



# CHURCH NEWS

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With this second issue (No. 56) of Volume 6 we will endeavor to continue the regular publication of an exact English translation of the Russian version of "Church News" which we began in the fall of 1988. We have received many requests from members of our Church Abroad who do not speak Russian to begin publishing in English. We hope with your support to issue in English bi-monthly.

The Russian version of this publication exists entirely due to the voluntary support of our readers. We do not have a fixed subscription fee, but we would like our prospective readers to realize that in order to provide information from various sources, we have to maintain numerous subscriptions that are not cheap. In addition, there are the expenses of producing the text and, of course, postal fees.

We intend with English subscriptions to follow the same policy of gratefully accepting donations to help cover our expenses.

**CHURCH NEWS**  
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## THE RECENT COUNCIL OF THE BISHOPS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE RUSSIA

Finally, after the passage of more than two months, the Russian language publication "Pravoslavnyaya Rus" of October 15/28 (which was received by our publication only on November 5/18) published the Council's (held from September 3rd to 15th) main resolutions and its Epistle. For the first time in the entire history of the Church Abroad, there is nothing to comment on in this Epistle, so empty and colorless is it. At best it can be deemed a sermon of mediocre quality. Therefore, we do not feel it necessary to reprint it. But those interested may send us a self-addressed envelope and \$1.00 to cover postage and handling and it will be sent to them.

From the Chancellery of the Synod of Bishops, September, 1996.

The Council of Bishops was held in New York City. Its sessions were opened on Aug. 21/Sept. 3, 1996, following a molieben "before starting a good work". All meetings were held in the Synod's Cathedral in the presence of the miraculous the Kursk-Root Icon of the Theotokos of the Sign.

The first meeting started with the singing of the stikhira "Today the grace of the Holy Spirit gathered us..." The following bishops were present: the presiding bishop, Metr. Vitaly and the members of the Council: their eminences archbishops Anthony of San Francisco and Western America, Laurus of Syracuse and Trinity, Alipy Of Chicago and Detroit, Mark of Berlin and Germany, Seraphim of Brussels and Western Europe, Hilarion of Sydney and Australia and New Zealand, bishops Benjamin of Chernomorsk and Kuban, Evtikhy of Ishima and Siberia, Barnabas of Cannes, Daniel of Erie, Cyrill of Seattle, Metrophan of Boston, Ambrose of Vevey, Agathangel of Simferopol, Gabriel of Brisbane, and Michael of Toronto.

Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco was chosen as vice chairman, and Archbishop Hilarion and bishops Evtikhy and Gabriel as secretaries of the Council. In his opening address Metr. Vitaly pointed out that during the period between the councils (the last council was held at the convent in Lesna in November of 1994) the archbishops Paul and Anthony, and the bishops John, Gregory and Constantine passed into eternity.

Archbishop Anthony commented that during this current year, sixty years passed from the day of the repose of Metr. Anthony (Khrapovitsky), the founder of our Church Abroad. In this connection, the members of the council intoned "Eternal Memory" to Metr. Anthony and the reposed bishops.

At the request of Archbishop Anthony, Archbishop Laurus described his trip to Belgrade to the council and his serving of a pannihkhda at the tomb of Metr. Anthony in Ivron Chapel. Following this the pilgrims were received by the Serbian Patriarch Paul in the patriarchate headquarters.

Vladyka Laurus then offered a proposed agenda which was accepted after a few corrections. It was then noted that during this period between councils, the following consecrations were performed: archpastors Agathangel of Simferopol, Gabriel of Brisbane, and Michael of Toronto. The Council then resolved to approve the acceptance of these above mentioned bishops into the fold of the episcopate of the ROCA.

Then the reports of the bishops concerning church life in their dioceses were heard. In connection with the repose of Archbishop Anthony of Los Angeles, it was resolved to annex the Diocese of Southern California to the Diocese of Western America. Bishop Hilarion of Washington was appointed to the widowed Diocese of Australia and was elevated to the rank of Archbishop with the title of Archbishop of Sydney and Australia and New Zealand. The following changes were made in the Diocese of Eastern America: Bishop Gabriel of Brisbane was appointed Vicar of the Diocese of Eastern America with the title Bishop of Manhattan with the proviso that he would also assume the duties of the Deputy Secretary of the Synod. Bishop Michael of Toronto was appointed Vicar of the Diocese of Canada to assist Metr. Vitaly.

On Aug. 24/Sept. 6 Archbishop Seraphim formerly of Caracas and Venezuela arrived for the morning session. He lives in retirement at the Novo Diveyevo Convent in New York state. Vladyka Seraphim chatted with all the archpastors, exchanged experiences of pastoral ministry, listened to the reports and after a trapeza returned to Novo Diveyevo.

On Aug. 27/ Sept. 9 the members of the Council heard the report of Archbishop Hilarion about the martyrdom of Priest Maxim Sandovitch, who was shot for his Orthodox pastoral and patriotic work in Lemkovshchina (now within the borders of the present Poland). The execution of the new-martyr was **executed** on Aug. 24/Sept. 6, 1914, in the courtyard of Gorkitskaya Prison. The Council of Bishops, after hearing this report of the martyric death of Fr. Maxim resolved: to include in the ranks of the New Martyrs of Russia the St. Priest-martyr Maxim Sandovitch who suffered under the Latins. His commemoration is to be celebrated on Aug. 24./Sept. 6. Then the bishops sang the magnification to the Priest-martyr

Maxim. This coincides with the grievous 400th anniversary of the Union of Brest (of 1596) which sanctioned the persecutions of the Orthodox Church and her children by the [Roman Catholics] in the western regions of Russia which have persisted down to the present day.

