

NEWSLETTER # 6  
Department of Foreign Relations  
Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church  
Outside of Russia

October-November 76

DISCOURSE IN AUSTRALIA ON THE POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.

During the Summer of 1976, for the first time, a delegation of the Australian Anglican Church, headed by Bishop Ian Shevill, went to the U.S.S.R. Upon his return, the Bishop published an ecstatic account of his trip. As is customary on such occasions, the delegation was received and treated most generously and lavishly. The Australians were greatly impressed by these honors and by the abundant feasts prepared for them. Metropolitan Nikodim and Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev assured them of the total freedom of the Church. Metropolitan Philaret, when asked about the imprisonment of the faithful, replied: "No one is persecuted for his faith. Every citizen has the right to confess a faith or not.... There are some cases where Christians violate the Soviet law. An example is Georgi Vins; the whole world knows of him. He was judged and received a sentence of some years. He was sentenced, not because he was a Christian, or because he believed, but because he violated the Soviet law."

Bishop Shevill published two long articles on the well-being of the Church in the U.S.S.R. He wrote that "a formula for co-existence has been achieved between an atheist communist State, whose Constitution allows for freedom of religious belief, and the Churches, who are prepared to accept the limitations of the law and develop their lives within these guidelines."

Bishop Shevill's optimistic views and his citing, without question, the false comments of Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev, resulted in quite a few protests in the press. Such a letter of protest was sent by His Eminence Archbishop Theodosios. Unfortunately it was not printed. Bishop Shevill's main oponent, Allan Gill, noted however in the "Sidney Morning Herald", that the official announcement of the Anglican Service Press neglected to mention that the main part of the Russian Orthodox Church in Australia recognized, not the Moscow Patriarchate, but the Emigre Hierarchy in the United States.

TESTIMONY OF BISHOP DIONYSIOS.

Bishop Dionysios Zukin of the Moscow Patriarchate, who died in Holland this past year, was greatly concerned with the position of the Church in the U.S.S.R. toward the end of his life. When Yakunin and Religson's letter to the World Council of Churches appeared in November 1976, Bishop Dionysios supported this protest and urged all the Christians of Holland to protest also. The Bishop was removed from his duties for participating in the opposition at the Moscow Council of 1971. His protests attracted the attention of the Holland Church circles. He informed Archbishop Anthony of Geneva of these. In his letter of Jan. 7th, 1976, he wrote the Archbishop: "The life of the clergy in the Soviet Union is unbelievably difficult. I have been there twelve times since the last war and each time I returned depressed and shattered. I saw and heard a lot because my friends have kept me informed.

All priests arriving from abroad to serve God in the "Soviet paradise" were disposed of in one way or another. Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) was killed.

Archbishop Gabriel was sent to his grave because of his assignment to Tashkent. There the difference in temperatures between winter and summer is 100° and his health was severely affected. He complained bitterly to me that because of his physical condition (he had had a Myocardial Infarction) he could not endure these drastic changes in temperature. I met him in 1948 when he came from China. Archpriest Zambrizsky contracted Tuberculosis and died. Archimandrite Seraphim (Svetozarov) also died from Tuberculosis. My confessor, Fr. Andrew Sergeyenko was systematically persecuted and oppressed until he also died from a Myocardial Infarction. I attended and performed the Service in the basement of a peasant house. I remember how tense we were when a bell rang. There is a sentence of 15 years in a concentration camp for attending such a service.

The latest victim is Archbishop Paul Glyshev. I do not know where he is now or what happened to him. I used to know him well. He was my neighbor in Antwerp. He told me: "Metropolitan Nikodim is an evil genius of our Church." There was an article in the newspaper "Russkaya Mysl" ("Russian Thought") entitled "Testimony", but this was just a small sample of the hardships of our much-suffering faithful people.

The Bishop of Sverdlovsk (I do not remember its former name, but it is a city with a population of one million people) was given a cemetery church able to accommodate 400 people. Tens of thousands of people were coming to church. Winter or summer we served with the doors and windows open (no amplifiers are permitted). Under these conditions we were constantly contracting colds and other illnesses. We pleaded for one more church, but Kuroyedov replied cynically: "What is once lost is lost for ever." Oh, my Lord, is it possible to relate everything!."

