan Nicodemus 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.”⁵⁰² This saving influence consists, according to Metropolitan Nicodemus, “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

⁵⁰⁰ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1980, № 3, p. 59.

⁵⁰¹ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1973, № 8, pp. 32-33. Report of the president of Kh.M.K., Metropolitan Nicodemus of Leningrad and Novgorod, at an open session of KOPR, 25 May, 1973.

⁵⁰² Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, Leningrad Theological Academy, 1974, vol. 4, p. 308.

union with this nature through the incarnation of the Only-Begotten Son.”⁵⁰³ “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*”.⁵⁰⁴ “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.”⁵⁰⁵ 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...”⁵⁰⁶ Therefore all people, the whole Body of humanity (Adam), is 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”.⁵⁰⁷ Metropolitan Nicodemus 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...”⁵⁰⁸ But the visible Church “is called to realize the fruits of the Incarnation and Redemption in the life of her *immediate* members.”⁵⁰⁹

And so, according to Metropolitan Nicodemus, 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.

⁵⁰³ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 4, p. 308.

⁵⁰⁴ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 143.

⁵⁰⁵ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 141.

⁵⁰⁶ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 153.

⁵⁰⁷ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 153.

⁵⁰⁸ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 141. Speech on the opening of discussions between the delegations of theologians of the Evangelical church of the Federal Republic of Germany (Arnoldsheim IV) and the MP in the Leningrad Theological Academy, 12 September, 1969.

⁵⁰⁹ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 143.

As we see, Metropolitan Alexis Ridiger repeats his teacher in everything, and now nobody can object to the statement that even before his appointment to the patriarchal throne (1990) Metropolitan Alexis openly confessed the ecumenical heresy – like all the leading hierarchs of the MP of that time, including Patriarchs Alexis I and Pimen.

Later we shall see whether Alexis (Ridiger), on becoming patriarch, renounced this open confession of heresy or not.

As Patriarch of the Moscow Patriarchate

After Metropolitan Alexis was “elected” patriarch of the MP at the dawn of perestroika at the Local Council of 1990, his ecumenist convictions did not change at all.

Patriarch Alexis II continues to carry out his ecumenical functions as fervently as did his predecessors. Thus at the beginning of 1990 the head of the MP together with the synod again confessed the “branch theory”, declaring that “the Evangelical and Orthodox Churches have been called *in an equal way* by Jesus Christ, *their* Lord, to witness and serve.”⁵¹⁰ The patriarch recognizes the Buddhists as his “brothers”⁵¹¹, and prays together with heretics: the Armenian catholicos and the Syrian, Ethiopian and Coptic Monophysite hierarchs, thereby falling under the anathemas of the 4th, 5th and 6th Ecumenical Councils.

But the most scandalous of all was the patriarch’s famous speech before the rabbis of New York (U.S.A.) on 13 November, 1991. The patriarch openly, in the name of the Orthodox Church, confessed that “we are one with the Jews, without renouncing Christianity and not in spite of Christianity, but in the name of and by dint of Christianity, while the Jews are one with us not in spite of Judaism, but in the name of and by dint of true Judaism. We are separated from the Jews because we are not yet completely Christian, while the Jews are separated from us because they are not yet completely Jews. For the fullness of Christianity embraces both itself and Judaism, while the fullness of Judaism is Christianity... The Jewish people are near to us in faith. Your law is our law, your prophets are our prophets.” The patriarch called on the Jews to work together to build “the new world order”: “by our joint efforts we shall build a new society – a democratic, free, open, just society... where Jews would live with in security and peace, in an atmosphere of friendship, creative brotherhood and the brotherhood of the children of the one God, the Father of all, the God of your fathers and of ours.”⁵¹² And the rabbis did not forget the reverence paid in their honour by the patriarch of

⁵¹⁰ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 1991, № 2, p. 58.

⁵¹¹ *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 1991, № 2, p. 51. Telegram to Hambo-lama Gaadan.

⁵¹² *The Speech of Patriarch Alexis II to the Rabbis of New York on 13 November, 1991 and the Heresy of the Judaizers*, TOO “Pallada”, Moscow, 1992, pp. 8-11.

Moscow: 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.

The MP's involvement in world ecumenism is so strong that the MP's hierarchy always replies with refusals to all the protests and demands of the patriarchal conservatives to leave the WCC and renounce the practice of ecumenical prayers. Moreover, the Hierarchical Council of 1994, which was headed by Patriarch Alexis, publicly recognized its participation in ecumenism "to be dictated by considerations of benefit for the Church" and synodically legalized the carrying out of joint prayers with the heterodox both in "the general external activity of the Church" and at the diocesan level, "which is defined by the canonical order of the Orthodox Church."⁵¹³

In 1997, at the Hierarchical Council that took place in Moscow, it was resolved "to reject the persistent suggestion of some pastors to stop all relations with Ecumenism". Apparently, Patriarch Alexis and his brothers in ecumenism, the hierarchs of the MP, decided come what may to accomplish that which Metropolitan Nicodemus insistently strove towards: "It is necessary to instil an ecumenical consciousness ever more deeply and broadly in the consciousness of our believers, to strive to attain ecumenical enlightenment in the mass of the Christians."⁵¹⁴

During Patriarch Alexis' visit to Armenia in May, 1996, he together with the hierarchs accompanying him took part in a session of the synod of the Armenian church at which questions of "the further merging together of the two sister churches" were discussed. Speaking in front of the hierarchy of the Armenian church, Patriarch Alexis highly valued "the striving for union of the ancient Eastern Orthodox Churches", and called the existing division "an unhealed wound on the body of the church" and promised to apply "special effort for the speedy overcoming... of the division". In the course of the visit Patriarch Alexis together with the head of the Armenian Monophysites, Patriarch-Catholicos Garegin, twice carried out joint prayer services and blessed the people from the altars of the Armenian churches.⁵¹⁵

On 22 June, 1997 Patriarch Alexis, together with Cardinal Martini of Milan, opened the 2nd European ecumenical assembly in Graz. There he prayed with Catholics in the Lower-Austrian Benedictine monastery of Melk, and then

⁵¹³ Resolution of the Hierarchical Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, 29 November – 2 December, 1994. "On the relationship of the ROC to inter-Christian cooperation in the search for unity" in the collection, *Orthodoxy and Ecumenism. Documents and Materials. 1902-1998*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 459-460.

⁵¹⁴ Metropolitan Nicodemus, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 366.

⁵¹⁵ *Avatamk*, №№ 35-36, 1996.

took part in a service in the cathedral church of St. Stefan together with the papal nuncio in Austria, Archbishop Skvicharini, and Archbishop Schenborn of Vienna.⁵¹⁶

Finally, on 21 April, 2000, while speaking about the perspectives for mutual relations between the MP and the Catholic Church during a meeting with the president of the Palace of Representatives of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Belgium, Herman de Kru, the patriarch once more assured his foreign guests that the church led by him “will not begin to isolate itself from the western world and western Christianity”. In the course of a discussion taking place in the Danilov monastery, Patriarch Alexis noted that “ecumenical contacts on a bilateral basis will be continued”.⁵¹⁷

One could cite many such examples. However, the fact remains: Patriarch Alexis, having prayed for the whole of his life with heretics, has never renounced and is not renouncing his ecumenist heresy, continuing openly, ex cathedra, to confess heretics and non-Christians to be “the Church of Christ”, that Church of which he himself considers himself to be a member and to which, consequently, his followers belong.

