



# CHURCH NEWS

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF ORTHODOX CHURCH OPINION

MARCH, 2000  
Vol. 12, No. 3 (85)

Supported by the voluntary contributions of its readers. Republication permitted upon acknowledgment of source.

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FROM THE LIFE OF THE ROCOR  
TO THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PEOPLE  
STATEMENT OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

The leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate has now officially declared that it looks upon the property of the Russian Church Abroad as its own, for only it, and no other, is the "sole legal heir to the property of the pre-Revolutionary Church" which consequently, "is being held by the schismatics abroad illegally," and that such a decision "is accepted by the Orthodox believing people of Russia with joy and profound gratitude."

This statement compels us, the hierarchs abroad, to address the Russian Orthodox people directly. It is essential that we clarify the essential question which has emerged over the last decade -- the question of succession with regard to the Russian Orthodox Church and historical Russia.

I. On the eve of the fall of the Communist regime it seemed possible that the previous cause of the ecclesiastical division -- the atheistic government -- was already falling away, and that the rest of our problems would be resolved in a fraternal dialogue. The Council of Bishops repeatedly referred to this idea in its epistles, and in actual fact strove to open paths to this fellowship. In this, however, great difficulties were encountered, and later -- as far as we are able to judge, due to active interference of the authorities in Russia early in 1997 -- our attempts at clarification were broken off (by the seizure of the monastery in Hebron).

Difficulties manifested themselves, firstly, in a totally different attitude toward questions essential to the Church, and our differences in this regard have not been resolved to the present day:

A) The question of the sainthood of the new martyrs and the Tsar-Martyr, the anointed by God, who was slain by the atheistic authorities. From our point of view, they [these saints] fulfilled the principal mission of the Church of Russia in the 20th century.

B) The policy of collaboration with the atheistic authorities begun by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky) against that part of the Church "disloyal" to the Communist overlords, which brought about the destruction of the former. From our point of view, to defend this policy is to demean the struggle of the New Martyrs.

C) The ecumenical activity of the Orthodox in the World Council of Churches. From our point of view, this crosses the boundaries set by the holy canons and the Tradition of the holy fathers, infringing upon very truth of Orthodoxy.

D) Relations toward the post-Communist leadership of the Russian Federation. From our point of view, they are introducing a non-Christian policy designed to break down the Russian people and destroy Russia. And this false spirit is in nowise offset by the gilding of domes and the restoration of church buildings in which these very leaders are praised.

*Attempts at "dialogue" on these differences on various levels did not lead to the hoped for results. We acknowledge that in this certain representatives are partly to blame, for in their haste to make the Truth clear they insufficiently understood the complex conditions of the turmoil in Russia. In the tumultuous sea of the last decade in Russia it was incredibly difficult to make our Russian brethren hear the Truth of the Russian Church by which we live -- in unbroken succession and without the intrusion of malicious powers into our ecclesiastical life. We were mistaken in our response to the situation in Russia and in our search for reliable allies, being somewhat lacking in patience and love for those opposed to us -- which soon even became viewed as arrogance in the eyes of the Russian people. Yet what we wished was something very different. [Italics by Church News].*

II. Over all the preceding decades, we had preserved spiritual fellowship with those who did not submit to militant atheism, preserving Orthodoxy; and our hearts were open to them, in whatever part of the Church in Russia they were to be found. This fellowship was in part also in accordance with the canons of the Church, so that when times of greater liberty came, these ties, this presence in Russia, were also revealed. This happened because there was preserved, and continued secretly to live, that part of the Church of Russia which did not accept the "Declaration of Loyalty" (1927) imposed by the militant atheists wherewith Metropolitan Sergius had tried to bind both the conscience of all Orthodox people in Russia as well as our conscience (demanding that each clergyman abroad personally sign an oath of "loyalty to the soviet authorities").

As the years passed, the word "schism" began to be applied to us and others who were viewed as "disloyal"; this term continues to distort the ecclesial crux of the question to this day. We have never accepted this term, and we do not wish to apply it to others. This question is extremely painful; and must, from our point of view, be resolved in some other way.

As early as 1923, the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad resolved:

"Having as our immediate objective the nurturing of the Russian Orthodox flock abroad, the Council of Bishops, the Synod, the hierarchs and priests, within the limitations of their powers, must show all possible cooperation in meeting various spiritual needs when asked to do so by the ecclesiastical organizations which remain in Russia or by individual Christians." In particular, it was stipulated: "Representatives of the dioceses located outside the boundaries of Russia, acting together, express the voice of the free Russian Church abroad; but no individual person, nor even the Council of the Bishops of these dioceses, represents itself as an authority which has the rights in the person of its lawful hierarchy."

The concept of the whole Church of Russia and a lawful hierarchy, according to canon law, does not exclude the diaspora, but naturally embraces the totality of the Church of Russia in the light of the Pan-Russia Council of 1917-1918. It is impossible to restore this integrity by a process of rejection and exclusion which has its origin with the militant atheists who tried to set the Orthodox people against another, and for this purpose concocted the "Living Church" and



other obstacles. We consider that the interpretation of historical and ecclesiastical judgement must be a joint task over which the Russian people -- all of us -- must labor with great patience, first of all with love for the Truth. Otherwise, there is the danger that we will fail to disentangle ourselves from the snares, or may fall into them again.

We reject the word "schism", not only as one which distorts the crux of the problem, but also as a lie against the whole Church of Russia concocted by the enemies of Christ during the most terrible period of persecutions. We have never accepted this lie concerning the Church, just as we have not accepted the lie concerning the Church contained in the "Declaration", in which, to please the regime of that time, patristic doctrine and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures were trampled underfoot. For this reason, our fathers declared in 1927: "The portion of the Church of Russia abroad considers itself an inseparable, spiritually united branch of the great Church of Russia. It does not separate itself from its Mother Church, and does not consider itself autocephalous. As before, it considers its head to be the patriarchal locum tenens Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, and commemorates him (as such) during the divine services." At that time, we discovered that the lawful first hierarch of the Church of Russia had rebuked his deputy, Metropolitan Sergius, from exile, for "exceeding his authority," and commanded him to "return" to the correct ecclesiastical path: but he was not obeyed. In fact, even when Metropolitan Peter was alive, Metropolitan Sergius usurped, first his diocese (which according to the canons, is strictly forbidden), and later his very position as locum tenens. These actions constituted not only a personal catastrophe, but also a universal catastrophe for our Church.

We never left the Church, even though there have been those who began to separate and drive us out with the word "schism" from those most terrible days even to the present - failing to grasp the main point, and still not being aware of it. It is impossible to resolve contemporary ecclesiastical questions by simply usurping the title "sole lawful ecclesiastical leadership," trampling the tragic truth of the Church in Russia underfoot.