#### Moscow Patriarchate returns to Metropolia the files of St. Nicholas Cathedral.

The official publication of the American Metropolia, "The Orthodox Church" reported in its September Issue, that in May 1976 Metropolitan Ireney received a letter from Patriarch Pimen. The correspondence between the Department of Foreign Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate headed by Metropolitan Yuvnaly, and Archbishop Cyprian for Metropolia, resulted in the return of the files preserved in Minnesota, to the Metropolia's representatives. The Patriarch stressed the point that the Metropolia is getting the files back due to the fact that it received its autocephaly from the Moscow Patriarchate. He also expressed the hope that this "will contribute to the deepening and strengthening of brotherly relations between our Holy Churches."

#### Supreme Council of USSR receives a united protest.

The London newspaper "Church Times" of July 23rd, 1976 reports that a Memorandum signed by 28 Christians of different denominations, including Orthodox representatives, was addressed to the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR. Pastor M. Bourdeaux underlines the fact that this memorandum represents an historical precedent, not only as the very first protest made against the persecution of religion in the USSR since the time of the revolution, but also as a demonstration of ecumenical spirit, although the authors never used the word "ecumenism". Frs. Gleb Yakunin and Lev Regelson, who previously addressed their well-documented protest to Dr. Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, also signed this particular protest.

It is noted that the famous mathematician Igor Shafarevich supposedly, for the first time, affixed his signature to a purely religious document. This is not quite correct. Shafarevich wrote a very valuable article documenting an investigation of the juridical position of the Orthodox Church in the USSR. This document concludes with the words: "We are not the first to make an appeal of this kind, and we are not so naive as to hope that it will be met with instant understanding. But our feeling of responsibility before our country and before history moves us to express our views in the hope that our word will be heard -if not now, then at least before it is too late."

#### The Faithful in USSR ask for help in removing a Bishop.

According to the New York Times of Sept. 7th, 1976, some 253 citizens of the City of Sverdlovsk (Ekaterinburg) signed and delivered to a foreign correspondent in Moscow, a letter for Dr. Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, in which they ask for assistance in having Bishop Clement replaced because he has failed to fulfill his pastoral duties. He is charged with reducing the number of clergy, shortening the church services and of conducting services only very rarely in his Cathedral. The plaintiffs underline that they have tried several times to reach the Patriarch in order to present their case personally, but have never been able to get an appointment. Their written complaints, it seems, have never reached him either.

#### The growth of the renovation movement in the Catholic Church.

The reformers, supported by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of America, made great strides in Detroit for their "Call to Action" organization. The Conference was attended by persons invited by the Bishops. Cardinal Dearden presided. The Conference attracted more than 1000 members and proved to be very renovation-minded, but it did not recommend immediate acceptance of reforms. Other conferences are planned which are expected to be more radical. The newspapers did not publish all of the decisions of this conference. Some conservative groups were present, but the majority of those attending were very radical and demanded priestly orders for women, acceptance of divorce, birth control, and certainly, a bill of rights for man. The radical mood of the conference did not frighten the Bishops. On the contrary, the New York Times of Oct. 27th, 1976 relates that Archbishop Peter Gerety clasped his friend in a bear hug and exclaimed: "Jack, this is one of the greatest days in the history of the Church." The same newspaper stressed that in general this assembly greatly encouraged all the renovator-bishops. Since 1973 there have been 41 new Bishops ordained in America and the majority of them are of the left-wing persuasion.

#### The Growth of the Charismatics.

The Pentecostal movement, which was primarily Protestant in nature, is now spreading rapidly among Catholics. The Pope himself supported the charismatics, telling them on May 26th, 1976, that they deal with the spiritual resources of which the whole human family has an urgent need. He did not neglect the opportunity to mention the ecumenical goals of the Catholic Church. "Let us be in step in the spirit of understanding, patiently and closely listening to what the Spirit has to say and be ready to enter the future with joy and confidence." said the Pope. Especially close to the Charismatic Movement are Belgian Cardinal Suenens and Archbishop Bernardin of Cincinnati, who is also President of the Roman Catholic National Bishops in America. This movement is also supported by the Greek Archbishop Iakovos. He makes no comment on the fact that some of his people are requesting "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" from their brethren, as if they had not already been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity (which certainly includes the Holy Spirit) and as if they had never received the Sacrament of Chrismation, by which