⁵¹⁶ *Rus' Pravoslavnaiia*, № 3, 1997, p. 3.

⁵¹⁷ Communication of ITAR-TASS, 21 April, 2000.

APPENDIX 3. A LIFE OF METROPOLITAN PHILARET OF NEW YORK

Early Years

Metropolitan Philaret, in the world George Nikolayevich Voznesensky, was born in the city of Kursk on March 22 / April 4, 1903, into the family of Protopriest Nicholas. In 1909 the family moved to Blagoveschensk-on-Amur in the Far East, where the future hierarch finished high school.

In a sermon at his nomination as Bishop of Brisbane, the future metropolitan said: "There is hardly anything specially worthy of note in my life, in its childhood and young years, except, perhaps, a recollection from my early childhood years, when I as a small child of six or seven years in a childish naïve way loved to 'play service' – I made myself a likeness of a Church vestment and 'served'. And when my parents began to forbid me to do this, Vladyka Evgeny, the Bishop of Blagoveschensk, after watching this 'service' of mine at home, to their amazement firmly stopped them: 'Leave him, let the boy "serve" in his own way. It is good that he loves the service of God.'" In this way was the saint's future service in the Church foretold in a hidden way already in his childhood.

In 1920 the family was forced to flee from the revolution into Manchuria, to the city of Harbin. There, in 1921, George's mother, Lydia Vasilievna, died, after which his father, Fr. Nicholas took the monastic tonsure with the name Demetrius and became Archbishop of Hailar. Vladyka Demetrius was a learned theologian, the author of a series of books on the history of the Church and other subjects.

In 1927 George graduated from the Russo-Chinese Polytechnical institute and received a specialist qualification as an engineer-electrical mechanic. Later, when he was already First Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), he did not forget his friends at the institute. All those who had known him, both at school and in the institute, remembered him as a kind, affectionate comrade. He was distinguished by his great abilities and was always ready to help.

After the institute he got a job as a teacher; he was a good instructor, and his pupils loved and valued him. But his instructions for the young people went beyond the bounds of the school programme and penetrated every aspect of human life. Many of his former pupils and colleagues after meeting him retained a high estimate of him for the rest of their lives.

Living in the family of a priest, the future metropolitan naturally became accustomed, from his early years, to the church and the Divine services. But,

as he himself said later, at the beginning there was in this “almost nothing deep, inwardly apprehended and consciously accepted”.

“But the Lord knows how to touch the human soul!” he recalled. “And I undoubtedly see this caring touch of the Father’s right hand in the way in which, during my student years in Harbin, I was struck as if with a thunder-clap by the words of the Hierarch Ignatius Brianchaninov which I read in his works: ‘My grave! Why do I forget you? You are waiting for me, waiting, and I will certainly be your inhabitant; why then do I forget you and behave as if the grave were the lot only of other men, and not of myself?’ Only he who has lived through this ‘spiritual blow’, if I can express myself thus, will understand me now! There began to shine before the young student as it were a blinding light, the light of a true, real Christian understanding of life and death, of the meaning of life and the significance of death – and new inner life began... Everything secular, everything ‘worldly’ lost its interest in my eyes, it disappeared somewhere and was replaced by a different content of life. And the final result of this inner change was my acceptance of monasticism...”

In 1931 George completed his studies in Pastoral Theology in what was later renamed the theological faculty of the Holy Prince Vladimir Institute. In this faculty he became a teacher of the New Testament, pastoral theology and homiletics. In 1936 his book, *Outline of the Law of God*, was published in Harbin.

In 1930 he was ordained to the diaconate, and in 1931 – to the priesthood, serving as the priest George. In the same year he was tonsured into monasticism with the name Philaret in honour of Righteous Philaret the Merciful. In 1933 he was raised to the rank of igumen, and in 1937 - to the rank of archimandrite.

“Man thinks much, he dreams about much and he strives for much,” he said in one of his sermons, “and nearly always he achieves nothing in his life. But nobody will escape the Terrible Judgement of Christ. Not in vain did the Wise man once say: ‘Remember your last days, and you will not sin to the ages!’ If we remember how our earthly life will end and what will be demanded of it after that, we shall always live as a Christian should live. A pupil who is faced with a difficult and critical examination will not forget about it but will remember it all the time and will try to prepare him- or herself for it. But this examination will be terrible because it will be an examination of our whole life, both inner and outer. Moreover, after this examination there will be no re-examination. This is that terrible reply by which the lot of man will be determined for immeasurable eternity... Although the Lord Jesus Christ is very merciful, He is also just. Of course, the Spirit of Christ overflows with love, which came down to earth and gave itself completely for the salvation of man. But it will be terrible at the Terrible

Judgement for those who will see that they have not made use of the Great Sacrifice of Love incarnate, but have rejected it. Remember your end, man, and you will not sin to the ages.”

In his early years as a priest, Fr. Philaret was greatly helped by the advice of the then First-Hierarch of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anthony (+1936), with whom he corresponded for several years.

He also studied the writings of the holy fathers, and learned by heart all four Gospels. One of his favourite passages of Scripture was the passage from the Apocalypse reproaching the lukewarmness of men, their indifference to the truth. Thus in a sermon on the Sunday of All Saints he said:

“The Orthodox Church is now glorifying all those who have pleased God, all the saints..., who accepted the holy word of Christ not as something written somewhere to someone for somebody, but as written to himself; they accepted it, took it as the guide for the whole of their life and fulfilled the commandments of Christ.

“... Of course, their life and exploit is for us edification, they are an example for us, but you yourselves know with what examples life is now filled! Do we now see many good examples of the Christian life?!.... When you see what is happening in the world,... you involuntarily think that a man with a real Orthodox Christian intention is as it were in a desert in the midst of the earth’s teeming millions. They all live differently... Do you they think about what awaits them? Do they think that Christ has given us commandments, not in order that we should ignore them, but in order that we should try to live as the Church teaches.

“.... We have brought forward here one passage from the Apocalypse, in which the Lord says to one of the servers of the Church: ‘I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Oh if only you were cold or hot!’ We must not only be hot, but must at least follow the promptings of the soul and fulfil the law of God.

“But there are those who go against it... But if a man is not sleeping spiritually, is not dozing, but is experiencing something spiritual somehow, and if he does not believe in what people are now doing in life, and is sorrowful about this, but is in any case not dozing, not sleeping – there is hope that he will come to the Church. Do we not see quite a few examples of enemies and deniers of God turning to the way of truth? Beginning with the Apostle Paul...

“In the Apocalypse the Lord says: ‘Oh if only thou wast cold or hot, but since thou art neither cold nor hot (but lukewarm), I will spew thee out of My mouth’... This is what the Lord says about those who are indifferent to His

holy work. Now, in actual fact, they do not even think about this. What are people now not interested in, what do they not stuff into their heads – but they have forgotten the law of God. Sometimes they say beautiful words. But what can words do when they are from a person of abominable falsehood?!... It is necessary to beseech the Lord God that the Lord teach us His holy law, as it behoves us, and teach us to imitate the example of those people have accepted this law, have fulfilled it and have, here on earth, glorified Almighty God.”