Our readiness, even over the last decades, to help the believing people in Russia (as far as our weak powers permitted) in various ways (literature, bearing witness concerning the persecution of the Church, protests) has not changed. It has led to our receiving believers under our omophorion, and, for various reasons, a small number of clergymen in addition to those who already had a secret existence for some time. In addition to the above-mentioned reasons, others were added which entailed at the time intolerable violation of the canons of the Church, and these were still uncorrected in 1989-1991. Then a tempest arose over the "opening" of parishes of the Church Abroad in Russia. We did not try actively to open parishes and foist ourselves on them from abroad, but merely "accepted" those Russian people who learned more about the history of the Church and its life and yearned for ecclesial communion with us, despite the barriers of a propaganda inherited from past times. This little portion, for which our shortcomings did not overshadow the Truth and which, for this reason, decided to unite themselves in Russia to our prayers, has been subjected to persecutions, while our Church is slandered in all the official church publications.

Yet the same leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, which on the new stage of gradual liberation has exacerbated the situation by its own interpretation of events and has so bitterly fought against the "parallel structure," has itself, since the end of the World War II, continuing to carry out the demands of the authorities then in power, created its own structures where this was possible, only in the diaspora, and in Israel, in 1948, totally drove away our monastics when establishing itself. At that time this was, for us, although grievous, at least understandable -- we saw the Church's lack of freedom and the enslavement of officially sanctioned ecclesiastical structures in Russia, which were fettered by the authorities and chained to the authorities.

These latter days have witnessed a new wave of forcible seizures by the Moscow Patriarchate of churches and monasteries from the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in various countries, or attempts to seize them -- with the help of the secular authorities (foreign and Russian), wherever such is possible -- in Italy, Israel, Germany, Denmark, Canada. Now it is finally confirmed even by the mouth of the primate of the Moscow Patriarchate, Alexis II, and representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Affairs, that they have no desire for unification with us on the proposed position of Truth. They prefer to resolve the indicated points of disagreement and the question of the history of the Church of Russia simply by eliminating the Church Abroad, by crushing it. In other words, the present leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate prefers to continue the policies of Metropolitan Sergius -- only in a new form, at a new level.

III. Thus, when we pose the question of succession, we have in mind not only property title to the churches abroad. Regarding this question, it is well known that the Soviet regime refused them, as it did "ecclesiastical obscurantism" in general, when in the 1930's it announced its "five year plan for atheism". It precisely the Russian emigration which was able to save these churches from confiscation by foreign states and from destruction, carefully restoring them with its own means as Russian Abroad, which is open with all its heart both to the Russian past (Tsarist Russia) and a Russia of the future. Therefore, this in actuality our joint heritage of the whole Russian people, and without fail it will be such as a result of the restoration of the one Church of Russia, which stands in Truth. However, to our distress, the past decade has shown that the leaders of the Moscow Patriarchate are avoiding true union, are not ready for it, for this would mean they would have to give an honest account to the people and listen to its voice. This is also the reason why they are violently seizing churches which have not been preserved by their efforts, taking no account of the outlay of expenses, even though in Russia itself thousands of desolate churches need to be saved.

It is obvious that the principal objective of this is smothering of our Church and not the nurturing of the flock abroad, for here they do not in the least fear the terrible scandalizing of that flock. Who among the emigrants will enter those churches which have been wrested away by violence and wickedness? One cannot fail to see that they are attempting to eliminate us as a vexing and incorruptible witness to the 20th century history of Russia.



The main succession which we preserve and which our "opponents" in the Moscow Patriarchate are trying to uproot in our person, is historical and spiritual. After the militantly atheist Revolution, it was our Church Abroad which became the linchpin of that small portion of the Russian nation which did not recognize the Revolution and chose as its path the preservation of loyalty to our Orthodox state. The stubborn stand for the Truth, despite its apparent "unreality," pressure from the Bolsheviks, from the pro-Soviet hierarchs, and the surrounding democratic world, was realized among us as a "struggle for Russianism in the midst of universal apostasy" -- in the hope that for this God would have mercy on Russia and give our people a last chance to restore its historic identity. This was the primary purpose of the Russian Diaspora. It is for this that we have been praying in our churches for eighty years: "For the suffering land of Russia" and "That He may deliver its people from the bitter tyranny of the atheist authorities." This refers also to the post-Communist regime of the Russian Federation, which considers itself the successor not so much of historical Russia (this is declared only rarely, and in words only) as the successor of the Bolshevik regime. The entire legal system of the Russian Federation is founded on the Soviet legal system, and not on the pre-Revolutionary laws.

The present democratically elected officials in Russia have preserved the majority of Bolshevism's atheistic symbols (the five pointed star, etc.), monuments, street and cities names, ignoring the people's original intent: that the Communist heritage be overturned, that the national tragedy of Russia in the 20th century be reassessed, that there be repentance. At the same time, a new, anti-Christian ideology has taken root in the Russian land. And so as to weaken the people's opposition to this, there is being waged an intentional, conscious, calculated demoralization of the people themselves by cutting them off from their true historic and spiritual roots.

And all of this is going on with the permission, consent and even blessing of the leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate which, in order to preserve its own power structure, is prepared to collaborate with any regime whatever, and to participate actively in Ecumenism, not only with non-Orthodox Christians, but even with non-Orthodox political powers. "By joint efforts we will build a new, democratic society," declared the head of the Moscow Patriarchate, Alexis II, in 1991, in an address made to rabbis in New York, where he preached peace for all "in atmosphere of friendship, creative cooperation and the brotherhood of children of the One God, the Father of all, the God of your fathers and ours." How similar eirenic activity answers to our fate is evident in the fact that not long ago, while in Israel for the feast of the Nativity of Christ, the primate of the Moscow Patriarchate performed three morally incompatible activities: he prayed to the God we have in common, Christ the incarnate Son of God, then reached an agreement with the Moslems concerning the seizure of one of our monasteries, and finally praised the destroyer Yeltsin for "laboring for the good of Russia" and for his "efforts in restoring the morality of our people."

IV. We are convinced that the intensifying persecution against the Russian Church Abroad throughout the world is one of the steps being taken toward the establishment of a new world order. Furthermore, peoples are being deprived of their own spirituality and cultural originality, and Christian principles are being perverted and undermined. Anti-Christian powers are achieving their objectives by employing various methods, among which is the inciting of certain nations and confessions against others, and often of a certain part of a nation against another, always encouraging within the local Orthodox Churches those groups which are deemed useful at a given moment, and denigrating those who oppose them. In particular, ownership of church buildings, as before, is vested in the government of the Russian Federation, not in the Church. This means that the government is able, whenever it wishes, to deprive the Church of any given piece of property. We cannot forget that in gratitude for its support in the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the latter gave to the USSR all the property of the Church Abroad located on territory controlled by the new state. Only a small portion of that property was transferred to the Moscow Patriarchate; the greater part was later sold back by the Soviet government to Israel at a purely nominal cost, in exchange, in fact, for oranges.

Is this not what is taking place right now in the midst of Russian Orthodoxy? Is it not obvious that there are powers which are striving to reduce the Church of Russia to an ideological instrument -- both the authorities of the Russian Confederation and the "mighty of this world" who stand behind them -- for control of the Russian people? How can we fail to remember the image of the harlot church seated upon the beast, which is described in the Book of Revelation? And if the Book of Revelation tells us: "Power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all who dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear" (Rev. 13: 7-9), then it would seem that over the past decade it has been entirely possible to discuss and clarify in a "dialogue" in what one ought to understand, following a true patristic interpretation of the Sacred Scripture (which every consecrated bishop is obliged by oath to keep holy) that "there is no power but of God" (Rom. 13: 1-5). By this it may be possible to set aright the perversion of the Orthodox Faith, terrible in its consequences, which is to be found in documents being published in the name of the Moscow Patriarchate as in the name of the Church of Russia itself.

