

## INFORMATION

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF  
THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF  
RUSSIA

5/18 October, 1975

### The Moscow Patriarchate and Roman Catholics

In June, Metropolitan Nikodim visited Western Europe. He is now immediately in charge of the Western European Exarchate. In Paris he called together a conference of nonrussian clergy. The Metropolitan explained to this clergy that the Moscow Patriarchate is completely involved in the Ecumenical Movement. Thus its clergy must somewhat change its mentality in the West, showing a greater understanding in their relationship to their "separated brothers", participating in ecumenical contacts and joint prayer with other faiths. Metropolitan Nikodim rode to revere the Mother of God of Fatima and in Rome gave a stern order to his hieromonk Evlogy to not accept any Italians into Orthodoxy so as not to hurt the Vatican. With the Pope's permission, Metropolitan Nikodim served in the Cathedral of Apostle Peter on a catholic antiminsion cloth and an altar, consecrated to St, Peter.

### A New Confession of Faith

Archbishop Athenagoras of Theatira published a new Confession of Faith which acquires a special meaning in view of its formal acceptance by the Constantinople Patriarchate. The bulletin, "Episcopsis", reckons that "After more than two centuries, the Ecumenical Patriarchate approved the publication of a new Orthodox Confession of Faith, that is, the expression of the Orthodox Faith and prayer." The official letter of the Patriarch dated January 10, 1975, says of the Confession that, "this study has been examined by the Synodical Committee of the Patriarchate, and has been found appropriate for the care of spiritual needs of the rational flock." Patriarch Dimitry wrote, "Gladly therefore according to the Decision of the Synod, we extend our Blessing for the publication of this excellent work, the product of your pastoral zeal and the spiritual endurance of Your Eminence and congratulate you wholeheartedly on its production."

This Confession expresses "a new understanding" of the Church dogmas, "christian people now visit churches and pray with other Christians of various traditions, with whom they were forbidden in the past to associate, for they were called heretics, damned schismatics and antichristians." The faithful were offered to not be polemical and not to display any antagonism to heretics. "Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, Lutherans, and Methodists etc. are Christians, baptised in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... The Church has doors but no walls."

The existence of different opinions is explained by the fact that the Orthodox Church as a whole "has not yet examined these important questions." All Christians independent of their confessions are declared to be members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Confession declares that Catholics are permitted to receive Communion in the Orthodox Church, and the Orthodox in the Catholic. It is now permitted for the Orthodox Liturgy to be offered in a Roman Catholic Church. The same permission is given to serve Catholic Mass in an Orthodox Church.

The Confession further states that because of friendly relations it has now become customary for the Orthodox to perform funerals for the Anglicans and offer to them the Holy Eucharist in places where there is no Anglican clergyman available. This is reciprocated for Orthodox Christians where there is no Orthodox clergyman available.

Concerning Masonry, it states that it is considered in vain to be a religion, regardless of the fact that it has distinct services for marriage, burial, christenings, and so on. We are reminded that the Catholic Church has announced that it no longer condemns Masonry.

The clear unorthodoxy of this document is remarked upon even by the monthly journal of the Orthodox Church of America.

### The Report of Archimandrite Justin

Former Professor of Dogmatics, widely known Archimandrite Justin Popovich, has for many years lived in retirement but continues his theological work. In the Greek newspaper, Orthodox Typos, of the 1st of July, 1975, a translation of his report is printed, addressed to the Holy Synod of the Serbian Church, on account of an invitation from the Catholics for the Church to participate in joint prayer and service during the "Octave", a week of prayer for the unity of Christians.

In his report, Archimandrite Justin remarks on the canons prohibiting the Orthodox to join in prayer with heretics. "These indicated canons of the Holy Apostles and Fathers," he writes, "are valid now also, not only in ancient times. They remain unconditionally necessary for all of us contemporary Orthodox Christians." Remarking that the canons apply in the case of the Catholics, Archimandrite Justin writes, "for Roman Catholicism is a multiple heresy."