Fr. Philaret was very active in ecclesiastical and pastoral-preaching work. Already in the first years of his priesthood he attracted many people seeking the spiritual path. The Divine services which he performed with burning faith, and his inspired sermons brought together worshippers and filled the churches. Multitudes pressed to the church in which Fr. Philaret was serving. All sections of the population of Harbin loved him; his name was also known far beyond the boundaries of the Harbin diocese. He was kind and accessible to all those who turned to him. Queues of people thirsting to talk with him stood at the doors of his humble cell; on going to him, people knew that they would receive correct advice, consolation and help.

Fr. Philaret immediately understood the condition of a man's soul, and, in giving advice, consoled the suffering, strengthened the despondent and cheered up the despairing with an innocent joke. He loved to say: “Do not be despondent, Christian soul! There is no place for despondency in a believer! Look ahead – there is the mercy of God!” People went away from him pacified and strengthened by his strong faith.

In imitation of his name-saint. Fr. Philaret was generous not only in spiritual, but also in material alms, and secretly gave help to the needy. Many homeless people turned to him, and he refused help to nobody, except in those cases in which he literally had nothing left, when he would smile guiltily and say: “Nothing, my dear!” But then he would find a way out – and give away the things he was wearing.

Following the example of the holy fathers, Fr. Philaret did not teach others what he himself did not do. He himself, like the saints, whom he called on people to imitate, accepted everything written in the Holy Scriptures and the patristic writings “not as something written somewhere to someone for somebody,”, but as a true guide to life. He was exceptionally strict with himself and conducted a truly ascetic style of life. He had a rare memory, keeping in his head not only the words of the Gospel and the holy fathers, but also the sorrows and woes of his flock. On meeting people the holy hierarch demonstrated great interest in all sides of their life, he did not need to remember their needs and difficulties – he himself developed the subject of conversation that interested a man, and gave ready replies to the perplexities tormenting him.

Confessor against Paganism

From 1931 until 1945 Manchuria with its capital city of Harbin was occupied by the Japanese. Towards the end of this period the Russians were called upon to confess their faith; for the Japanese placed a statue of their goddess Amateras, who according to Japanese tradition was the foundress of the imperial race, directly opposite the Orthodox cathedral of St. Nicholas. Then, in May, 1943, they demanded that Russians going to church in the cathedral should first make a "reverential bow" towards the goddess. It was also required that on certain days Japanese temples should be venerated, while a statue of the goddess was to be put in Orthodox churches.

The question of the admissibility of participating in such ritual veneration was discussed at the diocesan assemblies of the Harbin diocese on September 8 and October 2, 1943, in the presence of the hierarchs of the Harbin diocese: Metropolitan Meletius, Bishop Demetrius and Bishop Juvenal (Archbishop Nestor was not present). According to the witness of the secretary of the Episcopal conference, Fr. Leonid Upshinsky, "the session was stormy, since some objected that... Amateras was not a goddess but the Ancestress." It was decided "to accept completely and direct to the authorities" the reports of Bishop Demetrius of Hailar and Professor K.I. Zaitsev (the future Archimandrite Constantine), which expressed the official view of the episcopate that participation in the ritual veneration was inadmissible.

However, on February 5, 1944 the congress of leaders of the Russian emigration in Manchuria met in Harbin. The congress opened with a moleben in the St. Nicholas cathedral, after which the participants went to the Japanese temple "Harbin-Jinjya", where they carried out a veneration of the goddess Amateras. On February 12 the Harbin hierarchs responded with a archpastoral epistle, in which they said: "Since any kind of veneration of pagan divinities and temples is forbidden by the commandments of God..., Orthodox Christians, in obedience to the will of God and his Law, cannot and must not carry out this veneration, for such veneration contradict the basic theses of the Orthodox Faith." Archbishop Nestor refused to sign this epistle.

In March both vicars of the Harbin diocese, Bishop Demetrius and Bishop Juvenal, were summoned to the police, where they were closely interrogated about the circumstances of the illegal distribution of the archpastoral epistle and about the attitude of the flock to this question. On April 28 Metropolitan Meletius was subjected to interrogation. The conversation, which lasted for several hours, produced no result. Referring to his extreme exhaustion and illness, Vladyka Meletius asked that the conversation be continued on May 1. This again produced no result. Bishop Demetrius, who also took part, categorically and sharply protested against the veneration.

On May 2, an Episcopal Convention took place (Archbishop Nestor, as usual, was not present), at which this position was confirmed. Several days later, Metropolitan Meletius presented the text of the Episcopal Convention to Mr. Kobayasi. Kobayasi demanded that he give a written promise not to raise the question of veneration until the end of the war. Metropolitan Meletius asked that the words "if there will be no compulsion to veneration" should be added to the text. Vladyka's demand again elicited a quarrel. However, in the end Kobayasi gave in. On August 31 the Harbin archpastors sent a letter to Archbishop Nestor in which they appealed to him "to unite with us, return and may your voice sound out in defence of the purity of the Faith and zeal for its confession. Sign (better late than never) our Archpastoral Epistle and announce this publicly – in whatever way and place you can." In reply, Vladyka Nestor wrote that he did not disagree with his brother archpastors about the inadmissibility of venerating the temples of Amateras.

An important influence on the Japanese in their eventual climb-down was the courageous confession of Fr. Philaret. The Japanese seized him and subjected him to torture. His cheek was torn and his eyes were almost torn out, but he suffered this patiently. Then they told him: "We have a red-hot electrical instrument here. Everybody who has had it applied to them has agreed to our requests. And you will also agree." The torturer brought the instrument forward. Then Fr. Philaret prayed to St. Nicholas: "Holy Hierarch Nicholas, help me, otherwise there may be a betrayal." The torturer commenced his work. He stripped the confessor to his waist and started to burn his spine with the burning iron. Then a miracle took place. Fr. Philaret could smell his burning flesh, but felt no pain. He felt joyful in his soul. The torturer could not understand why he was silent, and did not cry out or writhe from the unbearable pain. Then he turned and looked at his face. Amazed, he waved his hand, muttered something in Japanese and fled, conquered by the superhuman power of the confessor's endurance. Fr. Philaret was brought, almost dead, to his relatives. There he passed out. When he came to he said: "I was in hell itself." Gradually his wounds healed. Only his eyes were a bit distorted. And the Japanese no longer tried to compel the Orthodox to bow down to their idol.

Confessor against Communism

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.

50,000 Russian citizens of Harbin, and every third young person, fell into the snare. The reality was soon revealed to them. At Atpor station 14,000 people were shot, and the remaining 36,000 were deported to concentration camps, where most of them perished of hunger and other privations.

Metropolitan Valentine of Suzdal writes: "I remember the year 1956, the Dormition men's monastery in Odessa, where I was an unwilling witness as there returned from the camps and prisons, having served their terms, those hierarchs who returned to Russia after the war so as to unite with the 'Mother Church' at the call of Stalin's government and the Moscow patriarchate: 'The Homeland has forgiven you, the Homeland calls you!' In 1946 they trustingly entered the USSR, and were all immediately captured and incarcerated for 10 years, while the 'Mother Church' was silent, not raising her voice in defence of those whom she had beckoned into the trap. In order to be 're-established' in their hierarchical rank, they had to accept and chant hymns to Sergianism, and accept the Soviet patriarch. And what then? Some of them ended their lives under house arrest, others in monastery prisons, while others soon departed for eternity."

At this time Fr. Philaret 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. Fr. Philaret 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 as a heavy burden on his soul. 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.