Encroachment upon the sense of Holy Tradition hinders spiritual healing. Our appeal continues to be ignored, the Truth of the Church is not being proclaimed; false teaching is not being condemned.

We know that a significant part of the people and clergy of Russia are aware of the danger of the situation, which is being manifested in many different forms. Still, the neo-Renovationists, the ecumenists, and their opponents within the "right-leaning" circles of the Moscow Patriarchate who call themselves "true catacomb Christians" despite all their irreconcilable differences, not to mention the very leadership of the Moscow Patriarchate, are united in spreading the selfsame slander against our Church.



We know that out being situated outside Russia can seem "unpatriotic" to some -- as is proclaimed in the publications of the Moscow Patriarchate. Yet those who attack us for this should read St. Athanasios the Great's "Apology for my Flight", and the canons of St. Peter of Alexandria, to avoid unchurchly, secular reasoning and to understand how the Holy Church has actually treated similar questions.

We see in this fate of part of the Russian people, sent into the West by the Providence of God, a call to understand the universal scale of the impending apocalyptic period. We do not place our hope in foreign authorities when we appeal to them, pointing out the principles of Justice (as the holy Apostle Paul once appealed to his Roman citizenship so as to avoid violence united with iniquity) when we demand the cessation of the iniquity inflicted upon the "little flock" of Christ, our little Church. Justice is appealed to -- as we avail ourselves of a traffic light on a road -- so as to insure elementary order for all, among whom one may also consider émigrés who once saved themselves from annihilation.

We place our trust in the One Holy Trinity, Whom we confess, and on the wisdom of our people, who for a thousand years have confessed the unity of the Trinity amid all the vicissitudes of history. We hope that, taught by its new bitter experience, it will have learned a lesson from the 20th century through which it has just lived. The fate of Russia is in the hands of God and the hands of Russian people, if they desire to remain the people of God.

We, the descendants of the various generations of émigrés, who find ourselves exiles in a foreign land by dint of bitter dregs which our people drained in the beginning, as well as many of the other peoples of the world (whose children have since come to us for the salvation of Christ), hope to hold out until that day when, through the supplications of our holy New-Martyrs, Russia will be moved by prayer to carry out its final mission -- to bear witness before the world concerning the Truth of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox form of government. As far as our scant powers permit, we will always bear witness to this for those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. Our goal, however modest, is not to allow anyone to drown this Truth in the ocean of impending apostasy.

Forgive us, compatriots who are dear to us in Christ, for our mistakes. And do not discard the Truth itself with our shortcomings and weaknesses. We call upon you to be aware of the universal scale of the present Church problems, to reunite with us in common prayer, and to deepen in our native land the struggle of being Russian amid the conditions of apostasy -- despite the policies of those worldly and ecclesiastical authorities who do not value Russia's universal spiritual vocation. Why is our existence disturbing to those who call us "a tiny handful of schismatics"? St. Mark of Ephesus demonstrated that the Truth is not measured by the number of ruling hierarchs. All of Orthodoxy can be defended by a solitary "schismatic." The holy Apostles, the holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, the holy martyrs, call upon us, for the sake of Truth, to withdraw from falsehood, from imminent kingdom of the Antichrist, and to struggle in love for Christ that we may be written "in the Book of Life of the Lamb, Who was slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear."

Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishop Lavr, Archbishop Mark, Archbishop Hilarion, Bishop Kirill, Bishop Mitrophan, Bishop Ambrosy, Bishop Gavril, Bishop Mikhail.

This present Statement of the Synod of Bishop to the Russian people has a number of particularities and some contradictions. Thus, on the very first page of this statement, it speaks about efforts to create a dialogue with the MP "on various levels", while in the Epistle of the Council of Bishops, dated April 22/May 5, 1998, it was categorically stated that "The Council of Bishops finds it necessary to make clear that our Church *has never held any negotiations concerning union with the Moscow Patriarchate -- i.e., concerning the self-abolition of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia -- and it is understood that it does not propose to undertake any such negotiations at this time.*" However, in the Epistle by the Council of Bishops in 1994 it was stated that "*the time has come to seek a living communication with all the parts of Russian Orthodox Church, separated due to historical circumstances.*" In the "common declaration of members of the ninth conference of clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia) on territory of Germany" this dialogue is mentioned quite openly and extensively.

In the above most recent statement it is quite rightly stated that the actions of the ROCA "at times" might have "looked in the eyes of the Russian people as arrogant." And indeed, the Synod of Bishops on numerous occasions did call itself "a center of Church Authority" for Russia. And how should one understand the appeal of the Synod of Bishops to the faithful children "in Russia and Abroad" to preserve the faithfulness to the Only Holy and Ecumenical Apostolic Church where it calls itself "the salvific ship" which *is being led* by the "holy hierarchy of the ROCOR," which "hopes for the prayers and faithfulness of her children... "? (Epistle of the Synod of Bishops, dated Feb. 11/24 1995).

Braking the decades' long tradition of the ROCOR to use exclusively the pre-Revolutionary style of writing, this statement is written in a Soviet manner. It also does not adhere to the traditional way in which official documents are issued, describing the position of persons who signed it and nor is it even dated either on the Internet or the Xerox of the original.

It is worth noting that in a text of four and a half pages single spaced, the Synod of Bishops never quotes a single canon, although it briefly mentions them.

*Declaration of the Holy Trinity Monastery (NY) regarding the violation of its copyrights.*

This declaration, signed by Laurus, Archbishop of Syracuse and Trinity Monastery was published in Russia in the newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in # 3-4, 2000.

Archbishop Laurus gives a short account of the monastery's printing, which started in 1928 and states that after the fall of Communist regime in Russia and birth of a free press, a number of businesses who started to print in the 90's, by now have become "powerful organizations." But, as Archbishop Laurus writes: "when the matter concerns publication rights, some of these businesses expect the same leniency as was given to the poor and often half-legal publishers of the period of at the beginning of the 90's. At that time, Holy Trinity Monastery indeed tried to treat with understanding some publishers who did not request permission to reproduce its publications. The Monastery at that time overlooked this and patiently accepted the fact that its own books were reprinted without publication dates and even without the Monastery's logo.

But the piracy by some of publishers did not stop at this and one just had to wonder about their openness. There were persons who printed on Jordanville publications their own copy-rights and after slightly changing the front page, changed even the name of author of a book published by Holy Trinity Monastery. One publisher in a foreword to a Jordanville book called the author an pre-Revolutionary priest. One can give a long list of similar lawlessness by the contemporary publishers, but even this is sufficient in order to show that the situation demands action on part of the Holy Trinity.