they were signed with the "Seal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit". In its June 18th issue, the magazine "Commonweal" published an article by a Catholic man who had attended a Charismatic meeting which he found to be very primitive as regards the music and the language used, and also very closely related to many forms of Protestant Fundamentalism. Fr. Stefanou, a Greek priest who is the leader of the Greek Charismatic Movement in America, and who some time ago defended the principles of the Unity of the Church of Archbishop Iakovos, has now adopted the ecumenical idea in the Charismatic Movement.

#### The Danger of Mixed Marriages.

The Assembly of Conservative Jewish Rabbis ruled that Rabbis must attempt to prevent mixed marriages, trying to talk the young people involved out of this step. In cases where they do not succeed, the Rabbis must try to influence the non-Jewish party to convert to Judaism and to raise the children in the Jewish Faith. If there is no conversion and no promise made to raise the children in the Jewish Faith, then the Synagogue must remove the Jewish party from membership in the Congregation. According to information given by the New York Times of Sept. 7th, 1976, the Rabbinate is seriously concerned because some 15% of all marriages are mixed and at least 70% of the children of these marriages are totally lost to Judaism. The new instruction requires that Rabbis also do pastoral work, such as visiting Common-law couples in their homes in order to try to persuade them to marry in the Synagogue and to instruct them in their religion. This is something entirely new to Judaism. Until now the Rabbi was considered as a teacher or at best a religious leader and consultant. This is the first time that Rabbis have been requested to do any missionary work or any proselytizing of non-Jews.

#### PREPARATION FOR PAN ORTHODOX COUNCIL.

In the matter of preparing for the Pan Orthodox Council, a special carefulness is noted in published official information. The magazine "The Eastern Church Review" #1, published a well-informed article by Archimandrite Kallistos Ware. In 1969 Patriarch Athenagoras insisted upon an urgent convocation of the Council and acceptance of the new Paschalia. One of the major obstacles was the Greek Church, which took a more conservative position, perhaps because of their bad experience with the split with the Old Calendarists. If the Assembly in 1969 was sympathetic to Patriarch Athenagoras' proposal then, now the Greek Church has expressed the desire to preserve the Paschalia, which was established by the First Ecumenical Council. The official publication "Ecclesia" stated: "Efforts to realize unity with other churches should not lead to the breaking of unity within Orthodoxy." Unfortunately, this principle was conveniently forgotten when the new calendar was introduced. In a long memorandum which was presented to the preparational commission, there is the following statement of the Greek Church: We regard as totally unacceptable the fixing of the date of Easter on a particular Sunday in April, since this conflicts with the decree of the First Ecumenical Council. We do not accept any deviation, great or small, from the decisions of the 318 Fathers." The Greek memorandum stressed that as long as some parts of the Orthodox Church adhere to the Julian Calendar, the equinox, on which the Paschalia depends, must be calculated by the old calendar. Only if and when the new calendar is accepted by ALL the churches, can one change the Paschalia, but still being guided by the principles which were established by the First Ecumenical Council. The Preparatory Commission of 1971 agreed with the Greek memorandum against the offer of Patriarch Athenagoras in 1969, as well as the Conference in Chambesi in 1970. (Easter Church Review 1976, vol. VIII #1, p. 80.)

Alas, the Paschalia question which Patriarchs Athenagoras and then Demetrios promised to resolve, and the resolution of which all the Western denominations so eagerly await, cannot be resolved as long as there are still Churches which are faithful to the Old Calendar. It is interesting to note that Metropolitan Meliton, while he was in Belgrade, had to admit that "some Orthodox Churches which adopted the new calendar, created for themselves many difficulties, because this change was not prepared for in the mentality of the faithful, and was not even necessary." (Glasnik #6, p. 103) A very true statement, although very much belated.