As a consequence of the interrogations and burns he suffered, for the rest of his life Fr. Philaret retained a small, sideways inclination of his head and a certain distortion of the lower part of his face; his vocal chords also suffered.

Two months passed. Fr. Philaret again began to serve, and within half a year he was able to live on his own in a separate maisonette above the church. But then he again went to Zinaida Lvovna. The reason was that he had gone into his cell after the service, but suddenly saw two big boots sticking out from under the curtain. Understanding that an assassin sent by the communists was standing there, he went to the chest of drawers, took something out to divert attention, and then quickly left the cell, locking it behind him. After this a Chinese policeman came to Zinaida Lvovna and asked her why Archimandrite Philaret did not sleep in his cell. She immediately understood what he was on about, and replied: because of his physical weakness.

Soon after this Fr. Philaret, through his spiritual sight, discovered a portrait of satan under the altar in the church of the House of Mercy. The portrait was immediately removed...

Archimandrite Philaret left China in 1961, only after almost the whole of his flock had left Harbin.

On March 29, 1962 the Hierarchical Synod of the Russian Church Abroad “heard a letter of Archimandrite Philaret (Voznesensky) to the president of the Synod on his arrival in Hong Kong and his repentance over the fact that in 1945 he had entered the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, and also a penitential declaration signed by him in accordance with the form established by the Council of Bishops” in 1959.

The form in question was as follows: “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.”

“While striving to guard my flock from Soviet falsehood and lies,” recounted the saint, “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.

“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 Hierarch 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. Archimandrite Philaret considered himself weak and unworthy of such a lofty service. However, the experience of monastic obedience did not allow him to decline from the path to which ecclesiastical authority summoned him. 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."

On May 14/27, 1964, having been for many years First Hierarch of ROCOR, Metropolitan Anastasy, for reasons of health and age, petitioned the Hierarchical Council for his retirement. The question arose who would be the new First Hierarch. Some members of ROCOR wanted to see the holy Hierarch John (Maximovich) as their head, but another part was very opposed to this. Then, to avoid any further aggravation of the situation, and a possible scandal and even schism, the Hierarch John removed his candidacy and suggested making the youngest Hierarch, Bishop Philaret, First Hierarch.

This choice was supported by Metropolitan Anastasy: Vladyka Philaret was the youngest by ordination, had mixed little in Church Abroad circles, and had not managed to join any "party".

And so Bishop Philaret of Brisbane was elected to the First Hierarchical see by the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR, and was enthroned by Metropolitan Anastasy himself in a service that, for the first time in centuries, used the ancient text for the enthroning of a metropolitan of Moscow.

Almost immediately, in his 1965 Epistle “to Orthodox Bishops and all who hold dear the Fate of the Russian Church”, Metropolitan Philaret made clear his completely uncompromising attitude to the Moscow Patriarchate and his great love for the Catacomb Church. In view of the continuing relevance of his words, when the gracelessness of the Moscow Patriarchate is understood by few, we quote it in full:

“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.”

Confessor against Ecumenism

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...

While Metropolitan Philaret was first-hierarchy, ecumenism finally showed its true face – the mask of a terrible heresy uniting in itself all the earlier heresies and striving to engulf Orthodoxy completely, destroying the very concept of the Church of Christ and creating a universal "church" of the antichrist. An important turning-point came in 1964, when, in defiance of the holy canons, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople prayed together in Jerusalem, and in December, 1965 they "lifted the anathemas" placed by the Roman and Constantinopolitan Churches on each other in 1054.

At this critical point the Lord raised Metropolitan Philaret to explain to the ecumenist Orthodox the essence of the danger into which they were falling. In the first of a series of "Sorrowful Epistles", on December 2/15, 1965, 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."

In his second Epistle, written in 1969, Metropolitan Philaret said that he had decided to turn to all the hierarchs, "some of whom occupy the oldest and most 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. The holy metropolitan quoted various ecumenist declarations of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and clearly showed, on the basis of the patristic teaching and the canons, that the position of the WCC had nothing in common with Orthodoxy, and consequently the Orthodox Churches should not participate in the work of this council. He also emphasised that the voice of the MP was not the voice of the True Russian Church, which was persecuted and concealed itself in the catacombs. He called on all the Orthodox hierarchs to stand up in defence of the purity of Orthodoxy.

On December 16, 1969 the MP Synod decided "that in cases where Old Believers and Catholics ask the Orthodox Church to administer the holy sacraments to them, this is not forbidden."

ROCOR's Archbishop Averky commented on this decision: "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* [emphasis in the original] and can no longer be considered Orthodox..."

Metropolitan Philaret agreed with this judgement; and on March 31, 1970, under his presidency the ROCOR Synod passed the following resolution, which for the first time in the history of ROCOR defined the MP as not only schismatic, but also *heretical*: "to consider the decision of the Moscow Patriarchate granting Roman Catholics access to all the sacraments of the Orthodox Church as in violation of the holy canons and contrary to Orthodox dogmatical doctrines. Entering thus into communion with the heterodox, the Moscow Patriarchate estranges itself from the unity of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church. By its action it does not sanctify the heretics to whom it offers the sacraments, but it itself becomes part of their heresy."

Eighteen months later, on September 15/28, 1971 a decree of the Hierarchical Council confirmed this decision: "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 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."

The metropolitan wrote a third "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. His aim in writing this fresh epistle was "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).

A fourth Epistle, written in 1975, 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 Metropolitan 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. And so the saint continued to explain the danger of the new heresy, which encompassed all the old heresies into a *heresy of heresies*. Thus 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 loves 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."

In addition to issuing his "Sorrowful Epistles", Metropolitan Philaret and his Synod took concrete measures to guard his flock against the heresy of ecumenism. It was especially necessary to make clear that Catholics and Protestants were not inside the True Church. And so in 1971 it was decreed that all Catholics and Protestants coming to the Orthodox Church should be received by full threefold immersion baptism.

This re-establishment of the canonical norms in relation to the reception of heretics increased the prestige of ROCOR among all those seeking the truth of Orthodoxy, and many converts from western confessions, as well as Orthodox from other, ecumenical jurisdictions, sought refuge in the ROCOR. By the 1970s ROCOR under Metropolitan Philaret's leadership was not only a global jurisdiction geographically, but was well on the way to becoming global in its membership, too.

While rebuking the apostasy of the "World Orthodox" who took part in the World Council of Churches, Metropolitan Philaret was zealous to establish relations with other truly confessing Churches. Thus in December, 1969, under his leadership, the Synod of ROCOR officially recognised the validity of the ordinations of the "Florinite" branch of the Greek Old Calendarists. And in September, 1971 communion was also established with the "Matthewite" branch of the same Church.

On September 20, 1975, Metropolitan Philaret wrote to Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kition, the leader of the Old Calendarist Church of Cyprus: "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...”

In 1977 the metropolitan received under his omophorion fourteen priests of the Russian Catacomb Church who were without an archpastor, thereby marking the beginning of the return of ROCOR to the Russian land. He had a lofty estimate of the exploit of the catacombniks and used to cite the example of the catacomb nuns who refused to carry out the commands of the godless authorities and received for their firmness the miraculous help of God – they did not freeze after several hours in the icy wind which the chekists had put them with the intention of killing them thereby. He used to say: “If the whole multi-million mass of Russian people were to display such faithfulness as these nuns displayed, and refused to obey the robbers who have planted themselves on the Russian people – communism would fall in a moment, for the people would receive the same help from God as miraculously saved the nuns who went to certain death. But as long as the people recognizes this power and obeys it, even if with curses in their soul, this power will remain in place.”