Of course, not all the Russian Orthodox publishers have behaved in such an improper manner. One exception one can mention is the St. Petersburg publisher "Satis" headed by its president Mr. Belinsky and the Balaam city residence of Archimandite Pankraty, with whom the monastery established a good business relationship. We call upon all the Russian publishers to join in an honest and professional cooperation.

Holy Trinity Monastery intends to put the resultant situation in order and is taking measures to stop the violation of its publication rights.

Holy Trinity Monastery declares that as of the present moment, all permits, with no exceptions, blessings or any other permits (if such were issued) which were granted by anyone, in writing or in oral form for publications, reprints or any other reproduction of books, booklets, newspapers, magazines, icons and any other printed production, issued by the Holy Trinity Monastery, Brotherhood of St. Job or the printing-house of St. Job are null and void.

In Russia the Russian law "of authors' rights and similar rights" protects the publishing rights of the Holy Trinity Monastery over its publications. It is public knowledge that in 1973 the USSR and later also Russia as its lawful successor is a member of Geneva Convention regarding copyrights. Besides, in 1994 Russia joined the Bern Convention protecting literature and artistic creations. In this manner all Russian publishers are subject to the requirements of the international conventions on rights of authorship.

Holy Trinity Monastery has appointed its own representative in Russia and SNG for defense of its publishing rights in the person of Serge N. Kunayev, president of the brotherhood of New Martyr Archbishop Hilarion of Vereya (197046 St. Petersburg, PO Box 488, Tel/fax (812) 240-78-01)

Permission to reprint any of the Holy Trinity Monastery's, the Brotherhood of St. Job's or the publishing house of St. Job's publications will be granted only after an agreement concerning reprints has been signed with Holy Trinity Monastery or a person delegated for this purpose by the Monastery.

The violators of the publishing rights of Holy Trinity Monastery will be prosecuted according to the Russian laws."

*The Orthodox Palestine Society ends temporary dependence on the Synod of Bishops of ROCOR*

Our editorial office received a letter from the President of the OPS, Mrs. T. Kameneff in Paris, dated February 21/March 5, 2000, Last Judgement Sunday, addressed to:

"Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR,  
Supreme Council of the OPS,  
Bishop Anthony (Grabbe) President of the Holy Land Section of OPS and  
Mrs. I. S. Bagration-Mukhransky, President of the American Section of OPS

Copies: All bishops of the ROCOR

Your Eminence,  
Your Eminences,  
Bless!

Dear Irina Sergeievna,

On March 25, 1969 the Orthodox Palestine Society with M. Pacheny as President, considering the threatened claims of the Soviet Government over the Society's properties in the Holy Land and the need of legal protections in view of judicial proceedings in Israel has decided to put the Society, temporarily and until a decision to the contrary, under the protection of the Synod of the ROCOR duly incorporated under the laws of the state of New York - USA ("de placer la Societe de Palestine, provisoirement et jusqu'a decision du contraire, sous la protection du Synode de L'Eglise Russe hors frontieres, dument enregistree a New York" sic).

This led consequently to the setting up in 1970 of a so-called "Supreme Council" under the Synod of Bishops, and to the division of the only one original OPS into three independent "sections" in USA, Europe and Holy Land, with the sole aim of trying to find the most effective defense platform to face the Soviet Government.



On April 9, 1998 the Orthodox Palestine Society, sitting in an extra-ordinary general meeting and acting as sole sovereign invested with the historical and legal legitimacy of the Society since its founding in 1882, decided to put an end to its temporary decision of 1969 and to the "reorganization" set up in 1970, and come back to the previous and original formula of one lay Society independent from the Church, with its Head Office in Paris and a local executive Office in Israel.

The OPS stands faithful to the Orthodox faith confessed by the ROCOR since 1920 and acknowledges the spiritual authority of the ROCOR

Asking your holy blessing, I assure you of my total devotion to our Church, and remain very truly yours,

Tatiana Kameneff"

*Jericho: A Second Gorny by Consent?*

Paris, February 18, 2000

The theft of the Mission's garden in Jericho confirms the accuracy of the Hebron Report dated 8th (see T. Kameneff's communiqués on the Internet dated January 27, and February 3rd, 2000).

Even though OPS had warned the bishops in November 1998 and suggested the proper line of defense to follow. The Mission responded with a lie (see Appendix 2 to the Hebron Report).

Even though the OPS had reiterated since November of 1999, obtaining in response accusations of calumny from Archb. Mark and the Synod as well as insults (see Archb. Mark's letter dated November 30, 1999; letter written by a monk under Archb. Mark's obedience dated December 4, 1999; N. Okhotin - Synod communiqué dated January 28, 2000; message from Archb. Mark's monastery dated February 5th, 2000: the contents of this last message being a faithful resume of Archb. Mark's direct and indirect responses, there is little chance of plagiarism, as these documents are being submitted for the first time.

The real "provocation" lies neither in the publishing of some Report, nor in the taking a public stance. THE REAL "PROVOCATION" LIES IN THE FACT THAT JERICHO ACTUALLY OCCURS, THEREBY IN AND OF ITSELF SUBSTANTIATING THE SAID REPORT'S CONCLUSIONS:

- the inefficiency of the Synod Committee appointed to deal with Hebron in 1997;
- the methodical destabilization and annihilation of the ROCOR, a strategy worked out well over 15 years ago;
- the treachery of the faction which arbitrarily assumed real power and which tangibly applies its policy of "rapprochement" vis-à-vis the MP by abandoning our real estate with only the echo of a fight.

Who, then, truly speaks a calumny? Who, then, assumes full responsibility at what level? The one who brings to light real, precise facts and citations? The one who is accused without foundation? Or the one who responds insubstantial to the inquiries put forward in the Hebron Report? Or the one who places the debate on improper grounds, pertinent to OPS? Where, then, is the respect and consideration for the call of the faithful? Where, then, is the concern for the search in the ecclesiastical Truth?

The battle for Jericho should keep us from forgetting neither the essential, nor the mortal danger of a parallel power within our Church. And yet, same men continue to preside over the guardianship and destiny of the ROCOR:

- Fr. V. Potapov - who instituted the elimination of the Head of the Mission, Arch. Anthony (Grabbe) by provoking an ecclesiastical trial at a moment crucial to the defense of our rights in Israel;

- Archbishop Hilarion - who upheld Fr. Potapov's methods and presided at the arbitration (between ROCOR and OPS-Holy Land) during which the Mission's documents "disappeared"; who participated in the withholding of information and means vis-à-vis Mission's Chief Archim. Bartholomew; who let the compromise with Y. Arafat be initiated concerning the illegal sale of the first Jericho Garden belonging to the OPS;

- Archbishop Laurus - who is responsible for the Synod's documents, as well as for its silence and withholding of information and systematic non-transmission of Mission affairs;

- Archbishop Mark, who manages all Holy Land matters since the Hebron affair; who dissimulated irregular, deceitful felonious activities; who practices disinformation and influence; who coerces consciences; who diverts the Church from its line of defense onto path of his personal convictions vis-à-vis "rapprochement" with the MP; who abandoned all substantial legal defense to the MP's benefit.