Next the Council of Bishops heard a report on the holy Chinese new-martyrs who were martyred during the Boxer Rebellion in Peking. The main day on which 222 Orthodox Chinese were martyred was June 11, 1900. Especially glorious was the "podvig" of the Priest Metrophan Tzi Chun and his entire family and that of the Orthodox catechizer, the servant of God Paul Wang. It was resolved to celebrate the memory of the Chinese New-martyrs on 11/24 June, as was the custom in the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China.

On Aug. 29/ Sept. 11, the day of the commemoration of the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner, a solemn service was conducted and in the afternoon at 4 PM a funeral service was performed for the generals A. P. Kutepov and E. K. Miller who were abducted in France in the 1930's. Now this has been verified on the basis of documents from the Russian Archives. The celebrants of the funeral service, including numerous archpastors and clergy, were headed by Metr. Vitaly. The service was also attended by representatives of various [pre-soviet] Russian military, civil organizations and laity travelling from various locations. A honour guard stood with the banners of the Russian army.

Archbishop Seraphim of Brussels and Western Europe addressed those present in a sermon describing this tragedy and after the service concluded a sermon was delivered by Metr. Vitaly.

Concerning the parishes under the ROCA in Russia, the council of bishops resolved:

1) To leave the regions which formerly belonged to the Odessa-Tambov and Suzdal dioceses, as well as those of Ukraine and Belorussia to the pastoral care of Russian bishops without defining the internal boundaries of the dioceses and to leave the subsequent differentiation of them to the Russian bishops themselves.

2) To delegate the possible problems connected with the pastoral care of the parishes in the above regions to resolution by the Episcopal Conference of Russian Bishops.

3) To reserve to the Episcopal Conference of Russian Bishops all the rights and obligations as provided in the resolutions of the Council of Bishops in 1994 with the exception [of that stipulating] that their representative Russian bishop be present at the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA.

In reference to the case of the suspended Bishop Valentine, formerly of Suzdal and Vladimir, it is resolved: to accept the draft resolution tendered by committee. Bishop Valentine is considered defrocked and his so-called sacraments are considered invalid. (A complete resolution on this matter will be published in "Tserkovnaya Zhizn" in Nos. 5-6, 1996.)

On the last day of the Council, Aug. 31/Sept. 13 the Act regarding the glorification of Holy Hierarch Jonah of Manchuria. The festival of the glorification is to be conducted on Sunday Oct. 7/20, 1996, in San Francisco and in Chicago because the major portion of his former flock resides in San Francisco.

Resolved: 1) To honor Holy Hierarch Jonah, Bishop of Honkou as a holy saint of God in the choir of All the Saints of Russia.

2) To delegate to Archbishop Anthony and Bishop Cyrill all preparations for this celebration.

3) To request that Metr. Vitaly head the glorification ceremony to be held on the day commemorating St. Jonah, Oct. 7/20, in San Francisco or Chicago.

4) To consider this day as the day for the commemoration of the newly glorified saint.

On the evening of Aug. 31/Sept. 13 by which time some bishops had already left for home, the sad news of the repose of Archbishop Seraphim of Caracas and Venezuela was received. Vladyka passed away in the convent of Novo Diveyevo. The funeral service was performed in Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville on Sept. 3/16, 1996."

The resolution of the Council concerning the three consecrations, which ends with the phrase "to approve the acceptance of the above bishops into the fold of the episcopate of the ROCA", causes considerable surprise since one of the fundamental rules prior to the election of a new bishop is the common consent to this by the entire Council. (However, Agathangel was not re-consecrated, but a year previously signed an oath of loyalty to only the ROCA Synod, while Gabriel and Michael were consecrated with the knowledge of only the Synod.) As is obvious from the above statements, this rule has not been observed by the Synod and, consequently, the whole Council of Bishops had to ratify these consecrations ex post facto.

As is obvious from the resolutions regarding the Russian bishops and their parishes, the Council of Bishops simply disavows them. Thus, after first creating total chaos in their church life, then, after a delay of almost five years, they are given independence without even the participation of their representative in the Synod! Yet, the Council of Bishops did not define for which "Orthodox Episcopate of the Russian Church" (this form of commemoration was introduced in the ROCA after the death of the head of the Russian Church, Metr. Peter of Krutitsa in 1937) they will now be praying.

Since they have removed from the ectenias the word "suffering" (literally: "persecuted") in regard to the Russian Church, one hopes this is not a prayer for the Moscow Patriarchate. But perhaps this refers to even Bishops Benjamin, Evtikhy and Agathangel? In addition, it is unclear how the hierarchy of the ROCA evaluates the hierarchy of the Free Russian Orthodox Church who have unexpectedly received autonomy on their native canonical territory. It is very doubtful that the ROCA will finally acknowledge in fact (and not only on paper) that it is only a portion of a huge Russian Church.

One's attention is caught by the fact that in the published resolutions of the Council of Bishops not a word is said about the course of Bishop Arsenius' (who left the Free Russian Orthodox Church) acceptance into the Church Abroad. On June 3/16 he applied to be accepted into the fold of the ROCA. It seems that he was accepted, in principle, because shortly before the Council of Bishops convened, he personally came to New York. But at that point the Council of Bishops refused him, as is obvious from the text of the resolution of his diocesan extraordinary meeting in which he complains about the inconsistency of the actions of the Church Abroad.