The decision of the MP to give communion to Catholics put the other Russian jurisdiction in North America, the American Metropolia, into a difficult position; for in the early 1960s the Metropolia (a body in schism from ROCOR since 1946) had been, through Fr. Georges Florovsky, among the most conservative participants in the ecumenical movement. However, this Church had been secretly negotiating with the Moscow Patriarchate for a grant of autocephaly. According to the deal eventually agreed upon, the patriarchate was to declare the Metropolia to be the autocephalous Orthodox Church of America (OCA) in exchange for the Japanese parishes of the Metropolia coming within the jurisdiction of the patriarchate. And yet the MP’s parishes in America did not pass into the OCA, but remained directly under the patriarchate!

This deal, which was recognized by none of the Local Churches and was to the advantage, in the long run, only of the MP and the KGB (it was engineered by the KGB General Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad), was made public in December, 1969 – just at the moment that the patriarchate announced that it had entered into partial communion with the Catholics. Thus the former Metropolia found that it had been granted autocephaly by a Church that was now in communion with the Catholics. Naturally, this dealt a death blow to such anti-ecumenist opinion as still existed in that Church.

In 1971 the ROCOR Council of Bishops passed over the heretical aspect of the matter, and concentrated on the illegality of the church that had given the autocephaly: “The Council of Bishops, having listened to the report of the Synod of Bishops concerning the so-called Metropolia’s having received autocephaly from the Patriarchate of Moscow, approves all the steps taken in due course by the Synod of Bishops to convince Metropolitan Irenaeus and his colleagues of the perniciousness of a step which deepens the division which was the result of the decision of the Cleveland Council of 1946 which broke away from the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

“The American Metropolia has received its autocephaly from the Patriarchate of Moscow, which has not possessed genuine canonical succession from His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon from the time when Metropolitan Sergius, who later called himself Patriarch, violated his oath with regard to Metropolitan Peter, the locum tenens of the patriarchal throne, and set out upon a path which was then condemned by the senior hierarchs of the Church of Russia. Submitting all the more to the commands of the atheistic, anti-Christian regime, the Patriarchate of Moscow has ceased to be that which expresses the voice of the Russian Orthodox Church. For this reason, as the Synod of Bishops has correctly declared, none of its acts, including the bestowal of autocephaly upon the American Metropolia, has legal force. Furthermore, apart from this, this act, which affects the rights of many Churches, has elicited definite protests on the part of a number of Orthodox Churches, who have even severed communion with the American Metropolia.

“Viewing this illicit act with sorrow, and acknowledging it to be null and void, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, which has hitherto not abandoned hope for the restoration of ecclesiastical unity in America, sees in the declaration of American autocephaly a step which will lead the American Metropolia yet farther away from the ecclesiastical unity of the Church of Russia. Perceiving therein a great sin against the enslaved and suffering Church of Russia, the Council of Bishops *DECIDES*: henceforth, neither the clergy nor the laity [of the Russian Church Abroad] are to have communion in prayer or the divine services with the hierarchy or clergy of the American Metropolia.”

The Third All-Diaspora 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."

Here the metropolitan was hinting that faithfulness to the dogma of the One Church was not compatible with communion with World Orthodoxy", the Local Orthodox Churches that participated in the ecumenical movement. However, such a vision of ROCOR was not shared by all her hierarchs. Some saw the isolation of ROCOR from other local Churches as necessitated, not so much by the struggle against ecumenism, as by the need to preserve *Russianness* among the Russian émigrés. They 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, the Serbs and Jerusalem. The unofficial leader of this group of bishops turned out to be Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, who was supported by Bishop Laurus of Manhattan, Archbishop Philotheus of Germany and Bishop Paul of Stuttgart.

In his address to the Council, entitled "Our Church in the Modern World", Anthony of Geneva 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."

This somewhat hysterical appeal not to separate from the World Orthodox at just the point when they were embarking upon "super-ecumenism" was criticised by Protopresbyter 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.”

Another important issue that divided the hierarchs was the attitude that needed to be taken to the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1971 the MP elected a new patriarch, which drew two resolutions from the Hierarchical Council of ROCOR. The first, dated September 1/14, 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...”

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, ROCOR's attitude to the MP was complicated by the phenomenon known as "the dissident movement" in the Soviet Union. The dissidents were courageous opponents of the Soviet regime and supporters of human rights whose activity affected both the political sphere (for example, Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn) and the religious sphere (Solzhenitsyn again, the priests Eshliman, Yakunin and Dudko, the layman Boris Talantov).

One of the most famous dissidents, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, had been expelled from the Soviet Union in 1974 and now turned up at ROCOR's All-Diaspora Council, although he was a member of the MP, at the invitation of Archbishop Anthony of Geneva. He promptly created a sensation by declaring that he did not believe in the existence of the Catacomb Church. He supported ROCOR's independent stance, but opposed any condemnation of the MP as graceless.

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 (many West European members of ROCOR, such as the future Archbishop Mark of Berlin, belonged to the NTS, a secret anti-communist political party which was infiltrated by both the KGB and the CIA). They were sincere anti-communists and despised the kowtowing of the MP hierarchs to communism, but would not have dreamed of denying that the MP was a true Church. In other words, their opposition to the MP was political and patriotic rather than strictly ecclesiastical and dogmatic.

Taking the opportunity presented by Solzhenitsyn's speech, Archbishop Anthony of Geneva 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 of them that would devalue the witness of the true catacomb confessors by giving the impression that it is possible to be a true confessor from within a heretical church organization. Also, 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.

The following is an extract from Protocol № 3 of the ROCOR Council, 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."

Voices were heard at the 1974 Council arguing for union not only between the ROCOR and MP dissidents, but also between ROCOR and the Paris and American Metropolia (Orthodox Church of America) jurisdictions. Love, they said, should unite us, and we should not emphasize our differences. But Metropolitan Philaret pointed out that love which does not wish to disturb our neighbour by pointing out his errors is not love but hatred! He continued to regard the Paris and American jurisdictions as schismatic, and did not allow intercommunion with them. This was in accordance with his profoundly felt conviction that there is only One True Church.

Conflict in the Synod

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 Council 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 agree with me then 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..."

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. However, Fr. Demetrius was infected with ecumenist and liberal ideas, which, of course, he

communicated to his followers. 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, led by Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, now began to do.

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, 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 recognised 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 recognise the Moscow Patriarchate as graceless."

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". Regelson confessed to having "criminal ties" with foreign correspondents and of mixing religious activity with politics, while Kapitanchuk also confessed to links with Western correspondents, saying 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 the zealots for "judging" him. But it was not a question of "judging", and nobody rejoiced in the fall of the dissident. It was a question of the correct discerning of the boundaries of the Church and the correct attitude to those struggling outside it.

The metropolitan wrote that the tragedy had overtaken Dudko because his activity had taken place from within the Moscow Patriarchate – 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 anathematised. His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon and the All-Russian Church Council anathematised 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 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 anathematised 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 anathematised 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."

Another important cause of conflict between Metropolitan Philaret and Archbishop Anthony of Geneva was the issue of relations with the Serbian Church. The Serbs had joined the WCC in 1965 and were as fully under the control of the communists as the MP. In spite of this, Archbishop Anthony continued to serve with the Serbs in his West European diocese, citing the pre-war hospitality of the Serbs to ROCOR in his justification. He also continued to serve with the new calendarists, which led to several parishes leaving his diocese, and to the Matthewite Greek Old Calendarists breaking communion with ROCOR in 1976.