Concretely:

- The partitioning of property is equivalent to waiving one's rights to ownership: such waiving is unacceptable on principle, it means accepting cohabitation with the MP. Have we already forgotten the lessons of Gorny Convent in 1949: after three years of "sharing and cohabitation" the Soviets brutally chased the nuns into the night and took the convent by force. Have we already forgotten that Archim. Anthony (Grabbe) fought over twelve years -- and won -- precisely in order to recover Gorny? Mother Juliana remembers all too well having lived this drama as a child: why, then, criticize her stand in Hebron?

- To pretend that the American intervention at Jericho has somehow altered the fundamental question of ownership is not only a mistake, since the question of ownership remains unchanged -- for Jericho, as for Hebron -- it is an additional insult to the defenders of Hebron: have we already forgotten how shamefully they were dismissed with the following words from member of the Synod Committee: "They have not been beaten enough"? Have we already forgotten the relinquishment of our legal positions subsequent to the "apologies" sent to Y. Arafat? How dare one now to speak of the "martyrs" in Jericho (whose podvig is remarkable) when in Hebron one spoke of naughty "disobedient monks"?

- As for the recent change in Archb. Mark's line of defense, note that even under duress, whether it be by vigilant arousal of the faithful, the American political scene, or the pressure exercised by the OPS, Archb. Mark persistently refrains from a property rights defense, while attempting to manipulate the faithful, making an American jurist and Congresswoman affirm the opposite of what they actually state in writing (see Synod communiqué dated February 5th, 2000). This is called treachery.

The Church is being implacably eroded from within by an arbitrary counter-authority. How much longer will our bishops tolerate these practices illicit in law and unjust in truth? How much longer are they going to condone by their silence, causing us all to become participants of the general inequity reigning in our Church?

This is why it is more than ever imperative:

1- to urgently place the Hebron Report on the order of the day and submit it to an in-depth study by the Council of Bishops;

2- to immediately remove from all positions of responsibility the main protagonists of this destabilization maneuver;

3- that the victims be rehabilitated, starting with those of the Hebron affair;

4- that the defense of the entity and patrimony of our Church be reviewed - by a new team - from a legal and not from a political standpoint.

All documents pertaining to the present communiqué may be found on the site [www.ops-sop.com](http://www.ops-sop.com)

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## BEGINNING OF AN EXODUS?

The official publication of the Greek Exarchate of Ecumenical Patriarchate in USA, the newspaper "Orthodox Observer" for January 2000 reported that it had received Abbot Patrick Irish, a clergyman of the ROCOR, who had the St. Mark "Monastery" in NY City and of which he was the only monk.

The newspaper mentions two more clergymen as being received by the Greek Exarchate from the ROCOR: Priest Elias Greer and Photios Bouton, but in the "roster of bishops, clergy and parishes of the ROCOR" we did not locate these names.

It is also known from the previous editions of "Church News" that Archpriest Dimitry Sever, the rector of the Holy Protection Memorial Church in Ottawa left the ROCOR and joined the Moscow Patriarchate.

Also a Holy Ghost parish in Detroit, IL left for the Moscow Patriarchate. Her former rector Archimandrite Theodossy (Clare), former Chief of the Mission in Jerusalem shortly before that was transferred to the Lesna convent in France.

In the middle of last year there defected to the Greek Old Calendar hierarchy created at the initiative of Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, Abbot Adrian (Oullette), who was a rector of the Holy Fathers Church in NYC, for which he was suspended and put under an ecclesiastical court to start procedure for defrockment. As a reason Abbot Adrian stated for his leaving to a Greek jurisdiction was the inactivity of the Synod administrative center and concelebrating of some individual hierarch with the Serbian Ecumenists.

Without any reason whatsoever being given, and it is not known to which hierarchy, the rector of many years in the parish of St. Nicholas, Archpriest Stavros Russos also left.

## SUDDEN SCANDALOUS ORDER

About four years ago priest Elias Warnke joined the ROCOR diocese under Archbishop Alipy from the Ukrainian Church in America. Shortly after that an icon belonging to him of St. Nicholas started to gush myrrh. He was appointed a rector to St. George Church, which originally was part of the Antiochian Exarchate in the USA.

Fr. Elias immediately informed his bishop about this miracle and brought to him the icon to be examined. Archbishop Alipy examined the myrrh gushing icon and with his permission it started visiting the ROCOR parishes in this country. In particular, the icon visited the summer camp of the Russian Youth organization and the fact of the myrrh gushing did not raise any doubts by anyone present. Yet, just recently, Archbishop Alipy suddenly was overcome by the doubts of truthfulness of the fact of myrrh gushing and decided to take measures.

As is obvious from a letter by Priest Elias Warnke (which unfortunately was very much publicized through the Internet) he received from the Synod of Bishops an Ukaz # 62/36/144 according to which he delivered to Archbishop Alipy the icon in question for 7 days, for a new examination. Archbishop Alipy took the "risa" off the icon and after a week declared that he didn't notice any traces of myrrh and, without even calling a single witness, declared the icon to be a fake.

Then, "Vladyka Alipy issued an unnumbered Ukaz to me by fax that the Holy Icon is a falsification and that 'if you do not agree with this then you can do me the favor of leaving my diocese.' "

As a result, according to Fr. Elias Warnke, he sent a petition to the Synod Meeting on February 29th to be accepted under the immediate jurisdiction of the First Hierarch, but received no answer, although the Synod decreed "To



postpone their decision until October on whether to accept the Holy Icon and my unworthiness under their protection before the full Synod. That the Icon will not travel to or appear in our parishes. Yet even this is not yet official in writing."

Unfortunately, the complaint of Fr. Warnke about the incomprehensible acts of Archbishop Alipy does not concern only the icon of St. Nicholas. From his letter it is obvious that Archbishop Alipy was publicly declaring the miraculous Iverion myrrh-gushing icon also to be a fake and its guardian, Bro. Joseph was killed as a homosexual!

This last remarks, when it was heard, created such an uproar by multitudes of people who had seen the gushing of the myrrh and witnessed many miracles from this icon, that Archbishop Alipy stopped accepting telephone calls and finally voided his ukaz and permitted Priest Elias to visit parishes as before, but only to stay away from him.

This highly scandalous decree of Archbishop Alipy makes one wonder about his stability, but the decree of the Synod to postpone the decision regarding this question until Bishops Council in October calls for even more astonishment. If the icon of St. Nicholas is not so known among the Russian people, as was the Iverion icon, which was seen during every single Bishops Council by the whole Episcopate. For example, during the consecration of the late Bishop Innocent the myrrh from the icon was streaming so strongly, that it fell to the floor. Thousands and thousands of Russian people in the Diaspora and hundreds of thousands in Bulgaria saw this icon during a period of one and a half decades. What about is there to deliberate for the Council of Bishops? May be only about Archbishop Alipy's retirement?

It is very sad only, that while this story, not by Fr. Elias fault (it was his personal letter to relatives and friends) got onto the Internet and created many scandals and confusions among the faithful. Were it not that it became public knowledge and it created a lot of talk, "Church News" would abstain from reporting this shameful story.