As for the case of the defrocking of Archbishop Valentine, this resolution has no validity, regardless of the publication of the complete text in "Tserkovnaya Zhizn", due to a number of reasons. 1) Archbishop Valentine was never advised of any accusatory action. 2) In accordance with canon law (the 74th Apostolic and the 28th of the Council of Carthage) an accused bishop has to be personally invited by two bishops three times to the court session. Only in the case of his nonattendance can a council arrive at its sentence, even to the point of defrocking in absentia. There was no court session in his case, and no one advised him of a date for one. It is completely certain that this canonical requirement was not met by the Council of Bishops. If this were not so, the Council would have to base its decisions not on a "draft resolution tendered by committee", but on the refusal of Archbishop Valentine to stand trial before the court. 3) The acceptance of the draft resolution tendered by this committee (its members and its goals being unknown) in general is an unprecedented action. No canons of the Ecumenical Councils provide for the creation of a committee, especially for a trial of a bishop, let alone in absentia. 4) Archbishop Mark and Bishop Barnabas participated in some degree in the resolutions of the Council about the defrocking of Archbishop Valentine. About Bishop Barnabas the late Bishop Gregory made several reports based on canonical principles to the Synod, the Council, and the Metropolitan himself. In them he considered it necessary to bring before an ecclesiastical court those who transgressed against the 16th Apostolic Canon concerning the reception of clergy suspended by one's bishop. Of such it is said: "He shall be excommunicated as a teacher of disorder". All of Bishop Gregory's reports remained unanswered, nor even acknowledged as received.

#### GENERAL LEBED AT THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE ROCA

On Monday Nov. 18, it became known during the afternoon that on Tuesday, Nov. 19, at about 12 noon General Alexander Lebed would arrive at the Synod of Bishops in New York and that there would be press conference.

At the same time a totally incredible aspect became clear: the "Russian speaking" organizer of this press conference, Mr. Y. Miloslavsky who in principle had permission to use the Synod's meeting hall for this purpose, did not think it necessary to inform the two vicar bishops of the Metropolitan (Gabriel and Michael) who reside in the Synod building of the time and date of the General's arrival. They became aware of this press conference only on the afternoon of the day before! Some time later, it became known that the "Russian language" radio station in Brighton Beach informed their fellow nationals about this event. It is possible that the General himself was not aware of the fact that only Russian language journalists would be present at this press conference.

General Lebed was invited to the USA by the Council for International Foreign Relations, while flatly refusing its offer to pay the travel expenses. These expenses were covered by supporters of the general amongst whom are some substantial persons. The General visited Texas where he met with former President Bush, his assistant B. Scrowcroft, former Secretary of State Baker, and H. Kissinger. The General refused all secret service protection offered him.

Fortunately the attempted provocation by the organizer of the press conference, Miloslavsky, was frustrated by the swift action taken by the two vicar bishops. Upon learning of the event, they immediately contacted Metr. Vitaly, who commissioned them to greet the general in his name. At the same time, Metr. Vitaly personally telephoned General Lebed and a personal meeting in a month's time was agreed upon.

Important Russian public figures were hastily informed of the impending news conference and a considerable number of people started to fill up the hall just prior to the General's arrival.

Upon the arrival of the General, Bishop Michael of Toronto greeted him with the following words:

In the name of Metr. Vitaly, the First Hierarch and Presiding Bishop of the Synod of the ROCA, I greet you, Alexander Ivanovich.

As you are aware, Vladyka the Metropolitan is today in the Canadian Diocese and upon learning, only yesterday afternoon, that you wished to visit us, blessed us to greet you. His Eminence has expressed by telephone personally to you his very best wishes.

Almost eighty years have already passed since more than a million (or perhaps two million) Russian people out of love for their country fled into exile from our much suffering Russian land. In this manner they were saved from total annihilation by the godless [Soviet] government.

The ship of the Church, under the wise leadership of the first of the First Hierarchs of the Church Abroad, Metr. Anthony [Khrapovitsky] and the Council of Bishops, also fled into exile. With the blessing of Patriarch St. Tikhon, the Confessor, the Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia remained preserved abroad. The image of Russia was also preserved abroad as an inseparable portion, for some three generations now, of the Russian people scattered throughout the world and who have preserved the Orthodox Faith.

We welcome you to this small piece of Russia, of which there are now many throughout the world.

In your person we welcome the Russian officer who believes that "a holy cause must be accomplished with clean hands, with a pure soul and with love". These, it seems, are your own words.

May the Lord save you and grant you the strength and patience to serve this holy cause, that Russia which is preserved in our hearts, that is, the service of God and the Russian people who nowadays are humiliated, despised, and untended.

As is said: "Be patient, cossack, and you will be ataman!" \*

I welcome you in the hope that in a month's time, when you will visit again, you will indeed be greeted by our First Hierarch.

In the interim I would like to present to you a gift from His Eminence, two books of his own publication, on a theme close to your heart, I believe, "St. Grand Duke Alexander Nevsky", "Dimitry Donskoi", and also the commemorative edition of "The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, 1918-1968".

We wish you, **Many Years!**

Following Vladyka's welcoming speech, the General offered those present an opportunity to put questions to him which poured forth in great abundance from the "Russian language" press, and also from representatives of the Russian Cadets Association (who presented the honored guest with issues of their magazine), the Russian Youth Organization, the Congress of Russian-Americans, the Imperial Order, the Tolstoy Foundation, the Fund for Assistance to the ROCA, some clergy, and still others. There can be no doubt that if the visit of the General had been announced ahead of time, the hall could not have contained all those who would have liked to see him. Nevertheless, despite the unexpectedness of his appearance, there were no less than 150 people present.

The General continued answering the numerous questions for more than two hours. Among them was one concerning the General's attitude towards the lack of morality in today's Russia.

The General's response was not the standard answer and, for a layman, one can say, one with humility and frankness. "The issue of morality is a difficult question. I have sought it, morality, everywhere, even within the Orthodox Church. ...I am a worldly man, and one must say, a very sinful one, and 'amongst paratroopers it's difficult to be an angel', but I suddenly realized that there were those who according to their status should be pious, and should lead others to the light of reason, yet were more sinful than I... This does not refer to the Church Abroad, but the Orthodox in the homeland. They have become mired in various sins... I drew close to them, but then drew back. I cannot go further, because of them."

These words prompted a short commentary from the rector of the parish in Nyack, Mitered Archpriest Fr. George Larin who explained why the ROCA has refused communion with the Moscow Patriarchate.