In connection with the Serbian issue 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 holy 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 Council 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 'exploits' 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-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".

Metropolitan Philaret was the humblest and meekest of men. However, when it came to matters of the faith, he showed no partiality to anyone. Thus in 1970 Archbishop Averky of Syracuse and Jordanville, who was a zealot for the faith and close to the views of the metropolitan, permitted Monophysite heretics to serve in the Jordanville community's church out of "pastoral condescension". On hearing of this, the metropolitan ordered the church to be immediately closed and re-sanctified as having been defiled by heretics. Then, in a letter to Archbishop Averky, he pointed out all the anticanonicity of this act, emphasising that it could be justified by no economy and expressing the fear that the faithful children of ROCOR would turn away from her if similar incidents were repeated...

Sorrows and Joys

Metropolitan Philaret had to suffer many slanders and attacks, even physical ones. Once a certain archimandrite in his presence declared to the other hierarchs that it was necessary quickly to remove "such an unfitting

Metropolitan" ... Again, in 1977, to a layman who was protesting against the ecumenist activities of Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, he said that while he agreed with his protest, he could do nothing to help him because he had a gun at his head – and at this point he formed the fingers of his right hand in the form of a revolver and pointed it at his temple.

On another occasion, the holy hierarch came to England and was asked by the ruling hierarchy, Archbishop Nikodim of Richmond and Great Britain, why he had criticised the baptism of a group of laypeople in his diocese. The metropolitan said he had no objection and asked to see his letter. On being shown it, he said that he had not written it – his signature had been forged...

According to Fr. Alexis Makrikov, several attempts were made on his life. One took place when he was returning by ship from the Lesna convent in France to the USA. Suddenly the fire in the ship's furnace became so powerful that the smoke-stack became white-hot. The captain of the ship, seeing no possibility of quenching the force of the fire, which threaten to melt down the smoke-stack and engulf the whole ship, turned for help to Metropolitan Philaret and asked him to pray, because in his opinion only God could save the ship and its passengers. The saint listened to the captain and immediately began to pray to God. Between 10 and 20 minutes passed, and the smoke-stack began to cool and turn red. And within an hour it had become black again. The ship was saved by the grace of God! The captain again came to the metropolitan, kissed his hand and thanked him for his prayers...

In spite of the opposition of individual bishops and clergy, as well as the enemies from outside the Church, Metropolitan Philaret was loved by the broad masses of the church people. As during his life in Harbin, the holy hierarch refused nobody help on his becoming First-Hierarchy. He took special care over the spiritual enlightenment of the young people, whom he very much loved and by whom he was always surrounded.

He taught people true humility and repentance: "Sometimes people say about themselves: "Oh, I'm very religious, I'm a deep believer," – and they say this sincerely, thinking that can in actual fact say this about themselves with good reason... From the life of the Church we see that those who really had true faith always thought about themselves and their faith in a very humble way, and always considered and were conscious of themselves as being of little faith... He who really believes does not trust his faith and sees himself as being of little faith, who in essence does not have the true faith thinks that he believes deeply...

"We see a similar 'paradox' in the moral, ethical and spiritual evaluation of a person;... righteous men see themselves as sinners, while sinners see themselves as righteous.

“... In the soul of a sinner unenlightened by the Grace of God, who does not think about the spiritual life, who does not think about correction, who does not think about how he will answer for himself before God, everything has merged together, and he himself can make out nothing in it; only the all-seeing God sees the pitiful condition of the soul of this man. But he himself does not feel it and does not notice it, and thinks that he is not that bad, and that the passages in the Gospel that talk about great sinners have no relationship at all to him. Perhaps he does not think of himself as holy, but he supposes that he is not that bad...

“Those who were pleasing to God thought of themselves in a completely different way and saw themselves and their spiritual nature in a completely different light. One ascetic wept all the time; his disciple asked him: ‘Father, what are you weeping about?’ ‘About my sins, my son,’ he replied. ‘But what sins can you have? And why do you weep over them so much?’ ‘My son,’ replied the ascetic, ‘if I could see my sins as they should be seen, in all their ugliness, I would ask you to weep for my sins together with me.’ That is how these extraordinary people spoke about themselves. But we, being ordinary people, do not see our sinfulness and do not feel its weight. Hence it turns out as I have just said: a person comes to confession and does not know what to say. One woman arriving for confession just said: ‘Batyushka, I’ve forgotten everything.’ What do you think: if a man has a painful hand or leg or some inner organ, and goes to the doctor, will he forget that he has a pain? So is it with the soul: if it really burns with a feeling of repentance, it will not forget its sins. Of course, not one person can remember all his sins – all to the last one, without exception. But true repentance unfailing demands that a man should be conscious of his sinfulness and feel sincere compunction over it.

“We pray in the Great Fast that the Lord grant us to behold our sins – our sins, and not other people’s. But it is necessary to pray about this not only in the Fast, but at all times – to pray that the Lord may teach us to see ourselves as we should and not think about our supposed ‘righteousness’. But we must remember that only the mercy of God can open a man’s eyes to his true spiritual condition and in this way place him on the path of true repentance.”

During the period of service of Metropolitan Philaret as first-hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad many new saints of God were glorified by the Church Abroad: Righteous John of Kronstadt (in 1964), St. Herman of Alaska (in 1971), Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg (in 1978), the Synaxis of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia (1981) and St. Paisius Velichkovsky (1982).

Of these canonizations the most significant was that of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. Unlike the seemingly similar act of the MP in 2000, this act did not confuse true martyrs with false, true servants of Christ with sergianists and traitors. Its influence within Russia was great.

In 1982 a great miracle of the mercy of God was revealed – the wonder-working icon of the Iveron-Montreal icon of the Mother of God, which in the course of fifteen years unceasingly emitted myrrh until its disappearance in 1997 together with the murder of its keeper, Jose Munoz...

The Anathema against Ecumenism

Time passed, and it became clearer and clearer that it was impossible for the Orthodox to have any kind of communion with the “churches” of World Orthodoxy, let alone be in them. In 1980 the ecumenical press-service (ENI) declared that the WCC was working out a plan for the union of the all Christian denominations into one new religion. In 1981 in Lima (Peru) an inter-confessional eucharistic service was devised at a conference during which Protestant and Orthodox representatives in the WCC agreed that the baptism, eucharist and ordination of all the denominations was valid and acceptable. But the greatest scandal was elicited by the Vancouver General Assembly of the WCC in 1983. Present at it were representatives of all existing religions, and it began with a pagan rite performed by the local Indians. Orthodox hierarchs took part in the religious ceremonies together with representatives of all the world’s religions.

The ROCOR Synod was also meeting in Canada at this time. It condemned this latest and most extreme manifestation of ecumenism: “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 knowingly 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.**"

The Anathema against Ecumenism was seized upon with delight 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. 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. The import of the anathema was clear: all Orthodox Churches that were fully participating members of the WCC fell under it and so were deprived of the grace of sacraments. Moreover, those in communion with the ecumenist heretics became participants in the same heresy. De facto, the ecumenists had already fallen away from the Church, and the anathema only witnessed to the faithful at large that they were outside the Church.