In the Internet letter of Fr. Elias there was a phrase in connection with this story that his family lost a "business."

In answer to our letter to the guardian of St. Nicholas icon, Fr. Elias kindly explained that he and his Matushka had an advertising company "Creative Output, Ltd.", which had to be closed because his travels with the icon took from nine to ten months in a year. The guardian of the Iverion myrrh-gushing icon Bro. Joseph used to say that it was a rare possibility for him if during the year he could spend in his home some three weeks in a row.

Now, does the cancellation of Archbishop Alipy's ukaz and permission to visit the parishes with the St. Nicholas icon means that the Synod of Bishops will also cancel its decision about the myrrh gushing icons and Fr. E. Warnke at the Council of Bishops in October?

#### FROM LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

##### ONE COULDN'T THINK IT UP EVEN IF ONE TRIED!

As we reported in the previous February issue # 2 (84) in response to the unsuccessful seizure of St. Olga's church in Zheleznovodsk, the rector of the church, Fr. R. Novakovsky addressed a letter of protest to the local procurator's office. Fr. Novakovsky received the following outrageous explanation of the Cossacks' actions instigated by the MP:

"Your declaration, addressed to the procurator's office of the city of Zheleznovodsk regarding the behavior of Cossacks near the St. Olga Church on 12-20-99 was examined. The leaders of the Zheleznovodks Cossack society explained that on Dec. 12, '99 Cossacks society were training near the church on how to prevent acts of terrorism. [Underlining by "Ch. N."] During this measure were present the members of the GOVD. [?] And no acts of violation of the public order were recorded. At the same time, the Cossack atamans were advised on the inappropriateness of taking such measures without coordinating them with the representatives of the clergy.

As regarding the property ownership to the St. Olga Equal to the Apostles Church, I inform you that after an investigation by the procurator's office, neither in the Zheleznovodsk GUP [?] nor in the "regiontechinventory," nor in the city's administration there were any documents found which would at present time permit us to investigate the matter of ownership. In connection with this, the matter of ownership of the building can be resolved in the legal manner.

Procurator of the city of Zhekeznovodsk and senior station's counsel Garus, N.I."

As is obvious from this outrageous explanation of the unsuccessful seizure of the church, which some time ago was given to the St. Olga parish, it will have to defend its right in court litigation.

#### PERSECUTION OF ORTHODOX LATVIAN AUTONOMOUS CHURCH CONTINUES

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Viktor of Daugavpils on the Christmas day received a document from the Daugavpils Procurator's office, addressed to "Mr. Viktor Kontuzorov" # 4/19 of the following:

##### "PROCURATOR'S WARNING

After checking the complaint of citizen V. Andreyev [a representative of the MP, "Ch. N."] about the actions of the Latvian autonomous Orthodox community in Daugavpils it was established: the Latvian autonomous Orthodox Church is not registered in the Justice department and, it follows, is not a legal entity.

Despite that, you, Mr. V. Kontuzorov, in the correspondence with the state establishments and other judicial persons are using the props of a legal entity, such as: a seal and letterheads and in this manner violate the demands of the Law of Latvian Republic "on religious organizations" which is in the future unacceptable.

Following the paragraphs # 17 and 18 of the Law of Latvian Republic "on the Procurate" I WARN YOU:

You must immediately cease using in your future activities the requisites of a LEGAL ENTITY: such as seal, your letterhead and a sign.

You are to inform the Procurate within 10 days from receiving this warning of the measures taken in order to prevent such future violations.

DAUGAVPILS CITY PROCURATOR AND JUSTICE COUNSEL (Signature) Janis Bogdans"

Such an outrageous order given by the government officials of the "democratic authorities" of the Republic, which constantly boasts her "sovereignty" one has not seen even at the times of atheistic persecution of the Church in the former USSR. There, the atheists, at least for benefit of those abroad, covered up their acts of persecution. But here we see quite blatant and openly cynical persecution!

#### I FEEL SORRY FOR THE CHILDREN

(State TV has "ecclesiastical censorship")

A letter to the newspaper "Izvestiya"

It is well known that in Imperial Russia ecclesiastical censorship existed under the Holy Synod, through which at those times passed all the theological and church oriented literature. Not so long ago I learned that something similar exists also in our days of Russian Public Television.

At the end of last year I received a call from Ostankino and was offered to participate in the popular program "Theme." This program was dedicated Christ's Nativity and was to be aired on the second day of Christmas, on Jan. 8th of the new calendar.

After a few days a film was made. In a large studio there were quite a few people and among them some in costumes, a troupe of bell ringers with their own bells and a children's choir of a Sunday school.

The shoot went for a long time and was difficult: the work was constantly interrupted, whole episodes had to be re-shot from the beginning. I felt sorry for the children -- it was hot in the studio, air was stuffy and they, poor, were very tired. And this lasted for three hours.

And when a few days passed, I again got a call from the TV and was informed that the "Theme" program dedicated to Christmas was canceled because I, an Orthodox priest, who does not belong to the MP participated in it (to use the official language, I belong to another "Orthodox religious union").

In Ostankino there work quite a few of those who are my well-wishers and it was no problem for me to find out that the prohibition came directly from the Chisty Pereulok, the very same place which is settled by the Holy Synod, headed by Patriarch Alexis II.

I would not say that I felt bad because the broadcast with my participation was canceled. But I was feeling sad for those numerous people whose work went down the drain. And I was especially sorry for the children of the Sunday school: despite obvious tiredness, they sang in angelic voices. And it is easy to imagine, how the children dreamed to see themselves on the TV screen...

This story evoked some sad thoughts. In the Statute 14 of the Russian Constitution it states:

"Religious associations are separated from the state and are equal under the law."

There are declared two principles: firstly -- separation of the religious associations from bureaucracy and secondly -- equality. In my case these two principles were violated in the most unceremonious manner.

And how can one not remember George Orwell's "Animal Farm"? After all, there was a "constitution," there were laws and they were called "the commandments of..." The seventh commandment ran as follows: "All animals are equal." But the pigs, who grabbed power, changed it and finally it was read:

"All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others."

If our bureaucrats were to be as consistent and open as Orwell's pigs, they should have amended the 14th paragraph of the Russian Constitution and formulated it a bit differently: "All the religious associations are equal by the law. But some religious associations are more equal than others." And more:

"All religious associations are separated from the state. But some religious associations are less separated than others."

Archpriest Michael Ardov (Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church)

#### DECISION OF THE SYNOD OF SERBIAN CHURCH ON ABORTIONS

The newspapers "The New York Times" of March 16 and "The Christian News" of March 27, basing their information on the agency "Beta," in a very brief manner reported that the Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church on March 15th mailed out a circular letter to all its dioceses.

In it priests are advised not to admit to Communion during Great Lent those members of medical staffs and midwives for participation in or conducting abortions, until they fulfill their penances. The Second Canon of St. Basil the Great and a number of others require for the murder of a child in his mother's womb "a 10 year penance, whether the embryo was perfectly formed or not." The circular letter states that "Abortion is a grievous sin before God, condemned by the Scriptures." The same letter gives also another motivation for the Synod's resolution. It states that abortions "As such, threaten the entire Serbian nation with biological extermination."