The "Russian language" press, in particular "Novoyoe Russkoe Slovo" on Nov. 20 published an outrageous article informing its readers that "the General was, touchingly, badly dressed..." and "bad taste in dress is a personal habit of the General", that "he is a rather rare and dangerous Homo Sapiens" and similar epithets which a certain kind of press were not stingy in offering. They had a few for us, the Russian people, as well. "For this address to the public", writes one nameless correspondent, "who would have gathered to meet this rebellious General at the Synod, on 93rd and Park Ave., other than, of course, the press? Naturally, piqué waistcoats [?!] -- that is, members of the Congress of Russian-Americans whom long after his departure, think of it, were still debating whether Chernomorsk would be declared a free city. When words like "Russia", "Orthodoxy", "officer", and "double-headed eagle" were mentioned, the little old men burst out in rapturous applause. This is understandable, for many of them evoked pity for their spotted foreheads with wisps of well-groomed grey hairs. Seeing those shaky hands and voices, one felt that Alzheimers was not rare among them."

"The Orthodox clergy who received the General kept a proper silence, jingling from time to time their car keys attached to the belts of their cassocks...[?!]" "In this unusually healthy, but narrow-shouldered man of 46 years, one does not expect the senility of old age, but his reaction surprisingly coincided with that of the little old men. And if, with

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\* Or in other words, "Be patient, soldier, and you will be a general!"

the words "Russia, Orthodoxy, the People", they poured out warm old tears, then in the blue Tartar-slanted eyes of Lebed, an icy moisture made an appearance. What this is; how much this is feigned is unknowable. This moisture would shine like crystal and form in his eyes -- this was oh so visible every time in the light of all those television cameras -- whenever the talk would turn to patriotic themes. 'I am a patriot', Lebed harshly declared, 'and I am not ashamed of this word.' "

It is evident that the "Russian language" descendants of the initiators of our revolution were very seriously annoyed by the Russian patriot General Lebed who in the course of the press conference twice drew a very fine line, demonstrating that he knows well the difference between the Russian emigrants and those who only speak the Russian language. It was very surprising that none of the representatives of the press raised any questions about the Jews and their so-called "holocaust".

At the end of the conference, which lasted for more than two hours, Vladyka offered the General and his entourage a small buffet.

#### IMPIETY FROM "CHRIST OF THE HILLS" MONASTERY

Christ of the Hills Monastery, in Blanco Texas, accepted some time ago into the fold of the ROCA by Archbishop Hiliarion, does not hesitate to discredit it with invented "miracles" or sales pitches. At this time, as the Nativity of Christ approaches, they have sent out an advertisement with pictures of two American style Santa Clauses (which they term "St. Nicholas"): one of these commercial clown-like figures has a green robe and the other a red one. Each of them is holding a holy icon: the green one, one of Christ the Saviour, and the red one, one of the All-holy Theotokos! Along with the Santa Clauses in the photograph are larger holy icons of Christ and the Theotokos. On another page of this same irreverent advertisement there are photographs, again, of Christ and the Theotokos next to Russian toy wooden dolls!

One cannot help but be amazed that the Synod of Bishops is taking no measures to stop this disgraceful case of charlatanism and impiety by a monastery under its jurisdiction!

#### FROM THE LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX FREE CHURCH

A resolution taken at the extraordinary conference of the Briansk-Tula Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Free Church:

We, the undersigned clergy, monastics and laity, motivated by a sense of unity and love, trusting in our brethren who are carrying out their ministry beyond the borders of historical Russia, in the interests of the good of the renaissance of our much-suffering and persecuted Russian Church on 3/16 June, 1996, appealed for reception in the fold of the ROCA with contrition.

In transferring to the jurisdiction of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA we collided with what in their turn are the far from ecclesiastical actions on the part of the Representative of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCA, Archbishop Valentine, who imposed upon all clergy unlawful suspensions for our transfer to the Synod Abroad.

With great sadness we have had to verify the insincere attitude of the hierarchy abroad towards its own assurances and resolutions. The Council of Bishops led by the nose by Archbishop Valentine, being deceived by his "arguments and facts", denied our application and in this manner brings himself to the threshold of a triumphant victory in the destruction of the parishes in Russia under the ROCA. And thus he also keeps the clergy in fear and subjection who have any desire to depart for the ROCA. With such an attitude towards the problems of the suffering Russian Orthodox Church, the Synod Abroad demonstrated to the entire Orthodox world its apostatic departure from the Truth of Christ.

In connection with the above situation, and if the Synod of the ROCA leaves us without spiritual care, we shall be compelled to follow the Ukase of His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, of the most Holy Synod and the Supreme Church Council # 362 of 7/20 Nov., 1920, and to apply this statute with all the rights and obligations that result from it.

Finding ourselves in this situation, we do not abandon the hope that all the difficulties and obstacles will be overcome within a short time and that all the various parts of the Russian Orthodox Church will unite their efforts in order to stand against Sergianism, ecumenism, church modernism, renovationism in all its forms and in this way with our common power bring the Russian Church to a free, local, Russia-wide council of the Orthodox Church.

September 14, 1996.

Signed by Bishop Arsenius and with him nine priests, three deacons, and "monastics and laity".

This resolution arrived at by the conference of Briansk-Tula Diocese under the chairmanship of Bishop Arsenius can evoke nothing but grieved bewilderment.

1) We do not know the reasons why the Council of Bishops refused to accept His Grace Bishop Arsenius, but there are strong reasons to believe that the main role in it was played not by Archbishop Valentine, but Bishop Evtikhy.

2) Archbishop Valentine, when suspending the clergy lured from him into schism by Bishop Arsenius, acted in perfect accord with the regulations of canon law.