Remembering the decree of the All-Orthodox Conference in Geneva in 1968, Archimandrite Justin writes, "that the Orthodox Church considers itself an organic part of the World Council of Churches. This decree is apocalyptically terrifying by its unorthodoxy and antiorthodoxy." He explains that in accepting that resolution, "We reject the Divine and human Orthodox Faith, this organic tie with the Divine Man and His Most Holy Body: the Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles and Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils, and we want to become an organic member of the heretical, humanitarian, humanized and human-idolization clubs, composed of 263 heresies, each of which is spiritual death."

Having read Archimandrite Justin's paper and other materials, the Holy Synod of the Serbian Church refused to participate in the "Octave", the eight day long prayer with the Catholics for union.

### The Address of Bishop Kiprian

Archbishop Kiprian (Zernov), retired in Moscow, sent a letter to His Eminence Philaret under the heading, "A Word to those in the Church Schism calling themselves The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia". In this address, he tries to arouse discontent with A.I. Solzhenitsyn and our Church in connection with the address of the latter to the Council of All the Churches Outside of Russia. He writes that he accidentally familiarized himself with the "insolent and ecclesiastically illiterate letter addressed to you, banished from our country, the illustrious Solzhenitsyn, who considers himself a writer, is already half-forgotten by his fellow countrymen." The letter does not contain anything interesting in itself. It ends with a summons to subordinate ourselves to the Moscow Patriarchate.

### The Letter from Father Gleb Yakunin

A letter signed by Father Gleb Yakunin, at one time having signed together with Father Eshliman a famous letter to Patriarch Alexei, was received by His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret, the first Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, simultaneously addressed to Patriarch Pimen, Metropolitan Irinei and Archbishop George. The letter, besides Father Yakunin, was signed by Victor Kapitalchuk and Leo Regelson.

The letter calls "to begin indepth work on studying the history of Christian martyrdom and confession in Russia in the XX Century; the collection and study of necessary materials and preparation for the canonization of martyrs and confessors, whose saintly podvigs have been established." They turn to Patriarch Pimen separately, "We ask him to at least now turn to the civil authorities, interceding for the removal of the false political accusation from innocently repressed clergy and laymen."

The address, calling for mutual work in the collection of materials, is motivated by the fact that, in the minds of the majority of faithful in contemporary Russia, the memory of ecclesiastical history is either a gaping void or screens off the false image of the "most kind elder, the wise Patriarch Sergei, as the creation of the hands of Apologetics of his fawning and capitulating position in relation to anti-church powers.

The letter will be published in full in Orthodox Russia.

### Closer Relations between the Jerusalem Patriarchate and Moscow

Recently, special attention from the Moscow Patriarchate towards the situation in the Holy Land has been observed. In the summer of this year, Metropolitan Philaret of Berlin visited Israel. In answer to the questions from correspondents, he said that his mission was purely religious but journalists noticed his words, that according to information that he had from the Soviet Union, a path is being prepared for the renewal of relations between the two countries. Western European

Metropolitan Philaret, as it was done by former Soviet representatives from year to year, expressed the hope that soon pilgrims will begin to arrive from the USSR. Besides the Patriarchate and official government representatives, he visited the Highest Rabbi, Ovadia Joseph. In the Institute of Yad Vashim, dedicated to the memory of Jews killed by the Nazis, Metropolitan Philaret served a commemorative service. The newspapers do not indicate precisely what kind. Whatever kind it was, it is a direct breach of Church canons.

On the Namesday of Moscow Patriarch Pimen, there was a large reception in the Soviet Church Mission in Jerusalem to which came Patriarch Benedict. According to information, he plans to personally visit Moscow. On the other side, the Moscow Patriarchate intends to send a delegation to Jerusalem for the feast of Christmas.