It is interesting to note, that none of the Ecumenist publications, not even the Serbian Orthodox newspapers ever mentioned this decision of Serbian Church.

The so-called "abortions" have become a mass phenomenon all over the world and in the USA alone more than a million children are killed, becoming the victims of their mothers' convenience and welfare.

#### ABOUT A FESTIVAL OF LOVE

The Serbian newspaper "Pravoslavlje," (an official publication of the Serbian Church) on March 1 reported that the spokesman of the Greek Church, Rev. Metalinos declared that the feast of "St. Valentine" as a holy day of love, celebrated on February 14th, is nothing else but a "foreign import," which is now spreading in Greece. This not only leads to exploitation of human emotions for commercial gain, but even worse, it holds up as an "ideal love" the movie actor Rudolph Valentino, who died in 1926.

Fr. Metalinos stressed that Greeks watch over their faith and national honor and "not imitate the Western style Christianity" and that the "feast of St. Valentine" has nothing in common with the Orthodox tradition. He also noted that during recent decades "the architects of the new age have tried to initiate some ten such holidays in order that the true holidays would cease their existence."

In the same newspaper the opinion regarding this matter, of the Romanian Archbishop Andrew, is published. He also "with pain" spoke of the spread in Romania of the cult of "St. Valentine" and a festival of "love" connected with him, while "it is foreign to Romanian spirituality. Maybe this celebration does reflect some traditions, but in no way those of the Orthodox. This is not a call to youth to exercise Christian love, but in contrary, to debauchery. This newly invented holy day is an attack on tradition."

#### "TO OURS AND TO YOURS" -- "PILGRIMAGE" OF THE POPE TO THE HOLY LAND

A few months before the Pope's trip at the end of March to the Middle East the entire world press was informed of every step this Pope would make. In February it was reported that the Pope wants to follow the path of the Forefather Abraham, venerated by Christians, Muslims and Jews and that he wants to visit Iraq. Yet, the negotiations about his visit failed for political reasons, since Saddam Hussein was not interested in his coming. Instead of that trip, the Vatican arranged a curious comedy. During some service, there was installed a big screen of which there appeared landscapes, made by various tourists of the Holy Land, of Ur of Chaldea, paintings on religious motives, such as Mark Chagall and of others. In front of Pope there was put a "cliff", representing the altar on which Abraham was to sacrifice Isaak. The pope put some incense in a copper bowl, which stood on top of this 'altar'. Behind the papal throne there were 3 huge vases, from which came out the flame. Next to the "altar", according to "The New York Times" of Feb. 24, the Vatican employees placed... a huge icon of the Holy Trinity by Rublev!

The Pope, who will be 80 in May, has visibly deteriorated and the Vatican had quite a few doubts that he will be able to sustain a trip to the Holy Land. Yet the trip, seemingly at the insistence of the Pope, took place.

In the first place came the matter of organizing his security by the Israeli government as well as the Palestinian.

"The New York Times" of March 20th reported that this time the Israeli and Palestinian authorities reached a close cooperation in the Pope's security. They even made experimental maneuvers.

In Israel the Pope was guarded by 18,000 policemen, 4,000 soldiers and additionally 250 men for personal protection. Brigadier Gen. David Tsur of Israeli police told the press that "It is probably the largest, most complicated and most sophisticated of VIP protection we've ever done." Gen. Tsur stressed the splendid cooperation which existed between his and Palestinian guard. This action cost Israeli government between \$10 and \$15 million. According to the schedule the Pope was to come to Nazareth and celebrate the feast of Annunciation. But before he left, on March 12, the Pope repented in the St. Peter's Basilica in name of his Church for 2 millennia of crimes. This repentance made no one happy, and in fact many were angered not only among the Cardinals, but even some lay-people, not to speak of the Jews.

Firstly the Pope delivered a sermon in which it was said, that his Church on its knees begs pardon for betrayal of the Gospels, crimes among Christians, cruelty against the non-Catholics and so on. Then the Cardinals, one after another read a previously composed repentance texts and the Pope responded to them. The newspaper quotes some of the most important parts and in particular:

"Cardinal Edward Cassidy confesses sins against the people of Israel:

Let us pray that, in recalling the sufferings endured by the people of Israel throughout the history, Christians will acknowledge the sins committed by not a few of their number against people of the Covenant and the blessings, and in that way purify their hearts.

Response by Pope John Paul II:

God of our fathers, you chose Abraham and his descendants to bring your name to the nations: We are deeply saddened by the behavior of those who in the course of history have caused these children of yours to suffer, and asking your forgiveness we wish to commit ourselves to genuine brotherhood with the people of Covenant. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Cardinal Ratzinger confessed the sins "committed in the service of truth:"



Let us pray that each one of us, looking to the Lord Jesus, meek and humble of heart, will recognize that even men of the church, in the name of faith and morals, have sometimes used methods not in keeping with the Gospel in the solemn duty of defending the truth,

Response by the Pope:

In certain periods of history, Christians have at times given in to intolerance and have not been faithful to the great commandment of love, sullyng in this way the face of the Church...

Cardinal F. Arinze on sins against women and "the unity of the human race:"

Response by the Pope:

Lord God... at times of equality of your sons and daughters has not been acknowledged, and Christians have been guilty of attitudes of rejection and exclusion...."

The magazine "US News and World Report" of March 27th reported that many Catholics got tired of Pope's apologies (John Paul II alone apologized no less than 100 times). Some complain that the Vatican talks about the Jewish sufferings only and never remembers those who during the Nazi regime selflessly were saving Jews. And the Jews criticize the Pope's "repentance" as one which does not sufficiently reflect the cause of "holocaust" and expressed a hope, that while being in Israel, he will correct this omission.

#### *The Pope in the Holy Land*

Before the Pope arrived to the Holy Land, the Vatican continually insisted that the Pope is fulfilling his life long dream to worship in the places which have been sanctified by Christ's living there. Yet, very soon it became quite obvious that the main purpose of this trip is purely political and ecumenical. The Pope arrived to the Holy Land as a herald of peace and general unity. As it is mentioned in the "US News and World Report" of April 3, "From the first moments it was clear that the leader of the world's 1 billion Roman Catholics was determined to press for a peaceful resolution on Middle East tensions."

In Jordan he spoke with King Abdolah II about "the rights of people and nations," while in Tel Aviv he expressed hopes for "peace and justice, which the peoples of the Holy Land do not yet have." At the meeting with Arafat, during his visit to the Palestinian refugee camp, the Pope declared that Palestinians should get the "natural rights to a homeland."

The Pope also visited Mt. Sinai. He was received by Sinai's Archbishop Damian, who is the abbot of St. Catherine Monastery. Archbishop Damian refused to participate in a prayer with the Catholic and this created an outrage on the part of some ecumenists.

After the arriving in Jerusalem, the Pope made an unsuccessful effort to arrange a meeting with rabbis, Palestinians and Christians. The grand mufti of Jerusalem refused to meet with Israel's chief rabbi. The next Muslim cleric in line, Sheik Taysir Tamimi, walked out after the Chief Rabbi Lau said that Jerusalem is "united eternal capital city" and very strongly denounced Israel's "aggression against people, property and holy places."