The opponents of this decisive break with "World Orthodoxy" said and say much about the "invalidity" of this anathema – to the extent of saying that the hierarchs of ROCOR accepted no anathema at all, but that certain "evil-minded people" simply introduced it into the text of the Acts of the Council. However, this seems improbable: after all, none of the hierarchs later renounced the anathema (in fact, it was reaffirmed in council in 1998), none of them said that he had not signed it; the anathematisation of ecumenism was introduced into the Synodicon of the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy...

Thus the work of Metropolitan Philaret's whole life found its highest expression in a historical act having universal significance for the whole fullness of Orthodoxy – in the official anathematisation of "the heresy of heresies" and the apostates of our age. It is evident that no exhortation directed at the "Orthodox" ecumenists could have any effect, and a very powerful cauterisation was necessary in order to halt the general infection.

In one of his sermons, while speaking about those who transgress the teaching of the Church, he explained the significance of the anathema: "The Church declares that they have cut themselves off from communion with the Church, having ceased to listen to her maternal voice. And this is not only for the information of others, so that they should know this, but also for the good of the excommunicates themselves. The Church hopes that this threatening warning, at any rate, will act upon them..."

"The distinguishing characteristic of our time," he used to say, "is that people are now more and more possessed by indifference to the Divine truth. Many beautiful words are spoken, but in fact – in reality – people are

completely indifferent to the truth. Such indifference was once displayed by Pilate, when the Lord stood before him at his trial. Before Pilate stood the Truth Himself, but he sceptically declared: "What is truth?" – that is, does it exist? And if it does, then it is a long way from us, and perhaps does not exist. And with complete indifference he turned away from Him Who announced the truth to him, Who was the Truth Himself. And now people have become similarly indifferent. You have probably more than once heard supposedly Christian words about the union of all into one faith, into one religion. But remember that what lies behind this is precisely indifference to the truth. If the truth were dear to a man, he would never go on this path. It is precisely because the truth is of little interest to everyone, and they simply want somehow to make simpler and more convenient arrangements in matters of the faith, too, that they say: 'Everyone must unite'...

"Brethren, we must fear this indifference to the truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Apocalypse clearly indicates to us how terrible indifference to the truth is. There he turns to the Angel standing at the head of the Laodicean Church and says: 'I know thy works. Thou art neither cold nor hot. Oh if only thou wast hot or cold! But since thou art neither cold nor hot (but lukewarm – neither the one nor the other, the truth is not dear to thee), I will spew thee from My mouth!' As an organism cast out of itself something which is absolutely repulsive and harmful to it.

"Let us remember that this indifference to the truth is one of the main woes of our age of apostasies. Value the truth, O man! Be a fighter for the truth... Place the truth higher than all else in life, O man, and never allow yourself to decline in any way from the true path.

"... There are now many attacks on the Church Abroad. Not one Church is reviled as much today. And the servers of other Churches are not reviled as much as the servants of the Church Abroad. What does this mean? This is the most reliable sign that our Church stands in the truth, and therefore every lie, every unrighteousness has taken up arms against her in war... She stands in the truth and preaches this truth, announces it and defends it – hence all these attacks on her.

"Let us remember and value the fact that you and I belong to the Holy Church, which in no way sins against the truth, but contains it in such a way as our Lord Jesus Christ and the holy apostles commanded. Amen."

Repose and Miracles

The holy hierarch Metropolitan Philaret passed away to the Lord on November 8/21, 1985, on the day of the Chief Captain of the Heavenly Hosts, St. Michael. In his typewriter after his repose was found a sheet of paper with the following words of the Lord addressed to the angel of the Church of

Philadelphia: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Revelation 3.11). Truly he was an angel of the Philadelphian Church, the True Orthodox Church of Christ, and the righteous accuser of the Laodicean Church, the church of ecumenist indifference to the truth, the church of the Antichrist...

Nearly thirteen years passed, and it was arranged that the remains of Metropolitan Philaret 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 Laurus 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 Laurus 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 pannikhida was served by Archbishop Laurus and 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 Metropolitan 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 honourable relics of the holy hierarch to the earth.

Several miracles have been recorded since the repose of Metropolitan Philaret.

Matushka Tatiana Fyodorov, the wife of Protopriest Constantine Fyodorov, writes: "During the time of the church troubles shortly after Metropolitan Philaret reposed, my husband was suffering very much over it. Hearing both sides of these sad situations finally 'got to him'. He prayed to Metropolitan Philaret about it. He was very tired and fell asleep. He had a dream that he was in church, fully vested for the Divine Liturgy, and was told that Metropolitan Philaret was coming unexpectedly. He prepared to meet the Bishop with the Holy Cross on the plate. The altar boy gave Metropolitan Philaret the staff and Metropolitan gave the altar boy his staff. Metropolitan was looking very radiant and young. Then Fr. Constantine put the plate with the Holy Cross on the analoy, which is not customarily done, made a full prostration before the metropolitan and said: 'Vladyka, it is so difficult for me.' The metropolitan answered: 'Yes, I know. But you, Fr. Constantine, should think less and pray more.' Father tried to get up from the prostration but the metropolitan pinned his head down with the staff. At that moment, Father woke up full of joy and peace, but with a headache where the staff had been placed on his head. Since then, he feels Metropolitan is looking after him, and is always there to help.

"In December of 2005, soon after the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, Father suffered terrible pains in the bones of his legs. He could not even walk. He had severe, excruciating pain. To try to get up he had to use crutches or a wheelchair, all with intense pain. From the severe pain he could not even sleep. He remained in bed for several days, thinking it would get better if he took some pain killers. That didn't help either. It was the worst he ever suffered, as he does have some bone problems. On Friday he finally called the doctor. He said he would come on Saturday with a specialist. That Friday evening we prayed from the Canon for the Sick and Father asked Blessed Metropolitan Philaret to help him. After the prayers, Father finally fell asleep peacefully for the night without pain. Lo, and behold, the next morning he was relieved of the pain so that he could walk normally!

The doctor came with the specialist, examined him, asked questions and gave him some medicine. He said it was a bone virus. The pain did not come back and he was able to walk. Thanks be to God!"

The following six miracles were collected by Nun Cassia (Senina), the author of the first published life of the saint (to which this *life* owes much) and of a forthcoming book entitled *Fiery Pillar. Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) of New York and Eastern America and the Russian Church Abroad* (1964-1985):

1. The account of Protodeacon Christopher Birchall (Canada). I was told this story by Lydia Mikhailovna Klar, the wife of Evgenia Iosiphovich Klar, the dean of the Jordanville seminary. In 1994 it was discovered that their daughter-in-law, Irina Klar, was ill with cancer. Her husband, Michael, a doctor by profession, was in despair. He prayed ardently for her recovery, and at times it seemed that the illness was in recession. Recently, however, in 1997, there was a sharp deterioration. Lydia Mikhailovna gave the pious spouses a shirt that had belonged to Metropolitan Philaret, which she in her time had received from the cell-attendant of the hierarch, Protodeacon Nikita Chakirov. Irina put it on and immediately sensed a powerful fragrance; she thought that someone in the room had poured out some perfume. Irina and Michael prayed fervently for the whole evening, and then Irina fell asleep in this shirt. The next morning she felt significantly better and went to the hospital for an examination. As a result of the investigation it became clear that the cancerous tumour had become 70 times smaller! There was no rational explanation for this, and the hospital personnel were amazed. At the end of 1998 Irina's tumour again began to grow. After the remains of Metropolitan Philaret had been uncovered and found to be incorrupt, Archimandrite Luke from Jordanville became to gather information on miracles. Irina decided that she had to tell him about her healing, and felt that she had not been right when she had been silent about it earlier. After she told Fr. Luke what had happened, she again felt better. Since then (a year has passed) she has been in good health. The cancerous tumour had not completely disappeared, but it has become so much smaller that Irina can carry on a normal life and dedicate herself to the upbringing of her children.
2. The account of Priest Stephen Allen (USA). Above my desk a photograph of Metropolitan Philaret has been hanging for a long time. I attached no particular significance to it. But suddenly I had the thought that I should light a lampada in front of it and pray to Vladyka. Several days later I was informed that his incorrupt relics had been uncovered in Jordanville. And now I always pray to the holy hierarch Philaret.
3. The account of Protopriest Constantine Fyodorov (France). Just before going to Jordanville, on the occasion of the uncovering of the relics of Metropolitan Philaret, Matushka and I made a big trip around France.