3) The reference by Bishop Arsenius to the decree of Patr. Tikhon to justify his independent existence does not stand in the face of any critique whatsoever. The patriarchal decree had in view nothing, but *the unity of neighboring dioceses and by no means a schism*. Bishop Arsenius, driven by his personal unfriendliness towards his First Hierarch, illegally left an already existing and solid church administration. In other words, Bishop Arsenius has done nothing but create a schism.

#### Another Monastery in Suzdal

In our last issue (# 6, 55) we related information about the dispersal by Metr. Methodius of Voronezh of St. Tikhon-Transfiguration Convent near Zadonsk as a result of ordering the founder and father confessor of this convent, Archm. Peter, to be transferred and his appointment of an abbess whom the 110 nuns unanimously requested by removed. As a result, the convent split in half. Submitting to force, 57 nuns remained and 65 headed by their spiritual director, Archm. Peter, moved to Suzdal and were accepted by Archbishop Valentine. Archm. Peter is reknowned for his very high level of spirituality.

Fortunately, this autumn Archbishop Valentine succeeded in putting a roof on a large two story house in which he intended to have pastoral courses with live-in students. After fixing up the first floor to make it liveable, he put up the refugee nuns. Archbishop Valentine already has a convent of more than 20 nuns who live in a house he had built a few years ago. The remainder who could not be accomodated by this building reside in private apartments. In other words, Archbishop Valentine has under his supervision some 85 nuns

#### A Letter to the Editors of "Church News"

Permit me to relay to you some sad facts in the life of an Orthodox priest living in a Russian province. I believe it might be of some interest to the readers of "Church News" to know by what methods the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate conduct their war against the communities of the Russian Orthodox Free Church.

In the beginning of 1996 by appointment of Archbishop Valentine of Suzdal and Vladimir I arrived in the village of Rashkino in Torzhok County in Tver Province. In this village there are still preserved some ruins of a church dedicated to the Kazan Icon of the Theotokos and the villagers have for some time sought to organize a parish. The Patriarchate Bishop of Tver and Kashin, Victor (Oleinik) was apparently not opposed to this, but then in 1991 he responded to the parishioners petition with a resolution which reads in part (I leave intact all the peculiarities of the original): "...As far as help is concerned, I warn you ahead of time, that to hope for our help is useless, because we will not distribute any funds and our funds are limited. [sic] keep this in mind and do not deceive yourselves with illusions of our help. In addition, there is the necessity of a priest, which does not exist in the diocese and it is doubtful that such will be for several years yet."

After two years, finally, the parish was registered, while no priest was sent, but nevertheless the representatives of Bishop Victor showed up in the village as soon as I arrived. Seeing that the laity gradually began to discern the essence of the Patriarchate and its leadership, they instigated a slanderous campaign against me personally and against the entire Free Russian Church. In this the greatest zeal was shown by the priest from Kuvshinovo Anatoly Volgin, from whose parish people began to come to me. Similarly several times some "missionaries" from the diocesan headquarters came to the village who tried to persuade the people where the "true" church is and where the "false" one.

In August after I had managed to register the Parish of St. Tikhon Patriarch of Moscow the Confessor, Bishop Victor himself could no longer restrain himself. He arrived in Kuvshinovo (a town not far from Rashkino) shortly before the Dormition and delivered a sermon in Trinity Church in which he termed me a "non-Russian who was planted from abroad" for the propogandizing of a "non-Russian faith". In addition, he called the Free Russian Church schismatic and without Grace and all the Mysteries performed by me he deemed accursed. He repeated these same things in a radio interview broadcast by the local station on the very day of the Feast. A few days later, a local newspaper "Znamya" ("The Banner") published an article by one of the activist members of the Kuvshinovo parish of the Moscow Patriarchate by the name of Nezhivikh [which literally in Russian means "Lifeless"] describing vividly the visit of his Vladyka and repeating the basic assertions of his "exposé address". However, I managed to force the editors to publish a retraction which said that the apostolic Grace of the hierarchs of the ROFC was perfectly canonically received from the bishops of the ROCA. Evidently

irritated the local priest in the extreme, because on Oct. 9 at a bus stop, one of his spiritual children with a bushy beard came up to me screaming "you dressed up doll" and tried to hit me. Several townspeople who were witnesses of this scene pulled this hooligan away from me. That evening when I returned home, I found my aged parents in a state of distress because they had only just endured a visit from Mr. Nezhivikh. He appeared on a bicycle and entered their quarters waving some sort of certification and began to yell that he represented some agency of the FSB [?] and if I did not leave the town soon, I would face some unpleasantness.

I lodged a complaint about this incident to the local prosecutor who promised an investigation but on serious punishment will come of it. (Since Nezhivikh is a mentally ill person who belongs to a group of patients whom it is very convenient to use in the fight against us.)

Unfortunately the authorities do not always, to say the least, treat our parish normally in any way and the main problem of handing over the ruins of the Kazan Church seemingly will not be resolved in our favour. On the one hand, the administration of the Tver Province reaffirms the separation of church and state and their unwillingness to resolve "infrachurch" problems. On the other, using as a cover an infamous regulation according to which all the prerevolutionary church buildings must be handed over to the Moscow Patriarchate, they blatantly support the latter. The "harmony" between the Communist government and the "spiritual" authorities of the Stalinist church evidently was welcomed heart and soul by the advocates of democracy and in this cacophony the local politicians scurried to occupy the places of honor once reserved at pontifical services for governors and mayors. Honestly, bureaucrats did not become more Orthodox as a result nor the Patriarchate less bureaucratic. Consequently at this point our parish is forced to look around for a private home that will do for a church. God grant that we find some good folk who will aid us in this endeavor.