Although some ultra-religious Jewish groups did arrange some small demonstrations against the Pope, nevertheless, the majority believed that no Pope has ever done that much to annihilate "anti-Semitism" as this Pope.

Arabs, who heard some encouraging words from the Pope, also greeted him. Even the Orthodox Arabs were glad for the Pope's visit, because it focused attention upon them. There is information that the Pope's mother was a Jew.

One of the first steps of the Pope in Jerusalem was a visit to Yad Washem, a holocaust memorial to Nazi victims. There the Pope also "repented" and placed a wreath on this symbolic grave.

While in Jerusalem, the Pope met with head rabbis and Israel's President Weizman.

The Pope's spokesman Navarro-Walls characterized this meeting as "cordial and frank," but the Ashkenazy Rabbi Lau could not restrain himself from publishing a critique of Papal statements in which he said: "I also waited for statements that, for the generations to come, made it clear that the church itself on many occasions had fed the flames of hatred."

Playing a role of peacemaker, the Roman Pope met also with Patriarch Diodoros, who initiated an ecumenical gathering of "Christians." When meeting each other, Patriarch and the Pope kissed each other three times. According to newspaper descriptions, at the right side of the hall the Pope sat with his entourage consisting of Melchites, Maronites, Armenians and other Uniates. And on the left, Patriarch Diodoros and with him Orthodox Greeks, Syrians as well as "Orthodox" Armenians and Copts. According to "The New York Times" of March 26, after an exchange of greetings between Patriarch and Pope, something happened not planned by the protocol. Papal nuncio Pietro Sambini took the microphone and suggested that all present rise and each one say the Lord's Prayer in his own language. Patriarch Diodoros rose with his entourage and guests, but he did not recite the prayer. Also the majority of his neighbors also abstained from the common prayer. A Russian priest employed by the Jerusalem Patriarchate said: "We are not used to saying the Lord's Prayer in these circumstances."

At this meeting Patriarch Diodoros stressed "the tireless and continuous contribution" by the Pope for "promoting Christian ideals," but he also expressed his displeasure with the Vatican, for "exploiting unemployment, education, and other social needs in the region." And indeed, the Catholics in the Holy Land (as well as throughout the world where there is an opportunity) open their schools, hospitals and welfare institutions to Orthodox Syrians with the aim of making them Catholics. Unfortunately, Greek chauvinism is extremely evident in the Holy Land, where Orthodox Syrian parishes are kept in enclosures, no one is interested in them and for decades the Jerusalem Patriarchate has not permitted them to have a Syrian bishop consecrated. At the same time, the Syrians complain that the Jerusalem Patriarchate without their knowledge and consent sells their parish properties.



This papal trip to the East, which was so widely described by TV and press, revealed his very poor health and decrepitude. So "The Wall Street Journal" of March 28 published an extensive article speculating on the possibility of the Pope's retirement even by the end of the current year. Some cardinals (not without reason) believe that since the Pope requires of all bishops and cardinals a letter of resignation at the age of 75, he also should follow this rule, he being the only exclusion. Yet another group fears possible schism if there were two living popes at the same time.

#### UNHAPPINESS WITH THE NEW GREEK ARCHBISHOP IN AMERICA

The problems for Greek Exarchate of the Ecumenical Patriarch in America are in no way settled. After the forced retirement of Archbishop Iakovos, who headed the Exarchate for a number of years, he was replaced by Archbishop Spyridon who stayed at the head of the Archdiocese only three years. The newly appointed Archbishop soon made unhappy the New Calendar Greeks with the reforms he instituted in the ecclesiastical schools and even demanded that priests stop shaving or cutting their hair, that they wear cassocks and at the vigils of Sundays and major holidays serve Vespers and Matins. Isn't it outrageous?! Very soon Archbishop Spyridon was removed by Patriarch Bartholomew under the pretext that he had mismanaged diocesan funds and wanted to purchase for himself a new residence. Archbishop Spyridon left for Greece and did not accept any other assignments. He was replaced by Archbishop Demetrios.

According to the bulletin published by the Orthodox Christian News Service, on March 6th, the President of the Chief Executive Office, Harry Pappas, wrote to Archbishop Demetrios two letters regarding the pension of Archbishop Spyridon of \$250,000.

Harry Pappas is very much upset that without the knowledge of the Archdiocesan Council and Executive Committee, Archbishop Demetrios and other Greek hierarchs decided not to give a pension to Archbishop Spyridon. In addition, Archbishop Demetrios, behind the backs of his associates, only 24 hours after the meeting closed, re-employed a certain Jerry Dimitriou against the strong recommendations of the Executive Committee. As is evident from this material, when the matter of the re-hiring of Dimitriou was raised, there was a lot of criticism of him. Archbishop Demetrios just bowed his head, so the Committee members believed he agreed with them, but it was just the opposite.

It will be interesting to see how long this Archbishop lasts in America?

#### YAKUNIN & CO RESTORE THE RENOVATIONISTS

The agency "Political News" of February 2 reported that due to an initiative of Gleb Yakunin there was established a new public movement "for restoration of Orthodoxy." Among the organizers there are the bishops of the "Russian True Orthodox Church" Steven, Kyriak and Didim, and also Zoya Khrakhmaknikova, who at some earlier time was well known for publishing a very good church oriented publication "Nadezhda" ("Hope") for which she spent time in a concentration camp in the USSR.

In the declaration made by these renovationists it is stated that there should not be a monastic episcopate, bishops are to be elected by "people" themselves (who are not sure how to make the sign of the Cross!), they should follow the Gregorian calendar, abolish fasts, "simplify" services and similar proposals. At the press conference they announced that their goal is enlightenment. "We want to say that the reformation movement in Orthodoxy was quite strong even before 1917. People have to know that we are not a bunch of modernists!"

As we once wrote previously, there is a multitude of so-called "true Orthodox Christians" of all kinds and various grades of "legitimacy," therefore, one should not be surprised by the statements of those "bishops," but how did Z. Khrakhmalnikova happened to be involved with this blasphemous group? There are other reasons to be puzzled. According to certain information, she was a tonsured nun!

#### NUDISM IN AN AMERICAN COLLEGE

"The New York Times" of March 18th reported that Martha Reicher, a student of Wesleyan University in Connecticut, happened to be assigned a dormitory called Westco. Almost all colleges in America now demand that students live in dormitories within the campus of their university or college. Attending this college for the first time, student Reicher found out that according to its tradition whether one is dressed or nude is optional.

In order to give the youngsters a chance to "express themselves" universities have parities, festivals, meetings and concerts. Nothing in the announcements mentioned the dress code. But it happened that some of the participants of these events appear naked. In the shower stalls the doors are kept opened and in them are students of both sexes.

The university administration explained that nudity is not mentioned in its behavior guides on purpose in order not to provoke a reaction! Some students come to meetings with a towel wrapped around their hips. Student Reicher said that there is no life except for beer, and the purpose is not to create something, but to get dead drunk. In the advertising booklets nudity is not mentioned in any way!