After two hours (it was necessary to travel seven hour in all), the car stalled. It seemed as if the petrol had run out. No matter how much I pumped the pedal, nothing helped. There was nothing around us, and my matushka panicked. I said: 'There's no need to worry so much – I'm wearing the epitachelion of Metropolitan Philaret, and the main thing is that I have the Life-giving Cross. You'd better get down to praying.' A couple of seconds passed, and suddenly she said from the heart: 'Vladyko Metropolitan, help. It's your child sitting here. Not for my sake, I'm unworthy, but for his sake, help us. Arrange it so that we can go further.' I turned the key, and the machine started as if nothing had happened. That was a great joy for my matushka.⁵¹⁸

4. The account of Elena Kudryavtseva (Moscow). Some time ago, the symptoms of an allergy appeared in our little son. It got worse and worse from day to day. The doctors could give no coherent explanation of the rash, which spread all over his body, and in places was turning into a hard crust. Medicines provided only insignificant relief. Moreover, it was not without harm for the child to take the tablets so often. We didn't know how to be or what to do. An acquaintance of ours, a pious and sincere person, who venerated Vladyka Philaret (Voznesensky), told a story about a seriously ill person who was taken to hospital. The doctors had already lost hope of curing him. The sick person took a photograph of the hierarch and with faith placed it on the painful place. Soon he improved, an operation was not required, and he was healed from his serious illness. Remembering this story, we took a photograph of the hierarch Philaret (Voznesensky) which had been taken not long before his death by Protopriest Constantine Fyodorov, and put it under the bed of the child. The next day the crusts on the legs of the child had begun to peel off, the rash became less, and after a time the symptoms of the allergy disappeared completely.
5. The account of Nun Cassia (Senina) (St. Petersburg). When in 1999 I was writing an article about the hierarch Philaret, 'The Angel of the Philadelphian Church', I was thinking: it's interesting: am I right in all that I am writing, that is, am I right in feeling that the general direction of the life and actions of are genuinely True Orthodox and a reversal of the whole course of ROCOR in the direction of akriveia towards the

⁵¹⁸ Matushka gives the following account of this miracle: "When living in France, we started a long trip in an old van from the Lesna Convent to Brittany, to visit friends. We were in the middle of nowhere when all of a sudden the car went dead. No matter what my husband did he couldn't get it started. He checked everything but was afraid he might drain the battery. By that time I was very worried. No one was around, no cars, no people. Father said, 'Instead of getting upset, why don't you pray.' So I began to pray to Metropolitan Philaret to help us as he was my husband's spiritual father when he was alive, and to us he is a Saint. I prayed in simple words. I asked with all my heart. My husband tried starting the car again and all of a sudden it worked! We continued our trip and the car made it with no problem! Even got back safely on the return trip also!"

apostates from the faith? (The question, as it turned out later, was not an idle one, insofar as, after the issue with the article came out, a ROCOR 'patriot', thinking that her hierarchs could not err in any way, in a private conversation accused me of re-interpreting the actions and words of the hierarch Philaret in the direction that I desired, when in actual fact, supposedly, he had never thought of breaking completely with the ecumenists, and that the present hierarchs of ROCOR were not departing from his course, but on the contrary were developing it.) The hierarch Philaret himself assured me of the correctness of my view by working a miracle. At that time I had already for several months been suffering from a strong pain in my side. At first, when it was only a little painful, I paid no attention to it, thinking that it would go away of itself. Two months passed, but the pains increased. I really do not like going to doctors, but I had to. As often happens, they did not give any coherent explanation. I was prescribed some medicines, but they didn't help. In the end I decided to go to a private doctor, and the day before I suddenly remembered: tomorrow was the commemoration of the holy righteous Philaret the Merciful (December 1/14) – that is, the namesday of the hierarch Philaret! I rejoiced and thought: well, the hierarch will heal me. Moreover, it did not occur to me that he would miraculously heal me himself, I simply thought that he would help me find a good doctor who would finally begin to treat me properly. In the evening I prayed to St. Philaret the Merciful and the hierarch Philaret, and the next day it turned out that I could not go to the doctor, and I had to return home with nothing. I was going back somewhat discouraged, thinking: well, it was probably the will of God... But on the way back home the pain in my side stopped. At first, for some reason I paid not attention to this, since I had felt some relief on previous occasions. But time past, and the pain did not return. I understood that the hierarch Philaret had healed me. The illness did not completely disappear from that day: although the sharp pains had gone, I still felt a little pain at times. The pain stopped completely some time later, in the year 2000, after I had received communion on the day of the commemoration of the hierarch, October 28 / November 10.

6. The account of Irina Smirnova (Konigsberg). I am a journalist. I obtained work in the editorial office of a newspaper, but it was very difficult for me working there: I began to get an allergy from the ordinary dust, since I cannot be in an unventilated place, whereas my neighbour in the office, on the contrary did not like draughts and was always closing not only the hinged pane, but even the door into the office. I was suffocating, I was dying, I ran to inject myself, without pills I couldn't enter the office. An acquaintance of mine advised me to pray for help to the hierarch Philaret. I began to pray to him, and soon the editor gave me a separate office, and I simply, so to speak, 'rose from the dead'....

7. The following miracle was accomplished through the prayers of Metropolitan Philaret on the feast of St. Stephen, January 9, 2006 in the True Orthodox women's monastery of New 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. The nuns were expelled from Old Stjenik a few years ago because of their opposition to the heresy of ecumenism, and are under the omophorion of a hierarch of the "Florinite" branch of the True Orthodox Church of Greece.

Nun Ipomoni (which means "patience" in Greek) suffers 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 Metropolitan 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. Akakije 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 thank God and his great hierarch, Metropolitan Philaret of New York.

March 22 / April 4, 2006.

Birthday of Metropolitan Philaret of New York.

(Sources: Tatiana Senina, "'And his lot is among the saints...'", *Vertograd-Inform* (English edition), № 15, January, 2000, pp. 6-24; Monk Vsevolod (Filipiev), "Mitropolit Filaret: k dvadtsatiletiu co dnia konchiny, 1985-2005", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, № 22 (1786), November 15/28, 2005, pp. 1-3; 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, "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>; Metropolitan Valentine of Suzdal, *Nativity Epistle*, 2000/2001; Ivan Ostroumoff, *The History of the*

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