Sincerely yours, Priest Vladimir Abolentsev, Rector of the St. Tikhon Patr. of Moscow, the Confessor, Community

On the same theme:

The minutes of a Meeting of the Synod of Bishops of the ROFC from Oct. 1/14, 1996, state that the Chancellor of the Synod of Bishops of the ROFC, His Grace Theodore, Bishop of Borisovskoye and Sanino "informed those present of a telegram received by the Synod of Bishops of ROFC from Deacon Vladimir Moukhin from the town of Syzran in the Samara Province. The telegram states that Deacon Vladimir Moukhin, a member of the clergy of the Suzdal Diocese and his wife were beaten up in the presence of their two children by members of the police force and also of the forcible placing of Fr. Vladimir under psychiatric observation in a clinic in the town of Syzran. This beating continues the campaign of abuse and persecution of the parishes of the Suzdal Diocese of the ROFC on the part of the government and the Moscow Patriarchate."

For this reason it was resolved: "to lodge protests in the name of the Synod of Bishops of the ROFC concerning the matters set forth in the telegram of Deacon Vladimir Moukhin with the local and federal governments as well as the Commission on Ties with Religious Groups of the Federal Duma."

About the Daugavpils and Latvian Diocese

His grace Victor, Bishop of Daugavpils and Latvia -- despite endless efforts and appeals to different ministers of Latvia, the Committee for Human Rights, the president of the republic, the director of the Department of Religion in the Ministry of Justice and other state and local offices -- still cannot officially register his diocese in Latvia. As the newspaper "Latgales Laiks" of Oct. 26 states, the Deputy Director of the Department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice, Mr. Y. Zalitis, found that "the community of St. Prince Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles, .... intends to operate autonomously. The statutes of the Latvian Orthodox Church state that all Orthodox communities found on the territory of Latvia are included in the Latvian Orthodox Church and will be guided by the Canons of the Church. We have concluded that the community in Liepa or in Daugavpils intend to operate outside the Latvian Orthodox Church and proceed against the canons of the Church. Consequently, the law about religious organizations do not permit the operation of such autonomous communities. An Orthodox community must act according to the canonical norms of their confession and apostacy from them gives grounds for doubting the bond of these communities with Orthodoxy. This was the basis for the Ministry of Justice reaching the decision not to register the Orthodox community of St. Prince Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles, in Daugavpils" according to the statement made by the Ministry on Jan. 24, 1996.

None of the documentation presented by Bishop Victor stating that the Moscow Patriarchate, officially registered in Latvia, has violated the canons, was instituted by an atheist like Stalin is of any avail.

Meanwhile, Bishop Victor has started receiving letters threatening him with reprisals. One of these was penned by a person within the circles of the "Orthodox Church of Latvia" with a signature familiar to the bishop. A whole series of threats were made to Hieromonk Philaret, the right hand man of Bishop Victor.



## COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS IN THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

The newspaper "The Moscow Times" of Nov. 5 in its Business Review section describes the commercial activities of the Moscow Patriarchate. It turns out that in spite of its continual complaints of near poverty, "it is founding banks, importing duty free cigarettes in a program that has cost the government \$40 million in lost revenues and is a partner in an oil exporting business that has an estimated turnover of \$2 billion annually."

Priest John Economtsev told reporters that a banking business is prohibited by the Bible, but it is common knowledge that the Patriarchate owns banks. These commercial activities are conducted through various departments of the Patriarchate, in part the Department of Foreign Relations.

The reporters noted that irregardless of commerce, which is common knowledge, in tobacco, alcohol, heating oil, banking operations and other commodities, in the official accountings there is nothing to be found, although Western businessmen who have dealings with the Patriarchate speak of these things quite openly.

A huge income comes from the Patriarchate plant in Sofrino which produces church articles and the "Danilov Hotel" located on its territory in the center of Moscow and falling under the Patriarchate's direct control.

The Moscow Patriarchate refuses to reveal to reporters any information concerning its budget for 1996 and its chief accountant, Natalia Deryuzhkina, stated that Patriarch Alexey II "will publish information about his budget when he deems it necessary and this only through his own means of mass information." But some of the employees of the Patriarchate acknowledged that its income for 1996 come to \$2 million. Also, it is known that the Moscow Patriarchate is one of the founders of the International Economic Partnership and that Bishop Victor is a member of its board of trustees.

Evidently, the commercial interests of the Moscow Patriarchate have turned into an international scandal. The newspaper "The Moscow News" on Sept. 29 published the following letter:

It is with sadness that we read in "The Moscow News" (#35, 1996) that the Russian Orthodox Church is one of the main importers for the Russian market of Western tobacco products. At first, we believed this news was a crude slander since such a thing would not enter the mind of an Orthodox Christian. However, to our great dismay, the employees of the Department for Foreign Relations confirmed the reality of this deal which has the ostensive aim of providing financial support for the restoration of churches and monasteries. But is it really possible the Dept. for Foreign Relations does not understand that this undermines the good name of the entire Russian Orthodox Church? This will scandalize many millions of "the least in this world". Now indeed our Church can be accused, with complete justification, by everyone of hypocrisy. While there are still a few missionaries in our Church trying to instill in our people -- who have, as it is, become mired in all sorts of immorality -- the concept of the Church as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, as the conscience of the nation, the salt of the earth, thanks to which the average person can turn his gaze towards the Church in the quest for truth. In fact it appears that *every imported cigarette smoked in Russia is sold by the Russian Orthodox Church!!!*

It can hardly be that any means available is appropriate for the adornment of our church buildings?

The Clergy and Laity of the Russian Orthodox Church. Moscow

Unfortunately, with the flimsy excuse of supposed poverty, the Moscow Patriarchate in no way is restoring churches and monasteries. She knows only how to squeeze the last drop of blood out of her parishes who are struggling at great personal sacrifice to restore the ruins of their local churches.

## ONCE AGAIN ABOUT THE "GREAT SILENT COLLABORATORS"

Not long ago, a religious information service Metaphrasis sent out the following notice:

"On Oct. 10 the Holy Synod heard the final report of the commission on the question of the canonization of the Imperial Family. Now the hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church needs to study it and then a resolution about the canonization can be introduced at the local Council. The date for convening the Council is not set, however, one can expect that it will occur no later than 1998."