Yet the Constantinople Church, in spite of all the obstacles, still tries to convoke the Council as soon as possible. "Glasnik", the voice of the Serbian Patriarchate, describing the visit of Metropolitan Meliton, concludes that the faithful should neither worry nor wish that this Council be convoked soon. In any case, the agenda of this Council, as described by Metropolitan Meliton, in no way can be considered as urgent.

#### ARCHBISHOP LEFEBVRE IRRECONCILABLE.

Pope Paul VI, after raging against the suspended leader of Conservative Catholics, Archbishop Lefebvre, granted him an audience at his Summer residence, Castelgondolfo. According to official Vatican reports, Archbishop Lefebvre requested an audience with the Pope and received it. Leaving the Pope's office, the Archbishop said: "We have not come to any conclusions. The Pope spoke to me as a father would to his son. I said that perhaps it would still be possible to find a solution to the question - especially for those Catholics who were upset by events that took place after the Council." However, later in a letter to the Pope, the Archbishop, remaining true to his opinions, urged the Pope to change direction and to return to the old traditions. He wrote: "Would that His Holiness abandon this destructive business of compromise with the ideas of contemporary man. Ideas whose origins stem from a secret agreement between the high officials of the Church and the Masonic Lodges, concluded before the Second Vatican Council." (National Catholic Register, 9/19/76, #142) Apparently Archbishop Lefebvre has quite a few supporters, not only in France, but in the whole Catholic world. This of course must be taken into consideration by the Vatican, keeping in mind the Catholic teaching that the powers of a Priest or Bishop are irrevocable. In view of this, a suspended Bishop or Priest may perform all the Sacraments, including Ordination. The possibility of the creation of a new "Old Believer" hierarchy threatens Rome with an enormous schism. Archbishop Lefebvre sees the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council, as split from the ancient Church - a new Church which he calls the "Conciliar" Church, from the word Council. In his sermon at the ordination of 13 priests on June 29th, 1976 in Ecône, Archbishop Lefebvre referred to the new Mass as an act of heresy. He said: "This new ritual expresses a new understanding of Catholicism - a different religion. No longer does the Priest perform the holy Sacrifice, it is now done by a congregation of the faithful. Now and in the future, the heretofore authority of the Church is delegated to the faithful. This Mass is no longer a hierarchical Mass, it is a democratic Mass. This is very significant. It is an expression of a totally new ideology. Into our holy rituals has been brought an ideology which answers the mentality of modernists - a liberal mentality accepted by the majority of religions, in place of one Kingdom under our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### A WIDENING OF ECUMENICAL GATES.

According to the "National Courier" of July 23rd, 1976, in the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Anglican Bishop Richard Trelease ordained to the priesthood the pastor of the "Assemblies of God" Church. The new Anglican priest finished the Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Texas, a Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis and a university in Scotland.

He was ordained by the "Assemblies of God" Church and started his own parish. The Anglican ordination does not alter his position, since he will remain pastor in his own sect. At the same time, once a month he will serve in an Episcopal Church, in Episcopal vestments, according to the Episcopal rite. Bishop Trelease affirms that this is not a new precedent in his church. He claims that "Dr. McConnell brings to the church the riches of his heritage and an understanding of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, and how they are employed." "In ordaining Dr. McConnell, the Anglican Church gets to the outside of our inclusiveness." clarified the Bishop.

A NEW BOOK STORE.

The Department of Public & Foreign Relations of the Synod has opened a Bookstore. The store is located on the third floor of the Synod building and will carry books, both in Russian and in English, as well as icons, records, cards and other publications of interest. Details have appeared in the Russian press.

DONATIONS RECEIVED:

Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, Archbishop Vitaly of Canada, Archimandrite Alexis, ADAMS, Joseph Berg, C. Barbusanes, Billingsley, S. Feldhausen, Fr. A. Gavalas, J. Graves, Sr., Galitzine, Hintze (Australia), Fr. Holovka, Kovalsky, O. H. Ziberis, Zinod, D. Lodmee, Daniel Olson, Fr. Jacob Parsells, Petrovsky, Pruden, Sivanich.  
TO ALL OUR DONORS, OUR VERY DEEPEST GRATITUDE.....

We regret that due to technical difficulties this Newsletter was unavoidably delayed.....  
Hopefully, numbers #7 and # 8 of the Newsletter will be forthcoming during the month of February.