### The Abuse of the Church in Georgia

The journal "Religion in Communist Countries", published by the Center for the Study of Religion and Communism in Caston College and guided by Pastor M. Burdeaux, released information about great abuses in the Georgian Church. He informs that he received many documents, attesting to the fact that Catholicos David V was elected illegally. David Coridze, a Superior Court Investigator, exposed this matter. On the basis of many complaints, he investigated a gang of bandits and stumbled upon their connection with the Georgian Church and the KGB. It became clear that after the death of Catholicos Ephraim II in 1972, quickly in the duration of two hours, a Council was convened for the election of a new Catholicos. Catholicos David V was then elected as a candidate indicated by the KGB and the Director of Church Affairs. Coridze discovered the plundering of Church treasures by a gang, resembling the Mafia. The most important members of this gang turned out to be Catholicos David V himself and Bishop Gaios of Chilikansk. The latter, as several other gang members, was found to be guilty of acts of great immortality. At the same time, it was clarified that he was an agent of the KGB. The faithful, indignant at their new criminal Catholicos, sent the documents about him abroad. Burdeaux and his associates hesitated to publish this case for a whole year, until it became confirmed from the received documents that this was really the truth. They received a copy of the report of the investigator Coridze, who in this case collided with the interests of the KGB and was removed for this. He revealed that the head of the KGB, Valchelidze, received an expensive present from the Patriarchal treasury. The Director on Church Affairs is also involved in the plunder of the Church. The wife of the First Secretary of the Communist Party in Georgia, Mshavanadze, received some of this treasure. The KGB, however, took steps to hush up this case. Evidently, the Georgian Church is in a catastrophic position. The majority of churches are closed. From 2500 before the Revolution, only 40 have remained open.

### Interconfessional Prayers

Under the influence of Ecumenism, interfaith religious services are spreading more and more, contradicting Orthodoxy.

In October of last year, Viennese Bishop Herman of the Moscow Patriarchy, invited by Viennese Cardinal Koenig, participated in an Ecumenical service in the Cathedral of St. Stephan on the Day of Catholicism in Austria.

On the 6th of July, 1975, Bulgarian Bishop Simeon served a liturgy in the Episcopal Church of the Holy Virgin Mary in New York. On this day, somewhat earlier, an Episcopal liturgy was served in that Church, but not finished. The Episcopalian priest called his parishioners to participate as much as possible in the Bulgarian service. When Bishop Simeon gave Communion to the faithful, beside him an Episcopalian priest simultaneously gave Communion to his parishioners. After the end of the Liturgy, Bishop Simeon called all those present to accept a blessing from the Episcopalian clergy also, giving the antidor both to the Orthodox and the Episcopalians.

Another unusual service occurred in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Patrick in New York. A memorial service was held there for the recently deceased Jewish Cantor Tucker. His widow and family were present at this service, being very touched by such unusual attention on the part of Cardinal Cook.

A sad phenomenon of the same order is the interconfessional program of the Annual Conference of the Confraternity of St. Alban and St. Sergei in England. At the meeting of this organization of Orthodox and Anglicans, we find the following in the program this past August: meditations, based upon Mahomedan Sufi mysticism, rabbinical lectures on prayer, meditations in the Jewish tradition and Jewish evening prayer held in the Chapel. This is especially surprising because persons of the Jewish faith can hardly be members of the above-mentioned Association.

### Changes in the Hellenic Church

After the transformation of the Greek Government, Archbishop Jeronim was dismissed from heading the Hellenic Church and replaced by Archbishop Seraphim. Twenty-four bishops, placed during Archbishop Jeronim, were retired. In connection with this, the process of modernization propagated by the former Archbishop is slowed down. Relations with the Roman Catholics were also disrupted after the appointment of a bishop of the Eastern rite to Greece. The Hellenic Church cut off relations with the Vatican. The number of Catholics among Greeks is very small. Thus, it was hoped in the Greek Hierarchy that in this rapprochement during the administration of Archbishop Jeronim, the Vatican would not send a bishop as a replacement for the deceased bishop. This appointment intensified the displeasure at the current appointment.