Translating this out of bureaucratic jargon into something human its meaning becomes clear: the Moscow Patriarchate has once more postponed the canonization of the Royal Martyrs for an indefinite period. One can imagine how much disappointment this will cause for millions who for some time now have wanted to place icons of the Most Revered Passion Bearers in their churches and offer prayers to them.

For those of us who do not belong to the Moscow Patriarchate and who recognize the canonization of the Royal Martyrs which was accomplished 15 years ago by the ROCA, there is nothing

surprising in this resolution of the "Holy Synod". Some three years ago this editor was told of words said in a confidential conversation with a very influential bishop of the Patriarchate: "All of us, including the Patriarch, recognize the sanctity of Tsar Nicholas. But we cannot now glorify him -- the Communists and democrats would be up in arms against us."

Those who are naive about these matters might be surprised at this. The Communists -- this is understandable. They are the direct descendants of the regicides: Lenin, Sverdlov, Goloshchekin, Yurovsky. But the democrats? Why are they mentioned here? What possible objections could they have against the Imperial Family?

But our democrats did not just drop out of the sky! Only yesterday they were the party functionaries, the bureaucrats, the officers of the secret police, the professors of ideology courses, etc., etc..., in other words, the very same Communists who temporarily touted "perestroika", but more accurately were chameleons or turn-coats. Our current politicians love to talk profusely about the former glory of Russia, the reinstatement of historic justice and similarly exalted subjects. But here we must judge not from words but from deeds. And deeds clearly testify that our democrats have no appreciation for the monarchical history of our country and cannot stand the Romanov Dynasty.

During the so-called "restoration" of Christ the Saviour Church in sight of the Kremlin there was not a word about the need to replace the monument to Alexander III demolished by the Bolsheviks. In St. Petersburg the monument to the same tsar was not destroyed, but they do not want to replace it either. And in the whole of Moscow there was no place to be found for a newly created monument to Tsar Martyr Nicholas II by the sculptor V. Klykov so they put it outside the city limits. But what can one say about monuments when last year, with an seemingly good pretext, the remains of Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich, the Tsar's uncle, who was viciously murdered by a terrorist, were removed from the Kremlin.

And we should not forget that a direct order of the First Secretary of the Sverdlovsk Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrade B. N. Yeltsin resulted in the demolishing of the Ipatiev House in Ekaterinburg where the Imperial Family met their martyric end. The current President of Russia visits Ekaterinburg quite often, but he never appears near that place, nor have we heard a word of regret from him.

But let us return to the words of the hierarch who three years ago explained why the Patriarchate cannot glorify the Imperial Martyrs. This was said face to face in a personal conversation, but there is no way such frankness and honesty could be openly expressed by the Moscow episcopate. Here one will never find any firm opinions or, God forbid, any convictions. Instead one finds with them the so-called "joys". This started in 1927 when the first head of the Soviet Patriarchate, Sergius Stragorodsky published his infamous declaration. In it he tried to convince the Bolsheviks that "the church's members are not the enemies of the Soviet government and are not involved with the insane weapons of intrigue, but are one with our people and our government." He further stated, "We want to be Orthodox and at the same time acknowledge the Soviet Union as our civil homeland, whose joys and successes are our joys and successes and whose misfortunes are our misfortunes." And so for more than 60 years the members of the Moscow Patriarchate with all their power strove to share the "joys" and "misfortunes" of the atheist Bolsheviks. And now we see how with even more success they share them with those who are nominally democratic.

Priest George Edelstein in one of his publications called the hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate the "great silent collaborators" and this is an absolutely correct diagnosis. They are publically accused of collaboration with the KGB, as substantiated by documentary evidence, and their agent code names are revealed again and again, but their only answer is silence.

We find a scandalous "tobacco deal" brought to light. We find the Patriarchate under the guise of "humanitarian aid" imports enormous quantities of duty-free cigarettes and alcohol. And when this is sold and millions of dollars of profits are made nobody knows where they went. Exposé follows exposé but they remain silent...

Thousands upon thousands continue to pose the same question: do you recognize the Tsar Martyr as a saint? And they procrastinate and find any way to avoid a straight answer again and again. They stay silent.

How could one not be reminded of one of Griboyedov's heroes [in his Russian classic satiric verse drama "Woe from Wit"], Molchanin. [In Russian the name means, literally, Silent.] Remember how he refers to himself: "...One dare not have / One's own opinion."

And when one imagines all those valuable crosses and panagias with diamonds, miters covered with precious stones, the expensive limousines, the luxurious residences, and in addition millions of dollars...

Chatsky was quite right: "Molchanins live in a blissful world!"

Signed: Archpriest Michael Ar dov, Rector of the Church of Tsar Martyr Nicholas II and All the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, located in Golovine Cemetery in Moscow.

### THE BIBLE STOPS BEING A BESTSELLER

According to the Business Section of the "The New York Times" of Sept. 29 the publishers of all the Bible translations have taken a substantial loss because sales were unexpectedly down 48% from last year. June is the most profitable month for Bible sales, it being customary in America to give Bibles as graduation gifts, to newlyweds, or for any anniversaries. The average income from these sales comes to \$3.7 million.

Hargis Thomas, the director of sales and marketing for the famous Oxford University Press said, "I have never seen a time in which well positioned and well financed and well done translations have entered the market with such horrible results. I think that we have reached a saturation point."

By now there exist several hundred varieties of the Bible which are touted to Christians as "new translations" (more accurately, falsifications) while the number of people who are interested in this Book of all books grows ever less and less. The largest Bible publishing company (Thomas Nelson, Inc.) declared that it has lost this year \$1.4 million. The Bible is suddenly only fourth in popularity among newly published books.

### A LOVING HEAD OF THE GREEK ARCHDIOCESE IN AMERICA

According to "The Boston Globe" of Sept. 22 the enthronement took place of a new head of the Greek Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in America, Archbishop Spyridon, and it takes note gladly of his tolerance towards heterodox spouses in mixed marriages. According to "The New York Times" of Sept. 21, not all the Greeks are enthusiastic about their new leader. This comes as no surprise. Archbishop Spyridon has too many ecumenical experiments under his belt to make a Greek with even rather liberal church views happy. He has served for an extensive period at the center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambesi, Switzerland, and then in Rome. Ironically, he lodged in the building which formerly belonged to a parish of the ROCA which in the 80's left for the Ecumenical Patriarchate. An event in which he played a significant role.

In spite of the significant reforms accomplished in America by Patriarch Bartholomew, his protege Archbishop Spyridon intends to continue the usual relationship with SCOBA, hoping to "continue and contribute more to Orthodox unity."

Initiating a new attitude for the Greek Archdiocese in America after the retirement of Archbishop Iakovos, Spyridon rather quickly got in touch with the Old Calendar Greeks and as a start offered them only friendly relations of good neighbors with no strings attached.

According to the Greek-American "National Herald" of Nov. 11 "In a cordial atmosphere a new conventional meeting took place [perhaps this should read: In the new cordial and relaxed atmosphere a meeting took place] of the leadership of the GOC with the new Archbishop of America, His Grace Spyridon... Metr. Paisios accompanied by Metr. Vikentios, who was visiting the USA, went to the Archdiocese where they welcomed the new spiritual leader of the Greek Americans. They congratulated him for his unanimous election and they wished him every success in his mission."

"Archbishop Spyridon received both hierarchs of the Greek Orthodox Church with great love and kindness, and event which establishes a new relationship between the American Archdiocese and the leadership of the GOC, a matter which should have taken place long ago. On the other hand, it is traditional for the Ecumenical Patriarchate to accept all peoples and to promote the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

If the retired Archbishop Iakovos was outrageous with his constant ecumenical statements, his new replacement will doubtless be an even more dangerous enemy of Orthodoxy by far.

"The Greeks are cunning even up to our days" one of the ancient Russian chronicles notes in passing!

### FROM THE LIFE OF THE ROMANIAN CHURCH

"Pravoslavlye", an official publication of the Serbian Patriarchate reported in the October issue that at the beginning of this year in Bucharest a meeting was held at which the financial problems of the Romanian Orthodox Church were discussed. Thirty-four delegates from the Patriarchate participated in this meeting and 21 dioceses were represented by 3 delegates each, a priest and two laymen. Altogether there were 97 representatives.

At this meeting a whole host of problems, not only those concerning financial problems, were discussed such as the teaching of God's Law in the schools. Patriarch Theoktist of Romania sharply criticized the state of religious studies in Church owned schools, noting that they are permeated with a secular spirit. Seminaries and ecclesiastical academies should strive to accept only those candidates who have a calling for pastorship, for it was noted that the quality of clergy has lowered significantly. It was resolved to open a school of ecclesiastical art and to foster the revival of iconography.

During 1995 there were 550 ordinations, while 1000 students graduated from seminaries. In spite of all this, there are 1500 parishes without priests. The salaries vary greatly, but the priests in Transylvania have it most difficult. In that region a parish with even 1500 is not able to support a decent monthly salary for its priest.

It is interesting to note that the Romanian Church alone among all the Orthodox Churches has raised the question of the artificial insemination of women. We regret to say we have no information as to what was resolved regarding this question.

#### ABOUT THE CATHOLICS IN WALES AND ENGLAND

According to the bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of Nov. 8 a poll conducted by "The Catholic Herald", Roman Catholics in England would like to put an end to the compulsory celibacy of their priests. Twenty-one percent hope it will occur soon, 60% expect the change "eventually" and only 19% believe it will never happen.

A society whose members consist of married Catholic priests lodged a protest with the Catholic bishops citing the fact that married Anglican priests who are accepted into Catholicism are permitted to remain married.

It is interesting that modernism among Catholics has become blatantly manifest not only among the laity. Not long ago, a Catholic bishop, Giuseppe Casale of Foggia, Italy, declared that in his church for quite some time laymen were permitted to become cardinals, and at the same time that limitations like those on cardinals at present did not always exist. On this basis some Catholics have reached the conclusion that women could become cardinals. However, one can foresee here some difficulties in such a reform, since, beginning in the 12th century, the Catholics made it a rule that only the cardinals can select the Pope.

An interesting idea: that one cannot exclude the possibility of seeing a woman in a cardinal's hat!

#### "ORTHODOXY" AND THE SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

"Ecumenical News International" of Nov. 22 reports that at the end of October the representatives of the sect of Seventh Day Adventists visited the Phanar, the administrative center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This is considered by the ecumenists a major step forward in the issue of dialogue between the "Orthodox" and these heretics.

This sect was founded in America in 1833 by a certain Miller who began to predict the "specific" date for the Second Coming of Christ. All their teachings are based on a "shuffling" of Biblical facts. At one time, before the Revolution, they became rather popular in Russia, especially in St. Petersburg.

These sectarians predicted Christ's Second Coming several times, but of course, having been proven wrong, they now no longer make any such predictions.

As the bulletin states, "the goal of this visit was to achieve better mutual understanding and to break down false stereotypes and to discover points of friction between the Orthodox and Adventist Christians."

A spokesman for the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Geneva declared that the meeting on Oct. 25 had been "frank and open. It was a breakthrough in the debate concerning proselytism in Eastern Europe. It was also agreed that such exploratory meetings should continue."

These heretics celebrate Saturday instead of Sunday and are called in Russian "Subbotniki" ("Sabbath worshippers").

The betrayers of Orthodoxy in the Phanar have no qualms about negotiating with heretics, no matter how wild their doctrines.